3rd Young Researchers' Indo-Persian Conference

May 31st-June 1st, 2025

at

ILCAA, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies (Japon, 〒183-0003 Tokyo, Fuchu, Asahicho, 3 Chome−１１)

and Online

(Day 1: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/qBgNMZVhTl6Fuh1FmRR_NA
Day 2: https://us02web.zoom.us/meeting/register/y80jP2c4QkKWU9iUh1DRrg)

Organised by:

Victor Baptiste (EPHE-GREI) and Raffaello De León-Jones Diani (EHESS-CESAH)

Co-organised by:

Prof. Satoshi Ogura (ILCAA, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies)

Presentation:

The field of Indo-Persian studies has witnessed a renewal of interest over the last decades, with contributions coming from all over the world, many focusing on aspects of translation and cultural confluences. Given the origins of this term as a linguistic description of the variety of Persian used in South Asia, it is not a surprise that the field should be dominated by textual studies. Yet, since its inception in the nineteenth century, it has also always served to designate something of a shared culture between India and Iran. The concept has proven especially fruitful in historical writing on South Asia, covering that period which has been defined by Richard M. Eaton as "Persianate India" (1000-1765).

However, rather than simply a catchall category invented to facilitate the lumping together of several centuries of South Asian history, "Indo-Persian" is a dynamic category that seeks not to divide the cultural contributions into originally Indic and originally Persianate constituents but rather emphasises the originality and vitality of cultural forms that, though emanating from a different geographical area, took root in South Asia and thrived. It also goes against an old trope: that of a self-sufficient India that existed disconnected from the rest of the world until Europeans came and forced it into their orbit. Beyond nationalisms, religious divides and linguistic fragmentation, Indo-Persian studies seek to shed light on an important period of not only South Asian but also Central Asian and ultimately Global history.

Schedule:

Day 1 (May 31ˢᵗ)

10:00-10:10: Opening Speech by Victor Baptiste, Raffaello De León-Jones Diani and Prof. Satoshi Ogura

10:10-10:25: Keynote Address by Nobuaki Kondo, Director of the ILCAA

Session 1: Encounters (Chair: Fabrizio Speziale)

        10:30-11:00: "Sanskrit catarchic astrology in North-Indian Persian astrological manuscripts" by Jean Arzoumanov

        11:00-11:30: "A Jain Ritual at the Mughal Court" by Raffaello De León-Jones Diani

        11:30-11:45: Coffee Break

        11:45-12:15: "Confluence of Faiths and Languages: Understanding the *Pranami* Literary Tradition of 17th Century Indo-Persian World" by **Mohd Rehmatullah**

        12:15-12:45: "The Development of the Theory of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* (Oneness of Being) in Mughal India: Ontological Analysis of Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī's Persian Commentary on Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* (the Bezels of Wisdom)" by Yohei Moriguchi

        12:45-13:15: General Discussion

  13:15-14:45: Lunch Break

  Session 2: Translation (Chair: Satoshi Ogura)

        14:45-15:15: "From David to Rāma" by Fabio Pagliani

        15:15-15:45: "Antinomian Traits in Feyżī's *Nal-u Daman*" by Fatemeh Naghshirvan

        15:45-16:00: Coffee Break

        16:00-16:30: "Persian Poetry in Disguise: *Madhumālatī*'s Intertext" by Victor Baptiste

        16:30-17:00: "Knowledge Transmission through the Brajbhasha Poetry in a Multilingual Space: Intertextuality, Translations, and Commentaries in the Mughal Age" by **Nagwant Singh**

        17:00-17:30: General Discussion

  18:30: Gala Dinner

Day 2 (June 1ˢᵗ)

Session 3: Delhi Sultanate and Mughal Courts and Services (Chair: Ayako Ninomiya)

        10:30-11:00: "The Emergence of Medieval Indo-Persian Literature: A Study of Amir Khusraw's *Dibācha-i Divān-i Ghurrat al-Kāmāl*" by Mehdi Sham Roshan

11:00-11:30: "Shahjahan and The Emergence of a Messianic King: Reassessing Narrative Strategies in Indo-Persian Histories" by Kirti Kanojia

11:30-11:45: Coffee Break

11:45-12:15: "At the Interstices of Empires: *Naukri* or Service Culture in Early-Modern South Asia" by Pooja Hazra

12:15-12:45: General Discussion

12:45-14:00: Lunch Break

Session 4: Modern (Chair: Masato Toriya)

14:00-14:30: "The Yunani Hakim tradition in early modern Afghanistan" by Riccardo Bonotto

14:30-15:00: "The Heritage of Perso-Islamic Culture in British India: Mehr 'Alī Shāh's Philosophical Elaboration of Sufi Thought" by Ryusei Homma

15:00-15:30: "Echoes of Indo-Persian Legacy: Shibli Nu'mani and the Articulation of Urdu Literature in the Colonial Era" by **Faheemuddin**

15:30-15:45: Coffee Break

Session 5: Arts (Chair: Yui Kanda)

15:45-16:15: "The World of 'Rāgamālā': Jain Musicologists on the Indo-Persian Stage" by **Ayesha Sheth**

16:15-16:45: "The Culture of Visualizing Sound in an 18th-Century North Indian Music Theory Text" by Haruo Inoue

16:45-17h15: "Recovering Female *Javanmardi* (Young-Manliness) from the Victoria and Albert Museum Mughal Collection" by Amanda Caterina Leong

17h15-17h45: "The Zulf of the Beloved: Idealized Beauty and Mughal Imitative Practices in Portraiture during the Early Seventeenth Century" by Hasan Nisar

17:45-18:20: General Discussion

18:20-18:30: Closing Address

18:30-18:50: Tabla Performance by Haruo Inoue

Programme:

1) Sanskrit catarchic astrology in North-Indian Persian astrological manuscripts

This talk will investigate the practice of Sanskrit catarchic astrology (*muhūrtaśāstra*) amongst Indian Muslim Persophone astronomer-astrologers in North India between the 16th and 19th centuries. Sanskrit catarchic astrology, still practiced in India today, offered a system to determine auspicious and inauspicious moments (*muhūrta*) for any given action. Traditionally, Arabic and Persian astrological treatises also described their own system of catarchic astrology named *iḫtiyārāt*, following procedures which are notably different from the ones found in Sanskrit texts. In the context of the ever-growing intellectual exchanges between Persian and Sanskrit scholars in early modern India, a range of different Persian texts produced between the 16th and 19th centuries started to include extensive descriptions of prognostication procedures that closely mirror the practice of Sanskrit *pañcāṅga* catarchic astrology. This corpus has never been investigated and includes a series of Persian manuscripts containing almanacs as well as an astrologer's notebook. These almanacs bear witness to the continued currency of Sanskrit prognostication methods for Persophone astrologers. They are also the more visible side of astrological practice and complement the theoretical descriptions found in several detailed treatises on *jyotiṣa* in Persian. Another remarkable text is the *Niẓām al-nujūm*, composed under Aurangzeb by Abū Saʿīd al-Ḥusaynī al-Riżavī, which describes in detail different astrological procedures relative to *pañcāṅga* catarchic astrology. These texts demonstrate that Indian experts in astral sciences shared a culture where Arabic-Persian and Sanskrit knowledge systems were communicating and practiced alongside, often benefiting from the patronage of princes. Imperial and local courts seem indeed to have relied as much on Muslim *munajjim*s as on Hindu *jyotiṣa*s, fostering a collaboration resulting in textual translations and shared practices.

