

Škand Gumānīg Wizār (The Doubt-Breaking Explanation) is the only surviving Zoroastrian polemical treatise. It was written in Middle Persian in the 9th or 10th century AD, under the Abbasid dynasty, in Iran. While the original has been lost, a Pāzand (Middle Persian in Avestan characters) version has been preserved.

One of the workshop's main objectives is to provide an update on the sources used by the author of the treatise, based on the current state of research. To this end, the workshop will bring together scholars of Zoroastrianism and related fields, including Islamology, Oriental Christianity, Judaism, and Manichaeism—the primary religions targeted by the treatise.

Another aim is to expand knowledge of the historical context of this polemical work, and the intellectual networks that developed within the Iranian world following the Arab conquest and the events that had already taken place by the end of the Sasanian period. In this respect, other contributions play a significant role in the programme. They are dealing with tools of argumentation in jurisprudence, the theological technical vocabulary, and the historical and sociological framework of the polemical encounters.

The workshop is primarily funded by the DFG (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft) and forms part of the research programme of the DFG project “Polemical Tools in the Zoroastrian Polemical Treatise *Škand Gumānīg Wizār*” (<https://www.geschkult.fu-berlin.de/e/iranistik/mitarbeiter/drittmittel/timus/index.html>).

Mihaela Timuş
mihaela.timus@fu-berlin.de

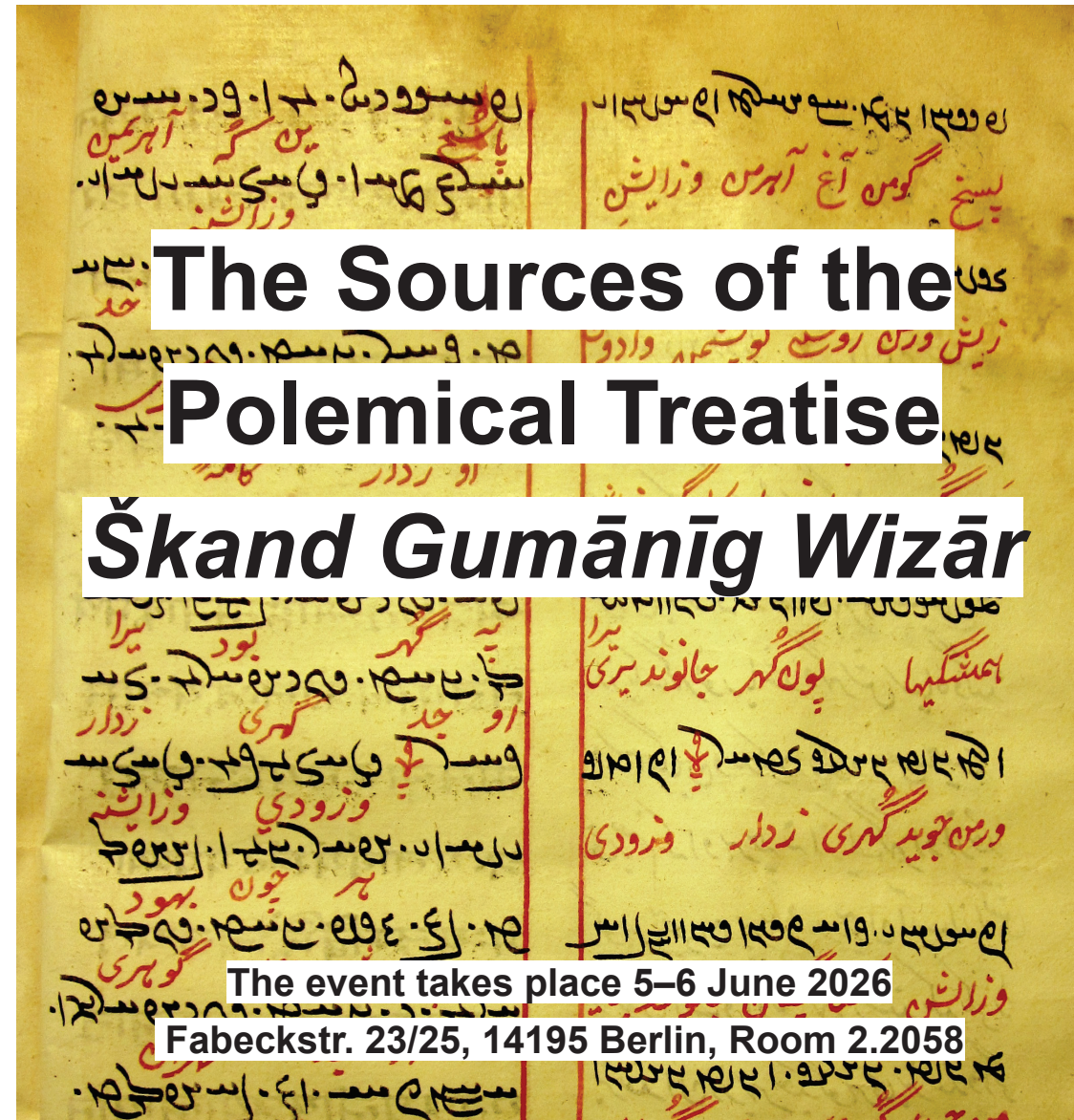
*The Institute of Iranian Studies
invites you to the*
International Conference

