

Kayla Dang, Ph.D. (Yale), is the John Renard Professor of Islamic Studies at Saint Louis University. Her current research, which engages a variety of classical languages (including Arabic, Armenian, Greek, Latin, Syriac, and Middle Persian), focuses on the history of the Zoroastrian priesthood from antiquity into the medieval period. This project forms one outgrowth of her broader interest in the interactions of Muslims, Christians, Jews, and Zoroastrians in the late antique and medieval Middle East. She examines the relationship between religion and history through each of these groups' continual re-narrativization of the past, that is, the attempts to tell and retell their stories in ever-changing social and political contexts until today. Her first book will illustrate how ninth-century Zoroastrian priests shaped the Zoroastrian tradition as we know it today, and furthermore how they did so not in isolation (as is usually supposed) but as part of Islamic society—engaging with Muslim intellectuals, with the support of Muslim rulers, and navigating the sectarian politics of the time.