

Alyssa Gabbay
Associate Professor
Department of Religious Studies
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EDUCATION

- 2007 Ph.D. with honors, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, University of Chicago. Dissertation: “The Language of Tolerance: Amīr Khusraw and the Development of Indo-Persian Culture.” Primary adviser: Heshmat Moayyad.
- 2000 M.F.A., Department of English, University of Pittsburgh
- 1985 B.A., *magna cum laude*, Department of English, Barnard College, Columbia University, Phi Beta Kappa

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

- 2020–Present Associate Professor, Department of Religious Studies, UNCG (affiliated with Women’s and Gender Studies since January 2014; Director of Undergraduate Studies since February 2019)
- 2013–2020 Assistant Professor, Department of Religious Studies, UNCG
- 2012–2013 Visiting Assistant Professor, Department of Religious Studies, UNCG
- 2011–2012 Lecturer, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization, University of Washington
- 2008–2010 Visiting Scholar, Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization, University of Washington
- 2007–2011 Research Associate, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Chicago

PUBLICATIONS

Books in Progress

The New Moon of Perfection and Other Prefaces. Under advance contract with Murty Classical Library of India, Harvard University Press.

Books in Print

Gender and Succession in Medieval and Early Modern Islam: Bilateral Descent and the Legacy of Fatima (London: I.B. Tauris/Bloomsbury, 2020).

Islamic Tolerance: Amīr Khusraw and Pluralism. London: Routledge, 2010; reviewed in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*; issued in paperback in 2014.

Edited Issue of Journal

“Fathers and Daughters in Islam: Spiritual Inheritance and Succession Politics.” Co-editor (with Julia Clancy-Smith), foreword, and article. Special issue, *Journal of Persianate Studies* 4, no. 1 (2011).

Articles

“‘The Earth My Throne, The Heavens My Crown’: Siyavash as Supranational Hero in Ferdowsi’s *Shahnama*.” *Journal of Persianate Studies*, forthcoming.

“Splitting Hairs and Trimming Tresses: Translating Amīr Khusraw’s Persian Locks into An American ‘Do.’” In *Middle Eastern Literatures* 19, no. 3 (2016), pp. 316–324.

“In Reality a Man: Sultan Iltutmish, His Daughter, Raziya, and Gender Ambiguity in Thirteenth Century Northern India.” In “Fathers and Daughters in Islam: Spiritual Inheritance and Succession Politics,” ed. Alyssa Gabbay and Julia Clancy-Smith. Special issue, *Journal of Persianate Studies* 4, no. 1 (2011), pp. 45–63.

“Love Gone Wrong, Then Right Again: Male/Female Dynamics in the Bahrām Gūr-Slave Girl Story.” In “Love and Desire in Pre-Modern Persian Poetry and Prose,” ed. Dominic Brookshaw. Special Issue, *Iranian Studies* 42, no. 5 (2009), pp. 677–692.

Book Chapters

“Heiress to the Prophet: Fatima as Inheritor of Her Father’s Legacy.” In *Female Religious Authority in Shi‘i Islam: Past and Present*, ed. Mirjam Kuenkler and Devin Stewart. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press/New York: Oxford University Press, 2021.

“Mothers, Liver-Eaters, and Matrilineal Descent: Hint bint ‘Utba, Mu‘āwiya, and *Nasab* (Filiation) in Early Islam.” In *Relations of Power: Women’s Networks in the Middle Ages*, ed. Emma O’Loughlin Bérat, Rebecca Hardie and Irina Dumitrescu. Bonn: University of Bonn, 2021.

“Establishment of Centers of Indo-Persian Court Poetry.” In *A History of Persian Literature*, ed. Ehsan Yarshater et al., vol. 9: *Persian Literature from Outside Iran: The Indian Subcontinent, Anatolia, Central Asia, and in Judeo-Persian*. New York: I.B. Tauris, 2018.

“Rebels, Virtuous Adorers and Successors: The Agentic Daughters of the *Shahnama*.” In *Shahnama Studies III: The Reception of Firdausi’s Shahnama*, ed. Charles Melville and Gabrielle van den Berg, 292–313. Leiden: Brill, 2018.

“In Praise of One of the Deeply Learned Ulama’: A Mysterious Poem by Qājār Court Poet Mīrzā Habīb Allāh Shīrāzī Qā’ānī.” In *The Necklace of the Pleiades*, ed. Franklin Lewis and Sunil Sharma, 131–48. Amsterdam and West Lafayette, IN: Rozenberg Publishers and Purdue University Press, 2007.

Encyclopedia Entries

“Qā’ānī, Habib-Allah,” *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, online edition, 2016, available at <http://www.iranicaonline.org/articles/qaani-poet>. (Also to appear in print edition).

“Bazaar,” *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*.

