

***Taking the Past into the Future:  
Studying, Preserving, and Understanding Islamic Manuscripts***

**University of Edinburgh, Thursday and Friday, May, 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup>, 2023**

**Symposium locations:**

**Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities (IASH)**

**Centre for Research Collections, Library of the University of Edinburgh (CRC)**

Related event of interest to participants:

**Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May**

**5:00pm** Research Series Lecture, Yael Rice (Professor of Art History, Amherst College, Massachusetts).

Department of Art History (followed by a drinks reception).

‘Mastering a World by Consuming a Book: The Ni‘matnāma (Book of Delicacies), circa 1495–1505.’

**Advance booking required (separate of symposium):**

<https://www.ed.ac.uk/event/history-art-research-seminar-yael-rice>

**PROGRAMME**

**SYMPOSIUM: DAY 1**

**Thursday 11<sup>th</sup> May**

**Virtual Participation:**

In order to join the conference on **Zoom** for Day 1, register here:

<https://ed-ac-uk.zoom.us/join/register/tZwsfu-vrDkjHtFOXuCMK4sij5-olCc0irDY>

**9.30am-10am** Welcome refreshments, IASH

**10am-12noon**

**PANEL 1 (IASH)**

***Curating and Preserving Islamic Manuscripts Today***

Mounia Chekhab Abudaya (Senior Curator, Museum of Islamic Art, Doha)

‘Curating and preserving manuscripts at the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha: Perspective and Challenges’

Yasmin Faghihi, (Head of Near and Middle Eastern Department Manuscripts and Printed Collections, Cambridge University Library)

‘Manuscript catalogues as data for research’

Jake Benson, (Research Associate for Persian Collections, John Rylands Research Institute and Library, University of Manchester)

‘Persian Manuscripts in the John Rylands Research Institute and Library: Aims and Approaches’

Discussants:

Daryl Green (Head of Heritage Collections, Co-Director of the Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh)

Nur Sobers-Khan (Independent Researcher)

**12:00 Lunch**

**1:30pm - 2.30pm**

## **PANEL 2 (CRC)**

### ***Colonial Contexts: Questions of Provenance and Related Material Evidence***

Lucy Deacon (World Cultures Curator, Arabic and Persian, Heritage Collections, University of Edinburgh)

‘Tabriz - Lucknow - Edinburgh: The Meandering Journey of Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*’

Zahra Kazani (Fellow, Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture, History of Art and Architecture, Harvard University)

‘Moving the Margins: The Afterlife of a Qur’an Manuscript at the East India Company’

Moya Carey (Curator of Islamic Collections, Chester Beatty Library, Dublin)

‘“Arabic Rare Texts”: Abraham Yahuda and Chester Beatty’

Nur Sobers-Khan (Independent Researcher)

‘Provenance research into Islamic South Asian manuscripts: Reconstructing the evidence’

Discussants:

Yashaswini Chandra (Lecturer in South Asian Art History, University of Edinburgh)

Mira Xenia Schwerda (Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities, University of Edinburgh)

**2.30pm-3.30pm**

**PANEL 3 (CRC)**

***Buying, Selling and Dismembering Islamicate Manuscripts***

Negar Habibi (Lecturer in Persian and Islamic Art History, University of Geneva)

‘For the Sake of the Image, or How to Make a Collection: A "Copy" of *Ajaeb al-Makhluqat* in Jean Pozzi's Collection’

Yael Rice (Professor of Art History, Amherst College, Massachusetts)

‘Dismembering the Qur’an’

Nick McBurney (Antiquarian Bookseller - Printing and Manuscripts of the Islamic World)

‘Book-banditry only? Ethics in the world of exploiting manuscripts.’

Gwendolyn Collaço (Collections Curator, Aga Khan Documentation Center, MIT)

‘Provenance in Practice: Re-Assessing Curatorial Approaches to Acquiring Islamic Manuscripts and Rare Works at MIT’

Discussant: Daryl Green (Head of Heritage Collections, Co-Director of the Centre for Research Collections, University of Edinburgh)

**3:30pm - 4pm Coffee Break**

**4-5pm**

**Manuscript Viewing Session 1 (CRC)**

**SYMPOSIUM: DAY 2**

**Friday 12<sup>th</sup> May**

**Virtual Participation:**

In order to join the conference on **Zoom** for Day 2, register here:

<https://ed-ac-uk.zoom.us/meeting/register/tZctd--uqT0uG9S6hzsoKSkre6gxsd8eP4Qf>

**9.30am-10am Welcome refreshments, CRC**

**10am -11am**

**Manuscript Viewing Session 2 (CRC)**

**11am -12.30pm**

**PANEL 4 (CRC)**

## ***The Texts and Subtexts of Early Islamicate Manuscripts***

Alireza Sadeghi (Asian and African Collections, British Library)

