

# ALEXANDER KEY

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## ACADEMIC EMPLOYMENT

**Stanford University**, Stanford, CA.

Assistant Professor of Arabic and Comparative Literature, August 2012 – present.

## EDUCATION

**Harvard University**, Cambridge, MA.

Ph.D. (with distinction) Arabic and Islamic Studies, May 2012.

“A Linguistic Frame of Mind: ar-Rāḡib al-İřfahānī and what it meant to be ambiguous”.

Ph.D. Thesis, Harvard University, 2012. <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:HUL.InstRepos:9572090>

**University of St. Andrews**, Scotland, UK.

B.A. / M.A. (1st class Honours) Arabic and International Relations. 2001.

## PEER-REVIEWED PUBLICATIONS

“Moving from Persian to Arabic” in *Mahdavi Damghani Commemorative Volume*, edited by William Granara, Alireza Korangy, and Roy Mottahedeh. *Studien zur Geschichte und Kultur des islamischen Orients (Der Islam)* Walter De Gruyter, forthcoming.

“Philosophy of Language in the Medieval Arabic Tradition” co-authored with Peter Adamson (LMU Munich) in *Linguistic Content: New Essays on the History of the Philosophy of Language*, edited by Margaret Cameron and Robert Stainton. Oxford University Press, 2015. pp. 74-99.

“The Applicability of the Term ‘Humanism’ to Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi”. *Studia Islamica* #100/101 (2005 appeared 2007) pp.71-112

## FURTHER PUBLICATIONS

Review of *Islam and Literalism* by Robert Gleave (Edinburgh University Press, 2013). Solicited by the *Journal of Near Eastern Studies* (2015) 74: 1. pp. 179-184.

Review of *Hardship and Deliverance in the Islamic Tradition* by Nouha Khalifa (I. B. Tauris, 2010). Solicited by the *Journal of Islamic Studies* (2013) 24 (2): 212-216.  
doi:10.1093/jis/ett022

“Al-Raghib al-İsfahani” in *Essays in Arabic Literary Biography I*, edited by Mary St. Germain and Terri de Young. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz Verlag, 2011. pp. 298-306.

“Language and Literature in al-Raghib al-İsfahani” in *Reflections on Knowledge and Language in Middle Eastern Societies*, edited by Bruno de Nicola, Yonatan Mendel and Husain Qutbuddin. Cambridge: Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2010. pp. 32-62.

## PRESENTATIONS

"The Name and the Thing Named: some eleventh-century questions". Presented to the Renaissances Workshop in the Division of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages at Stanford University. 11 May 2015.

"Thinking about *Ma'nā* after Richard Frank". Invited lecture in the *Islamic Studies Lecture Series* at Georgetown University's Department of Arabic and Islamic Studies in Washington D.C. 18 March 2015.

"Arabic Theory and Practice". Presented in the lecture series *Translation Matters: Applications in the 21<sup>st</sup> Century* in the Division of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages at Stanford University. 12 February 2015.

"Their Classics and Our Classics". Presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Comparative Literature Association in New York. 23 March 2014.

"The Lexicon and the Image". Presented to *Image as Animation: Mysticism, Magic, and Poetry in Byzantine Christian and Islamic Religious Experience*, the 2012/2013 Conference of the Sohaib and Sara Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies at Stanford University. 10 May 2013.

"Arabic Literary Theory: Poetics, Performance, and Metaphor". Presented to the Annual Meeting of the American Comparative Literature Association in Toronto, Canada. 5 April 2013.

"Shedding Light on the Life and Times of al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī". Presented to the 223<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the American Oriental Society in Portland, Oregon. 17 March 2013.

"Al-Rāghib al-Iṣfahānī's (fl. ≤ 409/1018) philosophy of language". Presented to the Eleventh Conference of the School of Abbasid Studies. 11 July 2012.

"Literary theory by al-Raghib al-Isfahani in MS Yale Landberg 165". Presented to the *Colloquium on Conceptualizing Literary History: Foundations of Arabic Literature* at Yale University's Whitney Humanities Center. 17 April 2010.

"Language and Literature in al-Raghib al-Isfahani". Presented to the Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association in Boston. 24 November 2009.

"The reception of Harun in *adab* compendia: a preliminary enquiry". Presented to the *Journée Commémorative: Le calife Hārūn al-Rashīd, Histoire et légende: 809-2009* at the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales and Université Paris 8 - Saint Denis (Paris, France). 13 November 2009.

"The Outlines of Philosophy in al-Raghib al-Isfahani". Presented to the Cambridge Symposium on Middle Eastern Societies: *Knowledge and Language in Middle Eastern Societies* at the Centre for Research in the Arts, Social Science and Humanities, University of Cambridge (UK). 18 October 2008.

