European Research Council

ERC Advanced Grant
Research proposal (Part B)[1]

Rediscovering Theological Rationalism in the Medieval World of Islam

Rationalism

Cover Page:
- Name of the Principal Investigator (PI): Sabine Schmidtke
- Name of the PI's host institution for the project: Freie Universität Berlin
- Proposal full title: Rediscovering Theological Rationalism in the Medieval World of Islam
- Proposal short name: Rationalism
- Proposal duration in months: 60

Proposal summary

The project will focus on theological rationalism in the medieval world of Islam between the 10th and the 13th centuries beyond and across denominational borders. Within this field, all major desiderata have been identified and will be addressed in a number of primary and secondary sub-projects (including critical editions of selected texts, a monograph entitled *Rational Theology in the Medieval World of Islam*, and a *Dictionary of Kalâm Terminology*.

The project is frontier research in several respects. It aims at crossing the boundaries between three main disciplines of academia, viz. Islamic Studies, Jewish Studies and the study of Eastern Christianity. The followers of the three denominations constituted a unique cultural and intellectual commonality in the medieval world of Islam. They shared Arabic as their common language and often read the same books, so that a continuous, multi-dimensional exchange of ideas, texts, and forms of discourse was the norm rather than the exception. This widely accepted historical reality notwithstanding, scholars usually opt for a one-dimensional approach with an (often exclusive) focus on either Muslim, Jewish or Christian authors and their writings. The project aims at radically breaking away from this established one-dimensional pattern replacing it with a multi-dimensional interdisciplinarity that is justified by the historical reality of the periods and regions under investigation. Yet it goes beyond "mere" interdisciplinarity in that the applicant furthermore seeks to connect between the leading researchers in the field who are not only separated by the established disciplinary boundaries but also by political ones. Close cooperation will be sought with researchers from the West and the Islamic world and an attempt will be made to bring them together during the two international workshops that are scheduled for Years 2 and 4. The primary purpose in bringing scholars from such diverse disciplines and worlds together is to create a new quality within research. As such, the project also serves a wider political purpose: In a world in which borders – national, religious, cultural and economic – increasingly gain significance, the project is meant to demonstrate that intellectual history characteristically disregards any such borders and that intellectual symbiosis was often the norm rather than the exception, and that this holds true particularly in one of today's hottest conflict areas, the Middle East.

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[1] Instructions for completing Part B (Research Proposal) can be found in Annex 5c of the Guide for Applicants

Section 1a[2]: *The Principal Investigator*

i Curriculum Vitae

ACADEMIC FORMATION:

1986	Bachelor of Arts (The Hebrew University, Jerusalem)
1987	Master of Arts (School of Oriental and African Studies, London)
1990	D.Phil. (University of Oxford)
1999	"Habilitation" (Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Bonn)

CAREER DETAILS:

1991-1999	Desk officer German Foreign Office
1997-1999	Lecturer in Islamic Studies (Rheinische Friedrich-Wilhelms-Universität, Bonn)
1999-2001	Visiting Professor of Islamic Studies (Freie Universität Berlin)
2002	Chair in Islamic Studies, University of Vienna (declined)
2002-today	Full Professor of Islamic Studies (Freie Universität Berlin)
March 2006	Visiting Professor at the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris ("Les ouvrages islamiques de polémique contre le judaïsme")

PRIZES, GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS, AND MEMBERSHIPS:

1996	Feodor-Lynen Research Fellow (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris)
1998	Feodor-Lynen Research Fellow (St. John's College, Oxford)
1998	Oxford Centre for Islamic Studies Research Fellow
1999-2002	Heisenberg Research Fellow (Institute of Islamic Studies, Freie Universität Berlin)
2002	The World Prize for the Book of the Year of the Islamic Republic of Iran (for the book: *Theologie, Philosophie und Mystik im zwölferschiitischen Islam des 9./15. Jahrhunderts. Die Gedankenwelt des Ibn Abi Gumhur al-Ahsa'i*, Leiden 2000.)
2002-2003	Fellowship, Institute for Advanced Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Research Group: "Exclusivity and Universality in Shi'i Islam")
2003-2006	Research grant by the German-Israeli Foundation for the study of Ibn Kammuna (with Y.T. Langermann, Bar Ilan)
2005-2006	Fellowship and co-coordinator (with W. Madelung) Institute of Advanced Studies, The Hebrew University of Jerusalem (Research Group: "Mu'tazilism in Islam and Judaism")
2006	Prize for Scholarly Achievement in the Study of Twelver Shi'ism Awarded by the Written Heritage Research Centre, Tehran
8-9/2007	Fellowship, Scaliger Instituut (Universiteitsbibliotheek Leiden)
2008-2009	Membership, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton

SERVICE TO THE PROFESSION:

2002-today	Sectional Editor (Theology & Philosophy) for the *Encyclopaedia of Islam*. Third Edition. Leiden: Brill.

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[2] In the case of interdisciplinary proposals involving co-investigator(s) alongside with the PI (**"co-investigator projects"**) the information listed under section 1a must be provided for each co-investigator (CV, scientific leadership profile, 10-year-track-record). In this case, section 1a should be repeated for each co-investigator, and the above-mentioned page limits for the section apply individually, i.e. maximum 6 pages per co-investigator.

2002-today	Co-editor of Ueberweg Geschichte der Philosophie (Islamische Philosophie) (General Editor: U. Rudolph, Zürich)
2003-today	Co-founder (with D. Sklare) and coordinator of "Mu'tazilite Manuscripts Project Group"
2006-today	Co-founder and member of the Advisory Board of the "Series on Islamic Philosophy and Theology. Texts and Studies" (co-published by the Iranian Institute of Philosophy, Tehran, and the Institute of Islamic Studies, Free University of Berlin)
2007-2008	European Science Foundation peer reviewer (Islamic Studies)
2008-today	Member of the Advisory Board, "Studies in the Children of Abraham" (published by E.J. Brill, Leiden)

FUNDING ID:

Applications currently under review:

Rolex Foundation (Mu'tazilite Rational Theology in Islam and Judaism). Amount: US $ 100.000.

German-Israeli Foundation (The Position of Religious Minorities in the Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Iran as Reflected in Muslim Polemical and Apologetical Literature). Amount: EUR 112.100.

Present:

August 2008	Grant, Gerda Henkel Foundation (International Conference: Religious and political thought of Ibn Hazm of Cordoba). Amount: EUR 23.260.
June 2008	Grant, Gerda Henkel Foundation (Manuscript research at the Russian National Library, St. Petersburg). Amount: EUR 3.270.

Past:

2007	ESF Exploratory Workshop (The Position of Religious Minorities in the Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Iran). Amount: EUR 15.000.
2006-2007	Grant Gerda Henkel Foundation (Interreligious Polemics in the Ottoman Empire and pre-Modern Iran). Amount: EUR 10.000.
2006	Grant Yad Hanadiv (International Conference: Mu'tazilism in Islam and Judaism). Amount: US $ 20.000.
2005	Grant Gerda Henkel Foundation (International Mu'tazila Workshop). Amount: EUR 20.000.
2004-2006	Grant Fritz Thyssen-Foundation (The Mu'tazilite Manuscripts Project). Amount: EUR 150.000.
2003-2006	Grant German-Israeli Foundation (Life and Work of the 13th century Jewish Philosopher Ibn Kammuna). Amount: EUR 150.000.

ii Scientific Leadership Profile; (max 2 pages)

The applicant's research field is the history of ideas in the medieval world of Islam as reflected in the literary productions of Muslim (and at times Jewish and Christian) writers in Arabic (and Persian), and she has focussed over the last decade on the following four main areas: Twelver Shi'i theology; post-Avicennan philosophy; Mu'tazilite rational theology; interreligious polemics. In all four fields she has aimed at breaking new ground and at approaching the respective areas as comprehensively as possible. Inspired by the research of her doctoral adviser, Wilferd Madelung (Laudian Professor of Arabic (emer.), Oxford), she explored in her "Habilitation" (1999) the later intellectual development of Twelver Shi'ism since the 13th century CE that was characterized by a unique amalgamation of various intellectual strands such as Mu'tazilite theology, Peripatetic philosophy, Illuminationism and philosophical Mysticism. For this work (*Theologie, Philosophie und Mystik im zwölferschiitischen Islam des 9./15. Jhdts.* Leiden: Brill, 2000) she was awarded "The World Prize for the Book of the Year of the Islamic Republic of Iran" in 2002 and another "Prize for Scholarly Achievement in the Study of Twelver Shi'ism" awarded by the Written Heritage Research Centre, Tehran, in 2006. A Persian translation of the book is currently being prepared (by A. Rahimi-Riseh).

In the field of post-Avicennan philosophy the applicant has since 2001 concentrated on the earliest generation of commentators of the founder of Illuminationist philosophy Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi (killed 1191), viz. Ibn Kammuna, Shams al-Din al-Shahrazuri and Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi. The pioneer of modern scholarly research of Illuminationist philosophy, Henry Corbin, had considered Shahrazuri as the central figure among these three; his writings had supposedly influenced both Ibn Kammuna and Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi. In this estimation, Corbin (as many scholars after him) seems to have paid little attention to Ibn Kammuna, as he was the only non-Muslim among them. During her research on the three commentators of Suhrawardi, and Ibn Kammuna in particular (funded by a GIF grant), the applicant was able to revise this picture entirely. Having studied all extant manuscripts of the writings of Ibn Kammuna in detail (most of them are located in Istanbul and in numerous public and private libraries in Iran) she was able to show that both Shahrazuri and Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi had studied Ibn Kammuna's works in detail and had incorporated extensive excerpts of them in their own writings. Her main publication in this area is the monograph *A Jewish Philosopher of Baghdad* (Leiden: Brill, 2006). In addition, she has taken care that all so far unedited writings of Ibn Kammuna (the majority of his oeuvre) become available in critical editions. Editions of all of his shorter treatises are included in the above-mentioned volume. Her edition of his glosses on Fakhr al-Din al-Razi's *Ma'alim* has recently (2008) appeared, and an edition of his commentary on Avicenna's *Isharat wa-l-tanbihat* is currently being prepared by the applicant. She has also encouraged younger scholars to participate in this undertaking, first and foremost her research assistant (and PhD student) R. Pourjavady together with whom she published most of her studies on the early Illuminationists (he has recently been offered a research position in a project on post-Avicennan philosophy at McGill University, Montreal). She also invited the Iranian scholar H. Naji Isfahani as a post-doctoral fellow funded by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation to Berlin (2005-06) to prepare a new critical edition of Ibn Kammuna's most significant independent philosophical work, *al-Jadid fi l-hikma*, under her supervision. An MA student of hers, I. Marazka, is currently working on Ibn Kammuna's *Sharh al-Isharat* for his MA thesis and he is assisting her in preparing a critical edition of the commentary. The applicant furthermore inspired a PhD student at Yale, L. Mühlethaler, to write his thesis on Ibn Kammuna's psychology. It will be completed in 2009.