“Sainthood,” *Oxford Encyclopedia of the Islamic World*.

Book Reviews

Review of *Female Personalities in the Qur’an and Sunna*, by Rawand Osman. *Religious Studies Review* 43, no. 3 (September 2017), p. 292.

Review of *Words, Not Swords*, by Farzaneh Milani. *Iranian Studies* 46, no. 3 (2013), pp. 499–502.

Review of *Esther’s Children: A Portrait of Iranian Jews*, ed. Houman Sarshār. *Iranshenasi* 14 (Winter 2003).

Review of *To See and See Again*, by Tara Bahrapour. *The Pittsburgh Post-Gazette*, Feb. 21, 1999.

Translations and Other Publications

“What India Can Teach Iran about Freedom and Tolerance.” Op-ed page, *The Seattle Times*, Aug. 22, 2010. Also published in *iranian.com*, Aug. 23, 2010.

“Portrait of an Innocent,” by Hushang Gulshiri. Co-translated with Heshmat Moayyad. In *Black Parrot, Green Crow*, ed. Heshmat Moayyad, 131–48. Washington, D.C.: Mage Publishers, 2003.

“Loukijān: An Iranian Memoir.” *Bellingham Review* 22 (1999): 87–111.

“Finding Persia in Today’s Iran.” Forum page, *The Pittsburgh Post Gazette*, Jan. 25, 1998.

FELLOWSHIPS AND AWARDS

- 2020 UNCG Humanities Network and Consortium Mini-Grant (\$250)
- 2020 UNCG Honoree for Faculty Excellence in Research and Creative Activity
- 2020 UNCG College Teaching Excellence Award for Junior Faculty on the Tenure Track
- 2018 UNCG Faculty First Summer Scholarship Support Award (\$5000)
- 2016 UNCG International Programs Center International Travel Fund for travel to Vienna, August (\$700)
- 2016–17 UNCG Candace Bernard and Robert Glickman Dean’s Professorship in the College of Arts & Sciences (\$10,000)
- 2015–present UNCG International Programs Center Kohler Special Projects Grant to support activities of Islamic Studies Research Network (\$2000 annually)
- 2014 UNCG Proposal Preparation Program Grant to conduct preliminary research in London for Amir Khusraw editions project, *The New Moon of Perfection and Other Prefaces* (\$3000)
- 2007 Foundation for Iranian Studies, Best Ph.D. Dissertation on a Topic of Iranian Studies
- 2006 Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship (study in India)
- 2003 American Institute of Iranian Studies Fellowship (study in Iran)
- 2003 Summer Foreign Language and Area Studies Title VI Fellowship (Advanced Persian)
- 2000–4 Foreign Language and Area Studies Title VI Fellowship (Persian and Arabic)
- 2000–4 University Unendowed Funds Tuition Fellowship, University of Chicago

TEACHING EXPERIENCE

University of North Carolina at Greensboro

Senior Seminar: Debates in the Study of Islam

Islam in India

Religions of Iran

Islam's Mystical Tradition

Approaches to the Qur'an

Introduction to Islam

Women, Autobiography, and Islam

University of Washington

Introduction to the Qur'an (Spring 2012)

Introduction to Islam (Winter 2012)

Advanced Persian Independent Study (Fall 2011, Winter 2012, Spring 2012)

INVITED TALKS

- 2020 "Descent from Daughters in Medieval Islam: Inheritance, Succession, and the Legacy of Fatima." Farouk Mustafa Memorial Friday Lecture Series, Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Chicago, October 23.
- 2019 "'The Earth My Throne, The Heavens My Crown': Siyavash as Supranational Hero in Firdawsi's *Shahnama*." Persian and Iranian Studies in Honor of Heshmat Moayyad, Franke Institute, University of Chicago, March 8–9.
- 2018 "Invoking Fatima: Female Kinship and Legitimation in Pre-Modern Iran and Central Asia." Between Women: Female Networks, Kinships and Power Workshop, University of Bonn, May 31–June 1.
- 2017 "When Kings Don't Act Kingly: Firdawsi's *Shahnama* (Book of Kings), Intertextuality and the Shaping of Iranian Identity." American University of Kuwait, March 6.
- 2013 "Heiress to the Prophet: Fatima and Bilateral Descent in Islam." Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization, University of Washington, January 23. (Also presented at the Department of Religious Studies, UNCG, January 31, and at Southeast Regional Middle East and Islamic Studies Seminar (SERMEISS), Emory University, March 9.)
- 2010 "Ārzū as a 'Docile Agent': The Paradox of the Obedient Daughter in Pre-Islamic Iran." Middle East History and Theory Conference, University of Chicago, May 14–16.

