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## The Newsletter of the American Institute of Indian Studies

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*Dr. Susan Bean, Professor Sumathi Ramaswamy, Mr. Arun Goel, Ambassador Kenneth I. Juster, Mrs. Purnima Mehta*

### AIIS Convenes All India Museum Summit

The All India Museum Summit 2019, organized by the American Institute of Indian Studies (AIIS), was held at the India International Centre in New Delhi, July 22-24, 2019. Under the theme “India’s museums in the new millennium,” the Summit emphasized the importance of museums in enriching the lives of India’s people and the

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## AIIS Language Students Masters Level Capstone Projects

In the summer of 2019, for the first time, AIIS awarded funding for its summer language students to carry out masters level capstone projects in India. This funding which was awarded on a competitive basis, was given to four students:

**Anne Briggs**, a graduate student in the School of Music at the University of Minnesota, participated in the summer Konkani program in Pune. She carried out her capstone project in Goa, which lived under Portuguese colonial occupation for nearly 450 years, being liberated in 1961 and formally added as an Indian state in 1987. As a result, the musical, gastronomic, and social fabric of the area continues to be represented as a linked and blended history of East and West. Many Goans even discuss their Portuguese-influenced heritage with pride and offer it as evidence of their difference from other groups in India. Ms Briggs encountered a small, but strong revival of Fado performances especially in the capital city of Panaji (or Panjim). Fado—an urban musical song usually consisting of voice, Portuguese guitar, and bass guitar—is often represented as a cornerstone of Portuguese identity. Similar revivals have appeared across the Lusophone world; however, unlike revivals she documented in Lisbon, Coimbra, and Northern California, Goa's Fado community is re-introducing the genre with local, community-focused education through workshops, concerts, and events. And while revivals in other Lusophone diasporic communities stress their *saudade*—longing and nostalgia—about a lost Portuguese past, the Goan Fado community represents their revival as apolitical, hoping to distance an oppressive Portuguese colonial past from the Portuguese-inspired/-affiliated cultural artifacts that mark what it means to be Goan. The AIIS capstone funding provided her the chance to travel to Goa and spend four weeks meeting with local musicians, connoisseurs, and students. Not only did the funding offer her the opportunity to learn Konkani in Pune for eight weeks, but also to engage with practitioners and musicians about whom little is written or known. This summer project formed the foundation of Ms Briggs' upcoming dissertation project which focuses on Lusophone music in diaspora.

**Julia Chatterjee**, a graduate student in the Department of Asian Languages and Literature at the University of Washington, participated in the summer Sanskrit program in Pune. Her summer project included two major elements which helped her gain perspective and a deeper understanding of the inscriptional practices in the western region of the

Deccan. First, with the help of a Sanskrit specialist, Dr. Kirti Kulkarni, she translated the Rudradaman inscription of year 72. The text appears on a rock at the site of Girnar, on which Aśoka's Prakrit edicts and Skandagupta's later Sanskrit inscription also appear. After translating the Rudradaman inscription, she placed the three inscriptions in conversation with each other in an attempt to assess how the inscriptional *praśasti* formula demonstrated in the Rudradaman and later Skandagupta inscriptions could have emerged through the physical and ideological acknowledgement of Aśoka's edicts. Preliminarily, she hypothesized that the physical present of the edicts transformed the rock into an ideologically powerful space, which other rulers, even centuries later, would utilize to spread their own messages. She continued exploring the notion that inscriptions can create ideologically powerful spaces through the next phase of her research which involved visiting archaeological sites. Due to time constraints, she focused on the following sites in Maharashtra — the Naneghat cave and surrounded monastic sites in Junnar as well as the caves of Ajanta and Ellora. Guided by Dr. Shreekant Jadhav, she visited these sites, taking special care to photograph any visible inscriptions. The Naneghat inscription remains the highlight of her travels, as the paleography of the inscription was so clear and reminiscent of Aśokan Brahmi, that she had little trouble discerning the text. However, the rest of the Junnar inscriptions as well as the inscriptions at Ajanta and Ellora were not nearly as well preserved, which made conducting a complete paleographic survey difficult. However, one shared feature of these less legible inscriptions was that they were often located in places that are somewhat hard to read. For example, a Pali inscription outside a prominent cave in Ajanta was placed far above eye-level, making the already small (compared to Naneghat) akṣaras nearly impossible to read. This placement caused her to reflect on the visual effects of an inscription which may be quite separate from the matter of readability. In fact, even a number of Aśoka's inscriptions appear in places that would not have been easily read. Perhaps these inscriptions served as visual markers of space whose ideological influence was *felt* rather than read. Having had the opportunity to explore this line of inquiry at actual archaeological sites, Ms Chatterjee is now well equipped to continue expanding her research on the effect of inscriptions on the creation of ideological spaces in ancient India in her current MA thesis.