In 2003, the applicant founded together with D. Sklare (Jerusalem) the "Mu'tazilite Manuscripts Project Group" with the purpose of collecting all hitherto unpublished Mu'tazilite manuscripts (Muslim and Jewish), of identifying these materials and of preparing critical editions, in order to set the scientific research of the Mu'tazilite movement on a broader basis. She has since been the coordinator of the group and was able to receive substantial research grants from the Thyssen Foundation (2003-06), the Henkel Foundation (2005) and Yad Hanadiv (2006). The "Mu'tazilite Manuscripts Project Group" consists of about fifteen active members from the West, the Islamic world and Israel who come from both Islamic Studies and Jewish Studies, and most of the publications of the group are the result of close collaboration beyond established academic, national and cultural borders, as is the case, for example, in the recently published volume *A Common Rationality. Mu'tazilism in Islam and Judaism* (Eds. C. Adang, S. Schmidtke, D. Sklare. Würzburg 2007) which combines ground-breaking contributions by scholars from Europe, the USA, Israel, Lebanon, Saudi Arabia and Iran and addresses Mu'tazilism among Muslims, Jews and Samaritans alike. The applicant also applied successfully for and coordinated (with W. Madelung) a research group of eight scholars (plus five guests), "Mu'tazilism in Islam and Judaism", at the IAS, Jerusalem (2005-06). As a result of the numerous critical editions, studies and catalogues that the

applicant has published as single or senior author in this field since 2003 [see "10-Year-Track-Record", Top 10 publications, nos. 1, 6; Research monographs and editions, nos. 2, 3, 4, 5, 9], and as a result of her numerous presentations of the ongoing project [see "10-Year-Track-Record", Invited presentations, 03/2008, 06/2007, 06/2006, 03/2004, 10/2003, 08/2003] and the two international workshops she has convened on the topic in 2005 and 2006, Mu'tazilism is today in the focus of scholars, and the significance of its impact on Jewish medieval thought for modern research (which had long been ignored) has by now become an established fact. In addition, the applicant is currently supervising a PhD thesis on Zaydite Mu'tazilism (J. Thiele), and she was recently offered Membership at the IAS Princeton (2008-09) on the basis of a research proposal in the field of Mu'tazilism ("Abu l-Husayn al-Basri. His doctrine and its reception among later Mu'tazilites (Sunni, Shi'i, Jewish and Christian)").

Her most recent field of study is interreligious polemics, and here again she focusses on the lacunae in the field. Muslim apologetical and polemical literature against other monotheistic religions from the first six centuries of the Islamic era has been relatively well studied. However, one repeatedly encounters the contention that in subsequent centuries this type of literature had little new to offer and that relatively few such tracts were being produced to begin with, so that further scholarly occupation with this field would yield few results. This contention is based on the one hand on the view that only completely original arguments are worth studying, and on the other on a mere lack of information on the relevant material that can be encountered in libraries, public and private, in present-day Turkey and Iran. The applicant has initiated a research project focussing on "The Position of Religious Minorities in the Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Iran as Reflected in Muslim Polemical and Apologetical Literature". Together with C. Adang (Tel Aviv), she has successfully applied for an ESF Exploratory Workshop on the topic (Istanbul 06/2007) and she is currently preparing the results of this workshop for publication (*Contacts and Controversies between Muslims, Jews and Christians in the Ottoman Empire and Pre-Modern Iran* (to be published in the series "Istanbuler Texte und Studien"). In addition, she has inspired two of her students (M. Hasenmüller & D. Halft) to write their MA theses in this field (both submitted in 2008). Revised versions of both theses will be included in the above mentioned volume. The applicant is finalizing another volume with J. Pfeiffer and C. Adang containing editions, translations and analyses of five hitherto completely unknown Muslim polemical texts against Judaism from the later Ottoman period (*Ottoman Writers on Judaism and the Hebrew Bible*, which has been accepted for publication in the series "Islamic History and Civilization. Studies and Texts" published by Brill, Leiden) (research funded by Henkel Foundation). Partial results of the project have already been published ["10-Year-Track-Record", Top 10 publications, nos. 3, 4] and/or have been presented at international conferences ["10-Year-Track-Record", Invited presentations 11/2007, 04/2007, 11/2006, 10/2006, 03/2006, 02/2005].

One of the principal motivations of the applicant is to cross borders wherever necessary and possible, so as to achieve the highest possible quality in research and to break new grounds in hitherto unexplored fields. Her entire research has been focussed on the vast manuscript holdings that have so far escaped the attention of scholarship. This holds true for her research on Twelver Shi'ism, on Ibn Kammuna (most of whose writings were not available in print, let alone critical edition, before she embarked on her study of them), on Mu'tazilism and on interreligious polemical literature. It is her strong belief that in many areas within the field of intellectual history of the medieval world of Islam the main challenge is until today a lack of a critical mass of primary literature. Only when these will be made available in reliable handbooks, critical editions and in-depth studies can we achieve a reliable picture of it. Moreover, in studying the intellectual history of the medieval world of Islam one must transcend denominational borders as was the living reality in those days. As a German being trained in Islamic Studies partly in Israel (BA) and partly in England (MA, D.Phil.), the applicant has very early developed an intense awareness of borders in every sense. Throughout her academic life she has therefore attempted to cross these wherever possible. Though a frequent visitor to Israel, she has been travelling regularly to the Islamic world and particularly Iran and, most recently, Oman and Saudi Arabia, and has established working contacts with the leading scholars in her field in these countries. She regularly publishes and lectures in Iran (and Lebanon), particularly in the fields of Mu'tazilism and post-Avicennan philosophy, stressing particularly the intimate connectedness of Muslim and Jewish thought in the lands of Islam. Moreover, she has successfully nominated her Iranian colleague, Prof. N. Pourjavady, for the prestigious Humboldt Research Award, which allowed him to spend a year in Berlin (03/2006-03/2007) during which he and the applicant collaborated fruitfully. She moreover founded the "Series on Islamic Philosophy and Theology. Texts and Studies", co-published by the Iranian Institute of Philosophy (Tehran) and her own Institute of Islamic Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin. Since 2006, six volumes containing critical editions (*editio princeps*) and facsimile publications of unique manuscripts in the fields of rational theology and philosophy have been published, and three additional ones are currently in press.

iii 10-Year-Track-Record. (max 2 pages)

Top 10 publications as single or senior author in the leading international peer-reviewed journals
(the number of citations cannot be indicated as there is no reliable citation index for the applicant's field of research):

1 "Qadi ʿAbd al-Jabbar al-Hamadhani (d. 415/1025) on the Promise and Threat." *Mélanges de l'Institut Dominicain d'Etudes Orientales* 27 (2008) 45-138 [in press] **2** "The Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi (d. 710/1311) Codex (Ms. Marʾashi 12868)." *Studia Iranica* 36 (2007) 279-301 **3** "The Jewish Reception of Samawʾal al-Maghribi's (d. 570/1175) *Ifham al-yahud*." *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic & Islam* 31 (2006) 327-349 **4** "Muslim Polemics against Judaism & Christianity in 18th Century Iran. The Literary Sources of Aqa Muhammad ʿAli Bihbahani's (1144/1732-1216/1801) *Radd-i shubahat al-kuffar*." *Studia Iranica* 35 (2006) 69-94 **5** "Some notes on a new edition of a medieval philosopical text in Turkey: Shams al-Din al-Shahrazuri's *Rasa'il al-Shajara al-ilahiyya*." *Die Welt des Islams* 46 (2006) 76-85 **6** "The Karaites' Encounter with the Thought of Abu l-Husayn al-Basri (d. 436/1044)." *Arabica* 53 (2006) 108-142 [Persian translation http://www.religions.ir/mag/mag.php?magid=11117&section=7; Arabic translation in *Tasamukh* 9 (2005) 224-236] **7** "Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi's (d. 710/1311) *Durrat al-Taj* and Its Sources." *Journal Asiatique* 292 (2004) 309-328 **8** "Studies on Saʾd b. Mansur Ibn Kammuna (d. 683/1284): Beginnings, Achievements, and Perspectives." *Persica* 29 (2003) 105-121 **9** "The Doctrine of the Transmigration of Soul according to Shihab al-Din al-Suhrawardi and his Followers." *Studia Iranica* 28 (1999) 237-54 **10** "Twelver-Shiʾite Resources in Europe." *Journal Asiatique* 285 (1997) 73-122.

Research monographs (and critical text editions) by the applicant as single or senior author/editor and any translations thereof:

1 *Critical Remarks by Najm al-Din al-Katibi on the Kitab al-Maʾalim by Fakhr al-Din al-Razi, together with the Commentaries by ʿIzz al-Dawla Ibn Kammuna*. Ed. with an Introd. Tehran 2008 **2** Jar Allah al-Zamakhshari: *Kitab al-Minhaj fi usul al-din*. Introd. & ed. Beirut 2007 **3** *Khulasat al-nazar. An Anonymous Imami-Muʾtazili Treatise (late 6th/12th or early 7th/13th century)*. Ed. with an Introd. Tehran 2006 **4** Abu l-Husayn al-Basri: *Tasaffuh al-adilla*. The extant parts introd. & ed. Wiesbaden 2006 **5** *Rational Theology in Interfaith Communication. Abu l-Husayn al-Basri's Muʾtazili Theology among the Karaites in the Fatimid Age*. Leiden 2006 **6** *A Jewish Philosopher of Baghdad. ʿIzz al-Dawla Ibn Kammuna (d. 683/1284) & His Writings*. Leiden 2006 **7** *Samawʾal al-Maghribi's (d. 570/1175) Ifham al-yahud*. Wiesbaden 2006 **8** F. Karsch-Haack: *Homoerotik im Arabertum. Gesammelte Aufsätze*. Hamburg 2005 **9** Abu l-Qasim al-Busti: *Kitab al-Bahth ʿan adillat al-takfir wa l-tafsiq (Investigation of the evidence for charging with kufr and fisq)*. Ed. with an Introd. Tehran 2003 **10** *Theologie, Philosophie & Mystik im zwölferschiitischen Islam des 9./15. Jahrhunderts. Die Gedankenwelt des Ibn Abi Gumhur al-Ahsa'i (um 838/1434-35 - nach 906/1501)*. Leiden 2000 [Partial Persian translation by A.R. Rahimi Riseh in *Nusheh Pazuhi* 1 (2004) 291-309] **11** *Correspondence Corbin-Ivanow. Lettres échangées entre Wladimir Ivanow et Stella et Henry Corbin, 1947-1966*. Louvain/Paris 1999 [Persian translation: *Mukatabat-i Hanri Kurbin wa Wladimir Iwanow (1326-1345/ 1947-1966)*. Transl. ʿA. Ruhbakhshan. Tehran: Iranian Institute of Philosophy, 2003] **12** *A Muʾtazilite Creed of az-Zamahsari (d. 538/1144) (Al-Minhaj fi usul al-din)*. Ed. & transl. Stuttgart 1997. [Partial Persian translation by R. Pourjavady in *Ma'arif* 20 iii (2004) 107-48] **13** *Andishe-ha-ye kalami-ye ʿAllama Hilli*. Transl. A. Nama'i. Mashhad: Islamic Research Foundation Astan Quds Razavi, 1999 [being a Persian translation of *The Theology of al-ʿAllama al-Hilli (d. 726/1325)*. Berlin 1991].

Books Edited (Selection):

1 *A Common Rationality. Muʾtazilism in Islam and Judaism*. Würzburg 2007 (with C. Adang & D. Sklare) **2** *Speaking for Islam. Religious Authorities in Muslim Societies*. Leiden 2006 (with G. Krämer).

Invited presentations to peer-reviewed, internationally established conferences and/or international advanced schools (Selection):

03/2008 "Mu'tazilism: Common Rational Theology Between Islam and Judaism" (CUA Institute for Interreligious Study and Dialogue, Washington DC). **03/2008** "Rationalism in the medieval world of Islam" (Rumi Forum, Washington DC). **11/2007** "Steinschneider and the Study of Interfaith Polemics and Apologetics" (*Moritz Steinschneider Centennial Conference*, Staatsbibliothek zu Berlin). **06/2007** "Abu l-Husayn al-Basri on the Jewish Torah and its abrogation" (*Les doctrines de la loi dans la philosophe de langue arabe*, CNRS, Paris). **04/2007** "An Anonymous Jewish Response to Samaw'al al-Maghribi" (*Religion on the Borders*, Stockholm). **11/2006** "An Anonymous Refutation of Ifham al-yahud" (*Rationalism and Sacred Text, 10th-12th centuries CE*, CSIC, Madrid). **10/2006** "Ottoman Polemical Writers on the Hebrew Bible" (*Obbedienza Religiosa e Resistenza Politica*. Università degli studi di Milano). **06/2006** "The theological thought of the Banu l-Awd" (*From Jahiliyya to Islam*; Institute for Advanced Studies, Jerusalem). **05/2006** "The Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi Codex" (*Qutb al-Din al-Shirazi International Conference*, Tehran/Shiraz). **03/2006** "Les ouvrages islamiques de polémique contre de judaïsme" (Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris). **11/2005** "The Significance of Ibn Kammuna for Post-Avicennan Philosophy" (*Post-Avicennan Science and Philosophy*, Bar Ilan University). **02/2005** "Tashköprüzade's Refutation of Judaism" (*Shlomo Pines Memorial Conference*, Institute for Advanced Studies, Jerusalem). **03/2004** "Mu'tazilite Manuscripts in the Firkovitch Collection" (Cambridge University). **10/2003** "Yusuf al-Basir's Refutation of Abu l-Husayn al-Basri" (*Textuality, Intertextuality: Interactive Cultural Practices in Judaism and Islam*, ISIM, Leiden; WIKO, Berlin). **08/2003** "Abu l-Husayn al-Basri in the Firkovitch Collection" (*Annual Meeting of the Judeo-Arabic Society*; St. Petersburg). **05/2003** "The main parameters of Islamic theology" (*Thinking God in Europe Today*, University Vienna). **04/2002** "Ibn Abi Jumhur and his Commentary on the Bab al-hadi ashar" (*From Cordoba to Isfahan*, Isfahan University).