‘The Simourgh in Persian Manuscripts’

Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila (Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies, University of Edinburgh)

‘al-Maqrizi’s Use of Manuscripts’

Umberto Bongianino (Departmental Lecturer in Islamic Art and Architecture, University of Oxford)

‘In the margins of Maghribī manuscripts: paratext, subtext, context’

Discussant: Glaire Anderson (Senior Lecturer in Islamic Art, University of Edinburgh)

**1pm Lunch**

**2:30pm -3.30pm**

### **PANEL 5 (IASH)**

#### ***Creating and Reading Manuscripts as Devotional Materials***

Ines Aščerić-Todd (Head of Department, Lecturer in Arabic and Middle Eastern Cultures, University of Edinburgh)

‘Production and Transmission of Sufi *Futuwwa* Manuscripts from Anatolia to the Balkans and Beyond’

Yasmine al-Saleh (Independent Scholar)

‘The Intention of Ghubari Script in OR MS 443’

Christiane Gruber (Professor of Islamic Art, University of Michigan)

‘Rashid al-Din’s *Jami* ‘*al-Tawarikh* and its Hamline Superscripts’

Discussant: Nacim Pak Shiraz (Professor of Cinema and Iran, University of Edinburgh)

**3.30pm -4.30pm** Farewell address and discussion of future initiatives

**4:30pm** Farewell Refreshments at IASH

### **ABSTRACTS AND PANELLISTS**

#### **PANEL 1: *Curating and Preserving Islamic Manuscripts Today***

### **‘Curating and preserving manuscripts at the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha: Perspective and Challenges’**

This presentation will focus on the challenges of curating and preserving Islamic manuscripts in the Museum of Islamic Art in Doha, Qatar. While the museum was conceived as a state-of-the-art institution following international standards for preserving and conserving its collections, the role of curators as museum professionals among the collection division is not only to enhance the visibility of this collection through documentation and research, but also to make sure that such standards are constantly met for permanent galleries and temporary exhibitions. Rotations, disaster planning, digitization of the manuscripts collection are among the significant projects that have been undertaken at MIA since more than 10 years.

**Dr. Mounia Chekhab-Abudaya** is Senior Curator at the Museum of Islamic Art, Doha, Qatar. Her expertise is in the Western Mediterranean, manuscripts and pilgrimage-related devotional materials in the Islamic world. At MIA, she has curated several exhibitions including *Hajj – The Journey through Art* (2013 - 2014) in collaboration with the British Museum.

Dr. Chekhab-Abudaya has also taught Islamic Art at undergraduate and graduate levels for four years at the Pantheon Sorbonne and INALCO and helped at the Department of Islamic Art at the Louvre Museum in Paris. She completed her Ph.D. in Islamic Art History and Archaeology at the Pantheon Sorbonne University in Paris.

### **‘Manuscript catalogues as data for research’**

Manuscript catalogues have a long history not just as finding aids but also as repositories of information of crucial interest to researchers. Often written by researchers themselves, they have tended to be idiosyncratic not only in their interests but also in the formats and vocabularies they use. The digital age brings new opportunities not only for the creation of new catalogues but also for new approaches to existing ones. How can the data recorded in manuscript catalogues tell us new things not only about the manuscripts themselves but also about the processes and contexts by which catalogues are created? In this talk I will take the example of FIHRIST as a case study, and talk about work we have done to apply digital methods and quantitative codicology to this dataset of manuscript descriptions.

**Yasmin Faghihi** is Head of the [Near and Middle Eastern Department](#) at Cambridge University Library. She is the editor of [FIHRIST](#), the online union catalogue for manuscripts from the Islamicate world and chairs the Board of Directors. She has been leading on using and promoting standardised practices in text encoding for manuscript description and teaching to foster awareness about compatible approaches to data creation and use. Her work with the Middle Eastern and African manuscript collections has evolved around Islamic codicology including papermaking and distribution and the history of collections and collecting. Her Digital

Humanities interests focus on how DH methodologies can impact the recognition of cultural diversity and offer new approaches to analysing cross-disciplinary frameworks.

### **‘Persian Manuscripts in the John Rylands Research Institute and Library: Aims and Approaches’**

Currently, the John Rylands Research Institute and Library seeks to process just under 1,000 Persian manuscripts, some aspects of which feature unclear provenance to explain how they arrive in Britain. In contrast, others reflect comparatively “uncomfortable” legacies, such as looted materials among the holdings. Many historical catalogues appear like outmoded relics of a colonial past. Instead, by drawing upon concepts of “inclusive” and “reparative” cataloguing maximizing diversity, equity, inclusion, and accessibility (DEIA), increases engagement.