"Attacks on Grammar in the Twelfth-Century Islamic West: The Reply to the Grammarians by Ibn Mada". Presented to the 217<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the American Oriental Society in Chicago. 15 March 2008.

“Quranic Revelation in the Prophet’s Sleep”. Presented to the Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association in Montreal. 18 November 2007.

“Revelation In The Prophet’s Sleep?”. Presented to the Inaugural Session of the Islamic Intellectual History Workshop in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University. 2 November 2007.

“The Applicability of the Term ‘Humanism’ to Abu Hayyan al-Tawhidi”. Presented to the Annual Meeting of the Middle East Studies Association in Boston. 20 November 2006.

## TEACHING

### Stanford University.

*Classic Arabic Poetry*. Introduction to Arabic poetry from the sixth to the twenty-first century open to undergraduate and graduate students. Pre-requisite: two years of Arabic. Autumn 2014.

*CompLit 101*. Undergraduate gateway to the Comparative Literature Major surveying disciplinary debates, engaging with theory, and focussing on writing skills. Autumn 2013 and Autumn 2014.

*Classic Arabic Prose*. Introduction to Arabic prose from the sixth to the twenty-first century open to undergraduate and graduate students. Pre-requisite: two years of Arabic. Winter 2015.

*Ethics of Jihad*. Undergraduate General Education Requirement (“Ethics Way” and “Program in Writing and Rhetoric 2”) seminar exploring Islamic history, politics, intellectual and ethical cultures from the 600s to the present day, and focussing on communication skills. Winter 2014 and Winter 2015.

*Readings in Avicenna and al-Jurjani*. Classical Arabic reading course on logic and poetics open to undergraduate and graduate students. Pre-requisite: two years of Arabic. Spring 2014.

*The Arab Spring in Arabic Literature*. Seminar ranging from 1970s Arabic poetry to 21<sup>st</sup> century Arabic prose, open to undergraduate and graduate students. Pre-requisite: two years of Arabic. Spring 2013.

*Philosophies, Literatures, and Alternatives*. Seminar exploring disciplinary boundaries and theoretical accounts of intellectual endeavour, open to undergraduate and graduate students. Spring 2013.

*Classical Arabic Poetry: an Introduction*. Seminar reading Classical Arabic poetry and literary criticism in manuscript facsimilie, open to undergraduate and graduate students. Pre-requisite: two years of Arabic. Winter 2013.

*The Meaning of Arab Literature*. Undergraduate seminar reading translated Classical Arabic texts. Autumn 2012.

**University of St Andrews**, School of History. Teaching Fellow 2010/2011

*Key Texts in Islamic Religion and Society I* for third-year undergraduates in Spring semester.

*Key Texts in Islamic Religion and Society II* for fourth-year undergraduates in Spring semester.

### **ACADEMIC SERVICE**

Co-ordinator of the Minor in Middle Eastern Languages, Literatures, and Cultures (MELLAC) in the Division of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages. 2015-.

Member of Search Committee for Assistant Professor of Persian Literature and Culture in Stanford Department of Comparative Literature. 2014-2015.

Stanford Sohaib and Sara Abbasi Program in Islamic Studies Faculty Advisory Committee 2013-present.

Member of Promotion Committee for Cintia Santana's appointment as Senior Lecturer in the Division of Literatures, Cultures, and Languages. 2013-2014.

Co-Organized panel "On The Classics: Debating a Concept Across the Premodern Mediterranean World" at the American Comparative Literature Association's Annual Meeting. March 20-23 2014.

Chair of Reading Committee for Vincent Barletta's appointment to Stanford Department of Comparative Literature. 2013.

Stanford Rhodes Marshall Panel. Autumn 2012.

Developed the "Middle East Institute" proposal for the 600<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Fundraising Committee at the University of St Andrews (UK). Fall 2010.

Founding Editor and Quick Studies and Literature Editor of *New Middle Eastern Studies* (a journal for early career researchers and graduate students at [www.brismes.ac.uk/nmes](http://www.brismes.ac.uk/nmes)). Fall 2008 – present.

Representative Committee Member for Harvard in the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies Graduate Section (UK). Fall 2008 – Spring 2012.

Organized the panel "Islamic Near East IV. Language: Revolutionary Grammar" at the 217<sup>th</sup> Meeting of the American Oriental Society. 15 March 2008.

Coached, counseled, supported, and oriented graduate students, and coordinated social activities and emergency responses as a Graduate Residence Halls Resident Advisor with the Student Services Office, Graduate School of Arts and Sciences, Harvard University. Fall 2006 – Spring 2008.

Member of Departmental Committee to Redraw Graduate Student Language Requirements in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University. 2007.

## **LANGUAGE SKILLS**

Arabic: fluent reading, writing, and speaking (classical, MSA, colloquial)

Persian: intermediate reading, writing, and speaking

French: reading

German: reading

Ancient Greek: reading