Research Groups that the applicant has led:

2006-07 "Interreligious Polemics in the Ottoman Empire and pre-modern Iran". Int'nal Research Group of 4 participants (applicant and coordinator). Funded by Henkel Foundation. **2005-06** "Mu'tazilism in Islam and Judaism". Int'nal Research Group of 13 participants, hosted by the IAS, Jerusalem (co-applicant and co-coordinator). **2003-today** "The Mu'tazilite Manuscripts Project Group". Int'nal research group of 15 scholars (co-founder and coordinator). Funded by Thyssen Foundation (2004-06), Henkel Foundation (2005), Yad Hanadiv (2006). **2003-06** "Life and Work of the Jewish Philosopher Ibn Kammuna". Funded by GIF. Group consisted of the applicant (P.I.) and one research assistant.

Organisation of International Conferences:

2008 Co-convenor of an int'nal conference (Istanbul): "The religious and political thought of Ibn Hazm of Cordoba (d. 1064 CE)" (funded by Henkel Foundation). **2007** Co-convenor: ESF Exploratory Workshop (Istanbul): "The Position of Religious Minorities in the Ottoman Empire and Early Modern Iran, as Reflected in Muslim Polemical and Apologetical Literature". **2006** Co-convenor: "Mu'tazilism in Islam and Judaism. An Int'nal Conference." Hosted by the German Orient Institute, Istanbul (funded by Yad Hanadiv). **2005** Convenor: "Mu'tazila Workshop". Hosted by the German Orient Institute, Istanbul (funded by Henkel Foundation). **2002** Co-convenor: „Religious Authorities in Middle Eastern Islam." Hosted by Interdisziplinäres Zentrum "Bausteine für eine Gesellschaftsgeschichte des Vorderen Orients", Berlin (funded by Anawati Foundation).

International Prizes/Awards/Academy Memberships:

2008/09 Membership, IAS, Princeton. **2007** Fellowship, Scaliger Instituut (Leiden). **2006** Prize for Scholarly Achievement in the Study of Twelver Shi'ism, Written Heritage Research Centre, Tehran. **2005/06** Fellowship, IAS, Jerusalem. **2002/03** Fellowship, IAS, Jerusalem. **2002** The World Prize for the Book of the Year of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

Section 1b: *Extended Synopsis of the project proposal* **(max 5 pages)**

State-of-the-art and objectives

Rationalism has been a salient feature of Muslim theological thought from the earliest times. The disputed issue of authenticity notwithstanding, a small corpus of texts is extant in which doctrinal issues such as free will versus determinism are dealt with in a dilemmatic dialogue pattern. The display of the dialectical technique in these texts testifies to the use of reason in the formulation of and argumentation for doctrinal issues from a very early period onwards. Despite the fact that rationalism had its opponents throughout Islamic history, it continued to be one of the mainstays of Muslim theological thought, and it is only in the wake of modern Islamic fundamentalism that rationalism has become marginalized and threatened as never before. The Mu'tazila was the earliest "school" of rationalist Islamic theology and one of the most important and influential currents of Islamic thought. Mu'tazilites stressed the primacy of reason and free will and developed an epistemology, ontology and psychology which provided a basis for explaining the nature of the world, God, man and the phenomena of religion. In their ethics, Mu'tazilites maintained that good and evil can be known solely through human reason. The Mu'tazila had its beginnings in the 8th century and its classical period of development was from the latter part of the 9th until the middle of the 11th century CE. The movement gradually fell out of favour in Sunni Islam and had largely disappeared by the 14th century. Its impact, however, continued to be felt in Shi'i Islam where its influence subsisted through the centuries. Moreover, modern research on the Mu'tazila from the beginning of the 20th century onwards gave rise to a renaissance of the Mu'tazilite notion of rationalism finding its expression in the so-called "Neo-Mu'tazila". Second in importance in the use of rationalism was the theological movement of the so-called Ash'ariyya, named thus after its eponymous founder, Abu l-Hasan al-Ash'ari (d. 935). Ash'ari and his followers aimed at formulating a *via media* between the two dominant opposing strands of the time, Mu'tazilism and traditionalist Islam. Methodologically, they applied rationalism in their theological thought as was characteristic for the Mu'tazila while still maintaining the primacy of revelation over that of reason. Doctrinally, they upheld the notion of ethical subjectivism as against the ethical objectivism of Mu'tazilism. On this basis, they developed their own theological doctrines. Within the Sunni realm at least, Ash'arism proved more successful and enjoyed a longer life than Mu'tazilism, yet, like Mu'tazilism, Ash'arism was constantly challenged by traditionalist opponents rejecting any kind of rationalism. The various strands of rational Muslim theological thought within Islam are closely related to each other as they were shaped and re-shaped in a continuous process of close interaction between its respective representatives. This also holds true for other theological schools that were less prominent in the central areas of the Islamic world, such as the Maturidiyya (named thus after its eponym Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, d. 944) which was heavily indebted to traditional Hanafite positions and to Mu'tazilite thought alike, but whose centre was in the North-East of Iran so that it has made relatively little impact.

What has been stated about the close interaction between the various strands of thought within Islam equally applies to the relations of Islam with other religions that were prominently represented in the medieval world of Islam, viz. Judaism and Christianity. Here, similar phenomena of reciprocity can be observed. Jews, Christians, and Muslims had Arabic as their common language and therefore naturally shared a similar cultural background. Often reading the same books and all speaking and writing in the same language, they created a unique intellectual commonality in which an ongoing, constant exchange of ideas, texts, and forms of discourse was the norm. This characteristic of the medieval world of Islam demands that any study of theological rationalism disregard religious borders and that the one-dimensional perspective that still prevails in modern research be replaced by true multi-dimensionalism.

There is a near-consensus among contemporary scholars that the Muslim dialectical technique of *kalâm* can be traced back to similar patterns of dilemmatic dialogue that were characteristic for the

Christological controversies raging in 6th century Alexandria and, more importantly, 7th century Syria. Moreover, Muslim theologians devoted much thought and energy to a critical examination and refutation of the views of Christianity and (to a lesser extent) Judaism, as is evident from the numerous polemical tracts written by them against these religions. While the majority of refutations against Christianity by early Muslim theologians are lost, there are a few extant anti-Christian texts from the 9th century that give a good impression of the arguments that were employed. Moreover, many of the earliest treatises in defense of Christianity in Arabic are preserved, and it is evident that their authors were well acquainted with Muslim *kalâm* techniques and terminology. Given the basic disagreements between Muslim and Christian theological positions, such as the Muslim notion of divine unicity (*tawhid*), which is incompatible with the Christian understanding of trinity and incarnation, any kind of far-reaching adoption of any of the Muslim school doctrines by Christian theologians was out of question. The most intensive reception of Muslim *kalâm* can be observed among Coptic writers of the 12th and 13th centuries. They produced a corpus of literature in Arabic that exceeds by far what has been written by all remaining Arab Christian communities taken together.

Judaism proved much more receptive to basic Muslim doctrinal notions such as divine unicity than was the case with Christianity, and it was Mu'tazilism in particular that was adopted to varying degrees from the 9th century onwards by both Rabbanite and Karaite authors, so that by the turn of the 11th century a "Jewish Mu'tazila" had emerged. Jewish scholars both composed original works along Mu'tazilite lines and produced copies of Muslim Mu'tazilite books, often transcribed into Hebrew characters. The influence of the Mu'tazila found its way to the very centres of Jewish religious and intellectual life in the East. Several of the Heads of the ancient Rabbanite Academies (Yeshivot) of Sura and Pumbedita (located by the 10th century in Baghdad) adopted the Mu'tazilite worldview. By contrast, Ash'arite works and authors had been received among Jewish scholars to a significantly lesser degree and in a predominantly critical way.

Mu'tazilism had also left its mark on the theological thought of the Samaritans. It is not clear whether Samaritans (whose intellectual centres between the 9th to the 11th centuries were mainly Nablus and Damascus) had studied Muslim Mu'tazilite writings directly or whether they became acquainted with them through Jewish adaptations of Mu'tazilism. The majority of Samaritan theological writings composed in Arabic still await a close analysis.

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Within the field of Islamic Studies, scientific research of Muslim rational theology is a comparatively young discipline, as a critical mass of primary sources became accessible only at a relatively late stage. Mu'tazilite works were not widely copied and few manuscripts have survived. So little authentic Mu'tazilite literature was available, that until the discovery of a significant number of Mu'tazilite texts in the late 1950's in Yemen, Mu'tazilite doctrine was mostly known through the works of its opponents.

The study of Jewish Mu'tazilism began a century ago with the works of S. Munk (1859) and M. Schreiner (1895). Schreiner and Munk, however, were not aware of the primary sources to be found among the various Geniza materials that have been discovered and retrieved during the second half of the 19th century in Cairo by a number of scholars and manuscript collectors. Thirteen of the Mu'tazilite manuscripts found in the Abraham Firkovitch collection (taken from the Geniza, or storeroom, of the Karaite Synagogue in Cairo) were described in detail by A.J. Borisov in an article published in 1935. Additional landmarks in the study of Jewish Mu'tazilism were H.A. Wolfson's *Repercussions of the Kalam in Jewish Philosophy* (1979) and G. Vajda's works on Yusuf al-Basir, particularly his edition of Basir's *al-Kitab al-Muhtawi* on the basis of a manuscript from the Kaufmann collection in Budapest

(1985). On the basis of Borisov's descriptions of the Firkovitch Mu'tazilite manuscripts and from fragments in the British Library, H. Ben-Shammai was able to draw additional conclusions regarding the identity of some of the Mu'tazilite materials preserved by the Karaites.

In 2003, the "Mu'tazilite Manuscripts Project Group" was founded by the applicant together with D. Sklare in order to assemble and identify as many Mu'tazilite manuscript materials as possible from Jewish as well as Shi'i repositories. Although much has been achieved over the past years, major textual resources still remain unexplored. Among the documents to be found in the various Geniza collections, the material that originated in the Ben Ezra Geniza (Cairo) and is nowadays mostly preserved in the Taylor-Schechter collection at Cambridge University Library (and other libraries in Europe and the USA) is until now still largely unidentified and only rudimentarily catalogued. It is to be expected that a systematic study of all Mu'tazilite fragments will render the reconstruction of many more so far lost Mu'tazilite (Muslim and Jewish) writings possible. As such, this Geniza material would significantly supplement the extensive findings of the Geniza material found in the Firkovitch Collection (St. Petersburg), which likewise has so far only partly been explored. Moreover, it is only during the last years that the vast holdings of the various private and smaller public libraries of Yemen are being made available to the scholarly community. While some of these materials have been used for various publications by members of the "Mu'tazilite Manuscripts Project Group", the majority still awaits close study. This also applies to the development of Mu'tazilite thought among the Zaydites from the 12th century onwards. The study of Samaritan literary activities in Arabic in general and of Samaritan Mu'tazilism in particular is still very much at the beginning. The only relevant text that has been partly edited and studied is the *Kitab al-Tubakh* by the 11th century author Abu l-Hasan al-Suri, who clearly shares the Mu'tazilite doctrinal outlook.

