

## JAMAL J. ELIAS

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### EDUCATION

|   |                 |
|---|-----------------|
| Ph.D. Yale University (Religious Studies)                                     | May, 1991       |
| A.M. Yale University (Religious Studies)                                      | May, 1987       |
| A.M. University of Pennsylvania (Oriental Studies)                            | December, 1985  |
| A.B. Stanford University (Religious Studies)                                  | June, 1983      |
| A.M. Amherst College (honorary)   | September, 2002 |
| Intensive Advanced Turkish Program, Bosphorus<br>University, Istanbul, Turkey | Summer, 1985    |
| Stanford-in-Tours, France   | 1981            |

### TEACHING EXPERIENCE

**Amherst College**, Amherst, Massachusetts.

Professor, Religion Department, 2002 to present.

Associate Professor, Religion Department, 1996 to 2002.

Assistant Professor, Religion Department, 1989 to 1996.

**Yale University**, New Haven, Connecticut.

Visiting Professor, Department of Religious Studies, 2002 to 2003.

**Brown University**, Providence, Rhode Island.

Teaching Associate, Department of Religious Studies, 1987 to 1989.

### PUBLICATIONS

#### Books

*Islam*. In the series *Religions of the World*, edited by Ninian Smart. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, and London: Routledge, 1999. Translated into Chinese (Cit , 1999); German (Herder, 2000); Portuguese (Edi oes 70, 2000); Spanish (Akal, 2001); Japanese (Shunjusha, 2005); Polish translation in production. Abridged as *Pocket Idiot's Guide to Islam*. New York: Alpha Books, 2002.

*Death Before Dying: Sufi Poems of Sultan Bahu*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1998. (introduction, edition and translation of approximately one hundred and twenty Punjabi poems by the 17th century Sufi poet Sultan Bahu).

*The Throne Carrier of God: The Life and Thought of 'Ala' ad-dawla as-Simnani.* Albany: State University of New York Press, 1995 (a study of one of the most influential religious figures in medieval Iran).

coauthor, *Interpreting the Self: Autobiography in the Arabic Literary Tradition*, edited by Dwight F. Reynolds. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001.

### **Articles in refereed journals and edited works**

"Truck Decoration and Religious Identity: Material Culture and Social Function in Pakistan." *Material Religion* 1:1 (March 2005).

"Not Reading the Writing on the Wall: Monumental Calligraphy as Visual Sign." In Saima Zaidi, ed., *Design: Essays on Popular Visual Culture and Iconography*. Karachi: Oxford University Press, 2004 [forthcoming].

"On Wings of Diesel: Spiritual Space and Religious Imagination in Pakistani Truck Decoration." *RES: Anthropology and Aesthetics* 43 (Spring 2003).

"The Sufi Robe (*khirqā*) as a Vehicle of Spiritual Authority." In Stewart Gordon, ed., *Robes and Honor: The Medieval World of Investiture*. New York: Palgrave, 2001.

Guest editor, *Muslim World* 90:3-4 (2000), Special Issue on Saints and Shrines.

"Sayyid 'Ali Hamadani and the Making of his Charisma." *Muslim World*, 90:3-4 (2000), Special Issue on Saints and Shrines.

"Zikr-i Dervîşâne'den Divân Musikisine Kadar: Osmanlılar Devrinde Semâ'ya Bir Bakış (From Dervish Zikr to Court Music: An Analysis of Sema in the Ottoman Period)." *Cogito* (Istanbul) 19 (Summer 1999), Special Issue on the Ottomans.

"Sufism." Review Article on coverage of Sufism in *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, vols. 1-7. *Iranian Studies* 31:3-4 (1998).

"My Life with the Prophet: the *Hadith* Traditions of 'A'isha as Prototypes of Self-Narrative." *Edebiyat* 7:2 (1997), Special Issue on Autobiography in Arabic Literature.

"Risāla-yi nūriyya-yi Shaykh 'Alā' ad-dawla-yi Simnānī." *Ma'arif* (Tehran) 13:1 (1996).

"The Sufi Lords of Bahrabad." *Iranian Studies* 27:1-4 (1994), Special Issue on Religion and Statecraft in Pre-Modern Iran.

"A Kubrawī Treatise on Mystical Visions: The *Risāla-yi nūriyya* of 'Alā' ad-dawla as-Simnānī." *Muslim World* 83 (Jan. 1993).

"Female and Feminine in Islamic Mysticism." *Muslim World* 78 (July - October 1988).

### **Publications in encyclopedias, magazines and non-scholarly works**

"On Wings of Diesel: The Decorated Trucks of Pakistan." *Amherst Magazine* (Spring 2005).

