

SUFIS AND MULLAHS: SUFIS AND THEIR OPPONENTS IN THE PERSIANATE WORLD

BIOGRAPHIES OF SPEAKERS

NICHOLAS BOYLSTON studies Islamic intellectual history and Persian literature through the lenses of religious, intellectual and literary pluralism. He is particularly interested in the way twelfth century Persian authors create texts that are discursively pluralistic – drawing on multiple sources and espousing multiple intellectual and ethical perspectives – whilst also maintaining both narrative and intellectual consistency. He also researches literature as a means of negotiating multiple religious identities in late Qājār Iran, focusing on the versified commentary and translation of the Qur’ān by the Shi’ite Sufi, Safī ‘Ali-Shāh. These projects are part of a wider concern for understanding how Muslim authors have come to terms with the diversity of their own tradition and understood the religious other in differing cultural contexts. He received a B.A. from Harvard College in 2007, an M.A. in Islamic Philosophy from the University of Tehran in 2011. He is currently writing a dissertation entitled, “The Significance of Religious Diversity in the Works of Sanā’ī, ‘Attar and ‘Ayn al-Quḍāt Hamadānī,” for a Ph.D. at Georgetown University in the Department of Theological and Religious Studies. In 2014-15 he served on the faculty of Harvard University as ‘Preceptor of Persian’ in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations.

ALESSANDRO CANCIAN is a Research Associate in the Qur’ānic Studies unit at The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London. He completed a Ph.D. at the University of Siena in Anthropology, concentrating on the Cultural Anthropology of Muslim Societies and the Anthropology of Religion, with a work on the Shi’ite theological colleges (*hawza ‘ilmiyyas*) in Syria. He obtained an M.A. in the History of Iran at Ca’ Foscari University, Venice concentrating on Religious History and Literature of Iran and Persianate Cultures; Shi’ism, Sufism and Zoroastrianism between Iran and South Asia. Dr. Cancian completed his B.A. in Oriental Languages and Cultures at Ca’ Foscari University, Venice. He is also a review editor for the *Journal of Shi’a Islamic Studies* and has edited and published articles and papers, contributed book chapters and encyclopaedia entries and lectures. Dr Cancian’s areas of expertise and interest includes the intellectual history of Shi’ism, Shi’ite Sufism in early modern times and the anthropology of Islam, Shi’ism and modern Iran. He is currently working on the Shi’ite mystical exegesis of the Qur’ān, its influences and reception in modern times, and the sources of religious authority in contemporary Shi’ism.

DEVIN DEWEESE is a Professor in the Department of Central Eurasian Studies at Indiana University; he earned his Ph.D. at Indiana University in 1985. He is the author of *Islamization and Native Religion in the Golden Horde: Baba Tükles and Conversion to Islam in Historical and Epic Tradition* (Pennsylvania State University Press, 1994) and (with Ashirbek Muminov) of *Islamization and Sacred Lineages in Central Asia: The Legacy of Ishaq Bab in Narrative and Genealogical Traditions*, Vol. I: *Opening the Way for Islam: The Ishaq Bab Narrative, 14th-19th Centuries* (Almaty: Daik-Press, 2013). His