- 2009 “A Ruler Transformed: Bahrām Gūr and Indian Ideals of Kingship.” The Reception of the Shahnama II. Leiden, The Netherlands, January 8–10.
- 2006 “*The Dībāchah-’i Dīvān-i Ghurrah al-Kamāl-i Amīr Khusraw*” (The Preface to the Book of Poems of the New Moon of Perfection, by Amīr Khusraw). The International Seminar on Amir Khusrau: A Delineator of Strong Cultural Bonds of India with Afghanistan, Central Asia, and Iran, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, India, March.

CONFERENCE ACTIVITY

Panels Organized

- 2010 “Reconstructing the Forgotten Female: Women in the Realm of the Shāhnāma.” Biennial Conference on Iranian Studies, Los Angeles, May 28–30.
- 2009 “Famous Fathers and Daughters in Islam.” Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting, Boston, November 21–24.
- 2005 “Frontiers and Frontier Societies in the Islamic World.” Middle East History and Theory Conference, University of Chicago, May 13–14.

Papers Presented

- 2019 “Poetry as Divine Portent: Classical Persian Verses and Legitimation in the Early Babi and Baha’i Communities.” American Academy of Religion Annual Meeting, San Diego, November 23–26.
- 2016 “The Case of the Missing Holograph and Amir Khusraw’s *Vasat al-Hayat*: An Eclectic Approach as a Means of Establishing Authorial Intent.” Biennial Conference on Iranian Studies, Vienna, Austria, Aug. 2–5.
- 2015 “‘And It is Not the Word of a Poet:’ Poetical Ambivalence in the Prefaces of Amir Khusraw (d. 1325).” The Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting, Denver, November 20–24.
- 2014 “Fatima’s Khutba: An Early Case of Female Religious Authority in Islam.” Of ‘Alimas, Muhaddithahs, and Mujtahidas: The Past and Present of Female Religious Authority in Shi’i Islam. Princeton University, March 6–8. Also presented at the Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting, Washington, DC, November 22–25.
- 2012 “Prophecy, Poetry and the Legitimization of the Babi Faith in 19th Century Iran.” Biennial Conference on Iranian Studies, Istanbul, Turkey, Aug. 1–5.
- 2011 “‘In Reality a Man’: Sultan Iltutmish, His Daughter Radiyya, and Female Sovereignty in Medieval Muslim India.” American Historical Association Annual Meeting, Boston, January 6–9.

- 2010 “From Ill-Starred to Auspicious: Depictions of Daughters in Firdawsi’s *Shāhnāma*.” Biennial Conference on Iranian Studies, Los Angeles, May 28–30.
- 2009 “‘In Reality a Man’: Sultan Iltutmish, His Daughter Radiyya, and Female Sovereignty in Medieval Muslim India.” Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting, Boston, November 21–24.
- 2008 “Turk and Hindu in Amīr Khusraw’s *Nuh Sipīhr*: Cultural Change on the Perso-Islamic Periphery.” Annual Conference on South Asia, Madison, Wisconsin, October 16–19.
- 2008 “Deconstructing Hierarchies: The Male/Female Dynamic in Amīr Khusraw’s Story of Bahrām Gūr and the Slave Girl.” Biennial Conference on Iranian Studies, Toronto, July 31–August 3.
- 2005 “The Influence of the Frontier on Cultural Production in Medieval India,” Middle East History and Theory Conference, University of Chicago, May 13–14.
- 2002 “Portrait of an Innocent: Hūshang Gulshīrī’s Labyrinthine Ways.” The American Literary Translators Association Conference, Chicago, October.

Other Presentations

- 2020 “The Legacy of Fatima: Gender, Succession and Inheritance in Medieval Shi‘ism.” Islamic Studies Research Network, UNCG, September 18.
- 2012 “Inspired by the Sacred Breath of Jesus: Persian Poets’ Claims to Prophecy.” Lecture Series in Persian and Iranian Studies, University of Washington, April 13.
- 2007 *Nuh Māh dar Dihlī-’i Naw* (Nine Months in New Delhi). Persian Circle, University of Chicago, April.
- 2005 “*Dastān-i yak ‘Arūsī*” (The Story of a Marriage). Persian Circle, University of Chicago, Chicago, Illinois, May. Also presented at the fifteenth annual meeting of the Friends of Persian Culture Association, Chicago, September.
- 2005 “The Idea of ‘Home’ in *Zīr-i Pūst-i Shahr* (Under the Skin of the City).” Iranian Film Series, Doc Films at the University of Chicago, March.
- 2004 “A ‘Turk of Hindustān’: Amīr Khusraw and the Development of Indo-Persian Culture.” Middle East History and Theory Workshop, University of Chicago, November.
- 2004 “The Case of a Mysterious Ode: Qā’ānī, Qājār-era Poetry, and the Bāb.” Annual Meeting of the Friends of Persian Culture Association, September.