Jean Arzoumanov is the Ludo and Rosane Rocher Foundation postdoctoral fellow at the Department of South Asian Languages & Civilizations at the University of Chicago. As a historian of early modern and modern Persianate intellectual history in South Asia, Jean works on textual encounters between Islamicate and Indic cultures. In 2021, he obtained his PhD in South Asian Studies from the Université Sorbonne Nouvelle–Paris 3 with a dissertation on the representation of Indian sects and ascetics in Indo-Persian literature between the Mughal and colonial periods (16th-19th centuries). Building on this research for a forthcoming book, he studies the involvement of non-Muslim literati in Persian literary production, and more particularly in the development of Hindu devotional literature in Persian. In a recent article in the Journal of Persianate Studies, *he analyzes indepth the only two known Persian translations of Jain texts, dating from 1796. His other areas of interest include the history of astral sciences in early modern South Asia, and he has published several articles on the astronomical and astrological works of Mullā Farīd and Mullā Ṭayyib, two brothers active in the early 17th century.*

2) A Jain Ritual at the Mughal Court:

Starting in the 1580s (and according to some accounts earlier), Jains monks (*sūrī*) were officially invited at the Mughal court, where they engaged in different activities. While many activities of these monks would ultimately reflect on the local communities, some of these activities were turned towards the Mughals themselves. One such case is an apotropaic ritual performed for the well-being of the daughter of then Prince Salīm (later Jahāngīr).

Found in the *Mantrikarmacandravaṃśalīprabandha*—a Sanskrit chronicle of the life of Mantri Karmacandra Bacchavat, minister of the Rāja Rāyasiṃha—the ritual involved Jain monks and the Mughal court and shows the participation of the latter in a Jain practice. The episode is equally paralleled in another Jain narrative, the *Bhānucandragaṇicarita* by Siddhicandra.

While mention of the event is found in the literature pertaining to the Mughals' relationship with non-Muslim religious groups, a detailed analysis and translation of the passage still is to be done. The aim of this presentation is to bring to light this event and to frame it within the broader context of Jain-Mughal relations.

Raffaello De León-Jones Dian is a PhD candidate at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (Paris-Marseille) under the supervision of Prof. Fabrizio Speziale. He has a BA in Sanskrit from the University of Naples "L'Orientale" (2021) and a Masters in Religious Sciences from the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (2020) which he completed after a three-year cycle of "classes préparatoires" in France (2016). His previous research focused on narratives of Jesus in India. Along Mughal patronage of non-Muslim ascetics, he works on Indo-Persian manuscripts and Persian translations from Sanskrit.

3) Confluence of Faiths and Languages: Understanding the *Pranami* Literary Tradition of 17th Century Indo-Persian World

This paper examines the large corpus of Pranami vernacular devotional and hagiographic literature of the Pranami movement, which emerged in 17th-century Mughal India as a 'syncretic' religious tradition that attempted to combine aspects of Hinduism (Indic) and Islam (Persianate) to create an extraordinary multilingual belief system. Entrenched in the teachings of the Gujarati devotional figure, Mahamati Prannath, Pranami thought advocated a universalist/cosmopolitan worldview, stressing that the divine/God could be understood through multi-religious and polyvocal traditions, instead of elite/classical monolingual pathway. The Pranami tradition germinated within a multicultural society during the Mughal Empire, where encounters and interactions between diverse linguistic, cultural, and religious individuals and groups fostered an environment perfect for cross-cultural exchange. Pranami literary culture portrays this amalgamation of beliefs and languages in a wide range of texts composed in polyvocal forms, including Khadi Boli, Braj, Gujarati, Sindhi, and terminologies from Sanskrit, Persian, and Arabic sacred texts, depicting a remarkable openness to both Indian and Islamic ideas. The Pranami literary culture is primarily composed of *Bani* (composition of Mahamati Pran Nath) and *Bitak*. Bani are known as *Kuljam Swaroop* (*Qulzum Shareef*), the most important scripture of the Pranami community. This text, attributed to Prannath, brings together elements and ideas from Hinduism and Islamic sources appealing to the audiences of both faiths By integrating vernacular languages with classical ones, Pranami literature appealed to a wider audience, transcending linguistic and religious barriers and bringing people of different faiths together under 'syncretic' themes of divine love and mitigating differences. Apart from Bani texts, *Bitak* (hagiographic compositions) texts were also instrumental in propagating Pranami ideology, a polyvocal vernacular faith, and narrating social, political, religious, and cultural interactions and exchanges at the centre and frontiers of the Mughal Empire.

This paper argues and contextualizes the Pranami literary tradition within the wider socio-political and religious dynamics of Mughal India, where interfaith interactions and exchanges were both encouraged and contested. The Mughal policy of *sulh-e-kul* (universal tolerance), championed by Emperor Akbar, and the literary production of *Dabistan-e-Mazahib* and *Majma-ul-Bahrain*, to mention a few, provided a historical background for the Pranami ideas. Pranami hagiographers like Laldas were able to articulate a vision of 'syncretic' religious and linguistic coexistence that aligned with the Mughal ideal of a pluralistic society. However, the Pranami ideas also encountered resistance from orthodox religious authorities, Hinduism and Islam, who viewed its 'syncretism' with suspicion. Pranami literary culture in Mughal India stands as a historical example of religious and linguistic syncretism. Through its unique synthesis of Hindu and Islamic beliefs, expressed in multiple languages, it developed a distinct literary tradition that embodied the cultural multiplicity of its time. The Pranami literary contributions continue to provide insights into the ways in which religious communities can bridge divides and foster a 'syncretic' bent of mind. The legacy of Pranami literary culture represents the enduring value of inclusivity, dialogue, and mutual understanding, indicating how religious and linguistic boundaries can be transcended.

I am Mohd Rehmatullah. I have recently been awarded Ph.D from the department of History and Culture, Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi, India. Based on the readings of the

Vernacular manuscripts like Bani (Utterances of Mahamati Pran Nath) and Bitak (Hagiographic Accounts of close disciples of Pran Nath), my research interests lie in exploring the nature of religious interactions and understanding nuances of religious identities in Early Modern India, with a focus on the growth and emergence of the Pranamis, a regional religious community in 17th Century India. I have published articles in renowned journals such as Indian History Congress. I have also presented my work in national and international conferences like Listening in Many Tongues Conference at Institute of Ismaili Studies, Agha Khan Centre, London (Offline), Exploring the Frontiers of Research in Medieval Indian History, organized by Centre of Advanced Study, Department of History, Aligarh Muslim University. I am passionate about advancing knowledge in this field and am excited to share my research findings with the academic community

4) The Development of the Theory of *Waḥdat al-Wujūd* (Oneness of Being) in Mughal India: Ontological Analysis of Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī's Persian Commentary on Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam* (the Bezels of Wisdom).