**Rachel Pei Hirsch**, a graduate student in the Department of Architecture at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, participated in the Mughal Persian program in Lucknow. She spent several weeks in Burhanpur, a small city located near the southern border of the state of Madhya Pradesh. Her goal was to use a surface archaeology approach to garner a historical understanding of the city. Burhanpur was a major Sufi center as well as a capital of both the Farooqi and Mughal dynasties from the late-fourteenth century, but receives little attention in historical scholarship today. She was particularly interested in its value to the rulers of the latter empire, most notably Akbar, Jahangir, and Shah Jahan, and set out to photo-document and map the city's architecture and spatial layout. The goal was to find new ways to interpret this seemingly-marginal city. This preliminary research will serve as the primary data set for her master's thesis. She is currently in the process of outlining the contours of this thesis, which will likely focus on the highly dynamic period of Mughal rule between 1601 and 1631. This thirty-year period saw the rule of the three emperors listed above, all of whom patronized architectural projects in Burhanpur. Using observations from this summer, she hopes to substantiate an argument that Burhanpur was a critical tool in imperial expansion southward into the Deccan and must be taken seriously as a significant form of urban construction distinct from the Mughal capitals at Agra, Lahore, Delhi, and Fatehpur Sikri.

**Margaret Masselli**, a graduate student in the Department of Art History at Columbia University, participated in the Urdu program in Lucknow. She used her capstone funding to travel to Patna, Kolkata, and Murshidabad. She was able to explore the collections of the Patna Museum, Indian Museum in Kolkata, Hazarduari Palace Museum in Murshidabad, and several other small collections. Her capstone project laid a foundation for her Master's thesis and helped her to gain a greater understanding and awareness of the region, in order to facilitate further research trips in the future. Her project explores the interlinked nature of artistic production in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century eastern India. Much of the art and culture of this period is now exhibited in the UK, removed from its initial context. However, it is crucial to understand the cultural centers and modes of production that these objects and artworks originated in. Furthermore, the eighteenth and nineteenth-century material archive of the region, ranging from in situ architecture to paintings and objects in public museums and small collections, remains largely inaccessible online, as well as in publication. The images and detailed notes she was able to take throughout the summer will continue to inform her research.

Funding for the capstone projects was provided by a grant from the U.S. Department of State, Educational and Cultural Affairs, through the Council of American Overseas Research Centers.



**The American Institute of Indian Studies is Pleased to Announce that the Following Scholars have been Awarded Fellowships to Carry Out their Projects in India in 2019-2020:**

Tariq Ali, an associate professor in the Department of History at Georgetown University, was awarded a senior short-term fellowship to carry out his project, "Building National Economies: State, Capital and Economic Lives in Post-Partition Bengal, 1947-1965." Professor Ali's fellowship is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Lisa Bjorkman, an assistant professor in the Department of Urban and Public Affairs at the University of Louisville, was awarded a senior fellowship to carry out her project, "Theatre of Democracy: Political Communication in Mumbai." Professor Bjorkman's fellowship is funded by a grant from the U.S. State Department Bureau of Educational and Cultural Affairs (ECA) through the Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC).

Kriti Budhiraja, a graduate student in the Department of Sociology at the University of Minnesota, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out her project, "Beyond Contested Entry and Tragic Exit: A Study of Equity in Indian Higher Education." Ms Budhiraja is the recipient of the Joe Elder College Year in India Junior Fellowship.

Keith Cantu, a graduate student in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of California, Santa Barbara, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out his project, "Sri Sabhapati Swami and the Translocalization of Siva's Rajayoga." Mr. Cantu is the recipient of the Ludo and Rosane Rocher Research Fellowship in Sanskrit Studies. Mr. Cantu's fellowship is funded by a grant from the ECA through CAORC.



Mikaela Chase, a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology at Johns Hopkins University, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out her project, "Confronting Asceticism: Law, Ethics, and the Right to Life in the Jain Fast Until Death." Ms Chase is the recipient of the Rachel F. and Scott McDermott Fellowship. Ms Chase's fellowship is funded by a grant from the ECA through CAORC.

Antoinette DeNapoli, an associate professor in the Department of Religion at Texas Christian University, was awarded a senior short-term fellowship to carry out her project, "The Satis are Rising: Women Gurus' Quest for Equality in India." Professor DeNapoli's fellowship is funded by a grant from the ECA through CAORC.

Edward (Ned) Dostaler, a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Berkeley, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out his project, "City of Sand: Urban Ecologies and Uncertain Life in Chennai." Mr. Dostaler's fellowship is funded by a grant from the ECA through CAORC.

Jennifer Dubrow, an associate professor in the Department of Asian Languages and Literature at the University of Washington, was awarded a senior short-term fellowship to carry out her project, "Dept of Asian Languages and Literature." Professor Dubrow's fellowship is funded by a grant from the ECA through CAORC.

Samyak Ghosh, a graduate student in the Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian and African Studies at Columbia University, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out his project, "Vernacular Kingship: Political Culture in Early Modern Northeast India." Mr. Ghosh is the recipient of the Kumkum Chatterjee Memorial Fellowship in Indian History.

Harjant Gill, an associate professor in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Towson University, was awarded a performing and creative arts fellowship to carry out his project, "Tales from Macholand: An Immersive 360 VR Web Series on Indian Masculinities." Professor Gill's fellowship is funded by a grant from the ECA through CAORC.

Andrew Halladay, a graduate student in the Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out his project, "Mughal Memories and the Nascent Nation: Representing the Recent Past in Late-Colonial India."

