

**DR. MARIA DE CILLIS**  
**Senior Research Associate and Managing Editor**  
**Department of Academic Research and Publications**  
**The Institute of Ismaili Studies – London**  
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## **PROFILE**

Maria De Cillis holds a PhD in Islamic Studies from the Department of Near and Middle East, Faculty of Languages and Cultures, School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). She has taught on the Qur'an at SOAS and on Islamic theology at Birkbeck, University of London. She continues lecturing on *Falsafa*, *Kalām* and Shi'i history at the Institute of Ismaili Studies. Her research interests include the Islamic tradition in the formative period, particularly Islamic theology, the study of the Qur'an, Islamic philosophy and Islamic mysticism. In addition she focuses on Shi'i Islam and Ismaili philosophy.

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## **EDUCATION**

**2006-2010 SOAS - School of Oriental and African Studies - University of London, UK**

**PhD in Islamic Studies**

Received a PhD from the Department of Near and Middle East, Faculty of Languages and Cultures. Areas of Study: Mediaeval Islamic Theology, Philosophy and Sufism.

PhD thesis: "The Discourse of Compromise: Theoretical Constructs of Free Will and Predestination in the Works of Avicenna, al-Ghazali and Ibn 'Arabi".

**2003-2004 SOAS - School of Oriental and African Studies - University of London, UK**

**MA Islamic Studies (Distinction)**

MA in Islamic Studies from the Department of Near and Middle East, Faculty of Languages and Cultures. Subjects of study:

- *Qur'an: Language, Style and Translation into English.*
- *Modern Trends in Islam.*
- *Islamic Texts*, including Islamic jurisprudence, Islamic theology, *Qur'an* and *Hadith* studies.

Title of MA Dissertation: "Ibn Sina's Essence-Existence Theory and its Legacy with the Concept of the Necessary Existent".

**1995-2001 Universita' degli Studi di Napoli "L'Orientale", Naples, Italy**  
**Bachelor's Degree (Hons)**

Faculty of Languages and Literatures. Department of Arabic and English Studies.

Title of thesis: "Libertà e Necessità nella Teologia Islamica". Supervision by A. Ventura.

## **FURTHER ACADEMIC QUALIFICATIONS**

**2016-2018 Fellowship Higher Education Academy. Kings College London  
PG Certificate in Academic Practice in Higher Education (PGCAPHE)**

Subjects of study:

- *Assessment and Feedback*
- *Internationale Perspectives in Teaching and Learning in Higher Education*
- *Enhancing Academic Practice*

**2009 –2010 SOAS - School of Oriental and African Studies - University of London, UK**

**Academic Teaching Development - GTA (Graduate Teaching Assistant) Training Programme**

Completion of Teaching Assistant Training Course.

## **WORK EXPERIENCE**

**Present Day The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, UK**

Department of Academic Research and Publications, **Senior Research Associate** and **Managing Editor** of the *Shi'i Heritage Series*

- Researching and preparing for publication of texts on Medieval Shi'i/Ismaili philosophy, theology, law etc.
- Preparing translations and critical editions of Shi'i and Ismaili texts.
- Presenting papers in meetings and conferences.
- Lecturing and Marking.
- Reviewing and copy-editing volumes proposed for publication.

**2011-2013 The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, UK**

Department of Academic Research and Publications, **Research Associate** and **Shi'i Studies Coordinator and Co-Coordinator**

## **TEACHING EXPERIENCE**

**2019-**

**Present The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, UK**

- Co-Leader for the **History of the Islamic World I** Module (30 credits) – part of MA Muslim Societies and Civilisations, validated by SOAS University of London and offered on the Secondary Teacher Education Programme (STEP).

**2016-**

**Present The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, UK**

- Co-Leader for the Module: **Key Moments in Shi'i History** GPISH - Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities.