While modern research on the Mu'tazila has begun relatively late, research on Ash'arism started already in the 19th century, due to the fact that more manuscripts of Ash'arite texts are preserved in European libraries than Mu'tazilite ones. Major landmarks in the 20th century were the publications of R.J. McCarthy in 1953 and 1957. Additional advances in recent decades were made by the numerous studies of M. Allard, R.M. Frank and D. Gimaret. In addition to the efforts by Western scholars, many scholars in the Islamic world have also contributed significantly to the research of this movement. This progress notwithstanding, many desiderata remain in the scholarly investigation of the Ash'ariyya, particularly with respect to the earlier phase of the movement. An in-depth search of all catalogued (Arabic) manuscript collections will no doubt bring to light a considerable amount of new material.

Approximately all extant writings of the first generation of Christian *mutakallimun* writing in Arabic have been edited and (partly) translated, and modern scholars, such as S.H. Griffith and D. Thomas, have studied them in detail. Likewise, all of the few extant anti-Christian writings by Muslim rational theologians have been published in critical editions. By contrast, much work still needs to be done on the vast corpus of Coptic Christian writings, only few of which have so far been published in critical editions, let alone studied. It is this corpus that still needs to be made available in critical edition and to be studied in order to locate them within the "whirlpool" of intellectual history in the medieval world of Islam.

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The proposed project will focus on theological rationalism in the medieval world of Islam between the 10th and the 13th centuries beyond and across denominational borders. Within this field, all major desiderata have been identified and will be addressed in a number of sub-projects. The point of departure will be the two major theological strands that originated within Islam but have left their mark on rational theology among Jews and Christians alike, namely Mu'tazilism and Ash'arism.

The project is frontier research in several respects. It aims, first, at crossing the boundaries between three main disciplines of academia and research, viz. Islamic Studies, Jewish Studies and the study of Eastern Christianity. The followers of the three denominations constituted a unique cultural and intellectual commonality in the medieval world of Islam. They shared Arabic as their common language and often read the same books, so that a continuous, multi-dimensional exchange of ideas, texts, and forms of discourse was the norm rather than the exception. Despite the fact that this historical reality is widely accepted, scholars usually opt for a one-dimensional approach with an (often exclusive) focus on either Muslim, Jewish or Christian authors and their writings. The project aims at radically breaking away from this established one-dimensional pattern replacing it with a multi-dimensional interdisciplinarity that is justified by the historical reality of the periods and regions under investigation. Yet it goes beyond "mere" interdisciplinarity in that the applicant furthermore seeks to connect between the leading researchers in the field who are not only separated by the established disciplinary boundaries but also by political ones. Close cooperation will be sought with researchers from the West, the Islamic world and Israel and an attempt will be made to bring them together during the two international workshops that are scheduled for Years Two and Four of the project. The primary purpose in bringing scholars from such diverse disciplines and worlds together is to create a new quality within research. As such, the project also serves a wider political purpose: In a world in which borders – national, religious, cultural and economic – increasingly gain significance, the project is meant to demonstrate that intellectual history characteristically disregards any such borders and that intellectual symbiosis – which is often inaptly idealized in anachronistic terms such as tolerance or pluralism – was often the norm rather than the exception, and that this holds particularly true in one of today's hottest conflict areas, the Middle East.

Methodology

The main objective of the project will be a groundbreaking widening of the available textual basis of rational theology written in Arabic within the world of Islam between the 10th and 13th centuries, regardless of the religious denomination of its authors, provided the texts belong or are relevant to either of the two strands, Mu'tazilism or Ash'arism. This aim will be achieved in several steps and a number of primary sub-projects. Moreover, the ongoing parallel approaches to texts written by adherents of all three denominations will be merged in two secondary sub-projects whose results are aimed at a wider public.

Primary Sub-projects:

• "The European Geniza Project"

Modelled upon the "Princeton University Geniza Project" that was initiated in the mid 1980s, this project will transcribe any fragment dealing with rational theology that is preserved among the various Geniza collections (mainly Cambridge, London, Manchester, New York, St. Petersburg), creating a full text retrieval database of transcribed documents that will be accessible to any researcher through the internet. It will be with the help of this database that further, so far undiscovered or only incompletely preserved Mu'tazilite texts by Muslim and Jewish authors can be identified and restored. This specialized approach of making the theological Geniza fragments available to the scholarly community supplements the ongoing efforts of the various libraries with holdings of Geniza fragments to make this material available to a wider public by putting the images on the web.

• Critical Editions of Mu'tazilite Key Texts

Through the realization of "The European Geniza Project" as many of the so far undiscovered Mu'tazilite texts as possible will be identified. Whenever the extant fragments allow for a reconstruction of an entire text or major parts at least, critical editions of such texts will be prepared. In addition, a number of key texts by Zaydi Mu'tazilite authors will be singled out for critical edition.

● Samaritan Mu'tazilism

On the basis of the microfilm collection of Samaritan writings in Arabic which is held at the Freie Universität Berlin, an inventory of all Samaritan-Mu'tazilite theological writings will be compiled as a supplement to the *Handbook of Mu'tazilite Works and Manuscripts* which has been compiled over the past four years by G. Schwarb, S. Schmidtke and D. Sklare. In addition, the most significant Samaritan Mu'tazilite texts will be selected for critical edition.

● *Handbook of Ash'arite Works and Manuscripts*

Modelled upon the *Handbook of Mu'tazilite Works and Manuscripts* that is co-edited by the applicant, a similar *Handbook* will be compiled for Ash'arism. It will contain a complete inventory of all Muslim as well as non-Muslim authors who, regarding their theological outlook, can be classified as Ash'arites.

● Critical Editions of Ash'arite Works

In addition to the compilation of the *Handbook of Ash'arite Works and Manuscripts*, a selection of so far unpublished manuscripts will be prepared for publication, with special emphasis on the early phase of Ash'arism.

● Coptic Theological Literature

A corpus of Coptic theological writings of the 12th and 13th centuries will be closely scanned for Muslim material that has been consulted and used by the respective authors. In addition, critical editions of selected texts belonging to this corpus will be prepared.

Secondary Sub-projects:

● A further objective of the project to be based on what has been outlined in the previous sections is a continuation of J. van Ess' seminal work *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra. Eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam* (6 vols., Berlin 1991-97) which covers the second and third centuries of the Islamic era (8th and 9th cent. CE). This work, which will provisionally be entitled *Rational Theology in the Medieval World of Islam*, will go beyond Van Ess' *Theologie und Gesellschaft* in several respects, first by covering the subsequent six centuries and, secondly, by a multidimensional approach to the intellectual landscape in all three denominations.

● In addition to this, *A Historical Dictionary of Kalâm Terminology* will be prepared which will be multilingual and cover several hundred key *kalâm* terms described and explained in their historical context and diachronic delevopment.

The project is committed to disseminating its materials and multilingual results as widely as possible to the international community of scholars. A website with details of the project will be set up and, whenever copyright does not prevent this, publications will also be made available in HTML form. The database of transcribed Geniza documents will be accessible to any researcher through the internet. In addition, the results of the project will further be disseminated during the two international conferences scheduled for Year Two and Four of the project.

Section 2: _The Project proposal_ **(max 15 pages)**
(NB: For technical reasons, this document does not contain full diacritics; moreover, following academic convention titles of books [arab. _kutub_, sg. _kitab_] written in Arabic will be given in the original only)

i. State-of-the-art and objectives

Rationalism has been a salient feature of Muslim theological thought from the earliest times. The disputed issue of authenticity notwithstanding, a small corpus of texts is extant in which doctrinal issues such as free will versus determinism are dealt with in a dilemmatic dialogue pattern. The display of the dialectical technique in these texts testifies to the use of reason in the formulation of and argumentation for doctrinal issues from a very early period onwards (Cook 1980; 1981; van Ess 1977). Despite the fact that rationalism had its opponents throughout Islamic history, it continued to be one of the mainstays of Muslim theological thought, and it is only in the wake of modern Islamic fundamentalism that rationalism has become marginalized and threatened as never before.

The Mu'tazila was the earliest "school" of rationalist Islamic theology, known as _kalâm_, and one of the most important and influential currents of Islamic thought. Mu'tazilites stressed the primacy of reason and free will (as opposed to predestination) and developed an epistemology, ontology and psychology which provided a basis for explaining the nature of the world, God, man and the phenomena of religion such as revelation and divine law. In their ethics, Mu'tazilites maintained that good and evil can be known solely through human reason. With their characteristic epistemology, they were also largely responsible for the development of the highly sophisticated discipline of legal methodology.

The Mu'tazila had its beginnings in the 8th century and its classical period of development was from the latter part of the 9th until the middle of the 11th century CE. While it briefly enjoyed the status of an "official" theology under the Abbasid caliphs in the 9th century, the movement had coalesced into two main schools by the turn of the 10th century: the school of Baghdad and that of Basra. The dominant figures of the Basran school were Abu Ali al-Jubba'i (d. 916) and his son Abu Hashim (d. 933). The followers of Abu Hashim formed an important sub-school known as the Bahshamiyya. Of the various members of this school, one can mention the following: Abu Hashim's disciple, Abu Ali b. Khallad (d. ca. 961), Abu Abd Allah al-Basri (d. 980) and Abu Ishaq b. Ayyash, who were students of Ibn Khallad. The chief judge Abd al-Jabbar al-Hamadhani (d. 1025) was a student of Abu Abd Allah and Abu Ishaq and a very prolific author. One of Abd al-Jabbar's own students, Abu l-Husayn al-Basri (d. 1044), established what seems to have been the last creative school of thought among the Mu'tazila. The movement gradually fell out of favour in Sunni Islam and had largely disappeared by the 14th century. Its impact, however, continued to be felt in Shi'i Islam where its influence subsisted through the centuries and can be seen even today. Moreover, modern research on the Mu'tazila from the beginning of the 20th century onwards gave rise to a renaissance of the Mu'tazilite notion of rationalism finding its expression in the so-called "Neo-Mu'tazila", a vague term designating various strands of contemporary Muslim thinkers who lean on the Mu'tazilite heritage to substantiate the significance of rationalism in modern Muslim discourse (Hildebrandt 2007).

Second in importance in the use of rationalism was the theological movement of the so-called Ash'ariyya, named thus after its eponymous founder, Abu l-Hasan al-Ash'ari (d. 935), a former student of the Mu'tazilite master Abu Ali al-Jubba'i. At the age of about forty, Ash'ari abandoned the teachings of Mu'tazilism and set out to formulate his own doctrinal system. Ash'ari and his followers aimed at formulating a _via media_ between the two dominant opposing strands of the time, Mu'tazilism and traditionalist Islam (in the brand of Hanbalism). Methodologically, they applied rationalism in their theological thought and writings as was characteristic for the Mu'tazila while still maintaining the primacy of revelation over that of reason. Doctrinally, they upheld the notion of ethical subjectivism as

against the ethical objectivism of Mu'tazilism, and they elaborated the notion of man's "acquisition" (*kasb*) of his acts as a way to mediate between the Mu'tazilite notion of free will and the traditionalist position of predestination. On this basis, they developed their own theological doctrines. As is characteristic for the development of Islamic theological thought, Ash'ari adopted various concepts into his doctrinal system that had been formulated by earlier thinkers. For example, the first to attempt to combine the rational methodology of the Mu'tazilites with the doctrinal positions of the traditionalists had in fact been Ibn Kullab (d. 855 ?), and the notion of man's "acquisition" of his acts had first been formulated by Dirar b. Amr (d. 796). However, due to the subsequent success of the Ash'ariyya as a theological school these earlier predecessors soon sank into oblivion.