This presentation focuses on Muḥibb Allāh b. Mubāriz Ilāhābādī (d. 1648) who was a Sufi of the Chishtī-Ṣābirī order and a mystical thinker of the theory of *waḥdat al-wujūd* (Oneness of Being) in the 17th century Mughal India. He wrote many treatises and commentaries on Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al Ḥikam* (Bezels of Wisdom) and *al-Futūḥāt al-Makkiyya* (Meccan Openings) and came to be referred as "Ibn 'Arabī al-Thānī (the second Ibn 'Arabī)". In this talk, I analyze one of Ilāhābādī's Persian commentaries and present a prominent example of the interpretation of *waḥdat al-wujūd*, especially Ibn 'Arabī's own thought in Indian subcontinent. I begin by briefly outlining the history of the acceptance of *waḥdat al-wujūd* theory in India, with an emphasis on the important role played in this regard by the Persian language. Next, I will address and correct a typical misunderstanding of the development of *waḥdat al-wujūd* in Mughal India: namely, that the alleged conflict between *waḥdat al-wujūd* and *waḥdat al-shuhūd* (Oneness of Witness) had not reality. After an overview of Ilāhābādī's life and writings, I discuss his comments on Ibn 'Arabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-Ḥikam*—with a special focus on the chapter of Adam ("the Bezel of the Wisdom of Divinity in the Essence of Adam")—in which the relationship between God and creation is examined. Moreover, to better understand how Ilāhābādī interprets this issue, references are made to his most well-known treatise *Taswiya* (Equivalence). Finally, I will examine how Ilāhābādī's thought can be characterized in terms of the theory of *waḥdat al-wujūd* developed in India.

Yohei MORIGUCHI

Kyoto University, Graduate School of Asian and African Studies

5) From David to Rāma.

My talk concerns a narrative poem in Sanskrit entitled *Sulaimaccaritra* ("Deeds of Solomon") produced in the early 16th century in the Delhi Sultanate by the poet Kalyāṇamalla. The work appears to have been commissioned by a nobleman of Afghan origin named Lad Khan, provincial governor of Jaunpur during the reign of Ibrahim Lodi (1517-1526). Besides representing an example of a work produced in Sanskrit for patrons afferent to the Persian cultural area, the *Sulaimaccaritra* has the peculiarity of narrating the events of characters belonging to the religious and cultural tradition of Islam (King David and his son Solomon) using sources which are biblical and, in all likelihood, originally in Hebrew. It will be shown how this subject, inherent in itself in the Islamic-Persian cultural world, is integrated into Sanskrit literary and cultural forms, highlighting in particular the importance of the narrative model represented by the *Rāmāyaṇa*: the figures of Solomon and David ideally overlap with those of the epic characters of Rāma and Daśaratha, and also with those of the poet's patrons, Governor Lad Khan and his father. Thus, Biblical-Koranic narratives, Sanskrit epics, and power relations contemporary to the author are involved at the same time. The *Sulaimaccaritra* inserts into the narrative of the events of David and Solomon other numerous references to multiple aspects of Sanskrit culture: from treatises (particularly erotic treatises, of which Kalyāṇamalla himself was already a celebrated exponent) to novelistic, from yoga to astrology. Based on the nature of these references, assumptions will be made about the political-cultural purposes of the poem: the figure of Solomon appears as a unifying and functional element in a storytelling aimed at the ethical and cultural formation of a scion of the ruling political class. However, this political class has its roots in the Persian and Islamic cultural world: Kalyāṇamalla's work thus seems to imply that the dominant group also needs an education related to the philosophical and literary cornerstones of the Sanskrit world and the kind of narrative he attempted would be instrumental to that end. These considerations are reinforced by the analysis of the content of the poem's last chapter, which presents a transposition - reworked in the ways already mentioned and probably mediated by Persian - of a section of the Arabian Nights from the text already codified in the Arabic tradition.

Fabio Pagliani is a PhD candidate at the EHESS (Paris-Marseille) under the supervision of Prof. Fabrizio Speziale and the co-tutorship of Prof. Gianni Pellegrini (University of Turin). His research project explores the influence of elements of non-Indian origin (mainly Arabic and Persian) on Sanskrit cultural production in north-western India during the period of the Sultanates (13th to 16th century). He did his graduate studies at the University of Florence (MA) and at the University of Bologna (Master in Historical and Oriental Sciences, with a thesis on the Sulaimaccaritra *of Kalyāṇamalla).*

6) Antinomian Traits in Feyżī's *Nal-u Daman*

Abu'l-Feyż Ibn Mubārak (1547-1595), also known as Feyżī or Feyżī Fayyāżī, served as the Indian poet-laureate at the Mughal court during Emperor Akbar's reign (r.1542-1605). Proficient in Persian, Arabic, and Sanskrit, Feyżī undertook the task of reinventing the Indian narrative of *Nal-u Daman* into Persian upon the request of the emperor. This endeavour became part of the bigger project of the poet, wherein he embarked on crafting a *khamsa* ("Quintet"), in imitation of the great Persian poet, Niẓāmī Ganjavī (1141-1209). Feyżī's *Nal-u Daman*, derived from a segment of the Sanskrit *Mahabhārāta*, served as a literary response to Niẓāmī's *Leylī-u Majnūn*. Through a nuanced reinterpretation of an Indian epic within the Persian romance tradition, Feyżī's literary synthesis offers a unique lens into early modern Indo-Persian conception of love and ideals of kingship.

In this adaptation, Feyżī combines the themes of profane and mystical love, embedding antinomian elements within his romance, following Niẓāmī's footsteps. King Nal's trials begin with the onset of lovesickness (*sowdā*), which propels him through a transformative journey of love that unfolds in three phases: love and intellect (*ʿaql*), love and beauty (*ḥusn*), and ultimately, love and madness (*junūn*). Exiled with his beloved Daman after losing his kingdom in a game of gamble, Nal traverses the wilderness, gradually shifting from ruler to ascetic-lover and, ultimately, to a saintly king. This transformation frames an ethical paradigm of love that addresses the complexities of kingship, blending Sufi ideals, courtly values, and the Indian conception of love.

This paper first analyzes Feyżī's portrayal of antinomian traits in King Nal, followed by a comparative study of Nal and Majnūn to explore themes such as the nature of love, the mystical ideal of beauty (*ḥusn*), and the experience of lovesickness (*sowdā*). Further, it examines Feyżī's construction of femininity through Daman's character, the female beloved, who challenges the stereotypical conceptions of gender norms. By situating Feyżī within the broader Persianate literary heritage, this study explores his creative experiments and interactions with the established norms in character portrayal and literary conventions.