**2011-  
2019**

**The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, UK**

- Co-Leader for the Module: **Traditions of Enquiry** STEP - Secondary Teacher Education Programme: (3 Lectures on Islamic Philosophy: '*Falsafa*: The Hellenistic Intellectual Legacy Appropriated', 'Al-Fārābī and the *falsafa*'s enquiry of religion and philosophy, prophecy and revelation', 'Ibn Sīnā's naturalization of Philosophy'; 2 Lectures on Islamic Theology: 'The Formation of Islamic Theology', 'Classical Topics in Islamic Theology' (Academic Years from 2014 to 2019)
- Guest Lecturer for the Module: **Law, Ethics and Society** GPISH – Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities, (Academic Year 2018-2019)
- Convener for the Module: **Topics in Islamic Intellectual Traditions** (GPISH) (Academic Year 2014-2015)
- Co-Lecturer for the Module: **Shi'i Islam: History and Doctrines** (GPISH) (Academic Year 2011-2012)

**2009-2010 SOAS - School of Oriental and African Studies - University of London,  
Co-Lecturer in Islamic Studies**

- Co-Lecturer for the Module: **Introduction to the Qur'an** (Undergraduates).

**2009-2010 Birkbeck, University of London  
Lecturer in Islamic Studies**

- Lecturer for the Module: **Islamic Theology and Philosophy** (Postgraduates).

## **PUBLICATIONS**

- **Monograph: *Salvation and Destiny in Islam: The Shi'i Ismaili Perspective of Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī***. (I. B. Tauris and the Institute of Ismaili Studies, London and New York, 2018)

- **Co-Edited Volume:** *Esotérisme shi'ite, ses racines et ses prolongements. Shi'i Esotericism: Its Roots and Developments*, Amir-Moezzi, De Cillis, De Smet, Mir-Kasimov, eds., (Brepols, Turnhout, 2016).
- **Monograph:** *Free Will and Predestination in Islamic Thought. Theoretical Compromises in the Works of Avicenna, al-Ghazālī and Ibn 'Arabī*, (Routledge, London and New York, 2014). This monograph has been translated into Arabic as:  
  
*Bayna al-ḥurriyya al-insāniyya wa'l-qadar al-ilahiyya fi'l-fikr al-islāmiyya*. Translated by Muḥammad Salāḥ (The National Centre for Translation, Cairo, 2019).
- **Book Chapter:** 'Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī and Mu'tazilism: An Enquiry into an Opaque Relationship', in *Raison et quête de la sagesse Hommage à Christian Jambet*, (Brepols, 2020), pp. 229-257.
- **Single-author Journal Article:** 'La Questione del libero Arbitrio nel pensiero Islamico Classico'. Rivista *Fondazione Oasis. Cristiani e Musulmani nel Mondo Globale* 26 (2017). In Italian. Translated into English as 'Muslims and Free Will' in *Oasis. Christians and Muslims in the Global World*, 26 (2017). <https://www.oasiscenter.eu/it/i-musulmani-e-il-libero-arbitrio>
- **Book Chapter:** 'A Preliminary Study on the Significance of *Qaḍā'* and *Qadar* in the Eighth Chapter of al-Kirmānī's *Kitāb al-Riyāḍ'* in *Esotérisme shi'ite, ses racines et ses prolongements: Shi'i Esotericism: Its Roots and Developments*, Amir-Moezzi, De Cillis, De Smet, Mir-Kasimov, eds., (Brepols, Turnhout, 2016), pp. 345-368.
- **Single-author Journal Article:** 'Discussions on Love, Determinism and Providence in Ibn Sina (Avicenna) and al-Kirmani' Conference Proceedings (International Conference of Arabic and Islamic Studies), Venice, June 13-14, 2016.
- **Single-author Journal Article:** 'Avicenna on Matter, Matter's Disobedience and Evil: Reconciling Metaphysical Stances and Qur'anic Perspectives', *Transcendent Philosophy* 12 (2011), pp. 147-168. The above article has been edited and published on the IIS website in 2013 <http://iis.ac.uk/academic-article/avicenna-matter-disobedience-matter-and-evil-reconciling-metaphysical-stances-and-qur-anic>
- **Single-author Journal Article:** 'Al-Kirmānī's Perspective on Spiritual Assistance and the Accomplishment of Prophethood in the Story of Moses and Shu'ayb'. (Forthcoming).