"Mysticism: Islamic Mysticism in Asia." *New Dictionary of the History of Ideas*. New York: Scribner's, 2004.

"Light." *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003.

"Lamp." *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2003.

Associate Editor, *Encyclopedia of Modern Asia*, edited by D. Levinson and K. Christensen. New York: Charles Scribner, 2002.

"Road Queens: Pakistan's Trucks." *Art India* (July 2002).

"Face of God." *Encyclopedia of the Qur'an*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2002.

"Secularization, Laicization, and Challenges to Feminist Reform in the Islamic World." *Curricular Crossings: Women's Studies and Area Studies*, A Web Anthology for the College Classroom from the Five College Women's Studies Research Center

- (<http://womencrossing.org/elias.html>).
- “Ghaznavid,” “Il-Khān,” “Layla and Majnūn,” “Nawrūz,” “Rubaiyāt,” “Rūmī,” “Shāh,” “Sharī‘atī,” “‘Alī,” “Sūfism,” “Timur (Tamarlane).” *The Dictionary of Global Culture*, ed. K.A. Appiah and H.L. Gates. New York: Knopf, 1996.
- “Ölüm: bize korkunç, bize gerekli (Death: Awful and Unavoidable).” *Fol* (Istanbul) 4 (1996).
- “Mawlawiyah.” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, ed. John L. Esposito et al. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- “Shattariyah.” *The Oxford Encyclopedia of the Modern Islamic World*, ed. John L. Esposito et al. New York: Oxford University Press, 1995.
- “Persian and Arabic Literature (c. A.D. 600-1400).” *Prentice Hall Literature, World Masterpieces*. Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice-Hall, 1991.
- “Women’s Rights and the Interpretation of Law.” *The American Muslim* (May - June 1991).
- “Throne of God.” *Encyclopedia of the Qur’an*. Leiden: E.J. Brill, 2005 [forthcoming].
- Translations of nine Punjabi Qawwalis performed by Nusrat Fateh Ali Khan, in *Nusrat Revealed*, edited by Varun Soni [forthcoming].

Book reviews published in *International Journal of Middle East Studies*, *Iranian Studies*, *Middle East Studies Association Bulletin*, *Muslim World*, and *Religious Studies Review*.

Poetry published in Japan, Pakistan and the United States.

## WORK IN PROGRESS

*On Wings of Diesel*. A monograph on truck decoration in Pakistan. This is the first book-length exploration of the nature and semiotics of vehicle decoration in an Islamic society. With discussions on notions of vernacular or popular religion, literacy and writing, modernity and national development, kitsch, and anthropological, visual and cultural theory, this book attempts to outline an important methodological avenue for exploring the nature of Islam as a lived religion (Under contract with Oneworld Publications, Oxford, U.K.).

*A’isha’s Pillow: Religious Art and Perception in Islam*. A monograph exploring the nature of visual religious art in Islamic societies. It comprises a sustained discussion on questions of perception in Islamic thought, arguing for a new understanding of the role of the visual in Islam. It engages the published literature on Islamic art history and visual aesthetics, and situates its subject within the wider context of writings on religion and art as well as visual and material culture. Subjects addressed in the book include iconoclasm in the contemporary Islamic world, calligraphy and epigraphy as physical representations of the divine word, the *Hilya* as a textual portrait of the Prophet, and the iconography of vehicular art. (To be submitted to California Press in January 2006).

*Critical Terms for the Study of Islam*. A reference work of 200,000 words with twenty-six chapters, each on a critical term vital to understanding developments in the study of Islam. I am the editor of this project as well as the author of one of the chapters. (Under review at University of Chicago Press).

“Lahore.” *Encyclopedia Iranica*. London: Routledge, Kegan Paul.

“Lucknow.” *Encyclopedia Iranica*. London: Routledge, Kegan Paul.

## LANGUAGES

Arabic, French, German (reading only), Hindi/Urdu, Persian, Punjabi, Turkish (Ottoman and Modern).