numerous articles on the religious history of Islamic Central Asia and Iran focus chiefly on problems of Islamization, on the social and political roles of Sufi communities, and on Sufi literature and hagiography in Persian and Chaghatay Turkic. Recent articles include “‘Alā’ al-Dawla Simnānī’s Religious Encounters at the Mongol Court near Tabriz,” in *Politics, Patronage and the Transmission of Knowledge in 13th-15th Century Tabriz*, ed. Judith Pfeiffer (Leiden: Brill, 2014); “Aḥmad Yasavī in the Work of Burhān al-Dīn Qīlich: The Earliest Reference to a Famously Obscure Central Asian Sufi Saint,” *Asiatische Studien/Études asiatiques* (Bern), 67/3 (2013); “‘Dis-ordering’ Sufism in Early Modern Central Asia: Suggestions for Rethinking the Sources and Social Structures of Sufi History in the 18th and 19th Centuries,” in *History and Culture of Central Asia*, ed. Bakhtiyar Babadjanov and Kawahara Yayoi (Tokyo: The University of Tokyo, 2012); “Spiritual Practice and Corporate Identity in Medieval Sufi Communities of Iran, Central Asia, and India: The Khalvatī/Ishqī/Shattārī Continuum,” in *Religion and Identity in South Asia and Beyond: Essays in Honor of Patrick Olivelle*, ed. Steven Lindquist (New York/London/Delhi: Anthem Press, 2011); and “Succession Protocols and the Early Khwajagani Schism in the *Maslak al-‘arīfīn*,” *Journal of Islamic Studies*, 22 (2011).

RODERICK GRIERSON is Menteşezade Research Fellow and Director of the Rumi Institute at Near East University, Nicosia, Cyprus. He has recently edited and written an introduction to *Deviant Histories: New Perspectives on Turkish Sufism*, a translation of Ahmed Yaşar Ocak’s *Türk Sufîliğine Bakışlar*. He has also edited and prepared an introduction and bibliography for a revised version of *The City of the Heart*, the first translation into English of the complete text of Yunus Emre’s *Divan* according to the edition published in 1961 by Abdülbâki Gölpınarlı. In 2009 he delivered the Süha Faiz Memorial Lectures, which will be published as *The Road to the City of the Heart*. In 2014 he delivered the Robertson–Hastie Lectures at the University of Glasgow, in which he discussed the career of William Hastie, the author of *The Festival of Spring from the Dîvân of Jelâleddîn*. He has just completed the first English translation of the *Risalat al-Nushiyya* of Yunus Emre and is preparing an exhibition catalogue of historic engravings, lithographs and photographs of Mevlevi dervishes. In 2015, he guest-edited vol. VI of the *Mawlana Rumi Review*, a special issue devoted to Rumi and the Mevlevi Sufi tradition.

AHMET T. KARAMUSTAFA is Professor of History at the University of Maryland, College Park. His expertise is in the social and intellectual history of Sufism in particular and Islamic piety in general in the medieval and early modern periods. His publications include *God’s Unruly Friends* (1994) and *Sufism: The Formative Period* (2007). He is currently working on a book project titled *Vernacular Islam: Everyday Muslim Religious Life in Medieval Anatolia* (co-authored with Cemal Kafadar) as well as a monograph on the history of early medieval Sufism titled *The Flowering of Sufism*.

ANNABEL KEELER obtained a BA in Persian from the School of Oriental and African Studies in London in 1981, after which she came to Cambridge to read for a PhD in Islamic Studies, the subject of her thesis being a 12th century Persian Sufi commentary on the Qur’ān. In 2002, she became a Junior Research Fellow at Wolfson College, concurrently holding a Research Fellowship in Qur’ānic Studies at the Institute of Ismaili Studies in London. She regularly assists with the teaching of classical Persian literature at the Faculty. Her research interests are largely centred on the hermeneutics of Sufi Qur’ān commentaries, those composed in both Arabic and Persian, and the investigation of ways in which mystics have expounded their doctrines through the interpretation of the Qur’ānic verses. This has led her more widely to research doctrinal developments in the

formative period of Islamic mysticism (between 9th and 12th centuries CE). Among her many books and learned articles may be mentioned: *The Esoteric Interpretation of the Qur'ān*, ed. with Sajjad Rizvi, (Oxford University Press/Institute of Isma'ili Studies, 2015), *Tafsir al-Tustari*, translated by Annabel Keeler and Ali Keeler, annotated and with an introduction by Annabel Keeler, (Louisville Fons Vitae, April 2011); and *Sufi Hermeneutics: The Qur'ān Commentary of Rashīd al-Dīn Maybudī* (Oxford University Press, in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2006).

