Summaries of Doctoral Dissertations

◾ L. Patrick Burrows [ThD]

Theology in Place: Religion, Geography, and the American South
Christianity is a place-less religion, so the story goes. This dissertation argues, on the contrary, that Christian theology, far from having put an end to spatial thinking, has found ways to take place literally over the course of its history. Theology has long engaged with concrete, material places, as well as imagining an array of fantastical topographies of its own. Much of this has been forgotten in Western Christian theological reflection, either from undue focus on time or from a misplaced desire to speak universally, from nowhere, inheriting the intellectual legacy of colonialism. Drawing on the geographical theory of Yi-Fu Tuan, Henri Lefebvre, Katherine McKittrick, and Michel Foucault, I develop an account of the relationship between theology and place that manifests both in places of theology (places of which theological reflection routinely avails itself), and in theology of places (theologies that both form and are formed by geographical situations).

Because place is specific and demands analysis of the place of the theologian, I apply this methodology to the American South, and to my own places within it. The result is a set of theological experiments exploring how South functions as a theological category and a source of theological reflection. I proceed through a series of geographic scales (the body in Decoration Day, the rural attraction of Dollywood, the urban neighborhood of Hayti, the imagined region of "the South"), genres of writing theology (narrative, taxonomy, oral tradition, systematics), bodily orientations (bodies I never knew and my own body, fantastical bodies, bodies that are not mine, imagined bodies politic), and theological topoi re-geographized (ritual and forgiveness, mysticism, demonology and myth, heresy).

Through these explorations, this project argues for an expansive vision of the utility of theological reflection in the consideration of the social, cultural, and political dynamics of place, particularly concerning race, gender, sexuality, and class. This broadness entails not only the necessity of engaging with place in theological terms, but also a loosening of the strictures of scope around the places

of theology and a reconsideration of reductive visions of the relationship of place and Christianity in the American South.

Adviser: Mark D. Jordan

◼ W. Sasson Chahanovich [PhD]

Ottoman Eschatological Enthusiasm: Ps.-Ibn al-ʿArabī's Tree of Nuʿmān *as an Early Modern Islamic Esoteric Apocalypse in the Service of Empire*

This dissertation presents the first extensive study in English of the eschatological and esoteric apocalypse titled *The Tree of Nuʿmān Concerning the Ottoman Empire* (*al-Šaǧarah al-nuʿmāniyyah fī al-dawlah al-ʿuthmāniyyah*). This work is a revelatory vision (*raʾaynā fī-l-mustaqbal*) composed in the late-tenth AH/late-sixteenth centruy CE (see below) by an unknown man claiming to be Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 638/1240), the thirteenth-century Sufi and—much later—the Ottoman dynasty's adopted patron saint; henceforth, I designate the composer as "Ps.-Ibn al-ʿArabī." As a mantic work of anonymous prophecy, one is confronted with the following clear themes: the messianic nature of the Ottoman dynasty, its crucial role in securing the end of times at/or after the turn of the Islamic millennium (1000/1591–1592), and the central importance of the Ottoman conquest and control of Egypt as the landscape *sine qua non* for apocalyptic battles and supernatural phenomena.

My principal argument is that this text was produced within what Noah Gardiner identifies as "intermediate groups" of mystically inclined "esoteric reading communities," and most particularly Egyptian intermediate esoteric groups. Interestingly, *The Tree of Nuʿmān* seems to have circulated almost exclusively among such esoteric cliques for a good half century if not more. The earliest reliable dating for commentaries on Ps.-Ibn al-ʿArabī's primary apocalypse, such as those of Ps.-Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī, Ps.-Ḫalīl b. Aybak al-Ṣafadī, and (Ps.?) Aḥmad b. Muḥammad al-Maqqarī, are from the mid-late eleventh/seventeenth century; if al-Maqqarī (d. 1041/1632) did in fact compose a commentary, then we can surmise that *The Tree of Nuʿmān* began circulating more widely—or at least became more well-known outside its earliest reading communities—within no more than fifty years following the earliest possible dating that I propose for Ps.-Ibn al-ʿArabī's revelatory undertaking.

