

For almost two months, I went to the British Library six days a week and poured over Persian histories, genealogies, stories, poetry, and even miniature paintings, panoramas, and maps. There was one specific moment during the course of the two months that continues to haunt and excite me at the same time: the moment when I was reading *Bayan-i Waqi*, an account of the times by a companion and historian of Nadir Shah, and I happened to stretch my arms and neck when I noticed a painting of a man whose eyes gazed directly on me. The man in the painting was no one other than Nadir Shah himself! That portrait was not the last of Nadir Shah I encountered during my short stay at the BL. I also managed to scan European style sketches of Nadir Shah in a 19<sup>th</sup> century copy of the *Tarikh-i Nadiri*. This specific text has numerous copies, but only this particular copy contains sketches of the man and two other historical events.

As a recipient of a three-month AIPS Junior Fellowship, I conducted research at the British Library in London, Bodleian Library in Oxford, Bibliotheque Nationale de France in Paris, and Institut fur Iranistik in Vienna. I consulted over fifty manuscripts, twelve maps, numerous documents, and twenty published materials. I scanned twenty-six complete or partial manuscripts. These manuscripts are critical for my dissertation research on 18<sup>th</sup> century Punjab. The question that drives my dissertation is: how do Iranian (specifically Nadir Shah) and Afghan (Ahmad Shah Abdali/Durrani) attempts to gain and legitimate political power in eighteenth century Punjab implicate changes in imagining, articulating, and representing land and space, language and culture, self and community. The sources I examined and copied from these libraries will provide me the data I need to answer the question outlined above.

In addition to conducting research, I met with and consulted important scholars in my field. In London, I met with Professors Christopher Shackle, Francesca Orsini, Roy Fischel, Shabnum Tejani, Thibaut d'Hubert, James Caron, Swati Chattopadhyay, and Derek Mancini-Lander. In Paris, I met with Professor Nalini Delvoye; and in Vienna, I consulted and read Indo-Persian texts with Professor Christine Noelle-Karimi. Conversations with these scholars forced me to rethink some of my assumptions, and more importantly, helped me think through some of my frameworks and arguments.

One direct result of this research trip is a paper I will present at the upcoming Annual Conference on South Asia at Madison in October. The paper is on an eighteenth-century ex-slave whose memoir in manuscript form is at the British Library. Although this text has been critically edited and published, examining and consulting the manuscript itself has been quite helpful. There are conventions within manuscript writing that are lost when the text is typed. For example, red ink indicates a change in subject, and lines appear over important names. I also noticed that the editor of the printed text at times wrongly noted discrepancies between the two extant manuscripts, one at the British Library and the other at Aligarh Muslim University. As the manuscript is in very good condition still, I was able to scan the entire memoir and can read it alongside the published text.

I sincerely thank AIPS for granting me the fellowship to conduct research in the United Kingdom, France, and Austria. The sources I collected are critical for my dissertation, which I hope to complete in the upcoming two years, at which time I will provide copies to AIPS in Madison and the office in Lahore.