BILAL KUŞPINAR received his B.A. in theology from Selçuk University, Konya, his M.A. in philosophy, logic and history of science from the Middle East Technical University, Ankara, his first Ph.D. in the history of philosophy from Selçuk University, and his second Ph.D. in Islamic philosophy and mysticism from McGill University. He specializes in medieval Islamic philosophy and mysticism. His research investigates into various philosophical and mystical traditions, especially within the context of the Ottoman intellectual history. He taught at several academic institutions, including International Institute of Islamic Thought and Civilization (ISTAC), Kuala Lumpur, and Concordia and McGill Universities, Montreal. He is the author of several books including: *Isma'il Ankaravi on the Illuminative Philosophy* (1996) and *Ibn-i Sina'da Bilgi Teorisi (Ibn Sina's Theory of Knowledge)* 2nd ed. (2001). And his third book on *Ankaravi's Commentary on the Light Verse* was published in 2011 (Oxford: Anqa Publishing). Until 2010 he was Professor of the History of Islamic Philosophy in the College of Arts, Science & Education, Ahlia University, Bahrain; he is currently Professor of Philosophy and Director of the International Rumi Center for the Studies of Civilizations, Necmettin Erbakan University, Konya, Turkey.

HERMANN LANDOLT has been a major contributor to modern scholarship on Sufism and Iranian Philosophy, and a student of Fritz Meier and Henry Corbin, Prof. Landolt was educated at Basel University, Switzerland and Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (Sorbonne), Paris. He taught Islamic Studies and Persian at McGill University in Montreal, Canada from 1964 to 1999, during which he was also affiliated to the University's Tehran Branch. From 1982 to 1984, Professor Landolt served as the Head of the then-Department of Graduate Studies and Research at the Institute of Ismaili Studies where he is currently a Senior Research Fellow. His publications include *Correspondence spirituelle echangee entre Nuroddin Esfarayeni (ob. 717/1317) et son disciple 'AlaJoddawleh Semnani (ob. 736/1336)* (1972); *Nuruddin Abdurrahman Isfarayini: Le Revlateur des mysteres* (1980; 2nd ed. 1986; 3rd ed. 2005), as well as numerous articles in various languages including a selection of his articles that was republished as *Recherches en spiritualité iranienne* (2006). He is preparing a book on the *Ishraqi* philosopher Suhrawardi, and several other publications including a new edition and translation of the Ismaili thinker Sijistani's *Kashf al-mahjub*. A Festschrift consecrated to Prof. Landolt's scholarship in Sufi and Islamic Studies, entitled *Reason and Inspiration in Islam: Theology, Philosophy, and Mysticism in Muslim Thought. Essays in Honour of Hermann Landolt*, edited by Todd Lawson, was published in London in 2005 (I.B. Tauris in association with the Institute of Ismaili Studies).

LEONARD LEWISOHN is Senior Lecturer in Persian and Iran Heritage Foundation Fellow in Classical Persian and Sufi Literature at the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies of the University of Exeter in England where he currently teaches Islamic Studies, Sufism, the history of Iran, as well as courses on Persian texts and Persian poetry in translation. He specializes in translation of Persian Sufi poetic and prose texts. He is the author of