I endeavor to make several new contributions to scholarship. First, as an esoteric-cum-apocalyptic work that sublimates the Ottoman sultans to messianic figures, I argue that *The Tree of Nuʿmān* is a key example of the appeal and reach of what I call Ottoman eschatological enthusiasm among groups at a distance, politically and perhaps even geographically speaking, from traditional centers of power. By this I mean that the pseudonymous composer and his target audience existed outside of the imperial palace walls wherein the composition of apocalyptically inclined Ottoman propaganda is more commonly attested (e.g. the Ottoman Tercümes of ʿAbd al-Raḥmān al-Bisṭāmī's *Key to the Comprehensive Prognosticon*, the anonymous *Conditions of Resurrection*).

Second, I take the issue of the pseudepigraphic composition of the apocalyptic vision seriously. The identity of the real man behind *The Tree of Nuʿmān* remains unknown. Yet, in an effort to understand the phenomenon of pseudepigraphy and its function as applied to this cryptic and chiliastic oracle, I underscore the cultural cachet of Ibn al-ʿArabī's name among esoteric groups, be they actual Sufis or simply Akbarian-inclined practitioners, as well as among elite political and religious echelons within the dynasty. My approach here is necessarily interdisciplinary for the purpose of galvanizing further scholarly discussion in Islamic intellectual history about the topic of pseudepigrapha.

Third, through extensive archival research, I correct many manuscript catalogues that erroneously list numerous copies, primarily of the later pseudepigraphic commentaries, as versions of the primary apocalypse. Specifically, I have determined that there exist only four primary copies of the prophecy: SK Ms. Beyazıd 4609, entire copy; İÜK Ms. A. 4884, fols. 1b-48a; BYEK Ms. Veliyüddin 2292/2 fols. 40a-65a; PYah. Ms. 4497, fols. 20b-49b.

Fourth, concerning a possible date of Ps.-Ibn al-ʿArabī's apocalyptic vision, I argue for a *terminus ante quem* within several years before circa 986–987/1578–1579. Notwithstanding a couple examples of later scribal interpolations from the mid-eleventh/seventeenth century, I hold that the eschatological apocalypse was written by the singular figure Ps.-Ibn al-ʿArabī, and that it is not a product of collective composition or successive conglomerate segments collated together at some point in the mid-eleventh/seventeenth century.

Fifth, I provide an historical overview of the Islamic apocalyptic genre called ǧafr according to which Ps.-Ibn al-ʿArabī classifies *The Tree of Nuʿmān*. I advance a new and concise definition of this oracular genre and refute earlier scholarship that claims ǧafr to be an exclusively Shiite revelatory science.

Finally, I argue that Ps.-Ibn al-ʿArabī may have been an ethnic Egyptian. This hypothesis is based on the curious restaging of Egypt as the foremost site of numerous Islamic End-Times phenomena and characters, all of which lead up to the Resurrection (*yawm al-qiyāmah*), Judgment (*yawm al-dīn*), and the total dissolution of cosmic creation.

Adviser: Khaled El-Rouayheb

■ Zhan Chen [PhD]

An Investigation into the Peshitta of Isaiah
This dissertation undertakes a careful study of P-Isaiah, focusing specifically on several essential aspects of the translational text: the status of its Vorlage, its dependence on other ancient versions and books, notably the LXX and the NT Peshitta, and other descriptive questions, such as how the translators dealt with difficult roots encountered in the Hebrew text. I argue that the translation of the Peshitta of Isaiah is most probably the product of at least two different Jewish-

Christian translators, each of whom has their distinctive style and techniques of translation.

The results of this study of P-Isaiah bring to light the history of the translation of one of the most important books in the Nevi'im. An understanding of this history allows for the re-evaluation of the importance of the Peshitta for textual criticism of the Hebrew Bible. At the same time, this study provides a new perspective, not only on the Christian-Jewish polemic behind the text, but also on the positive Christian-Jewish relationship in the eastern Syriac world.