Mr. Halladay is the recipient of the Metcalf Fellowship in Indian History. Mr. Halladay's fellowship is funded by a grant from the ECA through CAORC.

Nafis Hasan, a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of California, Los Angeles, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out his project, "Techno-Politics of ICTs: Investigating Bureaucracy in the Digital Age."

Justin Henry, an instructor in the Department of Theology and Religious Studies at Loyola University Chicago, was awarded a senior short-term fellowship to carry out his project, "Ravana's Kingdom: Cultural Interface, Religious Identity and Historiography in Sri Lanka." Professor Henry's fellowship is funded by a grant from the ECA through CAORC.

Indivar Jonnalagadda, a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Pennsylvania, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out his project, "Legal Titles, Illegal Practices: Land, Legitimacy, and Life in Slum Settlements of Urban India." Mr. Jonnalagadda is the recipient of the Joseph W. Elder Fellowship in the Social Sciences.

Gabrielle Kruks-Wisner, an assistant professor in the Department of Politics at the University of Virginia, was awarded a senior short-term fellowship to carry out her project, "Building Better Brokers: Journalists, Advocates and Intermediaries in Rural India." Professor Kruks-Wisner's fellowship is funded by a grant from the ECA through CAORC.

Harini Kumar, a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Chicago, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out her project, "Formations of Tamil Islam: Negotiations and Contestations in Contemporary South India."

Michael Levien, an assistant professor in the Department of Sociology at Johns Hopkins University, was awarded a senior fellowship to carry out his project, "Rural Land Markets in Liberalizing India." Professor Levien's fellowship is funded by a grant from the ECA through CAORC.

Amulya Mandava, a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology at Harvard University, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out her project, "Unruly Desires: Marriage and the Contestation of Caste-Based Inequality in Tamil Nadu." Ms Mandava's fellowship is funded by a grant from the ECA through CAORC.

Christopher McGuinness, a graduate student in the Department of Music at the City University of New York, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out his project, "Electronic Dance Music Production in Mumbai." Mr. McGuinness' fellowship is funded by a grant from the ECA through CAORC.

Benita Menezes, a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology at Johns Hopkins University, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out her project, "Politics of Dispossession: Land Transactions, Brokers and Families in Maharashtra." Ms Menezes is the recipient of the Rajendra Vora Fellowship for the Study of Society and Culture in Maharashtra.

Darshana Mini, a graduate student in the School of Cinematic Arts at the University of Southern California, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out her project, "The Transnational Journeys of Malayalam Soft Porn: Obscenity, Censorship, and the Mediation of Desire." Ms Mini is the recipient of the Thomas W. Simons Fellowship.

Laura Murray, a graduate student in the Department of Anthropology at New York University, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out her project, "Sacred Cows: Science, Politics and Ecology in Developmental North India." Ms Murray is the recipient of the Vina Sanyal Research Award.

Brent Otto, a graduate student in the Department of History at the University of California, Berkeley, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out his project, "Anglo-Indians, South Indian Christianity, and the Politics of Caste." Mr. Otto is the recipient of the Thomas R. Trautmann Fellowship. Mr. Otto's fellowship is funded by a grant from the ECA through CAORC.

Gita Pai, an associate professor in the Department of History at the University of Wisconsin, La Crosse, was awarded a senior short-term fellowship to carry out her project, "In Pursuit of Dancing Siva: The History of India's Iconic Cultural Treasure." Professor Pai's fellowship is funded by a grant from the ECA through CAORC.

Joshua Pien, a graduate student in the Department of South Asian Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out his project, "Tracing Dehlavi: 1200-1700." Mr. Pien is the recipient of the Daniel H.H. Ingalls Memorial Fellowship. Mr. Pien's fellowship is funded by a grant from the ECA through CAORC.

Haimanti Roy, an associate professor in the Department of History at the University of Dayton, was awarded a senior fellowship to carry out her project, "Paper Trails: Mobility, Identity, and the Making of the Indian Citizen, 1920-2015." Professor Roy's fellowship is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

Sasha Sabherwal, a graduate student in the Department of American Studies at Yale University was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out her project, "Racializing Religion: Transnational South Asian Religion, Gender and Caste in the Punjabi Diaspora, 1947-present." Ms Sabherwal's fellowship is funded by a grant from the ECA through CAORC.

Sharvari Sastry, a graduate student in the Department of South Asian Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago, was awarded a junior fellowship to carry out her project, "The Performance of Posterity: Archiving Theatre Practice in Modern and Contemporary India, 1960-2018." Ms Sastry is the recipient of the Asher Family Fellowship.

Martha Selby, a professor in the Department of Asian Studies at the University of Texas, was awarded a senior fellowship to carry out her project, "A Complete Translation of Kuruntokai, an Early Old Tamil Anthology." Professor Selby's fellowship is funded by a grant from the ECA through CAORC.

Mark Steinberg, a professor in the Department of History at the University of Illinois, was awarded a senior short-term fellowship to carry out his project, "The Crooked and the Straight in the City: Urban Disorders in Bombay, Odessa, and New York City, 1919-1939." Professor Steinberg's fellowship is funded by a grant from the ECA through CAORC.

