

AIPS Short-Term Research Grant Final Report

Project Title: Everyday *Fiqh*: Legal Encounters in Early Modern South Asia

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Location: Pakistan

1. Significance to Pakistan Studies

My dissertation on everyday *fiqh* in early modern South Asia focuses on manuscript collections in Pakistan in Arabic, Persian, and Hindavi. It presents the historical importance of cities now located in Pakistan such as Thatta, Lahore, Multan, and Qasur since many important jurists and scholars of the Mughal Empire traced their origins to these cities in the seventeenth century. My archival work for my dissertation unravels new possibilities for early modern histories. It shows the potential of social histories that zoom out from a specific city and region, especially since Pakistan's archives have been in neglect. It enables a closer understanding of networks of scholars rather than highlighting individuals since scholars working on Islamic law wrote or thought collectively in the early modern world. Therefore, my research contributes not only to my dissertation, but also to manuscript cultures in Pakistan, religious studies as taught from within regions in Pakistan, and to the re-writing of South Asia's histories that posit languages, knowledges, and scripts as owned by communal groups.

2. Key Outcomes and Deliverables

A key outcome was a shortlist of primary sources that are relevant for each of my dissertation chapters. During my summer travel to Pakistan funded by the AIPS grant, I was able to closely peruse the Nabi Bakhsh Baloch and the Matiari collections of manuscripts at the Sindh Archives, as well as the National Museum's collection. Through this process, I was able to retrace my earlier archival work conducted in Lahore and Islamabad and note patterns of ownership and circulation of manuscripts in Pakistan's collections. By taking notes on manuscripts, I was able to trace important jurists and scholars who were of significance to Islamicate knowledge and law in early modern South Asia and the Mughal Empire. I was also able to make notes on genres such as commentaries, *fiqh*, legal opinions, and logic that were most popular among jurists and judges in the seventeenth century. Hence, I was able to finetune my list of primary sources that I can analyze for my dissertation. My search for more manuscripts in other catalogs became more thoughtful because of this work and led me to tracing specific copies of texts across vast collections. I was also able to participate in an online paleology and codicology workshop to enable my understanding of various seals and colophons in the archive. This detailed work will lead to the writing of my dissertation that will help with understanding people's entanglements with Islamicate legal processes in early modern South Asia. More specifically, I am keen on developing my first chapter on the relationship between jurists and Mughal emperors based on the primary sources collected. I am also hopeful about participating in either the AAS or South Asia Conference at Madison in the 2025-2026 academic year where I can present my arguments about my primary sources for this chapter.