By the end of the 10th century, Ash'arism had established itself as one of the prevalent theological movements in the central lands of Islam mainly thanks to the prominent theologian and Malikite judge Abu Bakr al-Baqillani (d. 1013) who enjoyed the patronage of the Buyid vizier al-Sahib b. Abbad (d. 995), as had been the case with his Mu'tazilite contemporary Abd al-Jabbar al-Hamadhani. Moreover, it was through Baqillani's students Abu Bakr Muhammad b. al-Hasan b. Furak (d. 1015) and Abu Ishaq al-Isfara'ini (d. 1020) who both taught in Rayy and Nishapur that Ash'arism soon also spread into Persia where some of the most prominent Ash'arite theologians of the following generations emerged. Thanks to the spread of the Malikite school of law in North Africa, Baqillani's theological writings became also popular in this region and it is here that fragments of his *opus magnum*, *Kitab Hidayat al-mustarshidin*, have been preserved in manuscript. Ash'arism reached a further peak during the early Seljuk period when it enjoyed the official support of the vizier Nizam al-Mulk (d. 1099) and became a central component within the curriculum of the Nizamiyya network of educational institutions; the main Ash'arite theologians of the time were Abu Bakr Ahmad b. Muhammad al-Furaki (d. 1085) and the famous Imam al-Haramayn Abu l-Ma'ali al-Juwayni (d. 1085). As was the case with Abu l-Husayn al-Basri among the Mu'tazilites, Juwayni was the first to integrate philosophical methods and notions into Ash'arite *kalâm*, and there is in fact ample evidence that Juwayni had intensively studied and was deeply influenced by Abu l-Husayn's writings (Madelung 2006). With Juwayni the early phase of Ash'arism comes to an end, and the next phase is characterized by an increasing integration of philosophy and logic into theological methodology and thought. This phase was opened by Abu Hamid al-Ghazali (d. 1111) and among its most significant authors are Muhammad b. Abd al-Karim al-Shahrastani (d. 1153) and Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (d. 1209). In the Eastern lands of Islam, Ash'arism remained one of the most salient strands of thought until the end of the 16th century. Within the Sunni realm at least, Ash'arism proved more successful and enjoyed a longer life than Mu'tazilism, yet, like Mu'tazilism, Ash'arism was constantly challenged by traditionalist opponents rejecting any kind of rationalism.

The various strands of rational Muslim theological thought within Islam are closely related to each other as they were shaped and re-shaped in a continuous process of close interaction between its respective representatives. This also holds true for other theological schools that were less prominent in the central areas of the Islamic world, such as the Maturidiyya (named thus after its eponym Abu Mansur al-Maturidi, d. 944) which was heavily indebted to traditional Hanafite positions and to Mu'tazilite thought alike, but whose centre was in the North-East of Iran (Transoxania) so that it has made relatively little impact (with the exception of the central Ottoman lands).

What has been stated about the close interaction between the various strands of thought within Islam equally applies to the relations of Islam with other religions that were prominently represented in the medieval world of Islam, viz. Judaism and Christianity. Here, similar phenomena of reciprocity can be observed. Jews, Christians, and Muslims, educated as well as uneducated, had Arabic as their common language and therefore naturally shared a similar cultural background. Often reading the same books and

all speaking and writing in the same language, they created a unique intellectual commonality in which an ongoing, constant exchange of ideas, texts, and forms of discourse was the norm. This characteristic of the medieval world of Islam – which has aptly been described as a "whirlpool effect" (Stroumsa [forthcoming]) or a "crosspollination" (Goodman 1995; 1999; Montgomery 2007) – requires that any study of theological rationalism disregard religious borders and that the one-dimensional perspective that still prevails in modern research be replaced by true multi-dimensionalism.

There is a near-consensus among contemporary scholars that the Muslim dialectical technique of *kalâm* can be traced back to similar patterns of dilemmatic dialogue that were characteristic for the Christological controversies raging in 6th century Alexandria and, more importantly, 7th century Syria (Cook 1980; Zimmermann 1985; Brock 1986; Hoyland 1997; Reynolds 2004). Moreover, Muslim theologians devoted much thought and energy to a critical examination and refutation of the views of Christianity and (to a lesser extent) Judaism, as is evident from the numerous polemical tracts written by them against these religions. While the majority of refutations against Christianity by early Muslim theologians are lost, there are a few extant anti-Christian texts from the 9th century that give a good impression of the arguments that were employed (Thomas 2004). Extant examples of such works from the 10th century are the comprehensive *Kitab Tathbit dala'il al-nubuwwa* by the Mu'tazilite Abd al-Jabbar al-Hamadhani (Reynolds 2004) and, within the Ash'arite camp, the *Shifa' al-ghalil* by Juwayni or the *Radd al-jamil li-ilahiyyat Isa bi-sarih al-Injil* which is attributed to Ghazali and may indeed be by him (El-Kaisy Friemuth 2007; Thomas 2007).

Moreover, many of the earliest treatises in defense of Christianity in Arabic are preserved. These were written by theologians representing the three main Christian groups in the Middle East during the first Abbasid century: the Melkite Theodore Abu Qurra (d. c. 830), the Nestorian Ammar al-Basri (d. c. 845), and the Jacobite Habib ibn Khidma Abu Ra'ita (d. c. 855). We know from Muslim sources that these three Christian theologians were in dialogue with Muslim rational theologians. Moreover, from their respective defenses of those Christian doctrines that became the standard topic in Muslim/Christian controversies – viz. Trinity, Incarnation, Baptism, Eucharist, veneration of the cross, and the direction to be faced in prayer – it is evident that they were well acquainted with Muslim *kalâm* techniques and terminologies (Griffith 2002). Given the basic disagreements between Muslim and Christian theological positions, such as the Muslim notion of divine unicity (*tawhid*), which is incompatible with the Christian understanding of trinity and incarnation, any kind of far-reaching adoption of any of the Muslim school doctrines by Christian theologians was out of question. The most extensive reception of Muslim *kalâm* can be observed among Coptic writers. While the first major Coptic author writing in Arabic appeared relatively late in the person of Severus ibn al-Muqaffa' (d. after 987), the Copts produced in subsequent centuries a corpus of Christian literature in Arabic that exceeds by far what has been written by all remaining Arab Christian communities taken together (Graf 1947:294ff). As has been shown in detail for Abu Shakir Ibn al-Rahib and al-Mu'taman Ibn al-Assal (both 13th c.), Coptic writers of this epoch were particularly influenced by the writings of the Ash'arite theologian Fakhr al-Din al-Razi (Sidarus 1975; Wadi 1997; Schwarb [forthcoming]).

Judaism proved much more receptive to basic Muslim doctrinal notions such as divine unicity than Christianity, and it was Mu'tazilism in particular that was adopted to varying degrees from the 9th century onwards by both Rabbanite and Karaite authors, so that by the turn of the 11th century a "Jewish Mu'tazila" had emerged. Jewish scholars both composed original works along Mu'tazilite lines and produced copies of Muslim Mu'tazilite books, often transcribed into Hebrew characters. Prime examples of original Jewish Mu'tazilite works are the Karaite Yusuf al-Basir's (d. ca. 1040) *al-Kitab al-Muhtawi* and his shorter *Kitab al-Tamyiz* (Vajda 1985; Sklare 1995; von Abel 2005; Madelung&Schmidtke 2006), the *Kitab al-Ni'ma* of his older contemporary Levi ben Yefet (Sklare 2007), or the *Kitab al-Tawriya* of

Basir's student Yeshu'a ben Yehudah. The influence of the Mu'tazila found its way to the very centres of Jewish religious and intellectual life in the East. Several of the Heads of the ancient Rabbanite Academies (Yeshivot) of Sura and Pumbedita (located by the 10th century in Baghdad) adopted the Mu'tazilite worldview. One of them, Samuel ben Hofni Gaon (d. 1013), was closely familiar with the works of Ibn Khallad and personally acquainted with Abu Abd Allah al-Basri (Sklare 1996). Moreover, as had been the case with Christian writers, the Mu'tazilite doctrines and terminology provided a basis for discussion and polemical exchanges between Jewish and Muslim scholars (Sklare 1999). By contrast, Ash'arite works and authors had been received among Jewish scholars to a significantly lesser degree and in a predominantly critical way (Sinai 2005).

Mu'tazilism had also left its mark on the theological thought of the Samaritans, for example the 11th century author Abu l-Hasan al-Suri. It is not clear whether Samaritans (whose intellectual centres between the 9th to the 11th centuries were mainly Nablus and Damascus) had studied Muslim Mu'tazilite writings directly or whether they became acquainted with them through Jewish adaptations of Mu'tazilism. The majority of Samaritan theological writings composed in Arabic still await a close analysis, but a cursory investigation of the extant manuscript material confirms that Abu l-Hasan al-Suri was by no means an exception (Wedel 2007).

There are many other examples of the intellectual whirlpool process in the medieval world of Islam across the denominational borders. The following two should suffice to demonstrate that a truly multi-dimensional approach is needed to grasp these processes. The earliest extant systematic *kalâm* treatise was authored by Dawud b. Marwan al-Muqammas, a former Jew who converted to Christianism and later re-converted to Judaism. Al-Muqammas was a student of the Jacobite theologian Nonnus of Nisibis (d. c. 870) and his work, *Ishrun Maqala*, shows characteristics of Muslim *kalâm* as well as of Christian doctrines, while the overall outlook of the book is Jewish (Stroumsa 1989; 2007). The second example concerns the towering Jewish thinker Musa b. Maymun al-Qurtubi ("Maimonides", d. 1204) who was well-read in Muslim literature and widely received among Muslim and Christian medieval readers alike as is indicated by the many traces of his *Guide of the Perplexed* that are left in the later Muslim and Christian literature (Schwarb 2007).

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Within the field of Islamic Studies, scientific research of Muslim rational theology is a comparatively young discipline, as a critical mass of primary sources became accessible only at a relatively late stage. Mu'tazilite works were evidently not widely copied and relatively few manuscripts have survived. So little authentic Mu'tazilite literature was available, that until the publication of some significant texts in the 1960's, Mu'tazilite doctrine was mostly known through the works of its opponents. The study of Mu'tazilite thought has made slow but steady progress throughout the 20th century. Being virtually banned from the centre of the Sunni world from about the end of the 11th century, Mu'tazilite thinking was not considered an integral part of Islamic intellectual history. Given the rationalistic approach of the Mu'tazila towards theological issues, 19th century historians of thought generally considered the Mu'tazilites as "freethinkers" within Islam who had been influenced by Greek philosophical thought and thus constituted an anomaly within Islamic intellectual history (e.g. Steiner 1865).

This evaluation, which was based almost exclusively on heresiographies written by non-Mu'tazilites, was proven to be wrong at the beginning of the 20th century as a result of the publication of several significant texts. In 1925 the Swedish scholar H.S. Nyberg edited the *Kitab al-Intisar* of the Baghdadi Mu'tazilite Abu l-Husayn al-Khayyat (d. ca. 913), a refutation of the polemical treatises of the sceptic Ibn al-Rawandi (d. 860 or 912 ?) which in turn were directed against Jahiz's (d. 868) pro-Mu'tazilite *Kitab Fadilat al-*

Mu'tazila. Although Khayyat's work does not contain extensive information on the views of the Mu'tazilites due to its apologetical character, it was the first work authored by a Mu'tazilite available in print. Of much greater significance for the study of Mu'tazilism was H. Ritter's edition of Abu l-Hasan al-Ash'ari's doxography, *Maqalat al-islamiyyin*, published in 1929-30. This work provided reliable insights into the positions of the Mu'tazilites, as the author had originally been a follower of this movement (as was mentioned earlier) and was familiar with the Mu'tazilite writings of his time.

The next decisive step in the study of Mu'tazilite thought occurred when in the early 1950's a number of manuscripts were discovered in Yemen during an expedition of a group of Egyptian scholars. These manuscripts contained mostly works of various representatives of the Bahshamiyya. They included fourteen out of the original twenty volumes of the encyclopaedic *Kitab al-Mughni fi abwab al-tawhid wa-l-adl* of Abd al-Jabbar al-Hamadhani, which were subsequently edited in Egypt (1961-65). Further writings of adherents of the Bahshamiyya that were found in the library of the Great Mosque in San'a' were also edited during the 1960's. Among them mention should be made of *Ta'liq Sharh al-usul al-khamsa*, a recension of the *Sharh al-usul al-khamsa* of Abd al-Jabbar by one of his followers, the Zaydi Imam Manakdim (d. 1034), as well as *Kitab al-Majmu' fi l-muhit bi-l-taklif*, a recension of Abd al-Jabbar's *al-Kitab al-Muhit bi-l-taklif* by another follower of his, namely Ibn Mattawayh.