Ajay Verghese, an assistant professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of California, Riverside, was awarded a senior short-term fellowship to carry out his project, "Secularization in the Hindu Tradition." Professor Verghese's fellowship is funded by a grant from the ECA through CAORC.

Rashmi Viswanathan, a post-doctoral fellow at the Parsons School of Design at New School University, was awarded a senior short-term fellowship to carry out her project, "Receiving the Global Modern: Private Politics of Interest in Post-War United States." Dr. Viswanathan's fellowship is funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities.

### Workshop on Grand Challenges for the Humanities in India

A day long workshop on Grand Challenges for the Humanities in India and Indian Humanities was held at the India International Centre on 18 April 2019. The workshop was jointly chaired by AIIS president Sumathi Ramaswamy and Professor Nirmala Menon of IIT-Indore. The goal was to identify ten grand challenges facing the humanities in India, to analyze the climate of opportunities, but also locate the material and structural impediments facing humanists, and to enumerate resources: financial, material, and human.

Mr. R. Subrahmanyam, Secretary (Higher Education) Ministry of Human Resource Development (MHRD), Government of India, sponsored the workshop and participated in some of the discussions. Among the topics discussed were: access to knowledge: rebuilding archives, libraries, and other repositories of information; curriculum innovations; scholarly publishing projects; open access platforms with multilingual, cross-disciplinary avenues; identifying resources to stimulate collaborative teaching and research; and collaborations between Humanities and STEM fields. Professor Rukmini Bhaya Nair identified LEAF (Liberal Education in the Arts Fields) as a critical complement to STEM. This proposal had wide resonance across the Working Group. LEAF underscores that study of and research in the various disciplines broadly conceived as “the Arts” requires as rigorous dedicated efforts and strategic investments as in STEM.

Participants included Rukmini Bhaya Nair, IIT Delhi; Nita Kumar, Claremont McKenna College; Sudha Mohan, Department of Civics and Politics, University of Mumbai; Frederick Asher, University of Minnesota; Sunila Kale, University of Washington; Suranjan Das, VC, Jadavpur University, Kolkata; Maya Dodd, Flame University Pune; Ashok Thorat, Savitribai Phule University, Pune; Nirmala Menon, IIT, Indore; Paul Arthur, Edith Cowan University, Australia; Madhavi Menon, Ashoka University, Sonapat; Kavita Daiya, George Washington University; Bhagat Oinam, Jawaharlal Nehru University; and Sundar Sarukkai NIIS/IISc, Bengaluru.



The workshop resulted in a white paper prepared by a working committee, requesting the MHRD to institute a grant scheme dedicated to the humanities to focus on the following areas: 1) digital humanities 2) environmental humanities 3) publishing/translation studies; 4) public humanities 5) Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums (GLAM); 6) humanities, media and communication; 7) decolonizing knowledge systems; 8) creative pedagogy studies; 9) building national infrastructure for excellence in the humanities; 10) internationalization of the humanities in India.



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need for building institutional capacities to manage collections and resources. The Summit also provided a valuable interaction opportunity and set the stage for further cooperation among museum professionals from India and the United States.

The Museum Summit project was supported by a generous grant from the US Embassy in New Delhi, and was directed by Dr. Susan Bean, the chair of the AIIS Art and Archaeology Committee. The project co-director was Dr. Vandana Sinha, the director of the AIIS Center for Art and Archaeology.

The Museum Summit plan was radically innovative as a program for galvanizing India's diverse museum sector to articulate new, ambitious, aspirational goals for India's museums – to move them decisively beyond the role of caretakers of India's artistic heritage by charting a path towards becoming cutting-edge leaders, using 21<sup>st</sup> century technologies (from smartphones to state-of-the-art gallery lighting) in the deployment of cultural heritage in its broadest sense for diverse audiences (whether local or international; school children, families or the disabled).

The Summit was attended by more than 200 participants and speakers from India, the US, UK, Bhutan and Singapore and from cities including Aligarh, Bengaluru, Chandigarh, Chicago, Gandhinagar, New Delhi/NCR, Indiana, Jaipur, Kolhapur, London, Manipur, Massachusetts, Meghalaya, Mewar, Mumbai, New York, Paro, Pune, Rajasthan, Thimphu, and Vadodara. Attendees included curators, conservationists, educators, art book publishers, researchers, scientists, artists, architects, art critics, musicologists, archivists, art collectors, other professionals from arts and culture and students.



The event was inaugurated on July 22 with a welcome speech and opening remarks by AIIS president Professor Sumathi Ramaswamy and AIIS director-general Purnima Mehta. Arun Goel, Secretary, Ministry of Culture, Government of India delivered the inaugural address while the keynote address was made by the US Ambassador to India, the Honorable Kenneth I. Juster.

The theme for the first day of the Summit was “Reimagining Museums for the 21st Century.” Sessions included “India’s New Museums: Aims, Challenges, Strategies,” chaired by Dr. Bean, and “Supporting and Advancing India’s Museums,” chaired by Dr. Madhuvanti Ghose, the Associate Curator of Indian, Southeast Asian, Himalayan and Islamic Art at the Art Institute of Chicago. Day one ended with a roundtable on “Leapfrogging Museums into the 21st Century: Bringing Past into the Present for the Future.”