Fatemeh Naghshvarian is a PhD candidate for the ERC Advanced Grant Beyond Sharia (Utrecht University), related to the project "Qalandars in the 'Divine Religion' in India". In her dissertation, she aims to navigate the impact of Islamic critical thinking on shaping the political implications of Divine Religion and 'Universal Peace' in 16th century Mughal India. Fatemeh did her graduate studies in Cultural Studies (MA) and Digital Humanities (MS) at the University of Leuven (K.U. Leuven), Belgium.

7) Persian Poetry in Disguise: *Madhumālatī*'s Intertext

In 2019, a posthumous work by the esteemed literary historian Prof. Mujeeb Rizvi (1934–2015) was published, focusing on the life and works of the 16th-century Awadhī poet Malik Muhammad Jāysī. This book addresses several key issues, including chronology, cultural history, poetics, and stylistics, while centring its analytical framework on the poet himself—his influences (*prabhāv*), religious life, literary evolution, and the metaphysical and ethical systems (*siddhānt aur sādhanā*) reflected in his writings. Rizvi's analysis of Jāysī's "world" (*duniyā*) highlighted the remarkable diversity of his intellectual references, ranging from the *Purāṇas* to Qurʾanic sciences, but especially emphasised his knowledge of Persian literature. Through his study of *Padmāvat*, Rizvi identified direct translations of Persian verses into Awadhī, including some written by esteemed poets such as Rūmī, but also calques of conventional Persian tropes, adapted into *tadbhava* words. The significance of this discovery cannot be overstated. This paper seeks to apply Rizvi's critical methodology to another 16th-century Awadhī text, *Madhumālatī* by Saiyid Mañjhan Rājgīrī. Mañjhan's engagement with Persian literature—likely through his mentor, Muḥammad Ghaus Gwāliyārī (906-970 AH, 1500-1562 AD), or other social networks—is highly plausible. In this presentation, I will build upon this argument by showing that, similar to Jāysī's *Padmāvat*, many conventional Persian literary motifs, employed by poets such as Niẕāmī, Amīr Khusrau, and Jāmī, are also present in *Madhumālatī*, albeit in adapted forms. My aim is to lay the groundwork for a systematic survey and classification of these intertextual connections in *Madhumālatī*. While scholars such as Shyam Manohar Pandey have identified shared narrative patterns between medieval Hindi and Persian literatures, Rizvi's work opens a new field of inquiry. His approach shifts the focus from shared narrative structures (*kathānak rūḍhi*) to shared poetic images, expressions, and formulations, which he defines as part of a common "cultural patrimony" (*sāṁskṛtik paitṛkī*) among 16th-century North Indian multilingual poets. In this paper, I will, thus, further develop Rizvi's hypothesis by demonstrating how, during the reign of Shēr Shāh, Mañjhan, an Awadhī poet writing in a "pure" desī language and style, subtly infused his poetry with Persianate elements—carefully reworked, rewritten, and camouflaged to serve his own literary aims.

Victor Baptiste is a fourth year PhD student at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris. Under the supervision of Prof. Nalini Balbir (EPHE-Université Paris III Sorbonne Nouvelle) and the cosupervision of Thibaut d'Hubert (University of Chicago). His dissertation focuses on the life and work of a 17th-century Indo-Persian poet named Mīr ʿAlī ʿAskarī Khwāfī (1026?-1108 AH, 1617?-1696 AD), bearing the title ʿĀqil Khān and using Rāzī as his nom de plume. *Victor Baptiste is currently completing a critical edition and a French translation of a masnavī written by this author, entitled* Mihr-u māh*, written in 1065 AH (1654/55 AD), being a rendition of Madhumālatī, a romance written in medieval Hindi during the sixteenth century. He recently published in the* Annali di Ca' Foscari, serie orientale *an article focusing on literary adaptation and intertextuality in* Mihr-u māh.

8) Knowledge Transmission through the Brajbhasha Poetry in a Multilingual Space: Intertextuality, Translations, and Commentaries in the Mughal Age

The Mughals and regional courts were actively involved in translating literary texts, particularly Sanskrit literature. They played significant roles in this endeavor, patronizing poets who were well-versed in Brajbhasha and Sanskrit poetry. This paper will historically analyze the career and background of Brajbhasha (a vernacular language of Northern India that gained almost a cosmopolitan status in the early modern period) poets such as Sayyid Ghulam Nabi Bilgrami (1699-1750 CE), Bhikharidas (1734-1756 CE), Devdatt (1673-1767 CE), Kavindra Saraswati (fl. 1650 CE), and Surati Mishra (b. 1683 CE), King Sawai Pratap Singh 'Brajnidhi' (r. 1778-1803), and others, are among the eminent and scholastic poets of the concerned period. In the early modern period, poets were one of the significant agencies and had played considerable roles in the making of an intellectual culture that was so vibrant and interactive. Due to the mobile and interactive nature of Brajbhasha poets and coming from diverse geographical and literary centres, their literary accomplishments have contributed to the formation of a multilingual literary space in which patron-client relationships need to be contextualized. In that sense, the Brajbhasha intermixes with *tatsama* (purely Sanskrit words), *tadbhava* (words that originated from the Sanskrit works), *desaj* (Vernacular words), *videsaj* (Loan words) words. Bhikharidas's *Kavyanirnay* (fl. 1748 CE) shows the multilingual aspects of early modern literary practices. In Indian literary conventions, the commentary/rendition of a text was called *bhasya*, *tika*, or *satik*, which significantly transmitted traditional/cultural knowledge. However, the nature of translations was diverse, but I am more interested in exploring the aspects of love poetries (*Shringar kavyas)*. Notably, these transmissions in Brajbhasha came in profusion with Indo-Persian literary culture and substantially from the Sanskrit works. It is evident from the sources that the Persian and Sanskrit languages (Survani) were the language of elites. In contrast, vernacular languages were called Bhakha/Hindavi (apbhramsa), symbolizing the masses' language. Poets of the time noted that in the contemporary period (Kaliyuga, a period of decadence), people did not enjoy Sanskrit and Persian works as much as Brajbhasha works. Besides original compositions, in the later half of the second millennium CE, the processes of vernacularization became intensified; therefore, through innovations, translations, and commentaries, a large body of knowledge was disseminated, which could be visible throughout the disciplines. Consequently, new norms of connoisseurship (Rasikness) emerged that led Brajbhasha poets to translate, and comment on Sanskrit and Persian classical works in Brajbhasha on a large scale. Between the late nineteenth century and early twentieth century, colonial and Hindi scholars started studying Indo-Persian literature in compartmentalized ways. Therefore, the recent hypostatization and canonization of Indo-Persian language and literature have subverted the multilingualism character of the past.

