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**THE CURIOUS CASE OF THE ABU-‘ISA AL-ISFAHANI:
A JUDAIC FALSE MESSIAH OR AN ISLAMIC MAHDI CLAIMANT
OF THE 8TH C.?**

Key words: Middle East, Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Abrahamic religions, Jewish Messiah claimants, Islamic Mahdi claimants.

For a long time, the name of Abu-‘Isa al-Isfahani, a theologian and a messianic figure of the 8th c. Nisibius and Isfahan was known only to a very narrow circle of the specialists in Hebraica and Rabbinica of the late 19th and early 20th centuries and he was considered by default by them a founder of the first Judaic sect of the Middle Ages.

However, a number of North American and Israeli researchers in the 21st century, who after the collapse of the USSR gained access to poorly researched Hebrew, Aramaic and Judaeo-Arabic manuscript collections of that country, as well as the comparison of this material with that preserved in Islamic collections, allow us to look at this extraordinary personality of the 8th century in a completely new way.

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