The theme for the second day was “Constituencies, Audiences, Access” and began with the session “Installing exhibitions that engage the public,” chaired by Naman Ahuja, professor, School of Arts & Aesthetics, Jawaharlal Nehru University. This session was followed by a special lecture “Formulating Modes of Perception and Participation – Museum Audiences and Beyond” by Tasneem Mehta, managing trustee and honorary director of the Dr. Bhau Daji Lad Mumbai City Museum in Mumbai. The afternoon session “Reaching Audiences,” chaired by Joyoti Roy, head of marketing and communication at the Chhatrapati Shivaji Maharaj Vastu Sangrahalaya (CSMVS) in Mumbai, was followed by a visit to the Drishyakala Museum at the Red Fort in Delhi, organized by the Delhi Art Gallery.

The third day’s theme was “Collections: Care, Management, Conservation.” Sessions included “Preventative Care and Conservation,” chaired by Anupam Sah, head of conservation at CSMVS; “Realizing Collections’ Potential through Research,” chaired by Annapurna Garimella, curator at Jackfruit Research & Design, Bengaluru and New Delhi; and “Documentation, Digitization and Archives,” chaired by Pramod Kumar KG, managing director of Eka Archiving Services Pvt. Ltd. in New Delhi. One of the presenters in this session was Diane Zorich, director of the Smithsonian Institution’s Digitization Program Office. The third day concluded with an address by Nirupama Kotru, Joint Secretary (Museum) of the Ministry of Culture, Government of India.



*All India Museum Summit presenters group photo*

As an outgrowth of the Summit, a working group will convene to assess the proceedings and draft a white paper for the Ministry of Culture, the content of which will also be widely disseminated in India’s museum community and made publicly available. The aim of the white paper is to articulate the needs of museums, conservation facilities and heritage institutions to become 21<sup>st</sup> century leaders in the field worldwide and to outline initiatives that are innovative, feasible and sustainable to advance towards these goals. The Summit was covered by the *New Indian Express*.



## Textual Practices and Catholicism in South India

by Margherita Trento



*The author in front of the altar marking the location of old Āvūr, photo credit Jesse Pruitt*

In my dissertation, entitled “Writing Christianity in Early Modern South India,” I show how Catholicism took root in the Tamil hinterland in the eighteenth century thanks to new textual practices associated with an emerging corpus of refined literature (mostly poetry) in Tamil. I propose a contextual reading of this literature as the locus of negotiation between the concerns of Jesuit missionaries and their converts, and connect it to the development of social institutions like the catechist’s occupation, organized around literate lay élites in charge of evangelizing and managing local Catholic communities. For this project, I rely on historical methods—with special attention to small-scale analysis in the contest of global connected phenomena—combined with philological and literary methods. So, when I learned I had been awarded the AIIS junior research fellowship, my plan was to spend time in Tamil Nadu to hunt for manuscript of Tamil Catholic texts in local archives, read some of those texts with scholars in Chennai, Pondicherry and Madurai, and gather as many historical sources on Catholic life in the eighteenth century as possible.

Indeed, this is what I did during the six months I spent in India in 2017 on my AIIS fellowship. I had the good fortune to be affiliated with the École Française d’Extrême-Orient (EFEO) and thus based in Pondicherry, where I made regular use of local libraries. I also spent time in Jesuit Archives of the Madurai Province (JEMPARC) in Shenbaganur, nearby Kodaikanal; the Sentamil College archives and the library of the Tamilnadu Theological Seminary in Madurai; the Government Oriental Manuscript Library (GOML) and the Tamil Nadu Archives (TNA) in Chennai; the Swaminatha Iyer Library and Archives, always in Chennai; and the Saraswathi Mahal Library (SML) in Thanjavur. All these repositories contain paper and palm-leaf manuscripts of Tamil Catholic texts that were written in the eighteenth century, albeit often copied later in the nineteenth century. In the case of JEMPARC and TNA, the archives also hold important historical sources like parish diaries, records of land donations, and other such administrative files.

Besides gathering documents in the archives, I also read and analyzed some of the eighteenth-century literary texts at the core of my project with scholars of Tamil literature in Pondicherry. Between August and November 2017, I met regularly with professor K. Nachimuthu and professor Indra Manuel (the latter was my supervisor), both researchers at the EFEO, and read with them chapters from two important texts written by Jesuit missionary Costanzo Giuseppe Beschi (1680-1747). These were the *Tirukkāvalūr kalampakam*, a collection (*kalampakam* literally means ‘mixture’ in Tamil) of various poems following strict thematic and metrical rules, all dedicated in this case to the form of Mary venerated in the village of Ēlākkuricci; and the *Tonṇūl vīlakkam*, a grammar of literary Tamil that summarizes the available grammatical and poetological knowledge for the sake of Catholic catechists and students in the eighteenth century. Both texts are extremely complex, and in reading them I benefitted immensely from the expertise of prof. Nachimuthu and prof. Manuel in the fields of Tamil grammar and poetics.