However, despite these rich finds, numerous lacunae remain. On the one hand, only few texts by thinkers prior to Abd al-Jabbar were discovered. The same applies to rival groups to the Bahshamiyya such as the Ikhshidiyya, or the school of Baghdad. On the other hand, quite significant parts of the works by adherents of the Bahshamiyya were still unaccounted for. For example, volumes 1-3, 10 and 18-19 of the *Mughni* were not found, nor were other works by Abd al-Jabbar, such as the original version of the *al-Kitab al-Muhit* or his *Sharh Kashf al-a'rad*. Moreover, the finds of the 1950's suggested that the Bahshamiyya had constituted the last innovative and dynamic school within Mu'tazilism. This impression was proven to be incorrect only some decades later, when W. Madelung and M. McDermott discovered and edited the extant fragments of Rukn al-Din Mahmud b. Muhammad al-Malahimi's (d. 1141) *Kitab al-Mu'tamad fi usul al-din* (London 1990) and his shorter *Kitab al-Fa'iq fi usul al-din* (Tehran 2007). Ibn al-Malahimi was a follower of the teachings of Abu l-Husayn al-Basri, the founder of what seems to have been the last innovative school within the Mu'tazila. From his writings it is evident that Abu l-Husayn's views differed significantly from those of his teacher Abd al-Jabbar and that he formulated novel positions on a number of central issues. Not found in Yemen, however, were theological writings by Abu l-Husayn al-Basri himself. Nor were any contemporary texts by adversaries of Abu l-Husayn discovered that might have given evidence of the vehement disputations that took place between the adherents of the Bahshamiyya on the one hand and Abu l-Husayn on the other. It is only known from later sources that the animosities between the two groups must have been very strong indeed.

The study of Jewish Mu'tazilism began a century ago with the works of S. Munk (1859) and M. Schreiner (1895). Schreiner and Munk, however, were not aware of the primary sources to be found among the various Geniza materials that have been discovered and retrieved during the second half of the 19th century in Cairo by a number of scholars and manuscript collectors. Thirteen of the Mu'tazilite manuscripts found in the Abraham Firkovitch collection (taken from the Geniza, or storeroom, of the Karaite Synagogue in Cairo) were described in detail by A.J. Borisov in an article published in 1935. Between 1939 and 1943, L. Nemoy published *Kitab al-Anwar wa-l-maraqib* by the Karaite Ya'qub al-Qirqisani (fl. early 10th c. in Baghdad). An additional landmark in the study of Jewish Mu'tazilism were H.A. Wolfson's *Repercussions of the Kalam in Jewish Philosophy* (1979) and G. Vajda's works on Yusuf al-Basir, particularly his edition of Basir's *al-Kitab al-Muhtawi* on the basis of a manuscript from the Kaufmann collection in Budapest (Vajda 1985). H. Ben-Shammai has studied Mu'tazilite elements in the works of early Karaite authors of the 10th century, Ya'qub al-Qirqisani and Yefet ben Eli (Ben-Shammai

1978). On the basis of Borisov's descriptions of the Firkovitch Mu'tazilite manuscripts and from fragments in the British Library, Ben-Shammai was moreover able to draw additional conclusions regarding the identity of some of the Mu'tazilite materials preserved by the Karaites, showing in particular that the Karaites had preserved the original version of Abd al-Jabbar's *al-Kitab al-Muhit* which we now possess only in the paraphrastic version by Ibn Mattawayh (Ben-Shammai 1974). S. Stroumsa has published the *Ishrun Maqala* of Dawud b. Marwan al-Muqammas (Stroumsa 1989; 2007), and D. Sklare has reconstructed some of the Mu'tazilite writings of Samuel ben Hofni Gaon (Sklare 1996) and investigated the impact of Mu'tazilite thought on the legal writings of Yusuf al-Basir (Sklare 1995).

In 2003, the "Mu'tazilite Manuscripts Project Group" was founded by the applicant together with D. Sklare in order to assemble and identify as many Mu'tazilite manuscript materials as possible from Jewish as well as Shi'i repositories. One of the most spectacular recent findings by members of the group are three extensive fragments of Abu l-Husayn al-Basri's *Kitab Tasaffuh al-adilla*, which was believed to be completely lost (Madelung&Schmidtke 2006a), as well as fragments of two refutations of the doctrine of Abu l-Husayn, authored by his contemporary, the Karaite Yusuf al-Basir (Madelung&Schmidtke 2006; 2007). In addition, portions of Abd al-Jabbar's *Mughni* from volumes that had not been found among the Yemeni manuscripts have been discovered and edited (Schmidtke 2007; Hamdan&Schmidtke [in press]; Schwarb [in press]). Moreover, an anonymous commentary on Ibn Mattawayh's *Kitab al-Tadhkira*, which is preserved in an apparently unique manuscript copy housed at the Asghar Mahdawi Library in Tehran, has been made available in a facsimile publication (Schmidtke 2006). In addition, numerous Mu'tazilite writings that were presumed lost were recently found in Yemen and India, including Ibn al-Malahimi's critique of Peripatetic philosophy, *Tuhfat al-mutakallimin fi l-radd ala l-falasifa* (Ansari 2001).

Although much has been achieved over the past years, many Mu'tazilite textual materials still remain unexplored. Among the documents to be found in the various Geniza collections, the material that originated in the Ben Ezra Geniza (Cairo) and is nowadays mostly preserved in the Taylor-Schechter collection at Cambridge University Library (and other libraries in Europe and the USA) is until now still largely unidentified and only rudimentarily catalogued (Baker&Polliack 2001; Shivtiel&Niessen 2006). It is to be expected that a systematic study of all Mu'tazilite fragments will render the reconstruction of many more so far lost Mu'tazilite (Muslim and Jewish) writings possible. As such, this Geniza material would significantly supplement the extensive findings of the Geniza material found in the Firkovitch Collection (St. Petersburg), which likewise has so far only partly been explored (Schmidtke 2007). Moreover, it is only during the last years that the vast holdings of the various private and smaller public libraries of Yemen are being made available to the scholarly community, mainly through the efforts of the Zayd b. Ali Cultural Foundation (IZBACF) (see www.izbacf.org). While some of these materials have been used for various publications by members of the "Mu'tazilite Manuscripts Project Group", the majority still awaits close study. This also applies to the development of Mu'tazilite thought among the Zaydites from the 12th century onwards.

The study of Samaritan literary activities in Arabic in general and of Samaritan Mu'tazilism in particular is still very much at the beginning. The only relevant text which has been partly edited and studied is the *Kitab al-Tubakh* by the 11th century author Abu l-Hasan al-Suri, who clearly shares the Mu'tazilite doctrinal outlook (Wedel 1987; 2007). This deplorable state of research is all the more astonishing as the conditions for a systematic investigation of Samaritan theological thought are ideal. A microfilm collection containing virtually the entire extant literary legacy of the Samaritans written in Arabic is owned by the library of the Institute of Arabic and Semitic Studies of the Freie Universität Berlin.

While modern research on the Mu'tazila has begun relatively late, research on Ash'arism started already in the 19th century, as more manuscripts of Ash'arite texts are preserved in European libraries than is the

case with Mu'tazilite texts. In 1876 W. Spitta published a first monograph on the eponymous founder of the movement, and in 1889 M. Schreiner published a first extended historical survey of the Ash'ariyya. Juwayni's *Kitab al-Irshad* was first published in 1938 in a critical edition by J.D. Luciani, together with a translation into French. Major landmarks in the 20th century were the publications of R.J. McCarthy. In 1953, he published a monograph containing critical editions and translations of most of Ash'ari's extant writings, and in 1957 he published a critical edition of Baqillani's *Kitab al-Tamhid*. An in-depth historical study of the development of the school up to the time of Juwayni was made by M. Allard (Allard 1965), who had also published critical editions of two texts by Juwayni, *Shifa' al-ghalil* and *Luma' fi qawa'id ahl al-sunna wa-l-jama'a* (Allard 1968). Additional advances in recent decades were made by the numerous studies of R.M. Frank (e.g. Frank 1994; 2007) and D. Gimaret (Gimaret 1985; 1987; 1990). In addition to the efforts by Western scholars, many scholars in the Islamic world have also contributed significantly to the research of this movement (e.g. al-Bukhti 2005).

This progress notwithstanding, many desiderata in the scholarly investigation of the Ash'ariyya still remain, particularly with respect to the earlier phase of the movement, prior to Ghazali. Of the two most prominent theologians of that period, Baqillani and Juwayni, we possess so far only a very limited number of writings, and in both cases the respective major work – *Hidayat al-mustarshidin* of Baqillani and *Kitab al-Shamil* of Juwayni – is only partly extant (as far as is known so far at least). Moreover, many other theologians of this period whose writings contain highly valuable information on the doctrinal outlooks of the various representatives of the earliest phase still remain unedited and unstudied. To what extent these texts can revolutionize research can be learned from Ibn Furak's *Mujarrad maqalat al-Ash'ari*. It was published in 1987 by D. Gimaret on the basis of a single extant manuscript preserved in Medina, and on the basis of it he was able to write his so far unsurpassed study on the doctrinal thought of the founder of the movement (Gimaret 1990). Moreover, Juwayni's *Kitab al-Irshad*, a summary of his larger *Kitab al-Shamil*, gave rise to a number of commentaries by some of his students and later followers, as is evident, e.g., from the partially extant commentary by Abu l-Qasim Salman b. Nasir al-Nisaburi al-Ansari (d. 1118), *al-Ghunya fi l-kalam*. Juwayni's otherwise mostly lost *Kitab al-Shamil* (ed. Nashshar 1969; Frank 1981) was frequently used and often paraphrased by the authors of those commentaries. We also possess a manuscript containing a summary of the text by an anonymous author entitled *al-Kamil fi ikhtisar al-Shamil*. The *K. al-Shamil* is also frequently cited in the theological *summa* by another student of his, Abu l-Hasan Ali al-Kiya Harrasi (d. 1110), which is likewise extant in manuscript (MS Cairo, Dar al-kutub, *ilm al-kalam* 290). An in-depth search of all catalogued (Arabic) manuscript collections will no doubt bring to light a considerable amount of new material.

Approximately all extant writings of the first generation of Christian *mutakallimun* writing in Arabic have been edited and (partly) translated (Bacha 1904; Graf 1910; 1951; Hayek 1977; Lamoreaux 2005), and modern scholars, such as S.H. Griffith and D. Thomas, have studied them in detail. Likewise, all of the few extant anti-Christian writings by Muslim rational theologians have been published in critical editions (di Matteo 1921-22; Finkel 1926; Thomas 2002). By contrast, much work still needs to be done on the vast corpus of Coptic Christian writings, only few of which have so far been published in critical editions, let alone studied. It is this corpus that still needs to be made available in critical edition and to be studied in order to locate them within the whirlpool of intellectual history in the medieval world of Islam.

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The proposed project will focus on theological rationalism in the medieval world of Islam between the 10th and the 13th centuries beyond and across denominational borders. Within this field, all major desiderata have been identified and will be addressed in a number of sub-projects. The point of departure

will be the two major theological strands that originated within Islam but have left their mark on rational theology among Jews and Christians alike, namely Mu'tazilism and Ash'arism. Minor theological currents which had less interaction with non-Muslims, such as the Maturidiyya or any kind of rationalism among representatives of Hanbalism during later centuries, will only be addressed when immediately relevant.

