

Young Researchers' 2nd Indo-Persian Workshop: Writing in the Indo-Persian World

Marseille, May 23-24th, 2024

Campus La Vielle Charité, 2 Rue de la Charité, 13002 Marseille, France

General Presentation

Indo-Persian studies have recently received renewed attention in the field of History, Religious studies, Sociology, Gender studies, Art History and or Philology. Many pioneering books have been published in South Asia India, North America and Europe by scholars such as Muzaffar Alam, Sunil Sharma, Corinne Lefèvre, Dalpat Rajpurohit, Pankaj Jha, Francesca Orsini and many others, inspiring new works by PhD and postdoctoral students. In Europe itself, the efforts of scholars such as Françoise “Nalini” Delvoye at the EPHE in Paris, Fabrizio Speziale at the EHESS in Paris and Marseille, Eva Orthmann at the Georg-August-Universität of Göttingen or Stefano Pellò at the University Ca’ Foscari in Venice, have accompanied a new generation of young scholars exploring different themes in Indo-Persian culture and history. The first edition of this workshop, held at the EHESS Marseille in May 2023, was meant to be a first step taken to gather some of these young scholars who, unfortunately, are still very scattered across the continent and struggle with the classical partition of areal disciplines separating “South Asian studies” (*études indiennes*) and “Iranian studies” (*études iraniennes*). The workshop was held at the Vieille Charité campus of the EHESS in Marseille, in a port city open on the Mediterranean Sea, rich in multicultural history, that is currently turning into a new centre for Indo-Persian studies in France thanks to the efforts of Fabrizio Speziale, an endeavour to which we wish to humbly contribute. The goal of this first informal edition of the workshop was to assess the situation, allow the students and young scholars gathered to exchange on their subjects, difficulties and future perspectives and set up a program for the coming years. The scope of this workshop is international: it will be held in hybrid format, both on site and online in order for students and young scholars, located in South Asia or elsewhere, to be able to attend and participate.

Writing in the Indo-Persian world

The practice of writing is an essential one in South Asian history, one that perhaps goes back to the very first civilization found therein, the Indus Valley Civilization. Over the centuries, the technical, economic, social and the cultural shifts brought about by the inclusion of South Asia in the Persianate and Islamicate cosmopolises has had profound impact on South Asian writing. From scriptural change to material cultural evolution, from palmleaf manuscripts in *brahmi*-derived scripts to Persian texts on bound paper, the story of writing in South Asia is a pregnant one, with a lasting impact to this day. A reflection on the practice of writing in South Asia goes beyond the linguistic aspect of it all but rather brings into the light important questions such as the readership and the economy behind book exchange and production. Furthermore, when considering the Persian language, such a reflection puts to the fore an important yet often neglected fact: that South Asian readership and textual production in Persian largely outweighed the Iranian.

Writing does not exist in a vacuum: manuscripts, and especially manuscripts produced for the elite, are often decorated and illustrated. A reflection on writing will therefore necessarily also cover topics such as calligraphy, illumination, bookbinding, paper-production as well as the data contained in manuscripts in and around the text, mobilizing disciplines such as palaeography, codicology, and diplomatics.

We welcome contributions from Master, Doctoral and Postdoctoral researchers that deal with any topic relating to writing, reading and text production in South Asia from the perspective of History, Philology, Codicology or Art History in the period defined by Richard M. Eaton as Persianate India (1000-1750).

Paper Submission:

Abstracts are to be submitted to the following email address : raffaello.deleon-jonesdiani@ehess.fr. They should not exceed **500** words and are to be submitted by **March, 17th**. Once approved, we kindly ask participants to write and submit a **5000** to **7000** words long paper by **April, 30th**.