

Dissertation Defense

THE MOST POPULAR *TAFSĪR* IN ISLAMIC HISTORY: THE QUR'ĀN COMMENTARY OF AL-BAYḌĀWĪ (D. 691/1292)



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Zoom link: <https://arizona.zoom.us/j/86277375758>

Al-Qāḍī al-Bayḍāwī (d. 691/1292) was an Īlhānīd polymath whose works were a staple for *madrassa* curricula during the post-classical period. His Qur'ān commentary, *Anwār al-tanzīl wa asrār al-ta'wīl* (The Lights of Revelation and the Secrets of Interpretation), stands out as the most popular *tafsīr* work in Islamic history.

This dissertation provides insights into the historical contexts and the textuality of the *Anwār* by situating it within the narrative of *tafsīr*. It makes use of al-Bayḍāwī's works, sources, reception history, the gloss tradition, and *tafsīr* works in general. It combines historical



contextualization with an analysis of salient features of the *Anwār* to uncover both external and internal factors contributing to its popularity. It provides a critical biography of al-Bayḍāwī and places the *Anwār* within the contextual engagements with al-Zamakhsharī's *Kashshāf* in Shiraz and Tabriz during and after al-Bayḍāwī's lifetime. Also, this dissertation explores key aspects of the *Anwār* through the lens of Arabic and Islamic sciences, such as the integration of narrations, inferential exegesis, and practices of verification (*taḥqīq*).