## PAPERS READ (Selected, since 1990)

### Invited

- “Visual Images and Religious Pedagogy in Islam: *Du‘ā* Girl and the Comic Book.” Hagop Kevorkian Center for Near Eastern Studies, *New York University*, New York, New York, October 2005.
- “Sufi *Tafsīr* Literature and the Concept of Esoteric Commentary on the Qur‘ān.” *York University*, Toronto, Canada, October 2005.
- “The Qur‘ān and the Muslim Obligation of Compassion.” *Noor Center for Islamic Culture*, Toronto, Canada, October 2005.
- “Nation, Religion and Emplacement: Modernity and Identity Expressed through the Pakistani Truck.” *Secularism, Religious Nationalism and the State: Visual Practices and Public Subjects*, American University, Beirut, April 2005.
- “So... is there really another dimension? (Taking Sufi ontological claims seriously).” *Cross-Cultural Mysticism Workshop*, Harvard University, Cambridge, Massachusetts, February 2005.
- “On Seeing: Relationships of Resemblance in Premodern Islamic Thought.” *Majalis ul-ushaq: Portrait, Poetry and Biography in the Iranian World*, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts, October 2004.
- “When is Writing not Writing? Qur‘anic Calligraphy on Public Buildings.” *Stanford University*, Stanford, California, January 2004.
- “Seeing versus Reading: Qur‘anic Calligraphy as Visual Dhikr.” *Noor Center for Islamic Culture*, Toronto, Canada, October 2003.
- “How does One measure Progress along the Sufi Path? Mystical Sensation and Perception in the ‘Golden Order’.” *York University*, Toronto, Canada, October 2003.
- “Vehicular Decoration: Vernacular Religion and Modern Identity in Pakistan.” *Williams College*, Williamstown, Massachusetts, May 2003.
- “Religious Art and the Nature of Perception in an Islamic Context.” *Stanford University*, Stanford, California, April 2003.
- “Reading Sufi Texts.” *Emory University*, Atlanta, Georgia, November 2001.
- “On Wings of Diesel: Spiritual Space and Religious Imagination in Pakistani Truck Decoration.” *Exploring the Frontiers of Islamic Art and Architecture*, MIT, Cambridge, Massachusetts, May 2001.
- “Vehicle Decoration: Nostalgia and Religious Representation in Pakistan and the Indus Valley.” *Cornell University*, Ithaca, New York, March 2001.
- “Covered/uncovered, Open/closed: The Politics of Veiling in Turkey.” *Five College Women’s Research Center* South Hadley, Massachusetts, November 1999.
- “Ma‘rifat awr taṣavvufi zindaḡī kī bunyādī ḥaḡīqat (Mystical knowledge and the true meaning of the Sufi life).” *Madrassah-e Hamadāniyya*, Skardu, Pakistan, July 1999.
- “Zikr and Semâ in the Mevleviye during the Ottoman Period.” *Osmanlı 700: International Congress on Learning and Education in the Ottoman World*, Istanbul, Turkey, April 1999.

- “Certificates, Suits and Sets of Rules: Masters and Disciples in Medieval Sufism.” *20th Annual Meeting of the Muhiyuddin Ibn Arabi Society*, Berkeley, California, October 1997.
- “Experiences Purported, Experiences Reported: The Tensions of Text and Experience in Sunni Sufi Instruction.” Colloquium entitled *Conveying the Indescribable: Sufi Texts and Sufi Lives in the Formative Period (9th to 13th centuries)*, University of California, Los Angeles, March 1997.
- “How do You Make a Sufi Master? The Problem of Written Instruction in Islamic Mystical Education.” *Hartford Seminary Faculty Seminar*, Hartford, Connecticut, February 1997.
- “The Sufi Lords of Bahrabad, Juvayn.” *University of Pennsylvania Middle East Seminar*, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, November 1994.
- “God’s Face Through the Looking Glass: The Relationship between God and the Universe in 8th/14th century Sufi Thought.” *American Research Institute in Turkey*, Istanbul, Turkey, May 1993.
- Numerous lectures to community and religious groups, schools and secondary school teachers.

### **Conference Papers**

- “Wise Servants and Virtuous Kings: Sufi Writings as a Source of Islamic Ethics.” *American Academy of Religion*, Annual Meeting, Philadelphia, November 2005.
- “The Legitimation of Authority and the Perception of Spiritual Influence among Early Kubrawis.” *Middle East Studies Association*, Annual Meeting, Anchorage, Alaska, November 2003.
- “Religious Writing on the Tattooed Truck in Pakistan.” *Sufism and Socioreligious Transformation in the Punjab*, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts, April 2003.
- “Moving Murals: Religion, Sentimentalism and Art in the Decoration of Trucks and Buses in Pakistan.” *American Academy of Religion*, Annual Meeting, Boston, Massachusetts, November 1999.
- “Robing and Symbols of Investiture in Islamic Spirituality.” *American Academy of Religion*, Annual Meeting, San Francisco, California, November 1997.
- “Spiritual Guidance in Sufism: The Role of the Handbook,” *Middle East Studies Association*, Annual Meeting, Providence, Rhode Island, November 1996.
- “The Narrator as Subject in Ḥadīth.” *Middle East Studies Association*, Annual Meeting, Phoenix, Arizona, November 1994.
- “Patriarchs, Magicians and Depilatory Preparations: The Encounter of Sulayman and the Queen of Saba’.” *Five College Near East Seminar*, Northampton, Massachusetts, December 1992.
- “The Four Faces of God: Lāhūt, Jabarūt, Malakūt and Nāsūt in Islamic Thought.” *Annual Meeting of the American Oriental Society*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, May 1992.
- “Sufism and Orthodoxy in the Central Islamic Lands in the 13th to 15th Centuries.” *Five College Religion Seminar*, Northampton, Massachusetts, February 1990.

