

## MUSHEGH ASATRYAN, PhD

University of Calgary  
School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures and Cultures  
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### CURRENT POSITION

**University of Calgary (2015-):** Assistant Professor of Arabic and Muslim Cultures, School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures and Cultures

### Past positions

**Yale University:** Lector in Classical Arabic and Classical Persian (spring, 2015)

**The Institute of Ismaili Studies** (London): Research Associate (2012-2013)

**Trinity College:** Visiting Lecturer in Language and Culture Studies (2011)

**Fairfield University,** Religious Studies Department: Visiting Instructor (2008-2009); Adjunct Professor (2007)

### EDUCATION

PhD Religious Studies (Islamic Studies), **Yale University** 2012

MPhil Religious Studies (Islamic Studies), **Yale University** 2008

MA Medieval Studies, **Central European University** 2002

MA Arabic Studies, **Yerevan State University** 2003

BA Arabic Studies, **Yerevan State University** 2001

### Non-degree programs

2001-02 The University of Isfahan, Department of Theology, courses in Qur'an, Exegesis, Shi'i texts, and Hadith

1999-2000 The University of Cairo, Department of Arabic Literature, courses in Arabic language and literature

2000 Tarbiat Modares University (Tehran), courses in Persian Language and Literature

## PUBLICATIONS

### Book

*Controversies in Formative Shi‘i Islam: The Ghulat Muslims and their Beliefs*, London: I.B. Tauris, 2016.  
Reviewed by Sajjad Rizvi in [Hikmat](#)

### Peer-reviewed articles

- 2016 “Shi‘i Underground Literature Between Iraq and Syria: The Book of Shadows and the History of Early Ghulat,” in *Texts in Transit in the Medieval Mediterranean*, eds. Tzvi Langermann and Robert Morrison (Pennsylvania State University Press, 2016), pp. 128-161.
- 2015 “An Early Shi‘i Cosmology: *Kitab al-asbab wa l-aẓilla* and its Milieu,” *Studia Islamica* 110 (2015), pp. 1-80.
- 2014 “Bankers and Politics: The Network of Shi‘i Moneychangers in Eighth-Ninth Century Kufa and their Role in the Shi‘i Community,” *Journal of Persianate Studies* 7 (2014), pp. 1-21.  
(an earlier version of this paper won the 2011 Middle East Medievalists Graduate Student Paper Prize)

### Book chapters and other articles

- 2016 [with Dylan Burns] “Is Ghulat Religion Islamic Gnosticism? Religious Transmissions in Late Antiquity,” in *L'ésotérisme shi'ite, ses racines et ses prolongements*, eds. M. A. Amir-Moezzi et al., (Brepols, 2016 [Bibliothèque de l'Ecole des Hautes Etudes and The Institute of Ismaili Studies]), 55-86
- 2011 [with Hatim Mahamid, in Arabic] “Wathīqat ‘ahd min al-rasūl ilā l-nasārā kāffatan: dirāsa wa tahqīq,” in *Maqālāt tārikhiyya takrīman li l-ustādh al-duktūr Butrus Abū Manna*. Eds. ‘Atā’ Allāh Qutbī, Jūnī Mansūr, and Mustafā l-‘Abbāsī: 3-28
- 2006 “Iranian Elements in Arabic: the State of Research,” *Iran and the Caucasus* 10.1: 87-106.
- 2003 “Ibn Khaldun on Magic and the Occult,” *Iran and the Caucasus*, 7.1-2: 73-123.