Beyond Faith and Infidelity: The Sufi Poetry and Teachings of Mahmud Shabistari (London: Curzon Press 1995), and the editor of three volumes on *The Heritage of Sufism*, vol. 1: *The Legacy of Mediæval Persian Sufism*, vol. 2: *Classical Persian Sufism from its Origins to Rumi* Classical Persian Sufism from its Origins to Rumi, vol. 3 (with David Morgan): *Late Classical Persianate Sufism: the Safavid and Mughal Period* (Oxford: 1999)—covering a millennium of Islamic history. He is editor of the *Mawlana Rumi Review*, an annual journal devoted to Jalal al-Din Rumi (d. 1273), now in its sixth volume. He is also editor (with Christopher Shackle) of *The Art of Spiritual Flight: Farid al-Din ‘Attar and the Persian Sufi Tradition* (London: 2006), co-translator with Robert Bly of *The Angels Knocking on the Tavern Door: Thirty Poems of Hafiz* (New York: HarperCollins 2008), editor of *Hafiz and the Religion of Love in Classical Persian Poetry* (London: 2010), and editor of *The Philosophy of Ecstasy: Rumi and the Sufi Tradition* (Bloomington, Indiana: 2014). Dr. Lewisohn has contributed articles to the *Encyclopedia of Love in World Religions*, *Encyclopedia of Islam* (2nd and 3rd editions), *Encyclopædia Iranica*, *Encyclopædia of Philosophy*, 2nd Edition, *Encyclopædia of Religion*, 2nd Edition, *Iran Nameh*, *Iranian Studies*, *African Affairs*, *Islamic Culture*, *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society* and the *Temenos Academy Review*.

ORKHAN MIR-KASIMOV obtained his Ph.D. in Islamic studies from the École Pratique des Hautes Études (Sorbonne University, Paris), and has lectured at the École Pratique as well as the National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilisations (INALCO) in Paris. He is currently a Research Associate at The Institute of Ismaili Studies in London. He has published several articles and book chapters on various aspects of Ḥurūfī thought as well as on broader issues related to Islamic mysticism and messianism. His publications include *Words of Power: Ḥurūfī Teachings between Shi‘ism and Sufism in Medieval Islam. The Original Doctrine of Faḍl Allāh Astarābādī* (2015), and an edited volume, *Unity in Diversity: Mysticism, Messianism and the Construction of Religious Authority in Islam* (2013).

JAMES MORRIS since 2007 has been professor in the Department of Theology at Boston College. He held the Sharjah Chair of Islamic Studies at the University of Exeter (1999-2006), and he has taught previously at Princeton University, Oberlin College, Temple University, and the Institute of Ismaili Studies in Paris and London. He has served as visiting professor at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (Paris), University of Malaya, and University of Sarajevo, and he lectures and gives workshops widely throughout Europe and the Muslim world. Among his many books may be mentioned: *The Wisdom of the Throne: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Mulla Sadra* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1981); *The Master and the Disciple: An Early Islamic Spiritual Dialogue*, Arabic critical edition and English translation and Introduction to Ja‘far b. Mansūr al-Yaman's *Kitāb al-‘ālim wa’l-ghulām* (London and New York, IIS/I. B. Tauris Publishers, 2001); an introduction and annotated translation of *Kitāb Ma‘rifat ar-Rūh* in Nur Ali Elahi's *Knowing the Spirit* (2007).; *The Reflective Heart: Discovering Spiritual Intelligence in Ibn ‘Arabī's ‘Meccan Illuminations’* (2005); *Orientations: Islamic Thought in a World Civilisation* (2004); *Ibn ‘Arabī: The Meccan Revelations* (2002); *The Master and the Disciple: An Early Islamic Spiritual Dialogue* (2002),

ANDREW J. NEWMAN is Reader in Islamic Studies and Persian at the University of Edinburgh. Dr. Newman holds a B.A. in History, summa cum laude, from Dartmouth College, New Hampshire, USA, and an M.A. and Ph.D. in Islamic Studies from the University of California, Los Angeles, USA. He joined IMES in 1996, having been a