The project is frontier research in several respects. It aims, first, at crossing the boundaries between three main disciplines of academia and research, viz. Islamic Studies, Jewish Studies and the study of Eastern Christianity. The followers of the three denominations constituted a unique cultural and intellectual commonality in the medieval world of Islam. They shared Arabic (at times also Persian) as their common language and often read the same books, so that a continuous, multi-dimensional exchange of ideas, texts, and forms of discourse was the norm rather than the exception. This widely accepted historical reality notwithstanding, scholars usually opt for a one-dimensional approach with an (often exclusive) focus on either Muslim, Jewish or Christian authors and their writings. The project aims at radically breaking away from this established one-dimensional pattern replacing it with a multi-dimensional interdisciplinarity that is justified by the historical reality of the periods and regions under investigation. Yet it goes beyond "mere" interdisciplinarity in that the applicant furthermore seeks to connect between the leading researchers in the field who are not only separated by the established disciplinary boundaries but also by political ones. Close cooperation will be sought with researchers from the West, the Islamic world and Israel and an attempt will be made to bring them together during the two international workshops that are scheduled for Years Two and Four of the project, along the lines of two earlier successful workshops organized by the applicant in 2005 and 2006. The primary purpose in bringing scholars from such diverse disciplines and worlds together is to create a new quality within research. As such, the project also serves a wider purpose: In a world in which borders – national, religious, cultural and economic – increasingly gain significance, the project is meant to demonstrate that intellectual history characteristically disregards any such borders and that intellectual symbiosis – which is often inaptly idealized in anachronistic terms such as tolerance or pluralism – was often the norm rather than the exception, and that this holds particularly true in one of today's hottest conflict areas, the Middle East. The project has an additional motivation that is closely connected to its purpose of going beyond established frontiers, namely to revitalise the element of rationalism within present day Islamic discourse in which any kind of rationalism is threatened as never before in Islamic history. Apart from inviting first-rate scholars from the Islamic world to the two workshops, this will mainly be achieved by disseminating the results of the proposed research project in a format that can be easily accessed in the Islamic world as well as in the West.

ii. Methodology

The main objective of the project will be a groundbreaking widening of the available textual basis of rational theology written in Arabic within the world of Islam between the 10th and 13th centuries, regardless of the religious denomination of its authors, provided the texts belong or are relevant to either of the two strands, Mu'tazilism or Ash'arism. This aim will be achieved in several steps and a number of primary sub-projects. Moreover, the ongoing parallel approaches to texts written by adherents of all three denominations will be merged in two secondary sub-projects whose results are aimed at a wider public, viz. a monograph entitled *Rational Theology in the Medieval World of Islam* and *A Historical Dictionary of Kalâm Terminology*.

Primary Sub-projects:
● "The European Geniza Project"

Modelled upon the "Princeton University Geniza Project" that was initiated in the mid 1980's, this project will transcribe any fragment dealing with rational theology that is preserved among the various Geniza collections (mainly Cambridge, London, Manchester, New York, St. Petersburg), creating a full text retrieval database of transcribed documents that will be accessible to any researcher through the internet. It will be with the help of this database that further, so far undiscovered or only incompletely preserved Mu'tazilite texts by Muslim and Jewish authors can be identified and restored. Given the fragmentary state of preserved Geniza material, most of these fragments that have partly been described in the various (though by no means complete) catalogues still remain unidentified (Baker&Polliack 2001; Shivtiel&Niessen 2006; Schmidtke 2007). Moreover, by making transcriptions of these fragments in Hebrew and Arabic script accessible to a wider scholarly community through the internet, a large number of scholars will have convenient access to this material. This will greatly enhance the availability of the Geniza material that is relevant to the study of rational theology. This specialized approach of making the theological Geniza fragments available to the scholarly community supplements the ongoing efforts of the various libraries with holdings of Geniza fragments to make this material available to a wider public on the internet by digitizing these fragments and putting the images on the web (e.g. THE GENIZAH ON-LINE DATABASE (GOLD) [http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/Taylor-Schechter/GOLD/]; THE FRIEDBERG GENIZAH PROJECT [http://www.genizah.org/index.html]; The RYLANDS GENIZAH database [http://rylibweb.man.ac.uk/insight/genizah.htm], the JOINT CAMBRIDGE-PRINCETON GENIZAH PROJECT [http://www.lib.cam.ac.uk/Taylor-Schechter/GOLD/princeton_images.html]; PROJET GUENIZAH of the BIBLIOTHÈQUE DE L'ALLIANCE ISRAÉLITE UNIVERSELLE [http://www.aiu.org/bibli/spip.php?article155]).

● Critical Editions of Mu'tazilite Key Texts

Through the realization of "The European Geniza Project" as many of the so far undiscovered Mu'tazilite texts as possible will be identified. Whenever the extant fragments allow for a reconstruction of an entire text or major parts at least, critical editions of such texts will be prepared. By way of example, two major fragments of a so far unknown comprehensive text by al-Sahib b. Abbad, the Buyid vizier with Mu'tazilite leanings, on natural philosophy have been discovered by the applicant among the materials of the Firkovitch Collection (YA I 3106 and YA II 1224.3). Although both fragments are substantial, their fragmentary character has so far made a critical edition impossible. However, chance finds among the Geniza material held by the Cambridge University Library have shown that additional fragments of this text exist. With the help of a full text retrieval database it will be possible to identify all extant fragments of this text, which can then most likely be restored. The same applies, for example, to the *Kitab al-Muhit* of Abd al-Jabbar, as well as to those volumes of his *Kitab al-Mughni* that are lost in the Islamic world but have been preserved among the various Jewish repositories.

In addition, a number of key texts by Zaydi Mu'tazilite authors will be singled out for critical edition. Of prime importance will be the encyclopaedic work of al-Hakim al-Jishumi (d. 1101), the *Kitab Uyun al-masa'il*, together with the author's autocommentary, *Sharh Uyun al-masa'il*, one of the most significant single sources for the reconstruction of the doctrinal history of Muslim Mu'tazilism.

Moreover, the complete *œuvre* of one of the main later Zaydi Mu'tazilite authors will be singled out for *editio princeps* and study, namely Husam al-Din al-Hasan b. Muhammad al-Rassas (d. 1188).

● Samaritan Mu'tazilism

On the basis of the microfilm collection of virtually all extant Samaritan writings in Arabic around the world which is held at the library of the Institute of Arabic and Semitic languages and literatures of the Freie Universität Berlin, an inventory of all relevant Samaritan theological writings will be compiled as a supplement to the *Handbook of Mu'tazilite Works and Manuscripts* which has been compiled over the past four years by G. Schwarb, S. Schmidtke and D. Sklare and which will be delivered to the publisher in 2008 (Brill, Leiden, to be published in the series "Handbuch der Orientalistik"). In addition, the most

significant Samaritan Mu'tazilite texts will be selected for critical edition. This applies first and foremost to the *Kitab al-Tubakh* of Abu l-Hasan al-Suri which has so far only partly been edited, as well as to further Samaritan texts which will be identified during the project. The aim is to have at least five major texts in *editio princeps* at the end of the project.

● *Handbook of Ash'arite Works and Manuscripts*

Modelled upon the *Handbook of Mu'tazilite Works and Manuscripts* that is co-edited by the applicant, a similar Handbook will be compiled for Ash'arism. It will contain a complete inventory of all Muslim as well as non-Muslim authors who, regarding their theological outlook, can be classified as Ash'arites, on the basis of the relevant biographical dictionaries, all printed manuscript catalogues and eventually on the basis of a thorough search of all relevant extant manuscript materials as far as these are within reach.

● Critical Editions and Facsimile Publications of Ash'arite Works

In addition to the compilation of the *Handbook of Ash'arite Works and Manuscripts*, a selection of so far unpublished manuscripts will be prepared for publication, with special emphasis on the early phase of Ash'arism, i.e., the phase up to Juwayni and his immediate students and followers. Unique manuscripts of high quality will be considered for facsimile publication and will be accompanied by analytical introductions, table of contents and detailed indices. In other cases, critical editions will be prepared. In order to achieve a real breakthrough in the study of Ash'arism, a number of ten major texts at least is envisaged for publication. The decision which works/manuscripts will be selected for critical edition or for facsimile publication will be taken as the work on the *Handbook of Ash'arite Works and Manuscripts* proceeds.

● Coptic Theological Literature

A corpus of Coptic theological writings of the 12th and 13th centuries, among them Ibn al-Rahib's *Kitab al-Burhan* and al-Mu'taman Ibn al-Assal's theological *summa*, will be closely scanned for Muslim material that has been consulted and used by the respective authors. In addition, critical editions of selected texts belonging to this corpus, among them Ibn al-Rahib's *Kitab al-Burhan*, will be prepared.

Secondary Sub-projects:

● A further main objective of the project to be based on what has been outlined in the previous sections is a continuation of J. van Ess' seminal work *Theologie und Gesellschaft im 2. und 3. Jahrhundert Hidschra. Eine Geschichte des religiösen Denkens im frühen Islam* (6 vols., Berlin 1991-97) which covers the second and third centuries of the Islamic era (8th and 9th cent. CE). This work, which will provisionally be entitled *Rational Theology in the Medieval World of Islam*, will go beyond Van Ess' *Theologie und Gesellschaft* in several respects, first by covering the subsequent six centuries and, secondly, by a multidimensional approach to the intellectual landscape in all three denominations. Moreover, as it will be in English it will be accessible to a larger readership.

● In addition to this, *A Historical Dictionary of Kalâm Terminology* will be prepared which will be multilingual (Arabic/Hebrew – English, French, German) and cover several hundred key *kalâm* terms described and explained in their historical context and diachronic development, relying on classical *hudud/mustalahat* works as well as on modern research literature and, again, drawing on the literature of theological rationalism written by representatives of all three denominations.

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For the purpose of the realization of the above-mentioned objectives, the applicant will work in constant exchange with a number of parallel international projects and institutions that are immediately relevant. The most important among these are, first, several research institutes based in the Islamic world engaging in the systematic collection of manuscript copies from various regions of the world. It is through them

that reprodctions of manuscripts can be obtained particularly when the originals are not within reach for scholars from Europe (as is the case, for example, with Iraq). These are the King Faisal Centre for Research and Islamic Studies in Riyadh/Saudi Arabia (www.kfcris.com), the Jum'at Majid Reseach Center in Dubai (both collecting Islamic manuscripts from virtually anywhere in the world), and the Zayd b. Ali Foundation (IZBACF) which is based in San'a'/Yemen and engages in cataloguing and digitizing all Zaydite manuscripts from the smaller public and private libraries of Yemen. Excellent working contacts with these three institutions have already been established over the past four years. In addition, the applicant established some years ago an institutional partnership with the Iranian Institute of Philosophy in Tehran and set up the "Series on Islamic Philosophy and Theology. Texts and Studies" which is co-published with the Institute of Islamic Studies of the Freie Universität Berlin. It is within this series, which is primarily aimed at publishing critical and facsimile editions of philosophical and theological texts in Arabic and Persian and which is well distributed in the Islamic world and the West, that most of the critical editions that will be produced within the project as outlined above will be published.

The applicant has moreover long-standing contacts with the Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts at the Jewish National and University Library in Jerusalem, where microfilms of approximately all manuscript collections of Jewish provenance around the world are held. Moreover, she is in close contact with the responsible coordinators of the FRIEDBERG PROJECT (Jerusalem, Princeton) which is concerned with different aspects of the various Geniza collections, and the research project CONVIVENCIA: REPRESENTATIONS, KNOWLEDGE AND IDENTITIES (Centro de Ciencias Humanas y Sociales del Consejo Superior de Investigaciones Científicas, Madrid).

The project is committed to disseminating its materials and multilingual results as widely as possible to the international community of scholars. A website with details of the project will be set up and, whenever copyright does not prevent this, publications will be made available also in HTML form. The database of transcribed Geniza documents will be accessible to any researcher through the internet. In addition, the results of the project will further be disseminated during the two international conferences scheduled for Year Two and Four of the project.