### Under Review

- “Folk-Religion, Pagans, and Muslims: Manuk Abeghian’s *Der armenische Volksglaube* and the Study of ‘Popular Religion’ in the Nineteenth Century” (under review at *Method and Theory in the Study of Religion*)
- “Early Ismailis and Other Shi‘is: Polemics and Borrowing in *Kitab al-Kashf*” (under review at *Intellectual Interactions in the Islamic World: The Ismaili Thread*, London: I.B. Tauris)
- “Shi‘i Literature in the Late 9<sup>th</sup> Century Ishāq al-Aḥmar al-Nakha‘ī (d. 286/899) and His Writings” (*Festschrift* in honor of Gerhard Böwering)

## In preparation

“A Medieval Nusayri Scholar’s Travels and Disputes” (a study and critical edition of a 13<sup>th</sup> century Nusayri text entitled *Munaz̧arat al-Shaykh al-Nashshabi*)

“Studying ‘heresy’ in Islamic Studies: The Case of the Ghulat and the Nusayris”

## Encyclopedia Entries

*Encyclopedia Iranica*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater (New York, 1983-)

2013 “Mokhammesa” (2013; 1600 words)

2012 “Eshaq Ahmar Nakha’i” (2012; 750 words)

2011 “Mofazzal al-Jo’fi” (2011; 1800 words)

“Tanasokh” (Reincarnation) (3000 words, submitted for publication)

*The Princeton Encyclopedia of Islamic Political Thought*, ed. Gerhard Böwering (Princeton, 2012)

“Alawis” (650 words)

*Encyclopedia of Medieval Pilgrimage*, ed. Larissa J. Taylor (Leiden, 2010)

“Hajj” (2000 words)

“Ziyara” (1300 words)

## Book Reviews

2016 *The Politics and Culture of an Umayyad Tribe: Conflict and Functionalism in the Early Islamic Period* by Mohammad Rihan, *Ilahiyat Studies* 7.2 (2016)

2015 Sālih Ahmad al-‘Alī, *Al-Kāfa wa ablubā fī sadr al-islām: dirāsa fī ahwālihā l-‘umrāniyya wa sukkānihā wa tanzīmātihim*, in *Muslim Civilisations Abstracts* (Edinburgh), ed. Aptin Khanbaghi

2014 Mohammad Ali Amir-Moezzi, *The Spirituality of Shi‘i Islam: Beliefs and Practices* (London, 2011) in *Studia Islamica* 109.2 (2014): 329-347

2014 Isra Yazicioglu, *Understanding the Qur’anic Miracle Stories in the Modern Age* (University Park, 2013), in *International Bulletin of Missionary Research*: 214-15

2009 Gautier Juynboll, *Encyclopedia of Canonical Hadīth* (Leiden, 2007), in *Muslim Civilisations Abstracts: Encyclopedias about Muslim Civilisations*, ed. Aptin Khanbaghi (Edinburgh): 75, 255

2007 Ethel Sara Wolper, *Cities and Saints: Sufism and the Transformation of Urban Space in Medieval Anatolia* (University Park, 2003), in *Southeast European and Black Sea Studies* 7.1: 203-207

2005 Nicola Laure al-Samarai, *Die Macht der Darstellung* (Wiesbaden, 2001), in *Iran and the Caucasus* 9.2: 406-407.

## INVITED TALKS

- 2014 “Medieval Heresy between Armenia and Khurasan: Writing a Connected History of the Tondrakians” – UCLA (14 Mar.); (the podcast can be downloaded at <http://international.ucla.edu/institute/podcasts/138400>)
- 2011 “Divine Man or Man of God? The Early Islamic Sources on the Idea of the Divinity of the Imams” – Trinity College, Hartford, CT (14 Nov.)