Yet the most important development for my project was, as it often happens, unexpected. It was my old friend and collaborator, Professor Anand Amaladass SJ of Dhyana Ashram (Mylapore), who first suggested that I visit the locations where missionaries and their catechists lived and preached in the eighteenth century. These are mostly small villages, nowadays so geographically remote and culturally peripheral that it was often difficult to locate them. Yet

when I started doing so, and traveling to these locations—to villages called Ēlākkuricci, Āvūr, Carukaṇi, Vatakkāṇkuḷam and many others—I begun to discover the lively world of popular Catholicism, and to understand the complex way the history I study connects with local memory enshrined in art, literature, and (often dilapidated) monuments. Being able to connect these worlds, and to see the setting of the story I seek to tell in my dissertation, was extremely enriching. I am working on ways to incorporate this new information in my dissertation project, and these new materials also helped me to frame my next project on Tamil hagiography and popular Catholic literary genres in the early modern period.



*The old chapel at Vatakkāṇkuḷam (notice the underlying mandapam structure), surrounded by newer buildings*

In conclusion, the months spent in Tamil Nadu on my fellowship were crucial to the development of my dissertation because they helped me continue the archival and philological work at the core of my project. They also opened up new horizons of research, pointing to the need to incorporate ethnographic data, folk literature, and urbanistic and art-historical considerations into my project. Combined with the twelve months I had already spent in India with a fellowship of the Committee on Southern Asia Studies (COSAS) at the University of Chicago in 2016, and with the nine months I spent in Europe in 2018 thanks to a SSRC International Dissertation Research Fellowship (IDRF) to explore archives in Rome, Paris and London, the AIIS Junior Fellowship allowed me to understand the depth and width of the Tamil Catholic archive. My dissertation project is a first exploration of these sources in multiple languages (including Tamil, Sanskrit, Latin, Italian, French, Portuguese) and genres (from private correspondence to administrative records to poetry). I have been excited to see the dissertation taking shape as I write it this year, and I look forward to continue pursuing this exploration in future projects after my defense in November 2019.

*Margherita Trento is PhD candidate in the department of South Asian Languages and Literatures at the University of Chicago. She held an AIIS junior fellowship in 2017. She had previously participated in the AIIS intensive summer 2013 Tamil program in Madurai. In the fall of 2019, she will defend her dissertation and take up a post-doctoral position at the university L'Orientale in Naples.*



### **Mughal Persian Archival Workshop**

On August 8-9, 2019 the American Institute of Indian Studies organized a Mughal Persian Archival Workshop at Lucknow University. The workshop was conceived in the context of exciting intellectual trends in the fields of comparative empire studies and the study of the wider Persianate world in the Early Modern period. These trends are of great interest to scholars focusing on the Ottoman Empire, Safavid Persia, Central Asia, the wider Indian Ocean world, as well as those focusing on the sub-continent, including those working in regions previously considered “peripheral.” The workshop was intended to promote conversations and collaborations between scholars investigating common or intersecting themes and who will be using Mughal Persian archives for their research.

The workshop was led by Dr. Arif Ayyubi, professor in the Department of Persian at Lucknow University, Professor Shah Mahmoud Hanifi of James Madison University, and Ms Amanda Lanzillo, Ph.D. candidate at Indiana University



(and recent AIIS junior fellow) and organized by Dr. Ahtesham Ahmed Khan, the director of AIIS language programs and the head of the AIIS Mughal Persian and Urdu Language programs. Participants included the thirteen students enrolled in the AIIS summer 2019 Mughal Persian program: Craig Breckenridge (University of Michigan), Rachel Cochran (University of North Carolina), Shounak Ghosh (Vanderbilt University), Rachel Hirsch (Massachusetts Institute of Technology), Sajedah Hosseini (University of Arizona), Bahadin Kerborani (University of Chicago), Vipin Krishna (UCLA), Dipanjan Mazumder (Vanderbilt University), Zehra Mehdi (Columbia University), John Nowak (Harvard University), Spencer Pennington (University of Washington), Huma Ramazan Ali (Brown University), and Bryan Sitzes (University of Texas); AIIS junior fellow Samyak Ghosh, Tiraana Bains (Yale University), former AIIS Mughal Persian students and current Ph.D. candidates Anurag Advani, Namrata Kanchan and Sourav Ghosh, scholars from Lucknow: professor Asif Naeem, professor Ahsanul Zafar, Dr. Syed Gulam Navi Ahmad, Dr. Mohammed Arshadul Qadri, Dr. Shib Anwar Alvi, and Syed Huzaifa Ali Nadwi. AIIS was pleased to welcome two distinguished Iranian scholars, Dr. Hamid Reza Ghelichkhani, an expert on Persian inscriptions from Tehran, and Dr. Ehsanollah Shokrollahi of the Iran Culture House in New Delhi. In addition to those making presentations, the workshop was also attended by the AIIS summer 2019 Urdu students, the AIIS Mughal Persian and Urdu teaching staff, two scholars from Jawaharlal Nehru University and a number of scholars from Lucknow, for a total of 63 attendees.