Adviser: D. Andrew Teeter

■ Aaron James Goldman [PhD]

Kierkegaard on Faith and Desire: The Limits of Christianity and the Human Heart
This dissertation analyzes and evaluates several major productions by Danish philosopher and theologian Søren Kierkegaard (1813–1855). It focuses on three works Kierkegaard authored under pseudonyms—*Either / Or* (1843), *Fear and Trembling* (1843), and *Philosophical Fragments* (1844)—and the non-pseudonymously authored *Works of Love* (1847). The dissertation argues that for Kierkegaard, Christian faith is a distinctive capacity of the individual human being that enables the individual to organize their desires and pursue the good life in a way that is qualitatively superior to what is available outside of Christianity.

Through exegesis of Kierkegaard's works, the dissertation identifies two elements of Kierkegaard's presentation of Christian faith that recur throughout his authorship. The first is an axiom that undergirds Kierkegaard's conception of the good life, namely that for the best possible life to be lived (that is, the Christian life), a person must ultimately be individually responsible for their own happiness or unhappiness. The second is a complex juxtaposition between Christianity and alternative, non-Christian worldviews (collectively called "Paganism" by Kierkegaard), which Kierkegaard performs to provoke his reader into making the decision to affirm Christianity. If, with the assistance of God, the individual does so (that is, has faith), their desires and motivations are reorganized to enable a higher form of happiness and a new form of moral engagement (love for the neighbor).

The dissertation characterizes this juxtaposition through a stagecraft analogy: the *mechane*, a crane that lifts a theater actor to simulate flight. The analogy highlights the relationship of asymmetrical dependence between Kierkegaard's accounts of Christianity and non-Christian alternatives. For an actor to take flight (happiness) with the *mechane* (Christianity), the hoist (faith) that suspends them must be supported by a tension force from the ground ("Paganism"). Faith requires awareness that the theological and anthropological scaffolding that makes Christian faith possible is transcendent and distinctive. But at the same time, to avoid compromising the transcendence and distinctiveness of faith, the individual

cannot completely foreclose the possibility of that which Christianity negates, for example, through rational proofs or research into the historical origins of the Christian tradition.

Adviser: David C. Lamberth

■ Ryan Gregg [PhD]

Royal Runaways: A Theological Analysis of Love's Kenotic Power

This study in biblical theology proceeds from a basic curiosity: why does the foundational literature of many religions, Jewish and Christian ones in particular, enshrine stories of highborn individuals who (for one reason or another) are alienated from their inherited context of privilege, endure prolonged seasons of suffering and obscurity, and eventually return to assume a mantle of leadership equal to or greater than the one to which they were entitled by birth? I think of these figures as "Royal Runaways," and in this dissertation I ask what wisdom is conveyed through variations on their similarly-shaped biographies, and specifically, what such narratives communicate about the nature of (royal) power, self-sacrifice, and love. While such questions may be approached through a variety of disciplines and literatures—and this project is indeed interdisciplinary—I focus primarily on biblical and theological materials.

After an introductory chapter dealing with theoretical issues (narrative theory, myths and heroes, problematics of "authority," comparative and canonical reading, etc.), Chapter 2, "Mosaics of Israel," begins the exegetical core of the project by studying the biblical account of Moses' early life as an Egyptian prince and an exile in Midian, comparing it with a handful of ancient Near Eastern (Sargon) and Israelite (Adam, Joseph, David, etc.) parallels, as well as several Second Temple portraits of Moses (Philo, Josephus, the New Testament, Midrashim, etc.). The Royal Runaway pattern is observed to entail a privileged upbringing, subsequent rejection, prolonged exile, and eventual exaltation, leading to the conclusion that obedience and suffering are not at odds with the biblical model of royalty, but intrinsic to it.

Chapter 3, "A Runaway God? Christian Kenotic Theology and Its Narrative Sources in the Hebrew Bible," brings the foregoing exegesis into dialogue with the Carmen Christi of Philippians 2:6–11. This poetic account of Jesus emptying himself (ἑαυτὸν ἐκένωσεν, the origin of the term *kenosis*), becoming obedient unto death, and eventually being exalted by God is shown to correspond typologically with several Royal Runaway narratives in the Hebrew Bible. While study of the Carmen typically focuses on its Adamic and Isaianic imagery, I argue that this is only the beginning of its intertextual matrix since the Hebrew Bible regularly showcases the humble, self-denying nature of royalty. The New Testament takes the innovative yet relatively simple step of transposing this insight into the identity of Israel's divine King.