## AWARDS AND FELLOWSHIPS

- 2018 Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton: three-week visiting fellowship to work on a project related to Shi‘i studies
- 2011 Middle East Medievalists: Graduate Student Paper Prize for “Bankers and Politics: 8th c. Kufan Moneychangers and their role in the Shi‘a Community,” presented at the Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association in Washington, DC (published in the *Journal of Persianate Studies*)
- 2010 Beinecke Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Yale University: Research Fellowship
- 2004-11 Yale University: Doctoral Scholarship
- 2002-03 Central European University: Academic Scholarship

## CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS

### Panels Organized

- 2014 “Texts and Contexts in Pre-Modern Shi‘ism,” - *Middle East Studies Association*, Annual Meeting (Washington, DC)
- 2013 “Shi‘ism in Historical Perspective,” - *Middle East Studies Association*, Annual Meeting (New Orleans)
- 2009 “Armenians and Islam”, Organizer and Chair - *Central Eurasian Studies Society*, Annual Meeting (Toronto)

### Conference papers

- 2017 “The Discourse on Magic and Miracles in 11<sup>th</sup>-century Baghdad: a Broader Context,” *American Academy of Religion, Northwest-Pacific Regional Meeting* (St. Mary’s University, Calgary)
- 2017 “The Nusayris in Medieval Syria: What Can a 13th c. Theological Travelogue Tell us about Them?” *Middle East Studies Association, Annual Meeting* (Washington, DC)
- 2017 “A Medieval Nusayri Shaykh’s Disputations and the Study of the Nusayris in Western Academia,” *Shi’i Studies: The State of the Art*, Institute for Advanced Study (Princeton)
- 2016 “Conflict of Symbiosis? The Nusayris and the Ismailis in Medieval Syria,” *Intellectual Interactions in the Islamic World: The Ismaili Thread* – The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London
- 2015 “Iranian Loanwords in Classical Arabic Language Contact and Sound Change,” *Digital Arabic and Digital Persian Research Workshop*, The University of Leipzig
- 2015 [co-presented with Dylan Burns] “Is Ghulat Religion Islamic Gnosticism,” *American Academy of Religion-International Qur’anic Studies Association* joint panel (Atlanta)
- 2014 “The Ghulat Corpus and its Authors,” *Middle East Studies Association, Annual Meeting* (Washington, DC)
- 2014 “The World and Worldview of Early Shi’i Ghulat” – *Reason and Esotericism in Shi’i Islam* (The University of Chicago)
- 2013 “*Kitāb al-azilla*, Nusayrī Literature, and the Transmission of Texts from Iraq to Syria in the Tenth Century” – *Middle East Studies Association, Annual Meeting* (New Orleans)
- 2012 “A New Source for the Study of Early Shi’a *ghulāt*” – *Middle East Studies Association, Annual Meeting* (Denver)
- 2012 “How Shī’īs Adopted Mu‘tazilī Rationalism: Two Early Texts on the Proof of God’s Existence” – *American Oriental Society, Annual Meeting* (Boston)
- 2011 “Bankers and Politics: 8th c. Kufan Moneychangers and their role in the Shi’a Community” – *Middle East Studies Association, Annual Meeting* (Washington, DC)
- 2010 “Mystical Shiism between the Two Occultations: *Kitāb al-sirāt* and its milieu” – *American Academy of Religion, Annual Meeting* (Atlanta)
- 2010 “Who were the Mufaddaliyya? A Study of an “extreme” Shiite Sect” - *American Oriental Society, Annual Meeting* (St. Louis)
- 2008 “Mufaddal al-Ju‘fi and the Kufan ‘extremists’ in the eighth century” - *Central Eurasian Studies Society, Annual Meeting* (Washington, DC)
- 2005 “Ibn Khaldūn’s Refutation of the Occult Sciences” - *American Oriental Society, Annual Meeting* (Philadelphia)

## **LANGUAGES**

**Arabic** – reading fluency in Classical and Modern Standard; speaking and writing fluency in Modern Standard

**Persian** – reading fluency in Classical and Modern, speaking fluency in Modern Farsi

**Armenian** – native in Modern Armenian; reading fluency in Classical Armenian

**Russian** – near native

**German, French, Syriac, Turkish, Latin, Middle Persian, Old Persian** – reading competence

## **PROFESSIONAL MEMBERSHIPS**

Middle East Studies Association

North American Association for the Study of Religion

American Academy of Religion

Middle East Medievalists

American Oriental Society