

AIPS Short-Term Research Grant Final Report

Project Title: The texture, poetics, and the taste of Love and Knowledge in Amīr Khusraw and Fakhr al-Dīn Irāqī's works

Author's Name: Ilma Qureshi

Dates for Project: July-August 2021

Location: Lahore

The generous support of the American Institute of Pakistan Studies has been instrumental in pursuing my dissertation titled "The texture, poetics, and the taste of Love and Knowledge in Amīr Khusraw and Fakhr al-Dīn Irāqī's works" in Pakistan during the summer of 2021. The AIPS Short-Term research grant allowed me resources to conduct focused archival research in Lahore. These visits allowed me to access manuscripts, many of which hitherto remain absent in the western academy due to not having been cataloged yet. The Shirani collection at PU library, rare commentarial manuscripts on Amir Khusraw's poetics at Dyal Singh Library, and Persian magazines and Iranian secondary scholarship on Persian poetics at Oriental College were especially helpful bibliographical and theoretical sources that helped me answer critical questions pertinent to my dissertation. These findings will serve as the foundation for the first and third chapters of my dissertation, in which I offer emic theories to study South Asian poetics.

Moreover, my archival research in Lahore has allowed me to establish connections with various librarians, scholars, and publishers. Dr. Hamid at Punjab University Library and Shahid Imran Sb at Dyal Singh Library were immensely helpful in identifying and procuring manuscripts, as well as primary and secondary scholarship that has helped me in developing my dissertation bibliography. In addition to this, they familiarized me with a range of regional scholarship on Persian and Urdu poetics that are not available at Anglo-American libraries and publishing houses. Due to this, my dissertation will be able to draw on scholarly sources and indigenous theoretical frameworks that have not been incorporated in the Europhone scholarship thus far. In addition to this, I liaised with Pakistani publishers, such as Maktabah-i Tamir-i Insani at Urdu Bazar which houses rich textual sources of Sufi poetry. These connections have allowed me to discover sources that are otherwise not available at commercial publishing houses and local libraries.

I am deeply indebted to AIPS for their generous support to conduct research in Pakistan as it has supported my research in multiple ways: It enabled me to conduct archival work, acquire rare manuscripts, and establish scholarly and professional contacts within Pakistan. The visits allowed me to cultivate contacts with chief librarians and staff at these libraries who helped me tremendously in perusing and acquiring copies of manuscripts and bibliographical sources. Lastly, my visits allowed me to locate key commentaries on Khusraw and 'Irāqī's work for my dissertation which will allow me to answer critical historical questions about larger literary trends emerging in the Indian Subcontinent at that time.