Chapter 4, "From the Love of Power to the Power of Love," discusses the transition in the chapter's title, which, on a Christian reading, I take to be central to the narrative and theological appeal of the Royal Runaway paradigm. Considering that "love" and "power" are huge and contested topics, I locate my discussion in the work of three thinkers, two Jewish and one Christian, exploring various ways that Royal Runaway stories frame love, power, and even God in terms of willing self-gift.

<div align="right">Adviser: Jon D. Levenson</div>

■ Sarah Griffis [PhD]

Early Christian Generic Hybridity: The Martyrdom of Pionius *and Tragedy*

Early Christian martyr literature was composed in an ancient Mediterranean world in which a variety of literary and performance genres abounded across porous group boundaries. Noting this cultural vibrancy, a number of scholars have emphasized that martyr texts exhibit generic hybridity. This dissertation proposes that the genre of tragedy is a previously overlooked but prominent cultural element that contributed to this generic hybridity, and is thus an important key to understanding martyr texts' narrative features.

This dissertation begins to substantiate the hypothesis that appreciating tragedy's role in the generic hybridity of martyrdom literature can open up new directions of literary analysis for this corpus through a case study of a third-century CE Christian martyr text from Asia Minor, the *Martyrdom of Pionius*. Building on previous scholarship that explores themes and rhetoric in this text, the dissertation employs literary analysis to illustrate that certain features of the literary genre of tragedy operate also in *MPionius*. First, I demonstrate that it is plausible that early Christians would have been acquainted with the features of tragedies by showing tragedy's cultural prominence throughout the early Christian period and Christian thinkers' familiarity with the genre. Second, I show that three core features identified by Aristotle as the core of tragedy— suffering, recognition, and reversal—also structure *MPionius*. Finally, I show that, like Aeschylus's tragic trilogy the *Oresteia*, popular throughout antiquity and the only extant tragedy which stages a trial, *MPionius* brings its action to a denouement with the tragic device of a *deus ex machina*.

In revealing the importance of tragic generic features to understanding Christian martyr literature, this research shows that, far from being incompatible with Christianity, generic features of tragedy actually helped to structure some of Christianity's stories. This case study of *MPionius* shows that authors of martyr stories could draw on audience familiarity with tragic plot structural features in order to make their own distinctively Christian claims. *MPionius* draws on suffering, recognition, and reversal in order to define a specifically Christian model of piety and to persuade its audience that death leads to life, rather than the audience expectation that life ends in death. Similarly, in its denouement, the author of *MPionius* draws on conventions of the genre of tragedy by dramatizing the intervention of divine

authority in the events of the narrative. Specifically, through a *deus ex machina*, *MPionius* stages the triumph of a Christian vision of justice over the Roman judicial procedure that condemns Pionius to death.

In its redeployment of generic features from the prominent genre of tragedy, the *Martyrdom of Pionius* showcases early Christian participation in broader Greco-Roman literary practices. While future research will be required to establish that this insight holds for other martyr texts, the operation of generic features of tragedy in *MPionius* provides suggestive evidence that tragedy is a critical part of the cultural context that informs this distinctively Christian yet ultimately hybrid genre of martyr literature. As such, the case study presented in this dissertation opens up a fruitful new direction for the literary analysis of martyr texts.

Adviser: Karen L. King

◼ Adrián Emmanuel Hernández-Acosta [PhD]

On Death, Mourning, and African Diaspora Religions in Contemporary Hispanophone Caribbean Literature and Culture
This dissertation provides a critical inventory of the ways in which African diaspora religions are portrayed in scenes of death and mourning within Hispanophone Caribbean literature and culture. Drawing examples from an extensive catalogue of contemporary literature, cinema, and visual art, this critical inventory theorizes a "mortuary poetics" in order to name and analyze the various literary and artistic techniques by which portrayals of African diaspora religions circumvent social and psychic losses sustained within structures of power that disproportionately affect racialized, queer, and trans persons, all while contending with the material loss of radically singular embodiment for which there is no resurrection. As an analytic, mortuary poetics takes anti-Black racism and antagonism against queer and trans life as salient contexts within which both cultural objects and their creators work through death and mourning. In sum, this dissertation tarries with both the possibilities and limits of mortuary poetics in ways that touch upon broader theoretical and methodological questions of ongoing historical opacity, retrieval, and continuity that animate the study of religion, literature, psychic life, race, gender, and sexuality.

