

I am applying for an AIPS Short-term Grant to conduct dissertation research in Pakistani archives. My dissertation, tentatively titled “Everyday *Fiqh*: Legal Encounters in Early Modern South Asia,” explores the social world of Islamic law through the interconnected networks of jurists, judges, and theologians in the seventeenth-century Mughal Empire. Unlike most existing historiography of Islamicate texts and Mughal South Asia, I focus less on a static conception of Islamic law (*sharia*) and more on people’s daily entanglements with Islamicate legal processes. These encounters were marked by the ‘mundane’ such as daily rituals, marriage contracts, and burials. Exploring these encounters reveals that there was no fixed legal code in a single language (often assumed to be either Persian or Arabic). Rather, vernacular languages and oral traditions had central importance, but both have been neglected by historians. My dissertation, by contrast, explores how jurists and petitioners were entangled with legal processes by looking at manuscripts from a range of genres, such as legal responses to questions (*fatawa*), poetry on Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), and legal commentaries (*sharh* and *tafsir*). Attending to these rich but understudied genres will help me combine social and legal histories of Mughal South Asia.

My dissertation is situated at the intersection of South Asia studies, history, and manuscript cultures. As part of my training, I have undertaken advanced coursework and pursued independent research at the University of Washington. During my Masters program in South Asian Studies—funded by a Fulbright scholarship—I wrote a thesis on *Fatawa-e-Alamgiri*, a multi-volume legal compendium that was compiled in Arabic (with some Persian) during the reign of Aurangzeb ‘Alamgir’ (r. 1659–1707). This legal compendium opened up questions about how legal processes were negotiated by jurists and petitioners, and I have taken language classes in Persian and Arabic up till the advanced level, including Classical Arabic, to better explore these questions. Urdu and Dakhni are my native languages. To be able to read various folios and fragments where different scribes followed different orthographic practices, I have taken paleography lessons for manuscripts in vernacular languages (Hindavi, Dakhni, Punjabi) with my primary advisor, and will complete a Persian paleography class this year as well.

An AIPS grant will help me travel to libraries in Pakistan that hold important materials for my dissertation. I visited a few in-person last summer to identify sources relevant for my dissertation prospectus. These include the Punjab University Library (PUL) and the Dyal Singh Trust Library in Lahore, the Ganj Bakhsh Library in Islamabad, and the National Museum Archives and the Maulvi Abdul Haq Library at the Anjuman-e-Taraqqiye Urdu (ATUP) in Karachi. All of these libraries have extensive collections in Persian, Arabic, Urdu, Dakhni, and Punjabi. In addition to perusing the catalogs of these libraries, I have been in touch with their archivists and librarians. For instance, Dr. Hamid Ali at PUL has helped me tally that the Aazer, Shirani, and Mujaddadi collections would be useful for my dissertation.

In addition to helping with travel expenses from US to Pakistan, and domestic travel within Pakistan, the AIPS Grant will allow me to stay in Lahore and Islamabad for an extended period of time (tentatively July to September 2024) to access archived collections. With the grant, I will also be able to purchase digitized copies of manuscripts. Hence, I can return to Seattle for the academic year 2024-2025 and write my dissertation with a robust list of primary sources. In short, the AIPS grant will help cover the costs associated with travel, accommodation, and accessing primary sources in archives. In turn, these will enable me to write an untold story of people’s entanglements with Islamicate legal processes in early modern South Asia.