Research Fellow at both the Wellcome Unit for the History of Medicine, Oxford and Green College, Oxford, whilst researching topics in the history of Islamic medicine. In August 1998, Dr. Newman organised ‘The Third International Round Table on Safavid Persia.’ Over three days forty-one speakers drawn from a variety of sub-disciplines within the field of Safavid studies delivered papers. Selected papers from the Round Table have been published as *Society and Culture in the Early Modern Middle East, Studies on Iran in the Safavid Period* (Leiden: Brill 2003). He has authored many articles on Shi‘ism from its earliest years to the Qajar period, as well as academic articles on Islamic Studies and Persian History. Among his numerous books may be mentioned: *The Formative Period of Shi‘i Law: Hadith as Discourse Between Qum and Baghdad* (2000), *Safavid Iran: Rebirth of a Persian Empire* (2006 – winner of Iran’s book of the year prize for 2007 in the category of Iranian Studies), *Twelver Shiism: Unity and Diversity in the Life of Islam, 632 to 1722* (Edinburgh University Press 2013). Dr. Newman is the founder and moderator of ‘Shii News’, an e-mail list started in 2009 that now serves more than 620 academics and non-academics across the world who are interested in all forms of Shi‘ism and Shi‘i expression and their study both past and present: <http://www.shii-news.imes.ed.ac.uk/>. He is Section Editor for History of Iran, for the third series of *Encyclopedia of Islam*. Dr. Newman is currently programme director of a BIPS-funded project entitled ‘Recovering “Lost Voices”: The Role and Depiction of Iranian/Persianate Subalterns from the 13th century to the Modern Period’: <http://www.shii-news.imes.ed.ac.uk/the-subalterns-project/>.

ERIK S. OHLANDER is Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Indiana University-Purdue University Fort Wayne. A specialist in the history of Sufism, he is author of *Sufism in the Age of Transition: ‘Umar al-Suhrawardī and the Rise of the Islamic Mystical Brotherhoods* (Brill, 2008), editor (with John Curry) of *Sufism and Society: Arrangements of the Mystical in the Muslim World, 1200–1800* (Routledge, 2012), and author of numerous articles, book chapters, and other works on the subject. He also serves as the executive editor of the *Journal of Sufi Studies*, a biannual research journal published by Brill (2012–present).

LLOYD RIDGEON is Reader in Islamic Studies at Glasgow University, where he teaches courses on Sufism and modern Iran as well as general Islamic Studies. He is author of the only major study in English of the great 13th-century Persian Sufi thinker *Aziz Nasafi* (1998) and editor of *Islamic Interpretations of Christianity* (2001). His recent publications include *Sufi Castigator: Ahmad Kasravi and the Iranian Mystical Tradition* (2006), as well as a four-volume collection of articles by the contemporary scholars of Sufism entitled *Sufism: Critical Concepts* (2008). He is the editor of the *Cambridge Companion to Sufism* (forthcoming 2014). He has also written a study of spiritual chivalry in the Persian Sufi tradition: *Morals and Mysticism in Persian Sufism: A History of Sufi Futuwwat in Iran* (2010).

NEDA SAGHAEI is a Ph.D. candidate in Islamic Studies (2011) at Erfurt University, Germany, where she is currently completing her thesis there on “The Reconstruction of the Cultural History of Delhi in the 18th-Century Based on Nasir ‘Andalīb’s Work: *Nalaye ‘Andalīb*.” She has published widely in the field of medieval Sufism, the school of Ibn ‘Arabi and Persian Literature in India. She has worked as a lecturer in several universities of Iran, authored a number of articles on Sufism in various Iranian encyclopedias, and specializes in Persianate Mughal India.

OLIVER SCHARBRODT is Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Chester, UK. He studied Comparative Religion, Islamic Studies and Philosophy at the University of Bonn in Germany. He completed his graduate studies and research in London, obtaining his M.A. and Ph.D, from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). After teaching for a few years in London and in the USA, Dr. Scharbrodt joined the Study of Religions Department at University College Cork in 2008. Responsible for teaching courses on Islam, his research interests lie in the Sufism, the Shi'a Islam, the intellectual history of modern Islam, the historical and contemporary presence of Islam in Europe and the role of mystical, esoteric and millenarian traditions of Islam in the modern world. Between 2008 and 2011, Dr. Scharbrodt was the principal investigator of a research project, funded by the Irish Research Council for the Humanities and Social Sciences (IRCHSS), investigating the historical development and current situation of Islam in Ireland. He is currently director of Islamic Studies at the University of Chester.