Adviser: Amy Hollywood

◼ Dustin D. Klinger [PhD]

Language and Logic in the Graeco-Arabic Tradition: A History of Propositional Analysis from the Hellenic Commentators on Aristotle to Theories of the Proposition in Arabic Philosophy, 900–1350
This dissertation is a diachronic study of the philosophical problem of predication in the Graeco-Arabic tradition. It traces discussions on the role of the copula in predication from Aristotle and the Greek commentators to Arabic philosophers active in the 8th/14th century. The dissertation makes accessible, often for the

first time, contributions to the age-old problem of predication by classical and post-classical Arabic philosophers. Thereby it contributes, on the one hand, to recent scholarship in Islamic intellectual history by documenting how Arabic logic developed into an area of lively research well after the Mongol sacking of Baghdād, an event still widely considered as marking the beginning of cultural and scientific decline. On the other hand, it contributes to a more global history of philosophy, by complementing historical scholarship on Western contributions to the problem of predication.

Part I engages with modern scholarship on the problem of predication. By revisiting the contributions of Frege, Russell, Wittgenstein and Davidson, as well as studying Aristotle's *De interpretatione* and its Greek commentators, several aspects of Geachean views on the history of logic are scrutinized. Part II discusses the contributions of the classical Arabic philosophers Fārābī, Avicenna, Avempace, and Averroes against the historical backdrop of the translation movement. In part based on manuscript research, Part III presents and discusses, the contributions of nine sometimes little-known figures in Arabic philosophy: Fakhr al-Din al-Rāzī, Afḍal al-Dīn al-Khūnajī; Athīr al-Dīn al-Abharī, Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī, Najm al-Dīn al-Kātibī, Sirāj al-Dīn al-Urmawī; Shams al-Dīn al-Samarqandī, al-ʿAllāma al-Ḥillī, and Quṭb al-Dīn al-Rāzī al-Taḥtānī.

Adviser: Khaled El-Rouayheb

Kelsi M. Morrison-Atkins [ThD]

The Rhetoric of Dress and Adornment and the Construction of Identity in Early Christianity

In the cultural landscape of the ancient Mediterranean, clothing was not only a covering for the body but also functioned as an ideological system that worked to construct and stratify categories of identity and social roles. On the one hand, garments themselves, such as the *stola* and the *toga*, materialized hierarchal categories of gender, class, and citizenship under the Roman Empire. On the other, women's compliance with normative clothing practices—or lack thereof—served as a measure of broader social and moral decline for elite male writers. The early Christ movement emerged within this world, where clothing ideologies materialized and naturalized binaries of male and female, free and enslaved, citizen and foreigner.

From the proclamation that the baptized have put on Christ to prescriptions regarding how women should dress in the household and assembly, early Christ followers took up cultural norms of dressing and adorning to fashion arguments about the social organization of the community and relations of power within it. This dissertation analyzes the rhetorics of dress and adornment—or arguments that use clothing practices to "think with"—embedded within citations of the baptismal formula and the household/domestic codes. These key examples highlight the ways in which early Christians used dress and adornment in arguments on both

sides of debates about equality, piety, and social relationality within and outside of the community.

Using a feminist rhetorical critical and materialist historical framework, this dissertation considers dressing and adorning at the intersection of metaphor and material practices and highlights how structures of power are variously shored up and contested through the deployment of clothing rhetorics. Rather than identifying the notion of being "clothed in Christ" as distinct from calls to cast aside luxurious garments in early Christian discourse, this dissertation understands both as embroiled in political and theological struggles for equality in early Christianity. In this way, clothing functioned as both garment and argument, and could be utilized at once to justify systems of subordination and to fuel movements for transformation.