Nagwant Singh is a PhD candidate in the Department of History at the University of Delhi, where he has also completed his BA, MA, and MPhil. His doctoral research, titled "Some Aspects of Riti Literature in Eighteenth-Century North India*", explores Ritigranths- a genre of poetic manuals- as archives of Intellectual and Literary History. His work delves into themes such as the lives of poets, gender dynamics, and cultural practices in early modern North India, particularly in the* "Hindi-Urdu Belt"*. His MPhil dissertation,* "Sayyid Ghulam Nabi Raslin and His Works: A Historical Analysis of Gender and Culture in the Eighteenth Century"*, also engages with 18th-century literary texts.*

Nagwant has published a research paper based on his findings in the Social Scientist *journal: Nagwant Singh, 'Braj-Bhasha Poetry and Poets'Networks in Late Mughal North India',* Social Scientist, *53: 5-6 (2024), pp. 43-64.*

He is set to submit his PhD thesis soon, having recently completed his pre-submission seminar.

9) The Emergence of Medieval Indo-Persian Literature: A Study of Amir Khusraw's *Dibācha-i Divān-i Ghurrat al-Kāmāl*

The Perso-Islamic culture has long been a dominant force in shaping the medieval culture and history of an extensive geography such as South Asia, Central Asia, and Anatolia, also called the 'Persianate Cosmopolis'. The acculturation of Persian language and literature in subcontinent of India led to emergence of distinctive Indo-Persian literati under the Delhi Sultanate. Amir Khusraw was the most iconic Indo-Persian poet of medieval India. The writings of Amir Khusraw eloquently depict the cosmopolitical dimension of the Persianate age in India. Among his writings, the *Dibācha-i Divān-i Ghurrat al-Kāmāl* ("The Preface to The Full Moon of Perfection") stands out as a remarkable yet underexplored text. It is the earliest source offering valuable insights into the dynamics of multilingualism and transculturalism in medieval India. In the *Dibācha*, Amir Khusraw crafts a literary theory and a distinct transcultural perspective that highlights the interplay of languages and cultures in medieval India. It illuminates some features of Indo-Persian culture and several fascinating topics that are of historical, cultural, literary, and linguistic significance. It presents Amir Khusraw's transcultural perspective on language diversity, multilingual identities, and literary innovation in medieval India. This research, which draws on the understudied prose works of Amir Khusraw, aims to achieve a deeper understanding of the Indo-Persian culture and literature. It aims to address the following questions: How did the Persianate culture foster a distinctive Indo-Persian literature in medieval India? How do Amir Khusraw's works mediate Indo-Persian cultural and linguistic interactions? and how do Amir Khusraw's works address the Persianate identity?

Mehdi Sham Roshan is currently a PhD student in the Faculty of Letters, Section of Slavic and South Asian Languages and Civilizations, at the University of Lausanne. The director of his thesis is Dr. Prof. Blain Auer. His ongoing research examines Amīr Khusraw's Rasāʾil al-Iʿjāz *and other prose works as a significant Indo-Persian literary source for reconstructing the socio-cultural history of the medieval Islamicate India (13th to 14th Centuries). His primary academic interests include Persian language, literature, and historiographical works. He also works on Persian and Arabic primary sources in Persianate and Islamicate contexts. He has been working on a body of Persian medieval letters of victory (*faṯnāma*), victory poetry (*shir-i faṯ*), and manuscripts of* inshā *in different Islamicate contexts since 2020.*

10) Shahjahan and The Emergence of a Messianic King: Reassessing Narrative Strategies in Indo-Persian Histories

The theory of divine kingship provided a strong ideological plank for the Indo-Persianate monarchies: the Mughals and the Safavids, enabling their rulers to use various symbols, metaphors and icons to legitimise and consolidate their authority. Within this larger agenda of power consolidation, the Persian culture and Islamic traditions played an important role to create a model of sacred kingship. Therefore, we see Islamic ideals, concepts of *din* and *dunya* (religion and statecraft) were explained through use of pre-Islamic Persian symbols, icons and allegories. The Persian literary tradition provided a space for culmination of these ideas into a cohesive narrative of kingship in the eleventh century, Firdausi's *Shahnama* setting the precedence for future writers to glorify and amplify their patron's divinity and sacred status. Over time, the use of divine theory of kingship and the concept of divine light (*farr-i-izzadi*) became a common tool for the assertion of sovereignty and legitimacy. To differentiate from other divine kings, some rulers exploited the concept of messianism in Islam, which to some historians was borrowed from the pre-Islamic Persian tradition itself, and later on Islamised to emphasise that such a messiah would act as a saviour and religious guide to Muslims. In the wake of the Mongol invasions and the political chaos that prevailed in the Islamic world, the concept of messianism found resonance among people, taking advantage of which Timur proclaimed himself as the messiah and legitimised his authority. While theologians disagree on the timing of emergence of a messiah, it provided a space for sovereigns to self-style them as messianic rulers and their panegyrists expanding this narrative. Therefore, Timur and subsequent rulers proclaimed themselves as messiah, interpretating the concept of millennialism accordingly. However, Shahjahan's case was notably different from others, as he was born in the millennial year, 1000 Hijri, thus allowing him an edge over other claimants to the title of messiah. Upon his ascension to throne in 1628 CE, he self-styled himself as second Timur by using *title of sahib-i-qiran sani* (lord of second conjunction) to combine it with his birth in the millennium year of Islamic calendar. Mughal court writers adopted a two-way strategy to create a narrative of millennial kingship which helped Shahjahan to not only legitimise his accession to throne but also mobilise Mughal forces for expansion in Deccan and Central Asia. This research paper aims to explore these narrative strategies used by Mughal court historians and poets to communicate Shahjahan's messianic status and his sacrality. During his thirty years long reign, Shahjahan employed all the antics to project himself as a messiah of Islam and a world conqueror, competing with the Safavids and Ottomans, by using Timur's legacy and his memory to consolidate his sacred image and the kingship narrative. Through this research paper, I will try to explain this narrative strategy used by Shahjahan to manifest himself as a divinely ordained messianic king.

Ms Kirti Kanojia is a PhD scholar at the Department of History, University of Delhi, where she is currently pursuing her research on Urdu Literature and Women's Travel Writings. She completed her M.Phil. from the Department of History in 2025 and holds a Master's degree in History with a specialization in Medieval Indian History from the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, Delhi, India. Her research interests are centred on medieval Indian history, with a particular focus on the political history of the Mughal Empire. She is especially interested in exploring the Mughal rulers' relations with Safavid Iran and other contemporary dynasties. One of her notable research projects examines the concept of millennial sovereignty and the articulation of the messianic image during the reign of Shah Jahan.