- **Single-author Journal Article:** ‘The Concept of Time in al-Kirmānī and al-Sijistānī’ (Forthcoming).
- **8 Encyclopaedia Entries/5 Encyclopaedia Translations of entries** for the *Biographical Dictionary of Islamic Civilisation and Culture*, Mustafa Shah and Abdel Haleem, ed. (I. B. Tauris, Forthcoming, 2022)

Abū Ya'lā Ibn al-Farrā  
 Abū'l-Mu'in al-Nasafī  
 Ishāq ibn Hunayn  
 Abū Ishāq al-Isfarāyīnī  
 Izz al-Dawla Ibn Kammūna  
 Ja'far al-Barmakī  
 Al-Kharrāz  
 Al-Khāzin  
 al-Ḥanafī, Abū Ḥanīfah (Translation)  
 Al-Haytham b. 'Abdar-Raḥmān  
 (Translation)  
 Muḥammad b. 'Umar b. Wāqid al-Wāqidī  
 (Translation)  
 'Ubaydah b. Zayd (or Rā'īṭah) al-Baṣrī an-  
 Numayrī (Translation)  
 Muḥammad Ibn Ishāq ibn Yasār ibn  
 Khiyār (Translation)

- **1 Encyclopaedia entry:** ‘Free Will, Predestination, and Acquisition’ for the *Dictionary of Islamic Bioethics*, Oxford University Press (Forthcoming).
- **Book Review:** Özgür Koca *Islam, Causality, and Freedom. From the Medieval to the Modern Era* (Cambridge University Press, 2020). Pp. 287 in the *Religious Studies Journal*, Cambridge University Press, September 2021.
- **Book Review:** Seyfeddin Kara, *In Search of Ali ibn Abi Talib's Codex: History and Traditions of the Earliest Copy of the Qur'an*. The Review of *Qur'anic Research*, the online companion to the International Qur'anic Studies Association (IQSA). (14 July 2019) <https://members.iqsaweb.org/page-18221>
- **Article review:** ‘Divine and Celestial Knowledge in relation to Determinism in the Philosophy of Avicenna’. *The Toronto Journal of Theology*, November 2020.
- **Article review:** Comparisons in Muslim Anti-Christian Writings in Christian Iberia and Exile’. *Entangled Religions - Interdisciplinary Journal for the Study of Religious Contact and Transfer*, June 2020.

- **Article review:** ‘The Review of Free Will based on the Substantive and Functional Approach on the Imago Dei Motif in Ibn ‘Arabī’s Thought’. *The International Journal of the Platonic Tradition*, September, 2016.

### TRANSLATIONS and CRITICAL EDITIONS

- *The Proof of God: Introduction and English Translation* of M. A. Amir-Moezzi, *La Preuve de Dieu. La mystique shi’ite à travers l’œuvre de Kulaynī (ix<sup>e</sup>-x<sup>e</sup> siècle)*, (Forthcoming, 2022).
- Translation from the French of the Introductory paper by Prof M. Yahia featuring in *The Study of Shi’i Islam. History, Theology and Law*, F. Daftary and G. Miskinzoda, ed., (London, 2014), pp. 253-270.
- Supervised the translation into Arabic of *Free Will and Predestination in Islamic Thought. Theoretical Compromises in the Work of Avicenna, al-Ghazālī and Ibn ‘Arabī*. (Published as ***Bayna al-ḥurriyya al-insāniyya wa’l-qadar al-ilahiyya fi’l-fikr al-islāmiyya***, National Center for Translation (NCT) Cairo, 2019).