Adviser: Elisabeth Schüssler Fiorenza

▩ Haruka Umetsu Cho [PhD]

The Newly Forming Flesh of Women and the Divinity: A Theological Reading of Modern Japanese Fiction

This dissertation performs a theological reading of modern Japanese fiction and poetry written during the Meiji-Taishō period (the late 1860s–1930s), the period informed by the transmission, adaption, and response to Western modernity and coloniality. This work examines Christian language and images in Japanese literary works as both socio-cultural and theological phenomena. The main focus will be given to themes of the divine, eros, and women's flesh. Through a close reading of texts written by Kitahara Hakushū (1885–1942), Yosano Akiko (1878–1942), Hagiwara Sakutarō (1886–1942), Shimazaki Tōson (1872–1943), Arishima Takeo (1878–1923), and Akutagawa Ryūnosuke (1892–1927), this work explores how the Christian notion of the Incarnation was brought to, mutated, and increased its radicality in a textual space, particularly in regard to women's bodies, gender, and sex/sexuality. I contend that these authors' texts manifest the radical freedom of the Incarnate, who interacts with women who have stigmatized flesh and souls, in intimate and surprising ways. Ultimately, in this work, I explore the meanings and roles of texts in our embodied experiences of religion in modernity, and also consider how literary experiments disturb and broaden the scope of theological writing.

Adviser: Mark D. Jordan

▩ Lina Verchery [PhD]

Impersonal Intimacy: Relational Ethics and Self-Cultivation in a Transnational Chinese Buddhist Monastic Network

This dissertation is an ethnographic study of relational ethics in a contemporary Chinese Buddhist monastic organization, the *Fajie Fojiao Zonghui*, active throughout East Asia, Southeast Asia, and North America. The study explores how *Fajie* members negotiate a paradox at the heart of the monastic vocation: the tension

between the Buddhist ideal of interpersonal non-attachment and the irreducibly social nature of everyday monastic life. Drawing on scriptural, commentarial, and ethnographic data from multi-sited fieldwork, this study argues that *Fajie* monastic training aims to reconfigure conventional notions of intimacy and affection, sublimating personal bonds into forms of impersonal intimacy.

Drawing on Ilana Silber's notion of the "segregative-connective principle"—a structural paradigm that describes the state of simultaneous separation and connection that characterizes Buddhist monastic and lay relations—this study argues that maintaining the tension between distance and closeness is the cornerstone of relational ethics in *Fajie*. As such, this study challenges simplistic conceptions of intimacy as mere closeness, and argues that difference, distance, and separation are at the heart of the impersonal forms of intimate relationality valorized in *Fajie*. This is illustrated by analyzing the segregative-connective principle on three different levels, each gradually expanding in scope: 1) the micro-social level of daily life in *Fajie* monasteries, 2) the global level of *Fajie's* transnational cosmopolitanism, and 3) the cosmological level, where the *Fajie* vision of karma and rebirth challenges narrow conceptions of the human subject. On each level, we find that the tension between distance and closeness informs *Fajie* notions of personhood and self-cultivation, and these in turn shape the nature and scope of relational ethics.

This is also the first long-form academic study of *Fajie* and its founder, Hsuan Hua (1918–1995), a historically significant but largely overlooked figure in scholarship on contemporary Chinese Buddhism. I suggest this lacuna is in part due to longstanding biases in the study of modern Buddhism, which tend to perpetuate problematic binaries of "traditional" versus "modern," "east" versus "west," and "global" versus "local," all of which are challenged by the case study of *Fajie*. Methodologically, this study aims to offer an alternative to these binaries, and to model a *rapprochement* between fieldwork-based ethnographic methods and the textual and doctrinal foci of traditional Buddhist Studies. While contributing to current research on contemporary Chinese Buddhist monastic life, this study also raises broad interdisciplinary questions about the nature of intimacy, relationality, kinship, and collectivism. As such, it hopes to engage wider debates in the Humanities, particularly in the fields of Buddhist Ethics, Religious Studies, Anthropology, and Critical Theory.

