

Reading Islam from Europe: Towards a Renewed Academic Discourse¹

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We are pleased to present to researchers and esteemed readers the third issue of *Ijtihad Journal for Islamic and Arabic Studies*, a peer-reviewed scientific publication that, since its inception, has sought to contribute to renewing knowledge about Islam within European contexts and to establishing a critical and pluralistic space for dialogue, reflection, and rigorous academic research.

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This issue continues the journal's mission of exploring issues of Islamic and Arab thought and its place in contemporary European and Western societies, through a scholarly lens open to various fields of knowledge — from linguistic and Orientalist studies, to jurisprudence, philosophy, and history, and on to Qur'anic studies, interfaith and intercultural dialogue, coexistence, dialogue of civilizations, migration, and parallel diplomacy.

Since the publication of its previous issue, the journal has received twenty-five articles from European and Arab universities and research centers in Denmark, Morocco, Algeria, Egypt, Tunisia, and Germany. After an initial evaluation by the editorial board and a subsequent double-blind peer review, seven articles met the journal's scientific quality standards and were accepted for publication. Twelve were rejected, and six were placed on hold pending substantial revisions, with the possibility of publication in future issues if resubmitted within the specified deadlines.

This issue features seven peer-reviewed research papers, a special section for book reviews and recent publications, and a "Thoughts & Reflections" column — reflecting the journal's commitment to methodological and thematic diversity, as well as its aim to open multiple avenues of research for understanding religious and cultural phenomena in contemporary contexts.

The first paper, titled *"The Position of the Arabic Language in German Oriental Studies"* by Dr. Abdelmalek HIBAOUI, traces the evolution of German Orientalism's relationship with Arabic from the 12th century to the present, highlighting contributions to teaching Arabic, editing texts, and cataloguing manuscripts. The article highlights the centrality of philology in German Orientalist institutions and advocates for a critical examination of this legacy to envision its future.

The second paper, *"Popular Diplomacy of Moroccans Living Abroad: Models in Service of National Causes"* by Dr. Rachid MODNI, examines the concept of public diplomacy as a non-traditional form of international influence. It showcases initiatives by members of the Moroccan diaspora advocating for their homeland in global forums, and analyzes how such efforts can enhance Morocco's image abroad outside official state channels.

The third paper, *"Entangled Histories: Religious Discourse and Franco-Spanish Colonialism Through the Lens of an American in Morocco's Rif Region"* by Abdellatif LABKADRI, offers a fresh reading of Vincent Sheean's *An American among the Riffians* to deconstruct the religious and cultural

representations of northern Morocco during colonial times. It examines the interplay between religious discourse, political dynamics, and social imagery during the Franco-Spanish colonial period in the Rif (1921–1926), employing a combined narrative-historical and Foucauldian discourse analysis approach.

The fourth paper, *"Dialogue of Civilizations: Between the Directives of Holy Scripture and the Constraints of Reality: Islamic-Christian Dialogue as a Model"* by Dr. Said NAQCHI, sheds light on the tension between the clear recommendations in the Qur'an and the Bible regarding dialogue and the societal and political reservations that hinder it. The study calls for overcoming historical mistrust and promoting scholarly and religious encounters as a pathway to mutual understanding and peace.

The fifth paper, *"The Question of Qur'anicity in Logic and Kalam: An Expository Article on the Nature And Levels of Qur'anic Manifestation"* by Dr. Hamza FAZRY, explores the relationship between the Qur'anic text and the sciences of logic and kalam (Islamic theology), aiming to analyze the nature of Qur'anic discourse without being confined to traditional methodologies or the Greek-Islamic critical heritage.

The sixth paper, *"The Deviation of Secular Readings of the Qur'anic Text: Muhammad Shahrour's Interpretation of Polygamy Verses as a Case Study"* by Dr. Mustafa TOUATI, offers a critical analysis of Shahrour's modernist interpretation, focusing on his approach to polygamy as a case study. It examines his epistemological background and identifies methodological shortcomings in his reading of the Qur'an.

The seventh and final paper, *"Paths of Ijtihad in Maliki Jurisprudential Thought and their Functions in Implementing the Principle of Moderation"* by Dr. Nabil TANTANI, identifies four methodological paths — understanding, foundation, purposive reasoning, and application — that enable Maliki jurisprudence to balance text and intent when addressing new issues.

In addition to these rich studies, the issue contains two reviews: a critical review of *"The Manufacturing of Extremism in the West: Insights into Religious, Political and Individual Radicalism"* by Tijani Boulaouali, written by Achraf Laroussi; and a presentation of *Islam in Europe: Public Spaces and Civic Networks* by Spyris A. Sofos and Rosa Tsagarousianou, reviewed by Dr. Mimoun Daoudi. The issue also includes an introduction to *Contemporary Moroccan Thought in Philosophy, Theology, Society, and Culture* titled

“Writing as an Intellectual and Critical Recognition” by Dr. Mohammed HASHAS, translated by Sara ELHADI.

Furthermore, this issue features updates on the activities of the *Ijtihad Center for Arabic and Islamic Studies* over the past six months, including events organized independently and those held in partnership with affiliated research units, as well as with Western and Arab universities and institutes. This section aims to keep readers and researchers informed about current intellectual and academic developments in the West and the Arab-Islamic world, particularly those that intersect with the journal’s and the Center’s interests.

The editorial board renews its invitation to scholars — especially those working within European and Western contexts or on topics related to them — to submit original academic work for future issues. *Ijtihad* is a peer-reviewed journal that adheres to rigorous international academic standards and promotes methodological diversity to advance balanced critical scholarship on Islamic-Arabic studies both in the Arab-Islamic world and in European and Western contexts.

The editorial board first evaluates all submissions before being sent for double-blind peer review by experienced specialists in the relevant fields. The journal is committed to the highest academic and scientific standards found in internationally ranked scholarly publications.

In conclusion, the editorial board extends sincere thanks and appreciation to all contributors to this issue, to the peer reviewers who dedicated their time and expertise to ensuring the quality of published work, and to everyone who supports this ambitious and promising scholarly project and helps to advance its academic mission.

Madrid, June 28, 2025