### CONFERENCES, SEMINARS and WORKSHOPS

- **Chair Panel:** Philosophical and Theological Debates related to Ismaili Doctrines for the IIS International Conference *Islamic Traditions in ‘Greater Khurāsān’: Ismailis, Sufis and Sunnis* (24-27 February 2021)
- **Chair for the Institute of Ismaili Studies Second PhD Seminar**  
Chairing the panel for: The Conceptual History of Wilaya: Shared World View of Shi’ism and Sufism by Shayesteh Ghofrani, University of Exeter; The Use of Hadith Literature in Reinforcing Shi’i Identity in the Safavid Period by Zarangez Karimova, University of Exeter; The Development of the Mystical Theology and Ethics of Rindi in Persian Poetry from the Eleventh to Fifteenth Centuries by Rafiq Ajani, University of Exeter (November 2020)
- **Guest Speaker at the 10<sup>th</sup> International Colloquium for the Société Internationale d’Histoire des Sciences et de la Philosophie Arabes et Islamiques SIHSPAI (Science, Philosophy and Kalām in Islamic Civilization: The Old and the New).** Paper to be presented: *Kalām and Falsafa in al-Kirmānī’s Discourse: an Ismaili Insight on the Intellect, Soul and the Human Acquisition of Salvation*. (Naples, 9-11 September 2019).
- **Book Launch and Lecture:** *Salvation and Destiny in Islam: Sketching Ḥamīd al-Dīn al-Kirmānī’s Views on the qaḍā’ wa’l-qadar Debate* (13 May 2019), The Aga Khan Centre, London.

- **Guest Speaker at the Muhiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society (MIAS LATINA):**  
Presented paper: "Immutabilità e Perfezione nell'Unicità dell'Esistenza: Un'Analisi Comparativa tra Sufismo e Neoplatonismo Con accenni alla Teoria Ismailita". Turin, Sala dei Lettori (22-23 September 2018).
- **Guest Speaker at the 34<sup>th</sup> International Symposium for the Muhiddin Ibn 'Arabi Society:** Presented paper: 'Free Will and Predestination in Ibn 'Arabi's Thought. Between Philosophy and Mysticism', SOAS (06/05/2017).
- **Conference paper: BRAIS (British Association for Islamic Studies):**  
Presented paper: '*Al-Kirmānī's Perspective on Spiritual Assistance and the Accomplishment of Prophethood in the Story of Moses and Shu'ayb*', University of Chester (11-13/04/2017)
- **Chair of the panel** on Sufi-Ismaili Relationships for the Conference '**Intellectual Interactions in the Islamic World: The Ismaili Tread**' (Convenor. O. Mir-Kasimov), The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, 19-21 October 2016.
- **Participation to the Workshop** 'Introduction to Arabic Manuscript Studies' (Led by Prof Adam Gacek), The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 4-8 April, 2016.
- **Conference paper:** 'Discussions on Love and Providence in Avicenna and al-Kirmani', International Conference of Arabic and Islamic Studies, Venice, Italy, 13-14 June, 2016.
- **Lecture** 'Al-Kirmani's Philosophy' for **ITREB**, The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, October, 2012.
- **Presented paper:** 'Ibn Sina and al-Kirmani on God, Creation, Emanation and Origination', The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, July 2011.
- **Conference Co-ordinator.** Collaboration for the organisation of the conference "The Ontology of the Soul in Medieval Arabic Thought" held at SOAS in September 2010.

## **ACADEMIC ADMINISTRATION, BOARDS AND COMMITTEES**

**June-**

**July 2019**

**The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London, UK**

**Recruitment Manager for the IIS Research Associate in Ismaili Studies Position.**

Responsibilities included:

- Examined 23 applications.
- Worked with other recruitment manager to shortlist the candidates and discuss the organisation of the recruitment process.

- Coordinated the work of the interview panel.
- Compiled and circulated documents related to the interview
- Served as a member of the interview panel on the set interviews' dates.