ALI-ASGHAR SEYED-GOHRAB is Associate Professor at Leiden University. His publications include *Soefism: Een levende traditie*, (Amsterdam: Prometheus / Bert Bakker, 2015); *Literature of the Early Twentieth Century: From the Constitutional Period to Reza Shah* (ed., Volume XI of *A History of Persian Literature*, London / New York: I.B. Tauris 2015), *Layli and Majnun: Love, Madness and Mystic Longing in Nizami's Epic Romance*, (Leiden / Boston: Brill, 2003), *Mirror of Dew: The Poetry of Ālam-Tāj Zhāle Qā'em-Maqāmi* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, Ilex Foundation Series 14, 2015), *Metaphor and Imagery in Persian Poetry* (ed., Leiden/Boston: Brill, 2012), *The Great Omar Khayyam: A Global Reception* (ed., Leiden: Leiden university Press, 2012), *Courtly Riddles: Enigmatic Embellishments in Early Persian Poetry* (Leiden: LUP, 2008, 2010); *The Treasury of Tabriz: the Great Il-Khanid Compendium* (West Lafayette, Indiana, Purdue University Press, ed. together with S. McGlinn, 2007); (2007) Seyed-Gohrab, A.A. & *Gog and Magog: The Clans of Chaos in World Literature* (West Lafayette, Indiana, Purdue University Press, together with F. Doufikar-Aerts & S. McGlinn, 2007); *One Word – Yak kaleme: A 19th-Century Persian Treatise Introducing Western Codified Law* (Leiden: LUP, 2008, 2010, together with S. McGlinn); *Conflict and Development in Iranian Film*, ed. together with K. Talattof (Leiden: LUP, 2013). He has translated several volumes of modern Persian poetry into Dutch, including the poetry of Sohrāb Sepehrī, Furūgh Farrokhzād, Muḥammad-Riḍā Shafī'ī-Kadkanī, and (together with J.T.P. de Bruijn) Ahmad Shāmlu, Nāder Nāderpur, and Hushang Ebtehāj. He headed the project *Of Poetry and Politics: Classical Poetic Concepts in the New Politics of Twentieth Century Iran*, financed by a five-year research grant from the Netherlands Organization for Scientific Research (NWO). He is the founding general editor of the Iranian Studies Series at Leiden University Press, and the Modern Persian Poetry Series in Dutch.

SARA SVIRI studied Arabic and Islamic studies at the Hebrew University in Jerusalem, where she later taught in the Department of Arabic Studies. She is Emeritus Professor from the Hebrew University in Jerusalem. Dr. Sviri's areas of expertise and interest include early Islamic mysticism (Sufism), the interaction between Islamic and Judaic mysticism, the mystical path of blame (*Malāmatiyya*) and Letter mysticism and performative language. For many years, Sara lectured extensively in Europe and the United States on Sufism.

REZA TABANDEH received his B.A. from York University on Religious Studies. He also finished his M.A. on Rumi in University of Toronto. He earned a Ph.D. in Islamic Studies

from the Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies of the University of Exeter, U.K. His thesis was about the revival of Ni‘matullāhī Sufism in Qājār Persia, focusing on the second generation of Ni‘matullāhī masters, during the period following the return of the order to Persia from India (1776 C.E). He was invited to be a guest lecturer at Brock University, University of Toronto, and York University in Canada, where he lectured on subjects related to contemporary Shi‘ite Sufism with special attention toward Ni‘matullāhī Sufism and persecution of Sufis in Persia. He was also a visiting lecturer in University of Bradford, UK, on issues related to cultural influences of certain Islamic countries (Iran, Lebanon and Palestine). He is currently undertaking post-doctoral research at the University of Toronto on the concept of the love of “People of the Prophet’s House” among Sufis between the twelfth to fifteenth centuries.