11) **At the Interstices of Empires:** *Naukri* **or Service Culture in Early-Modern South Asia**

In South Asia, terms like *naukri* or *chakri* are often treated as synonymous with employment, without unpacking the rich histories behind them. For instance, the term *naukri* itself originates from the Mongol word *nökör* (pl. *nököd*) meaning "clansmen". In the sixteenth century, the term began to evolve with an influx of Perso-Turkic groups from Central Asia into the subcontinent. By the late seventeenth century, service culture under the Timurids underwent a transition, and these terms shed their earlier ambiguity, aligning more closely with professional employment. My project explores these shifts in service identity using the case of scribes or *munshi*. Through an inter-textual analysis of 17th-18th century chronicles, I demonstrate two things: First, at the turn of the seventeenth century *munshis* functioned as part of an impersonal service class centred on the Mughal Court. Secondly, this discourse fostered a social mobility that simultaneously challenged hereditary elites and reconfigured service identities, laying the foundation for colonial administrative infrastructure. I use the term "*naukri*" as an emic analytical category to trace the changing notion of service across the 17th-18th centuries. This research challenges the assumption that a bureaucratic professional habitus was the product of European modernity, instead highlighting the sophisticated service culture that pre-existed in early modern India. This project fits within the broader Indo-Persian historiography exploring the role of intermediaries in negotiating power dynamics between the imperial state and society. My entry point into this analysis is a study of scribal service culture, to highlight structural changes and continuities in imperial systems of power.

Pooja Hazra

I am a PhD Candidate in History with a focus on Middle-East and South Asia at the University of California, Davis. My dissertation is focused on Persianate scribal culture in 17th-18th century Mughal South Asia. My broader interests include socio-intellectual analysis of pre-modern Islamic/Islamicate communities. I am also interested in critical theories on post-structural textual analysis whereby I unpack the discourses framing authorship and narrative emplotment.

12) The Yunani Hakim tradition in early modern Afghanistan

The aim of this communication is to present the figure of the Yunani Hakim in Afghanistan, starting with the stories of the professional experiences of two old Hakim refugees in France, turning back as far as the 16th century. The figure of the Hakim, which is disappearing today, was for a long time exclusively reserved for the Sikhs. This paper is the result of the reworking of interviews I carried out for the preparation of my thesis on the Afghan Sikh community's history. I had the opportunity to talk to some of them or their descendants in Paris and New Delhi. Through their stories, I was able to partly reconstruct their journey, their education and their daily life in present-day Afghanistan until their final departure. With the return of the Taliban regime to power in Afghanistan in August 2021, the last Sikh inhabitants of the country left Kabul to find refuge in India or North America. Among them are many traders and some officials of the newly deposed government, but also some Yunani Hakim. Descendants of the Indian people who arrived in Afghanistan at the time of the Mughal emperor Akbar, the modern Hakim are the continuators of a centuries-old tradition firmly rooted in the Afghan culture. The Hakim practise traditional Indian medicine, borrowed from the Arab Persian culture. They are considered reliable physicians for everyday care and enjoy real respect from the population, in a country where access to basic medical care is complex if not impossible. For Ayurvedic medicine, the Hakim are key figures, as they practise this science and pass on their knowledge to future generations. In the case of the Afghan Hakim, who have no access to schools or graduate training, all learning is done in the context of the family and orally, without the study of traditional or modern books on Ayurvedic medicine. The geographical situation of Afghanistan, halfway between India and Persia and sharing a common historical past with them but with its own history and tradition, makes the Afghan Sikh Hakims unique in the tradition of Ayurvedic medicine in the region. The ancestors of today's Hakim lived in Afghan cities since before the country's independence in 1747. During the 18th century, European travellers often noticed in the bazaars of Afghan cities the presence of shops (sometimes called pharmacies) run by people of Indian origin, who offered their remedies to patients after a careful examination of their pulse and anamnesis. Thanks to interviews with their descendants, it was possible to reconstruct their working method and transmission of knowledge (among the Hakim in Afghanistan), as they have not changed much since the 18th century. In fact, today's Hakim often practise in the places where their ancestors practised. Through this contribution, I also wish to highlight the Hakim's social function in early modern Afghanistan.

Riccardo Bonotto is a PhD candidate in history at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes en Sciences Sociales (Paris), under the supervision of Fabrizio Speziale. He has a BA in Political Science and an MA in EU Politics from the Università di Padova (Italy). He has a DLC (Diplôme en Langues et Civilisation) pashto of INALCO (Paris). He works mainly on the history of Afghanistan, the history of non-Muslim communities in Afghanistan, in particular the Sikh community. He has worked on the colonial archives of British India and recently published an article on the role of non-Muslim merchants as economic mediators in the region of present-day Afghanistan during the first two centuries of the Mughal Empire.

13) The Heritage of Perso-Islamic Culture in British India: Mehr 'Alī Shāh's Philosophical Elaboration of Sufi Thought

In this presentation, I demonstrate that when the so-called "Perso-Islamic culture" was rapidly declining in British India, some Muslim thinkers could reform and philosophically elaborate Indian Sufi thought by employing the Perso-Islamic elements in their speculation.

The concept of "Perso-Islamic culture" proposed by Francis Robinson is based on two pillars: the Persian language and rational sciences (*ma'qūlāt*). In India, the Perso-Islamic culture flourished between the late 16th and 18th centuries to the extent that Persian became the governmental language throughout the subcontinent. In the British period, however, the revival of traditional Islam and the introduction of Western modernism led to a rapid decline in the rational sciences. Moreover, the spread of Urdu among Indian Muslims severely damaged the status of Persian.

Despite such an intellectual milieu surrounding the Perso-Islamic culture in British India, we can witness a movement to preserve the cultural heritage among a few Muslim intellectuals. Mehr 'Alī Shāh (d. 1937), a Sufi poet from Punjab, was prominent in this movement. He was renowned as an authority on the Sufi doctrine of "*waḥdat al-wujūd*" (the oneness of being) derived from the monistic ontology of Ibn 'Arabī (d. 1240). In 1897, Mehr 'Alī Shāh wrote a Persian work called *Taḥqīq al-Ḥaqq fī Kalimat al-Ḥaqq* to criticize the pantheistic understanding of *waḥdat al-wujūd* by 'Abd al-Raḥmān Lakhnawī (d. 1829). In response to Lakhnawī's claim of essential identity between God and creation, Mehr 'Alī Shāh refutes it as polytheism. He also emphasizes that the teaching of *waḥdat al-wujūd* should not be revealed to the masses (*'awāmm*) but be limited only to the intellectual elite (*khawāṣṣ*). He wrote *Taḥqīq al-Ḥaqq* in Persian, a language less circulated than Urdu in his time, probably to restrict the readership deliberately.

The most notable in Mehr 'Alī Shāh's doctrine of *waḥdat a-wujūd* is his concept of "Being" (*wujūd*) constructed based on the *ma'qūlāt* philosophical terminology. For him, the Being is regarded as the "second intelligible" (*ma'qūlāt-i thāniya*), which is absolutely unknowable and transcends human cognition (*idrāk*). The "second intelligible" thus contrasts the "first intelligible" (*ma'qūlāt-i awwal*) that refers to concrete existences in the phenomenal world. The Being as the "second intelligible" first manifests Its essence (*māhiyyāt*) in Its self-intellect (*ta'aqqul*); thus, nothing is beside the Being in the outer sphere. What should be emphasized here is that Mehr 'Alī Shāh chose Persian as the language for such a highly philosophical argument on *waḥdat al-wujūd*. He used Urdu, not Persian, in writing treatises on the critique of heretical Indian Aḥmadiyya for better circulation among his fellow Muslims, which implies that he used different languages depending on subjects. Moreover, there are few philosophical arguments on the doctrine in the Urdu writings by his contemporaries.

