

## **AIPS Fellowship Final Report**

Project Title:

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### **1. Significance to Pakistan Studies**

This dissertation contributes to the historiography of the territory of Pakistan in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century by exploring the ways in which the polity of Lahore was deeply connected to political and historiographical traditions in Afghanistan and Central Asia during this period. It examines the development of new modes of sovereignty outside of the framework of universal empire that developed in this region and in doing so interrogates historiography which has often understood Lahore only in the context of the history of the Mughal empire, but which has ignored the significance of historical developments in Afghanistan and Central Asia to the formation of rule in this region. It opens new avenues in the historiography of Pakistan by engaging with sources produced outside of major courts in Central Asia as well as in South Asia and thus contributes to dismantling the legacy of modern area studies boundaries in the historiography of Pakistan, as well as the legacy of colonial historiography and collecting practices. Finally, this dissertation demonstrates the importance of Pakistan to the global history of sovereignty more broadly and helps to expand the understanding of sovereignty in Muslim societies beyond notions of sacred kingship.

### **2. Key Outcomes and Deliverables**

During my fellowship, I conducted research on Persian manuscripts in the collections of the British Library in London and the Bodleian Library in Oxford. In particular, the Ouseley collection at Oxford and the only partially catalogued Delhi Persian collection at the British Library contained a wealth of early 18<sup>th</sup> century Persian histories in manuscript form that had until now, been largely neglected in scholarship. My research on these sources reveals a new mode of sovereignty developed in Muslim polities in between the waning of Mughal, Safavid and Bukharan control over territory in South and Central Asia and the rise of colonial rule in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Contrary to the notion that early 18<sup>th</sup> century rulers in this region merely sought to replicate models of universal kingship and perform the modes of millennial Timurid and Chinggisid sovereignty that had predominated in the previous century, my research shows that prior to Nadir Shah's conquest, nascent polities in Qandahar, Badakhshan, Lahore, and Samarqand were engaged in a dynamic process of reformulating and negotiating sovereignty outside of the old frameworks of universal empire. This process was facilitated by a shared ethical framework rooted in the Persian Cosmopolis that was legible across a diversity of lineages, groups, and polities and often transcended notions of tribal, ethnic, and dynastic

affiliation. My research shows that this period also saw the coalescing of a historiographical tradition that reflected these transformations in sovereignty. Lahore was a key locale in the production of this historiography in the early 18<sup>th</sup> century. This fellowship has enabled me to research histories of sovereignty in South and Central Asia before colonialism and will contribute to an expanded understanding of sovereignty in Muslim societies that looks beyond notions of sacred kingship to the ways in which sovereignty was negotiated in the midst of increased conflict, the rise of new polities and the waning power of old empires. This dissertation will, in turn, contribute to non-Eurocentric scholarship on sovereignty more broadly.