The first day consisted of a number of thematic sessions where participants made brief presentations about their research interests, the challenges they anticipate in conducting their projects, the resources they believe would assist them, and how they see their own scholarship in the overall universe of scholars using Mughal Persian archives. Sessions included: Mughal India and Comparative Empire Studies; Comparative bureaucratic cultures, diplomacy, center/periphery interactions within empire and crossing across frontiers; Intellectual history, Islamic historiography, discourses around legitimacy; Literature and Art; Sufi studies, Islamic philosophy and religious culture, Islamic reform movements; Lucknow and Visiting Experts and Scholars Panel. Presentations included “Industrial writing in Persian between late Mughal and colonial rule” by Amanda Lanzillo; “Afghanistan and Mughal Persian Texts: The National Archives and the Baburnama” by Shah Mahmoud Hanifi; “Persian language sources for history of Yezidis in Ottoman Empire written by geographers and travelers in 17<sup>th</sup>-18<sup>th</sup> century” by Bahadin Kerborani; “Envisioning and Enacting Imperial Transitions in Eighteenth Century South Asia” by Tiraana Bains; “Poetics at the margins of the Mughal Empire in early modern Bengal” by Dipanjan Mazumder; and “Shi’a scholars in the Persian Gulf and their relations with Shi’a communities in Deccan during the Safavid Empire” by Craig Breckenridge. A keynote address, “The Indo-Persianate communities of Unani healing in the period of Mughal decline” was delivered by eminent scholar Seema Alavi, professor in the Department of History at Jamia Millia Islamia.



*Mughal Persian Archival Workshop Presenters Group Photo*

During the second day participants visited the site of Mahmudabad with its Kothi (palace) a notable religious and cultural center, containing an important library that hosts scholars of literature, art and poetry. Participants enjoyed a buffet lunch as a guest of Raja Amir Mohammad Khan.



After lunch, they engaged in a brainstorming session focusing on outcomes and next steps, including practical issues such as what students/scholars need for their research: finding aids, better description of collections, resource guides, a possible data base of available archives and contents that are important for particular fields of inquiry, how to make such data available to wider community. They also discussed more scholarly outcomes—ideas for joint collaborations of scholars working on archives in India exploring topics encompassing entire Persianate world, opportunities for students/scholars from different countries and/or working on different countries to work together on common interests, and defining those common themes. AIIS is now working on creating an interactive platform that would be a resource for scholars working on the overall Persianate world of the early modern period to keep on top of the archival material relevant to their research that is available in the various institutions in India. This would be an interactive rich platform site with map, key words---topics documents, collections can be useful, locations and attributes of different collections each “annotated” with keywords that can be helpful finding aids.



*workshop participants visiting Mahmudabad*

The workshop was co-sponsored by the American Institute of Afghanistan Studies and the American Institute of Iranian Studies and was supported with a grant from the U.S. Department of State, Educational and Cultural Affairs, through the Council of American Overseas Research Centers.



*Workshop participants engaged in exhilarating discussions*



### CAA Workshop on Archaeological Methods

The AIIS Center for Art and Archaeology held its second two-day Workshop on Archaeological Methods at the AIIS headquarters in Gurugram on June 27-28, 2019. This workshop was designed to introduce Indian students to a range of methodological approaches and technical skills used by American archeologists that both enable and constrain what can be said about the past through archaeological research and material analyses. The workshop was led this year again by Professors Andrew M. Bauer, Department of Anthropology, Stanford University and Peter Johansen, Department of Anthropology, McGill University, who have been working in Maski, an archaeological site in Karnataka for the last eight years.

The estimated 20 participants included curators, students of archaeology, researchers and historians from different Indian States. They were affiliated with institutions including Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi, University of Delhi, Shiv Nadar University, Greater Noida, Delhi Institute of Research & Heritage Management, New Delhi, Faizabad University, Lucknow, Deccan College, Pune, and the National Museum, New Delhi.

Professor Bauer would like to make this workshop an annual event. For the last couple of years AIIS has been discussing the possibility of an internship project between Stanford University and CAA. Professor Bauer hopes to collaborate with CAA to establish internships to bring students to work on Maski materials. He said, "the Maski Archaeological Internship will bring undergraduate students from the United States and Canada to the CAA to specialize in digital archiving. This will involve participating in archaeological documentation, and archiving records such as GIS databases, digitization of field records and loci information, computing and storing photogrammetric models of artifacts and features, and will also often include an opportunity for archaeological fieldwork. The internships will typically last six to eight weeks, split between the CAA in Gurugram and visiting sites and conducting fieldwork in northern Karnataka. We would make it "viewable" and searchable in a GIS viewer, or perhaps even downloadable." The materials created through this project could be put on the Virtual Museum of Images and Sounds (VMIS) in a section dedicated to Archaeological materials. CAA has archaeological materials from the late Gregory Possehl also that could be put in this section. This would allow CAA to accept materials from other AIIS archaeologists also to be shared on the VMIS



## **ARCE Awarded Ambassadors Fund Grant for Documentation of Imperiled Musical Traditions of Western Rajasthan**

The AIIS Archives and Research Center for Ethnomusicology was awarded a grant from the U.S. Embassy in India's Ambassador's Fund for Cultural Preservation (AFCP) small grants competition for "India: Documentation of Endangered Musical Traditions in Western Rajasthan." ARCE will receive \$70,000 for the 18-month project that falls under the AFCP focus area of "forms of traditional cultural expression."