**The Sources of the
Polemical Treatise**

Škand Gumānīg Wizār

The event takes place 5–6 June 2026

Fabeckstr. 23/25, 14195 Berlin, Room 2.2058



International Conference 5–6 June

“The Sources of the Polemical Treatise *Škand Gumānīg Wizār*”

Friday 5 June 2026

- 9:00–9:30** Welcome
9:30–10:00 Introduction (**Alberto Cantera**, **Mihaela Timuș**)

Rational Patterns and Theology

- 10:00–10:40** **Maria Macuch** (Berlin)
How to Achieve ‘Better Justice’:
Legal Argumentation in Zoroastrian Jurisprudence
10:40–11:20 **Arash Zeini** (Oxford)
Is Zoroastrian exegesis a practice without technical
vocabulary? On (the absence of) technical terms.

- 11:20–11:40** **Coffee Break**

Exegesis and technical vocabulary

- 11:40–12:20** **Götz König** (Berlin)
A speculative concept of nature in the *Škand Gumānīg Wizār*
12:20–13:00 **William Uyttendaele** (Berlin)
A rational approach of two religious notions: *mēnōy* and *gēfīy*
13:00–13:40 **Benedikt Peschl** (Berlin)
The Common Ground of Middle Persian Theological Discourse

- 13:40–15:40** **Lunch**

Counter Islam and Judaism

- 15:40–16:20** **Christian Sahner** (Oxford)
What did Mardānfarrox know about Islam and what were his sources?

- 16:20–17:00** **Samuel Thrope** (Tel Aviv)
Back to the Garden: Polemical Prooftexts and Narrative Integrity
17:00–17:40 **Geoffrey Herman** (Paris)
Pre-Islamic Talmudic allusions to *xuēdōdah*:
between exegesis, polemics, and reality
17:40–18:00 **Final Discussion**

Saturday 6 June 2026

Counter Manichaeism

- 9:00–9:40** **Desmond Durkin-Meisterernst** (Berlin)
The anti-Manichaean chapter, a reading and an appreciation of it
9:40–10:20 **Ted Good** (Bochum)
Mardānfarrox against infinite Body

Science

- 10:20–11:00** **Kosta Gligorijevic** (Leipzig)
The structure and function of the eye
in 9th c. unpublished Syriac sources

- 11:00–11:20** **Coffee Break**

Counter Christianity

- 11:20–12:00** **Barbara Roggema** (Florence) – zoom
Jewish and Islamic refutations of Christianity from
the early Abbasid period and its reverberations
12:00–12:40 **Mihaela Timuș** (Berlin)
Quotation, paraphrase and compilation in the anti-Christian chapter
12:40–13:00 **Conclusions**