Mehr 'Alī Shāh accomplished the philosophical elaboration of Sufi doctrine by employing the two pillars of Perso-Islamic culture: the Persian language and rational sciences. In addition, his orientation toward transmitting and preserving the Perso-Islamic culture in British India might express his pride as a high intellectual who inherited the classical Mughal legacy.

Ryusei Homma is a postdoctoral research fellow at the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa (ILCAA) at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. In March 2024, he finished his Ph.D. (Area Studies) at Kyoto University. His general interest is South Asian Sufi

thought and primarily focuses on the doctrine of waḥdat al-wujūd *originating in the mystical philosophy of Ibn ʿArabī (d. 1240). His recent article is about the transmission of Ibn ʿArabī's Sufi doctrine by a famous Muslim thinker in twentieth-century South Asia, namely Ashraf ʿAlī Thānavī (d. 1943), written in Japanese and the English version of this article is now under preparation.*

14) Echoes of Indo-Persian Legacy: Shibli Nu'mani and the Articulation of Urdu Literature in the Colonial Era

This study examines the end of the Indo-Persian era and its contributions to the articulation of its successive literatures in India, particularly Urdu, in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Persian, after enjoying centuries as the language of the literati in the subcontinent, gradually lost its pre-eminence while contributing to the refinement of the newly emergent Urdu. The colonial era, marked by interactions and transformations, introduced new perspectives to Indian society, particularly in the realm of literary rejuvenation and reform. During this period, Urdu literati endeavoured to define and regulate poetry in the relatively new Urdu language. Many Urdu scholars of the late nineteenth century, comfortable in both languages, established Persian as a principal inspiration. Among these efforts was Shibli Nu'mani's extensive five-volume opus, *Shai'r ul-'Ajam*, written between 1906 and 1912. This historical analysis of Persian poetry, following the *tazkira* style narrative, identifies unique challenges within Urdu poetry. By dividing the rich Persian culture of poetry into three epochs, Nu'mani legitimized one of these eras as the foundation for Urdu poetry.

Shibli Nu'mani was an Indian scholar of the late nineteenth century who was trained in Persian, Arabic, and religious studies. At the beginning of his career, he was part of the Mohammadan Anglo-Oriental College and the Aligarh Movement. He later became instrumental in establishing many Muslim seminaries, such as Nadwat ul-Ulama and Madrasat ul-Islah. He authored numerous books on biographies and histories in Urdu, drawing overall inspiration from the rich Indo-Persian tradition.

By analyzing *Shai'r ul-'Ajam*, this study highlights the importance of Indo-Persian thought in Shibli Nu'mani's work in particular and among Urdu scholars of his age in general. It demonstrates that the production of Indo-Persian literature, which began during the Ghaznavid period, culminated in a grand tribute by scholars like Shibli Nu'mani. The study suggests that the continuity of Indo-Persian culture persisted through the Urdu language, and works like *Shai'r ul-'Ajam* represent efforts to establish the legacy of Indo-Persian culture, which was unfortunately disappearing from public life.

This study explores how Nu'mani nuanced the understanding of poetry for the Urdu audience and how his literary contributions through *Shai'r ul-'Ajam* reflect his broader thought process, with poetry being just one aspect of it.

*Faheemuddin completed his PhD at the University of Delhi under the guidance of Professor Raziuddin Aquil, focusing on the topic "*Shibli Nu'mani and Muslim Intellectual Responses in British India*." Prior to this, he earned his master's degree in history and pursued an M.Phil. dissertation at Jamia Millia Islamia under the supervision of Mukul Kesavan. His M.Phil. research was titled "*Icon of History; History of the Icon: Kannada Nationalism and Kannada Cinema from 1956 to 1983.*"

15) The World of 'Rāgamālā': Jain Musicologists on the Indo-Persian Stage

Abstract: Starting in the late fourteenth century, music treatises composed in Sanskrit began to describe *rāga* (melodic mode) as male or female figures, complete with detailed descriptions of their attire, ornaments, and aesthetic qualities. These vivid characterizations gave rise to the *rāgamālā* (garland of *rāga*) tradition—initially a form of musicological verse that subsequently inspired a genre of painting, where artists visually interpreted the descriptions. By the sixteenth century, *rāgamālā* verses also found their way into literary works like Qutban's *Mrigāvatī* (1503) and Jayasi's *Padmāvat* (1540). While the artistic and poetic beauty of the *rāgamālā* form has received much attention in scholarship, not much has been written on its initial development and circulation, both of which took place within a specifically Jain milieu. This presentation focuses on two texts —Sudhakalasa's *Saṅgītopaniṣatsāroddhāra* (1350), composed during the reign of Muhammad bin Tughluq (r. 1325-51) in Gujarat, and Mandana's *Saṅgītamaṇḍana*, composed for the Malwa Sultan Hoshang Shah (r.1405-32)—as well as a series of Jain *Kalpasūtra* manuscripts that contain the earliest known *rāgamālā* images. By contextualising these textual and visual forms of the *rāgamālā* within the multilingual and multicultural landscape of the Sultanate courts, this presentation frames the *rāgamālā* as a pedagogical device that facilitated the simplification of musical theory and allowed for the diffusion of *rāga* music across the diverse intellectual audiences of Sultanate South Asia. In doing so, this presentation widens the ambit of 'Indo-Persian' musicology to include the contributions of a Jain mercantile and scholastic network.

Ayesha Sheth is a historian of early modern South Asia. She specialises in courtly culture and polity formation with a particular focus on music, literature, and comparative knowledge traditions in South Asia and the broader Persianate cosmopolis. She earned her PhD from the Department of South Asia Studies at the University of Pennsylvania. Her research spans performance studies, early modern literatures, indigenous histories, and mercantile histories of South Asia. She is currently Assistant Professor at the School of Arts and Sciences, Ahmedabad University. Alongside teaching, she is developing two research projects: one on the Gond kingdoms of central India and the other on the role of Jain mercantile networks in early modern literary and cultural circulation

16) The Culture of Visualizing Sound in an 18th-Century North Indian Music Theory Text

This presentation examines the personification of rhythm theory (*tāla*) through a music iconographic interpretation based on the 18th-century North Indian music theory text *Risala-yi Qavaid-i Tabla* (1780), aiming to uncover its intentions. In North India, the cultural practice of associating melodic theory (*rāga*) with deities or saints, known as *rāgamālā*, is well known, and numerous visual resources have been preserved. In contrast, attempts to personify or symbolize *tāla* are almost non-existent, with its depictions being limited to analytical representations of its structural elements. While *tāla* forms the foundation of melody and represents the flow of time, visual expressions that attribute distinct personalities to individual rhythm sounds may have been considered unnecessary.