This project is aimed at the revival and revitalization of an important, but rapidly disappearing, oral tradition of ballad and storytelling found in the deserts of Western Rajasthan (referred to in the local Marwari language as "baat," "katha" and "varta"). The narrative traditions of two marginalized communities, the Manganiar and Langa communities of hereditary musicians in western Rajasthan form a vital part of the western Rajasthan cultural landscape. Though these communities have survived for generations on traditional patronage, these musical traditions are presently being threatened by changes in patronage, urbanization, and the intrusion of modern media into rural areas.

These ballads are a repository of history and traditional knowledge. They include a range of heroic ballads, romantic epic tales and tales that have Sufi spiritual interpretations. The primary reasons that these traditions are highly threatened or nearly extinct are that the narratives are long and sung and recited for several hours, traditionally during night long performances, and thus have not been able to migrate to the urban stage the way instrumental and song performances of the same communities have done. The reduction of traditional patronage has not been replaced by the concert stage and festivals as a support for the performers of these genres, as has happened with some other forms of cultural expression, thus removing a key incentive for the next

generation of musicians to learn and continue with the tradition.

The primary objective of this project is to document this tradition in order to create a base for a multi-pronged approach to its revitalization through documentation, community involvement and training of a younger generation of performers. This will also serve as a model of a community-led approach by which members of a community are trained in the physical preservation of the repertoire, as well as in the transmission and preservation of the tradition.

The need to create a wider patronage and audience is an important part of any culturally sustainability strategy. This will be carried out on a local as well as global level. On the local level, two performances by the senior and new practitioners are planned as a pilot event to expose local rural audiences to the repertoire they are familiar with, as well as programs in three cities of India. Presenting traditions through public performances raises the prestige of performative traditions and it has been demonstrated that increased prestige plays an important role in revitalization and helps create long term sustainability.

The first step will be to train young community members of the Manganiar and Langa community of hereditary musicians to survey and document this tradition, teaching them to locate practitioners as well as making an inventory of important ballads and narratives. They will collect data, record the ballads and take notes on the texts. This means that the preservation of the tradition will not adopt a top down approach but instead build capacity within the community to learn to document and preserve their own traditions. This will entail training in recording technology as well as documentation. Based on the surveys carried out and detailed recordings made, master musicians will be identified to train a chosen group of younger musicians in the repertoire and the contexts in which it was performed, thus reviving the oral transmission of the ballads and narratives.



On a more global level, selected extracts of recordings with explanations will be presented through the internet on platforms that the Archives and Research Centre for Ethnomusicology is already using such as the Virtual Museum of Image and Sound (VMIS) and Smithsonian Folkways Recordings, through which tracks are available as paid downloads and distributed widely for revenue-generating streaming.

ARCE-AIIS will collaborate with local institutions that are active in working on the musical traditions of Western Rajasthan. The primary collaboration will be with Rupayan Sansthan based in Jodhpur. Rupayan Sansthan, founded by the eminent folklorist Komal Kothari and writer Vijaydan Detha in 1965 is the premier institution known nationally and globally for its pioneering work in putting Rajasthani music of the Langas and Manganiars on the world map. This will serve as well as the local headquarters of the project. Other institutions which will be involved are the Manganiar Lok Sangeet Sansthan (Institute of Manganiar folk music), which is a community-based archive and institution, and Rajasthan Virasat Foundation, which is an organization that has pioneered heritage work in Rajasthan including Rajasthan International Folk Festival (RIFF). Their newly established initiative, Rajasthan Rural Arts Program, would make them useful collaborators.

Digital recordings will be archived at ARCE and will also be deposited in multiple locations serving different purposes, such as Rupayan Sansthan, the premier institution for music and folklore in Rajasthan and known for its support of musicians; the Jaipur Virasat Foundation which is embarking on a Rajasthan-wide revitalization project; and a community archive based in Jaisalmer called the

Manganiar Lok Sangeet Sansthan that serves the local musician communities. The performances aimed at rural and urban audiences will set the basis for future performances sustaining the energy created by the intensive phase of training, documentation and performance, and providing a new kind of patron for the performance of the narratives. Finally the project will be an important exercise in a community-led revitalization in the area of Intangible Cultural Heritage and will provide a model for such initiatives. Reports on this will be shared on the Project website and shared on various fora through presentations, publications, and other collaborative projects.

The outcomes are envisaged as reactivating and revitalization a near extinct tradition that captures the rich local history of a part of India that is known for its musical traditions, through teaching in the traditional oral transmission mode; a collection of recordings documented by the community members; supporting and nurturing traditional audiences as well as creating wider national and global audiences. The methodology of community-led revitalization will be a path-breaking initiative and can be used as a pilot for other oral traditions in India and other parts of the world.

This project is one of three projects ARCE is currently undertaking in Western Rajasthan in partnership with Rupayan. ARCE also received a grant from the Modern Endangered Archives Program of the UCLA Library for “Digitization and Preservation of Audio Recordings of Music and Oral Traditions in the Collections of Rupayan Sansthan, India.” This project involves digitizing the cassette collection that belonged to the late Komal Kothari that is held at the Rupayan Sansthan.



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