### **ACADEMIC HONORS**

- Council of the American Overseas Research Centers Fellow, 2003-2004.
- Miner D. Cray Fellow, Amherst College, Summer 1995.

American Research Institute in Turkey Fellow, 1992 - 1993.  
Amherst Trustee-Faculty Fellow, 1992 - 1993.  
Dana Foundation Faculty Fellow, 1989 - 1993.  
National Endowment for the Humanities Fellow, Summer 1992.  
American Institute for Maghreb Studies Fellow, Summer 1991.  
Honorable Mention, Dissertation of the Year, Foundation for Iranian Studies, 1991.  
Honorable Mention, Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Award, Middle East Studies Association, 1991.

## **MEMBERSHIP IN PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS**

American Academy of Religion.  
American Institute of Pakistan Studies.  
Association for the Study of Persianate Societies.  
Society for Iranian Studies.  
Sufis and Society Project.  
Middle East Studies Association of North America.  
Radical Reassessments of Arabic Arts, Language and Literature.

## **RELATED EXPERIENCE AND PROFESSIONAL SERVICE**

Steering Committee Member, Islamic Mysticism Section, American Academy of Religion, November 2003 – present.  
Chairman, Five College Near East Seminar, Five Colleges Incorporated, Amherst, Massachusetts, July 1991 - July 1992; July 1993 - July 1995; July 2005 - present.  
Chairman, Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Awards Committee, Middle East Studies Association, November 2003 – 2004.  
Organizer, conference entitled “Majalis ul-ushaq: Portrait, Poetry and Biography in the Iranian World,” Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts, October 2004.  
Organizer, conference entitled “Sufism and Socio-religious Transformation in the Punjab,” Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts, April 2003.  
Organizer, Annual Meeting of Sufis and Society Project, Amherst, Massachusetts, 2000, 2001, 2002, 2004.  
Malcolm H. Kerr Dissertation Awards Committee Member, Middle East Studies Association, November 2002 - 2004.  
Advisory Board Member, Duncan Black Macdonald Center for the Study of Islam and Christian Muslims Relations, Hartford Seminary, Hartford, Connecticut, June 1996 - 2003.  
Chairman, Religion Department, Amherst College, Amherst, Massachusetts, July 1997 – June 1999; 2001 - 2002.  
History of Religions Committee Member, American Academy of Religion, December 1999 - 2002.  
Participant, Talking Toward Techno-Pedagogy, Bryn Mawr College, Bryn Mawr, Pennsylvania, June 2001.  
Steering Committee Member, Islam Section, American Academy of Religion, November 1997 - 2000.

Director, Teachers' Workshop on Teaching about Islam and the Middle East, Amherst, Massachusetts, July 1994.

Section Head, Islam Section, American Academy of Religion, New England Region, May 1990 - May 1992.

Thesis committee service and dissertation reader for theses at Yale University and McGill University.

Manuscript reader for Routledge, Blackwell Publishing, Oxford University Press and University of California Press.

## **SERVICE ON INSTITUTIONAL COMMITTEES**

Committee on Priorities and Resources, July 2000 to 2003.

Chairman, Hamilton Lecture Fund Committee, Amherst College, 2001 to present.

Residential Master Planning Committee, July 2000 to June 2001.

Faculty Research Awards Program Committee, July 1998 to June 2000.

College Council, July 1996 to June 1998.

Orientation Committee, July 1990 to June 1992, July 1993 to June 1994.

Five College Arabic Support Committee, July 1999 to May 2001.

Five College Near Eastern Studies Committee, July 1993 to May 1999; 2003 to present.

## **COURSES TAUGHT (reverse chronological)**

Islamic Ethics

Asian Art, Western Eyes

Sufism

Women and Islamic Constructions of Gender

Seminar in Sufi Thought [graduate seminar at Yale University]

Islam in the Modern World

Muhammad and the Qur'an

The Power of Icons

Introduction to Asia: Heroes and Villains

Islam and Modernity

The Islamic Religious Tradition

Readings in Islamic Philosophy

Introduction to Religion: Religion and Art

Introduction to Religion: The Body

Introduction to Religion: War

For Every Pharaoh there is a Moses: Islamic Liberation Theology

The Delusion of Reality [First-year seminar]

Comparative Fundamentalism