The personification of rhythm seen in *Risala-yi Qavaid-i Tabla* suggests that this text represents the first attempt at "visualizing *tāla*" in North Indian music history. I would like to tentatively name this cultural endeavour *tālamālā*. To understand why *tālamālā* emerged during this period and why it did not continue to develop, it is essential to consider not only its comparison with *rāgamālā* but also its connection with Persian culture from West Asia. The time of this text's creation coincided with a period when the fusion of Indian and Persian cultures was actively taking place in the realms of music and visual arts. This suggests that *tālamālā* may have been a hybrid cultural experiment born from such intersections.

Additionally, I aim to explore the symbolic significance of visualizing and personifying music itself. The attempt to represent sound in the form of humans or deities may not be limited to Indian characteristics but could also be viewed as a universal cultural activity evident in Persian culture and other cultural regions. The emergence of *tālamālā* can be seen as an example of cultural practice that transcends sound and imagery, sight, and hearing. Understanding how this practice was received, interpreted, and adapted to its historical context can provide valuable insights into the cultural currents of the time.

In this presentation, I will explore the unique characteristics and cultural background of *tālamālā*, based on a comparison with *rāgamālā*. Furthermore, I will analyze the fusion with Persian culture and the historical and cultural factors surrounding the personification of *tāla*, ultimately aiming to present a new perspective on the universal significance of visualizing music.

Haruo Inoue Is Assistant Professor at the Graduate School of Asian and African Area Studies, Kyoto University. He specializes in South Asian area studies and ethnomusicology, with a particular focus on Hindustani classical music, the cultural history of the tabla, Indo-Islamic traditions in music, and contemporary musical expressions in India.After earning his Ph.D. from Kyoto University, he has held research and teaching positions at various institutions in Japan and the UK, including a term as a JSPS Overseas Research Fellow at King's College London. His research explores the transmission, transformation, and improvisation of music in modern South Asia, combining archival work with field-based performance studies. He has published extensively in both academic journals and public media, contributing chapters to major reference works such as the Encyclopedia of Indian Culture. He is also an active tabla performer and educator, seeking to bridge practical musicianship with scholarly inquiry. His recent works include analyses of rhythmic theory across Persian and Indian traditions, as well as investigations into India's experimental

music scenes. He is committed to interdisciplinary dialogue and international collaboration in the fields of music and area studies.

17) The *Zulf* of the Beloved: Idealized Beauty and Mughal Imitative Practices in Portraiture during the Early Seventeenth Century

The famous wager between Mughal emperor Jahangir and the English ambassador to the Mughal court, Thomas Roe, has long captured the attention of historians and art-historians alike. The wager was meant to pit a miniature portrait by Issac Oliver against its Mughal interpretations. The Royal Windsor Castle Collection has identified a potential Mughal copy of the Oliver portrait (figure 1), grafted onto the folios of a late Mughal album. The artist and the sitter of the Mughal portrait remain unidentified but the woman's dress is typical of masque performers at the early modern English court. Using this attribution, I demonstrate that this painting records the manner in which the Mughal artists responded to this particular challenge. Foregrounding the painting, I argue against a paradigm of aesthetic hybridity through an analysis of Mughal artistic practices of imitation and emulation gleamed both from this particular object and the wider canon. The paper will focus on the ways in which the *zulf*, or the lock of hair, of the sitter has been rendered, to argue that the Mughal interpretation engages in the wider discursive, poetic, and philosophical genre of portraiture at the seventeenth century Mughal court. By looking at other contemporary artistic practices of imitation in portraiture at the *taṣvīrkhānā* (atelier), I demonstrate that this unusual focus on the hair is more than just artistic virtuosity or convention, rather it is rooted in beauty ideals. By situating the object within the wider context of Mughal portraiture tradition of the early seventeenth century, my intervention will argue for the particularity of Mughal portraiture, not as a consequence of interaction with the European portraiture tradition but being a sophisticated domestic development. The original portrait by Isaac Oliver, its journey to Mughal India, its subsequent interpretation in a culturally disparate idiom, and the journey of the Mughal interpretation back to England, is ripe for investigating the processes of the cross-cultural exchange and the mercurial moment of interaction in the early modern period.

Hasan Nisar is a PhD student in History of Art and Early Modern Studies at Yale University focusing on Mughal art of the seventeenth century, particularly the period of Jahangir. Hasan received a masters of science in Islamic architecture from MIT resulting in a thesis titled, "An experiment in Piety: the Domed Suhrawardy Tombs of Uchch Sharif." He is interested in the rise of the individual artist at the Mughal court and cross-cultural exchange between the Mughals and Europe. His research has been supported by the Macmillan Center at Yale

18) Recovering Female *Javanmardi* (Young-Manliness) from the Victoria and Albert Museum Mughal Collection

Javanmardi is an ethical concept used in the Persianate world to describe a person possessing ideal, manly virtues (martial prowess, intelligence, self-sacrifice, etc...). Scholars have predominately associated *javanmardi* with men. However, textual sources such as the *Humayunamah* written by Mughal princess Gulbadan Begum (1522-1603) reveal the various ways early Mughal royal women performed *javanmardi*– demonstrating the historical reality of women's longstanding connection with this ideal. Building upon Gulbadan's text, this paper uses Mughal visual sources to challenge this scholarly oversight regarding female *javanmardi*. Furthermore, despite recent exhibitions like the Victoria and Albert Museum's "The Great Mughals: Art, Architecture, and Opulence," which seek to advance new knowledge about the court's artistic and cultural achievements, Mughal women's contributions and power remain under-talked and under-displayed. By analyzing 16th and 17th-century Mughal paintings from illustrated manuscripts and albums within the V&A collection, this paper aims to uncover how Mughal women visually communicated their understanding of *javanmardi*. I start by looking at paintings by 17th-century elite Mughal female artists such as Sahifa Banu and Nini Begum, specifically the way they utilized techniques such as imitation, innovations, and synthesis to demonstrate their identities as female *javanmards* and convey their understandings of *javanmardi*. Moving on, I examine the different ways royal and non-royal women were represented as *javanmards* by looking at a 16th-century depiction of the female labourer, 17th-century representations of female hunters, the female musician, the female lover, the old female Sufi, and the old female mentor. This provides a new way to understand Mughal female power and agency from beyond an elite perspective as well as the imperial mindscape.

Dr. Amanda Caterina Leong is the Getty Project Mongol Connections Postdoctoral Fellow at the Courtauld Institute of Art. She was the inaugural 2023 Ebrahimi Fellow for Persian Art at the Smithsonian National Museum of Asian Art. Amanda's research and upcoming monograph look at multimedia representations of female javanmardi *in the premodern Persianate world (945-1800). Her recent article on early Mughal women's relationship with female* javanmardi *and the mirror for princesses genre won the 2022 Association for Iranian Studies' Conference to Journal Paper Award. Amanda has also published on Mughal women's use of grief as a form of political rhetoric in South Asia: Journal of South Asian Studies.*