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iii. Resources (incl. project costs)

"The Team"

In order to enable the applicant to devote the necessary time and energy to the project and work on and complete the research projects as outlined above, there should be a 60 % replacement over the funding period of five years [EUR 55.000 P.A.]. She will be supported in the project by two doctoral candidates [EUR 120.000 P.A.] and one post-doctoral research assistant [EUR 60.000 P.A.]. The two doctoral candidates will devote 50 % of their time to their own respective doctoral projects, which must fall within the overall spectrum of the proposed research project. The suitability of their doctoral projects will be one of the main criteria in selecting candidates for these two positions. Likewise, the postdoctoral research assistant will be selected mainly on the basis of her or his research proposal, which should again be closely linked to Theological Rationalism in the Medieval World of Islam. Ideally, s/he will take up any one of the above described sub-projects independently. In addition to the core team, additional personnel will be required for keyboarding the manuscript material, namely the Geniza material to be added to the database of the "European Geniza Project" and all texts that have already been selected (or will be selected as the project proceeds) for critical edition [EUR 20.000 P.A.]. As much as possible, the keyboarding will be done by graduate students who will work under the supervision of the applicant and her assistants. One of the three assistants (trained in Islamic and Judaic Studies with a good command of Arabic, Judaeo-Arabic and Hebrew) would be mainly responsible for setting up and updating the website, the technical aspects of the database of the "European Geniza Project" and for instructing and supervising the keyboarding personnel. S/he will therefore also be mainly engaged in the additional projects related to Mu'tazilism. A second assistant (who should be trained in Islamic Studies and have a good command of Arabic, Persian and Turkish) will support the applicant with those projects that are related to Ash'arism, and a third assistant (ideally an expert on Eastern Christianity and Islamic Studies with a good command of Arabic and Coptic) will support the applicant with those sub-projects related to theological writings by Coptic authors. Despite this division of labour, the entire team will have regular meetings and discuss major decisions that need to be taken as the project proceeds, though the final decision will remain with the applicant. Members will advise and support each other wherever necessary.

"Travel"

Most of the work of the project will be done on the basis of manuscript material. To the extent possible, work will be done in Berlin on the basis of microfilms or digital images, provided the respective libraries will be willing and able to provide those. However, whenever reliable catalogues are not available (this mostly applies to the Geniza material and partly also to the Ash'arite material), the applicant as well as some of the research assistants will inevitably need to work for extended periods in the relevant libraries, particularly during the first three years of the project. Most important are the Russian National Library (St. Petersburg), Cambridge University Library, Institute of Microfilmed Hebrew Manuscripts (Jerusalem), British Library (London) and the Jewish Theological Seminary (New York) for the Geniza materials. For Zaydite Mu'tazilite materials, Yemen is the most important destination. For Coptic Christian writings, the Vatican library is of central importance, followed by a number of specialized Christian libraries mainly in Lebanon. Ash'arite manuscripts are to be found in many Western and North American libraries (as a rule well catalogued), Tehran and other major cities in Iran (some of the libraries are well catalogued), Istanbul and several Anatolian cities (catalogues are mostly unreliable), Egypt and the Maghreb (not well catalogued). Moreover, for the *Handbook of Ash'arite Works and Manuscripts* extended visits to the library of the Furqan Foundation in London, the only library within Europe with a nearly complete collection of all published catalogues of Islamic manuscripts, are necessary, particularly during the first and second year of the project. In addition, the travel budget will also be used to invite scholars responsible for parallel international projects for consultation purposes to Berlin whenever necessary [EUR 20.000 P.A. FOR THE ENTIRE TEAM].

"Microfilms, digital images and books"

For all parts of the project, the acquisition of microfilms or digital images of the relevant manusript material will be indispensible [EUR 20.000 YEAR 1; 10.000 YEARS 2, 3, 4; 5.000 YEAR 5]. In addition, it is necessary to build up a reference library for the team consisting of the most frequently needed specialized titles and manuscript catalogues [EUR 15.000 FOR YEAR 1, EUR 5.000 P.A. THEREAFTER]. This reference library will complement the holdings of the libraries of the Freie Universität and the State Library Berlin, both of which will also be used by the applicant and her assistants.

"European Geniza Database Project"

For the database, the software of the TextGarden system, in which the "Princeton Geniza Project" transcriptions are nowadays found, was written under the GPL licence and is therefore completely free. The software is made to run in a LAMP environment and the IT Department of the Freie Universität Berlin disposes of a LAMP web server of sufficient capacity that can be used for the project. The IT Department will also offer basic maintenance services throughout the project. Four stationary computers will be acquired for the keyboarding of manuscript materials [EUR 8.000 IN YEAR ONE].

"Conferences to be held in Year Two and Four of the Project"

Each conference will be attended by a maximum of 25 participants and will last about 4 days. They will be hosted by the German Orient Institute in Istanbul, which offers particularly congenial surroundings for this kind of event. Moreover, having the conferences in Istanbul has two additional advantages: first, the logistics and organization will be taken care of by the personnel of the Orient Institute; secondly, for most participants coming from the Islamic world, Turkey offers visa-free entry. To enable qualified scholars (senior as well as junior) to participate regardless of the economic situation of their own host universities, travel expenses and accommodation should be covered. During both conferences, experts in Islamic Studies, Judaic Studies and the study of Eastern Christianity will be invited. Care will be taken to invite a balanced number of scholars from the West, the Islamic World and Israel. [ESTIMATED COSTS PER CONFERENCE: EUR 30.000 PLUS EUR 3.000 FOR THE PREPARATION OF PROCEEDINGS VOLUMES]

"Additional Equipment"

The applicant and her three assistants will furthermore require the following equipment, to be acquired during Year One: four notebooks so as to enable them to work efficiently both in Berlin as well as when travelling [EUR 12.000 (Year One)]; one institutional licence for the software program "Classical Text Editor" which will be used for the preparation of critical text editions (camera ready copies) and allows for electronic publications [EUR 300 (Year One)]; one b/w network-printer [EUR 1.000 (Year One)] and one colour network-printer [EUR 1.000 (Year One)] for the purpose of producing high-quality prints of digitized manuscript copies and CRCs to be submitted to the publisher; one scanner [EUR 1.000 (Year One)] and one digital camera for the purpose of producing scans and/or photographs of manuscripts when travelling (for example during visits to private or smaller public libraries in Yemen) [EUR 1.000 (Year One)].

	Personnel Costs			Travel	Microfilms, digital images, and books		Geniza Project	Conferences	Additional Equipment	
	60 % Replacement for P.I.	Research assistants (2 doc's; 1 PostD)	Keyboarding		Microfilms, digital images	Books	4 Stationary Computers for Keyboarding		Equipment for travelling	Stationary Equipment
Year 1	55.000	180.000	20.000	20.000	20.000	15.000	8.000		14.300	2.000
Year 2	55.000	180.000	20.000	20.000	10.000	5.000		33.000		
Year 3	55.000	180.000	20.000	20.000	10.000	5.000				
Year 4	55.000	180.000	20.000	20.000	10.000	5.000		33.000		
Year 5	55.000	180.000	20.000	20.000	5.000	5.000				

Totel (Direct Costs): EUR 1.555.300

Section 3: *Research Environment* **(max 2 pages)**

PI's Host institution

The applicant is Full Professor of Islamic Studies at the Institute of Islamic Studies at the Freie Universität Berlin. Together with twenty colleagues from the Freie Universität and Humboldt University (the two main universities in Berlin), she is one of the applicants and Principal Investigators of the "Berlin Graduate School for Muslim Cultures" which was approved in October 2007. Within the framework of the Graduate School she contributes to the research area "Plural Traditions" with her own research on theological rationalism in the medieval world of Islam [www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/graduateschool/en/index.html]. As the main objective of the Graduate School is to train graduates, this new institution will be an additional incentive for PhD students interested in this field to pursue their studies in Berlin. Moreover, the Freie Universität has recently (October 19, 2007) been selected as one of the nine "universities of excellence" in the Federal Republic of Germany [www.fu-berlin.de/en/info/exzellenzinitiative/news/fup_07_244_en.html]. Being an "International Network University", it is particularly suited to host a multidisciplinary project such as the proposed one with its vision to connect between researchers who are normally separated by disciplinary as well as national and cultural boundaries. Within Germany, Berlin is the leading centre of Middle Eastern Studies and as such provides the applicant with a unique circle of colleagues working in related fields. In addition to the Institute of Islamic Studies (apart from the applicant, the senior faculty consists of Prof. Gudrun Krämer and Prof. Ulrike Freitag) [www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/islamwiss/], mention should be made of the Institute of Arabic and Semitic languages and literatures (Prof. Angelika Neuwirth, Prof. Rainer Voigt and Prof. Georges Tamer [until 2007, now Ohio]), which is particularly strong in the study of Christian Arabic literature. Moreover, its library hosts a microfilm collection of virtually all extant Samaritan writings in Arabic [www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/semiarab/]. With the Berlin Graduate School newly established in Berlin, the faculty at the Institute of Islamic Studies will be significantly expanded (three additional professorships, among them one position for Islamic law) from this year onwards. The applicant is also member of the "Interdisziplinäres Zentrum Mittelalter – Renaissance – Frühe Neuzeit", an interdisciplinary group of researchers and graduate students of Freie Universität Berlin working on any aspect of medieval and early modern history. Intellectual history of the Middle Ages in Latin Europe and the Islamic World is one major focus of the Centre, and the applicant greatly benefits from the highly stimulating regular meetings of the members where ongoing projects and research results are presented and discussed [http://www.geisteswissenschaften.fu-berlin.de/izma/ueberuns.html].

In addition to the Freie Universität, the colleagues at the Institute of Asian and African Studies at Humboldt University provide a further intellectual stimulus, and the Institute for Advanced Study Berlin ("Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin") [www.wiko-berlin.de] each year hosts one or two high-profile fellows working in the fields of Islamic and/or Judaic Studies, in recent years, for example, Salman H. Bashier, Peter Schäfer (both 2007/08), Thomas Bauer, Suha Taji-Farouki (both 2006/07), Abdolkarim Soroush (2005/06), Galit Hasan-Rokem (2004/05), M. Mojtahed Shabestari, Stefan Wild (both 2003/04), Nasr Hamid Abu Zayd, Mark Cohen (2002/03), and Suraiya Faroqhi (2001/02). The applicant had stimulating intellectual exchanges with all of them.

Freie Universität Berlin disposes of highly efficient and extremely supportive administration units. The Research Department stimulates and supports research efforts in any possible way and has assisted the applicant during the preparation of this application most efficiently. Freie Universität also provides a wide range of administrative and support services to its faculty members for the administrative management of sponsored projects, such as research administration, accounting and compliance programs [http://www.fu-berlin.de/forschung/service/dmv/aufgaben/index.html]. In addition, Freie Universität Berlin has a strong and service oriented IT Department that will support the applicant throughout the project in various respects [http://www.zedat.fu-berlin.de]. It will specifically provide the required space on its LAMP web server that will be needed for the "European Geniza Database Project" and will offer basic maintenance services for the data stored on the web server throughout the project. The IT Department will support the applicant also in establishing and maintaining a website for the project and will provide the required space on its web server.

Berlin offers unique library resources. The Oriental Collection of the State Library Berlin (Preussischer Kulturbesitz) offers one of the largest European collections of manuscripts, among them significant

numbers of Zaydite manuscripts of Yemenite provenance as well as manucripts of Jewish provenance that were discovered among the Geniza materials in Cairo during the second half of the 19th century [http://orient.staatsbibliothek-berlin.de]. The various libraries at the Freie Universität Berlin host a vast collection of journals and books related to Near Eastern Studies. In addition, the specialised collections at the Seminar of Asian and African Studies at Humboldt University comprise around 155.000 volumes and 390 current periodicals [www.ub.hu-berlin.de/bibliothek/zweigbibliotheken/asienaf/asienaf3.html]. The Freie Universität provides electronic access to a very large number of journals (16.000, about half of them related to the humanities, including JSTOR, the Oxford journals, Periodicals Archive Online, Science Direct – dating back to 1907 – Springerlink etc.), databases (among others Historical Abstracts), and monographs (Oxford Scholarship Online, Netlibrary).