ELIZA TASBIHI holds a Ph.D. (2015) in Religious Studies from the Department of Religion, Concordia University and an MA (2007) in Islamic Studies from the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University. Her master’s thesis was based on Mulla Hadi Sabzawari’s philosophical commentary on Rumi’s *Mathnawi*. For her doctoral thesis, she examined the seventeenth-century Ottoman Mevlevi commentary by Isma‘il Anqarawi on the apocryphal text known as ‘Book Seven’ of the *Mathnawi*. Her fields of interest include Sufism, classical Persian literature and Ottoman Sufi literature. She is particularly interested in the teachings and Sufi doctrines of Jalal al-Din Rumi. Her scholarship is based on analysis of pre-modern Ottoman and Persian manuscripts and she has done extensive research in the manuscript libraries of Turkey, Sarajevo and Iran. Dr. Tasbihi has taught and lectured in several courses on Rumi, Sufism, Islamic Thought, Western Religions and Persian language at McGill and Concordia Universities, Montreal Canada. She has presented her research at international conferences and seminars and contributed to several peer reviewed journals and anthologies such as *al-Masaq*, *Journal of the International Society for Iranian Studies*, the *Encyclopedia of Pivotal Events in Religious History* and the *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*. Her articles include: ‘The Concept of Divine Love according to al-Ghazali’ (2011), ‘Shams-i Tabrizi: His Critique of Philosophy’ (2006), ‘Qajar Implementation of Shi‘a Islam in Iran’ (2016) and ‘The Emergence of Sufism’ (2016). She works as a consultant for the Persian Sufi Opera project at Scripps College. She is currently working on her book monograph entitled, *Isma‘il Anqarawi’s Commentary on Book Seven of the Mathnawi: A Seventeenth-Century Ottoman Sufi Controversy*. Dr Tasbihi is fluent in Persian, Azeri, Arabic and Ottoman.

SHAFIQUE N. VIRANI is Distinguished Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Toronto, founding Director of the Centre for South Asian Civilizations, and past chair of the Department of Historical Studies. He was previously on the faculty of Harvard University in the Department of Sanskrit and Indian Studies and the Head of World Humanities at Zayed University in the United Arab Emirates. After earning a joint honours degree with distinction in Religious Studies and Middle East Studies and a master’s degree in Islamic Studies at McGill University in Montréal, he completed an MA and PhD at Harvard University in Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations. Professor Virani’s research focuses on Islamic history, philosophy, Sufism, Shi‘ism (Twelver and Ismaili), Bhakti, and Muslim literatures in Arabic, Persian and South Asian languages. He is the author of *The Ismailis in the Middle Ages: A History of Survival, A Search for Salvation*, published by Oxford University Press. Professor Virani’s scholarly work has been translated into Albanian, Arabic, Persian, Russian, Serbo-Croat-Bosnian and Urdu, and has received awards from UNESCO, the Organization of the Islamic Conference, the Middle East Studies Association, the Foundation for Iranian Studies,

Harvard University, the International Farabi Prize and the British-Kuwait Friendship Society Prize. He is also the recipient of the International Book of the Year award from the government of Iran. The American Academy of Religion recently named him the recipient of its highest pedagogical honour, the AAR Excellence in Teaching Award.

SAEKO YAZAKI is a Lecturer at Theology and Religious Studies, University of Glasgow. She was awarded a Ph.D. in Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Edinburgh. Before coming to Glasgow in 2012, she worked as the Outreach and Project Manager at the Centre of Islamic Studies, University of Cambridge, and was Research Associate of the Centre until 2015. Her areas of research include mysticism and epistemology of religion, the Judaeo-Islamic tradition in al-Andalus, and their continuing relevance to the present. Her monograph, *Islamic Mysticism and Abu Talib al-Makki: The Role of the Heart* (2013) addressed the complexity of the Sufi-Hanbali interaction on one hand, and the Muslim-Jewish nexus on the other. Currently she is carrying out research on morality in the Sufi tradition, connections between Jewish and Muslim spirituality, and the life and work of A.S. Yahuda. She is also pursuing a comparative study of monotheistic and non-monotheistic faiths, especially in relation to Sufism and Zen.