Advisers: Janet Gyatso and James Robson

■ Joseph Leonardo Vignone [PhD]

Bodies of Knowledge: Medicine, Memory, and Enhancement in Medieval Islam
In this dissertation I study the privileged place of medical erudition in the ethical literature (*ādāb*) written by Muslim scholarly elites (ulema) from the tenth through fourteenth centuries. Authors of *ādāb* in this period were keen to learn whether certain activities, drugs, and surgical procedures might augment intellectual capacity on a humoral basis. In arguing for or against these interventions, they engaged in

sophisticated natural philosophical discussions on the topics of scholarly aptitude, bodily health, and psychological well-being.

In the dissertation's first chapter I recount the drug and surgical therapies medieval physicians recommended for improving the functioning of the brain. In the second I situate this discourse within *ādāb*'s understanding of the human body as being ruled by its humoral nature. The precise influence that this nature had over one's intellectual capacities was always open to debate, but I show that, by the twelfth century, authors of *ādāb* were willing to admit a degree of fluidity to natures, allowing for meaningful intervention along the lines suggested by physicians. As familiarity with natural philosophy and theoretical medicine gained professional prestige among the ulema, matters of mental fitness and bodily health attained an equally important devotional dimension. The third chapter explores how heavily the pietistic consequences of intellectual illness weighed on the ulema's understanding of themselves as the custodians of religious knowledge. This led authors of *ādāb* to cite the advice of medical authorities alongside recommendations made by the Prophet and his Companions in order to protect the ulema from ill health and bad memory. Authors of *ādāb* additionally argued that the taxing nature of the ulema's education might promote such maladies in the first place. In the final chapter I therefore describe the measures they suggested for limiting the hardships of the scholarly lifestyle, with specific reference to the health of the ulema's hearts and spirits.

In addition to describing the role medicine played in the professional formation of the ulema, demonstrating *ādāb*'s interest in the physical and mental health of its readership sheds further light on the natural scientific, devotional, and affective dimensions of medieval Islamic scholarly society.

Advisers: Khaled El-Rouayheb and Ahmed Ragab

◼ Alexis G. Waller [ThD]

Forgeries of Desire: The Erotics of Authenticity in New Testament Historiography
Situated at the intersection of the study of the New Testament, the theorizing of Christian origins, and queer historiography, this dissertation examines the ways in which biblical scholarship's pursuit of historical authenticity normalizes some epistemic desires while stigmatizing others. I focus specifically on a set of New Testament and early Christian texts whose authenticity is disputed—texts characterized by some rubrics as pseudepigraphical and by others as forged—and the arguments that arose over the course of those texts' receptions. Rather than making a case for or against the authenticity of any of the texts read here, this project analyzes how discourses of authenticity and forgery, as two terms in a binary constructed to distinguish the normative from the deviant, inflected as both terms are by the forces of canon and orthodoxy, designate acceptable and unacceptable—*perverse*, even— forms of contact across texts and times. The deployment of forgery discourses in New Testament scholarship can be read, I propose, as enabling or curtailing certain

kinds of readerly and writerly relations—relations that speak to a kind of *historical desire* and *disavowed eroticism* that structure biblical scholarship's historicizing truth claims generally, especially when its traditional historiographical commitments constrain certain desires and modes of identification by marking them as intelligible and properly historical, while rendering others as historically illegible.

Thus, this project also investigates how historical-critical biblical scholarship negotiates its unease regarding the relational nature of interpretation and the place of the historian's desire. I entertain the question of whether a paradox—that biblical studies is passionately attached to and structured by its notions of objective history—is what undermines the recovery of the intimate politics and affective disavowals that discourses of authenticity perform in disputes on "falsely" authored texts. Ultimately, I suggest that biblical history poses its own forms of "queer" history, queer in the sense of disrupted, broken open, by diverse—and perverse, by many of its own dominant and regularly enforced standards—lines of desire and imagination. Engaging resources offered by queer theoretical and affective engagements with historiography that are particularly helpful for parsing relations between the erotic, relational, and theological negotiations in forgery scholarship in biblical studies specifically, I ultimately wonder if we might need to grapple with the epistemological implications of the fact that all our histories are forgeries of desire.

Adviser: Amy Hollywood