**2018-2019 Writer for the MA Muslim Societies and Civilizations (STEP)**

Serving as a writer for the approved MA programme for STEP students in association with SOAS. Developing syllabus and academic contents (abstracts, readings, seminars) for the 20 sessions in the module: History of the Islamic World I.

**2018-2019 Member of the Annemarie Schimmel Fellowships Committee**  
(October 2018).

**2018-2019 Interview on my monograph *Salvation and Destiny in Islam*** produced in honour of the Donors Event organised at the IIS in September 2018.

**2017-2018** Serving as a member of the **Academic Team selected to investigate and assess the quality of Online Encyclopaedias' entries** on Islam in general and Ismailism in particular.

**2013-**

**Present Day Managing Editor for the *Shi'i Heritage Series*. Shi'i Studies Unit.**

Academic Reviews of proposed projects and co-ordination of authors and editors' works and timetables.

Communicating the value of the proposed works discussing aspects of Shi'i Studies with senior management, evaluating quality of scholarly material.

**Academic Reviews of proposed projects for the *Shi'i Heritage Series*:**

- *Intellectual Interactions in the Islamic World: The Ismaili Thread*, O. Mir-Kasimov (ed.), (I.B. Tauris and the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2020)
- *Shi'i Islam and Sufism: Classical Views and Modern Perspectives* Mathieu Terrier and Denis Hermann, (ed.), (I.B. Tauris and the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2020)
- *Words of Power* by O. Mir-Kasimov (I.B. Tauris and the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2015)
- *Controversies in Formative Islam: The Ghulāt and their Beliefs* by M. Asatryan (I.B. Tauris and the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2016)
- *Intellectual Interactions in the Islamic World: The Ismaili Thread* edited by O. Mir-Kasimov (I.B. Tauris and the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2019)
- *Shiism and Sufism in Early Modern and Modern Times* edited by M. Terrier and D. Hermann (I.B. Tauris and the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2019)
- *Shi'i Thought in Safavid Iran: The Philosophical School of Isfahan* by J. Esots (forthcoming 2021)

- *The Authority of the Jusists in Twelver Shiism* by. D. Stewart (under review)
- *The Proof of the Age: An English Translation of the Kitab al-Hujja* by O. Sachabrodt (under review)

**2015-2017 Chair of the Plagiarism Committee. The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London.**

Reviewing assessment papers regarding which concerns of academic irregularities have been raised.

Identifying the validity/severity of the offence/s.

Conducting a hearing of the relevant student/s when necessary. Deciding appropriate penalty/ies for the offence/s in keeping with the penalty guidelines.

**2011-2012**

**2012-2013 Shi'i Studies Coordinator and Co-Coordinator. Shi'i Studies Unit. The Institute of Ismaili Studies, London.**

Co-ordinating and supervising works by scholars in the Shi'i Studies Unit at the Department of Academic Research and Publications. Developing plans and provide guidelines for projects.

Identifying professional members of staff suitable to develop projects relevant to the field of Shi'i Studies.

Outlining the research procedure approved by DARP to be followed by internal and external scholars involved in projects.

**SUPERVISING STUDENTS**

**2020-Present GPISH Students Research Supervisor**

**2018-2019 PhD Scholarship Academic Contact.**

**2016-**

**Present Day STEP Students Academic Advisor for**

Ensuring the monitoring of two STEP Students' Progresses in their Academic endeavours through planned meetings, exchange of emails and general guidance.

**GRANTS AND AWARDS**

Arts and Humanities Research Council (AHRC), Doctoral Award, 2007 - 2009.

Ouseley Memorial Scholarship (SOAS), Doctoral Award, 2008.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Award (Italy and Tunisia), IUO, 2004 - 2005.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs Award (Italy and Syria), IUO, 2000 - 2001.

## **LANGUAGES**

Italian: Native Speaker

English: Fluent

Arabic: Advanced Knowledge

French: Advanced Knowledge

Spanish: Intermediate Knowledge

Latin: Intermediate Knowledge