MEDIA COVERAGE

- 2020 Interview by Shehnaz Haqqani about *Gender and Succession and Medieval and Early Modern Islam: Bilateral Descent and the Legacy of Fatima*, for New Books in Islamic Studies podcast; <https://newbooksnetwork.com/alyssa-gabbay-gender-and-succession-in-medieval-and-early-modern-islam-i-b-tauris-2020/>
- 2009 “Rulers Should Consult Academics,” *Gulf News* article mentioning “Famous Fathers and Daughters in Islam” panel at Middle East Studies Association; see <http://gulfnews.com/opinions/columnists/rulers-should-consult-academics-1.532316>

ACADEMIC SERVICE AND OTHER ACTIVITIES

- 2020–present Member, Editorial Board, *Iran Namag*
- 2020–present Member, Board of Directors, Association for the Study of Persianate Societies
- 2019–present Member, Editorial Board, I.B. Tauris Studies in Medieval and Early Modern Persian Literature
- 2019–present Director of Undergraduate Studies, Department of Religious Studies, UNCG. (Includes directing the concentration in nonprofit management).
- 2019–present Adviser, Pakistani Student Organization, UNCG.
- 2018–present Advisory board, Islamic Studies minor, UNCG.
- 2018–2019 Search committee member and Affirmative Action Officer, Department of Religious Studies, Religions of the Americas position, UNCG.
- 2018 Guest lecturer, “Capstone Seminar in International and Global Studies,” a UNCG class, February.
- 2018–Present Member, Advisory Editorial Board, Muslim South Asia Series, Gorgias Press.
- 2017–2018 Search committee member and Affirmative Action Officer, Department of Religious Studies, Asian Religions position, UNCG.
- 2017 Guest lecturer, “Arabic Composition” and “Readings in Arabic Heritage,” two American University of Kuwait classes, March.
- 2016–2018 Co-Coordinator, Write-on-Site, UNCG.
- 2015–2017 Member, executive board of the Southeast Regional Middle East and Islamic Studies Seminar (SERMEISS)

- 2015 Search committee member, Department of Religious Studies, Non-western position, UNCG.
- 2015 Guest lecturer, “From Constantinople to Istanbul: A City and Its Monuments,” a UNCG class, February.
- 2014–2017 Council member, International Society for Iranian Studies.
- 2014–2016 Faculty Adviser, Religious Studies Club, UNCG.
- 2014–2015 Member, Committee to draft a humanities research statement, UNCG.
- 2014 Presenter, “The Here and Now,” a concert based on Rumi’s poetry comprising part of a year-long UNCG program, “Globe and Cosmos: Celebrating 450 Years of Shakespeare and Galileo,” October.
- 2013–Present Co-director and co-founder, Islamic Studies Research Network of UNCG, a research network dedicated to promoting awareness and understanding of Islamic history and culture in North Carolina and in a wider, global context.
- 2013–2020 Departmental Library Liaison, UNCG.
- 2013 Participant, Global Engagement Institute, UNCG, June 3–4.
- 2012 Supervisor, Senior Essay, Near Eastern Languages and Civilization, University of Washington.
- 2011 Participant, Classical Persian Reading Group, University of Washington.
- 2010 Guest lecturer, University of Washington Middle East Center Teachers Course on Islamic Iran, July.
- 2008 Chair, “Program Committee Picks” panel, Middle East Studies Association Annual Meeting, Washington, D.C., November.
- 2007 Author, “Preservation and Digitization of the Amīr Khusraw Corpus,” a project to identify the most important editions among works by Amīr Khusraw in preparation for preserving and digitizing them. Funded by the South Asia Microform Project.
- 2003 Participant, American Institute of Iranian Studies Roundtable on Academic Exchange Between the U.S. and Iran, New York City, December.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH

- 2020 Member and co-founder, Saturday Evening Race Amity Team of the Triad

(SERATT), a group charged with organizing regular meetings centered on the issue of race unity.

- 2016 Presenter, "Introduction to *The Shahnama*," Quarry Lake at Greenspring, Baltimore, Maryland, December.
- 2012 Presenter, Religious Founders Day, University of Washington, Seattle, Washington, February.
- 2011 Presenter, Four Faiths: An Experiential Exploration, Interfaith Community Church, Seattle, Washington, October.
- 2009 Presenter, World Peace Series of the Baha'is of Wailuku, Waikapu, Hawaii, April.
- 2007 Participant and Reader, University of Chicago Interfaith Service of Prayer and Reflection on Global Warming, Chicago, April.

PROFESSIONAL AFFILIATIONS

American Academy of Religion

Middle East Studies Association

Association for Iranian Studies

Association for the Study of Persianate Societies

Southeast Regional Middle East and Islamic Studies Seminar

LANGUAGES

Persian, French, Arabic