Confronting members of the general public with highly specialized jargon in a brief summary misses an invaluable opportunity. Simplicity proves impactful, *especially* when those summaries accompany digital images. Adopting inclusive language caters to more than just academics, but reaches everyone from heritage, second-generation communities of a range of ages, to conservators, codicologists, bookbinders, and artists. It provides greater access that increases engagement by a wider public.

Further interactive approaches increase site traffic, from inserting hyperlinks that encourage viewers to examine specific features, such as paratextual notes and seals, which in turn helps others—even those incognizant of the languages—to identify them. Bibliographies linked to online references also invites visitors to learn more.

**Jake Benson** catalogues the Persian manuscripts holdings of the John Rylands Research Institute and Library, University of Manchester, for which he contributes TEI metadata to both the [FIHRIST](#) union catalogue for Islamic manuscripts, and [Manchester Digital Collections](#). His training as a bookbinder, conservator, and paper marbler inspired him to study Arabic, Persian, and Turkish sources on manuscript production. Later this year, he shall defend his doctorate “The Advent of Abri: The First Wave of Paper Marbling During the Long 16th Century (ca. 1496–1615)” at Leiden University.

Discussants:

**Daryl Green** FSA FSAScot is Head of Heritage Collections (Research & Curatorial) and Co-Director of the Centre for Research Collections at the University of Edinburgh. He has previously worked as Fellow Librarian at Magdalen College, Oxford, Rare Books Librarian at the University of St Andrews, and in a myriad of rare book and archive cataloguing roles. Daryl is also Chair of the Rare Books and Special Collections section of the International Federation of Library Associations and IFLA’s representative on UNESCO’s Memory of the World Register subcommittee. He has worked extensively on the provenance of early printed books and manuscripts in his current and former roles.

**Nur Sobers-Khan** was formerly the director of the Aga Khan Documentation Center, a research centre and archive of Islamic visual culture and urbanism at MIT. From 2015-2021, she was the Lead Curator for South Asia Collections at the British Library, London, where she was responsible for curating the South Asian printed book and manuscript collections and was Principal Investigator of the AHRC-funded project Two Centuries of Indian Print (2016-2021). Her current research focuses on the transition from manuscript to print in South Asia and the creation of new genres and forms of reading through the circulation of lithographed texts on cosmology, dream interpretation and other divinatory literatures. She has taught at the University of Cambridge, St Mary's University College, and Habib University, where she designed the undergraduate courses, “Dream Interpretation: A Decolonial History” and “Islamic Art and Visual Culture: From the Middle East to South Asia.”

## **PANEL 2: Colonial Contexts: Questions of Provenance and Related Material Evidence**

### **‘Tabriz - Lucknow - Edinburgh: The Meandering Journey of Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*’**

In 1876, the University of Edinburgh Library received a donation of 165 Arabic and Persian manuscripts from the collection of East India Company soldier and diplomat, John Baillie of Leys (1772-1833). Among them was a substantial fragment of the Arabic rendition of Rashīd al-Dīn’s *Jāmi’ al-tawārīkh*, to become Or Ms 20. Created in early 14<sup>th</sup> century Tabriz, it is one of only a handful of extant examples of this work dating to the lifetime of the author and was probably produced in his own scriptorium. Comprising 151 folios and 70 miniatures, it is an important example of medieval Persian book painting. Featuring depictions of events in the life of the Prophet Muhammad, its content has been at the centre of recent controversy about the permissibility of creating and, indeed, displaying such images. Despite its renown, significant gaps exist in our understanding of this manuscript’s provenance: how the fragment reached its current form, and the hands through which it passed en route to Edinburgh. Building on the research of Blair (1995) and Kamola (2019), this paper considers how evidence from Baillie’s wider collection can shed light on his acquisition practices and networks, and further chart the journey of this fragment.

**Lucy Deacon** (PhD, University of Edinburgh, 2022) is World Cultures Curator (Arabic and Persian) of the University’s Heritage Collections. Her forthcoming monograph *Retelling Karbala: Key Plays of the Iranian Ta’ziyeh Repertoire* (under review) traces important developments in Shi’i devotional drama through the juxtaposition of historical scripts—largely in manuscript form—with visual records and witness accounts. Her interests include: devotional drama, the circulation of Islamicate Manuscripts (post 1500), and the legacy of colonialism in Scotland.

**‘Moving the Margins: The Afterlife of a Qur’an Manuscript at the East India Company’**

A Qur’an manuscript (British Library Add 5548–5551) with Bihari script, attributed to fifteenth-century India, features a curious case of English annotations within its folios. The annotations appear as interlinear translations superimposed onto its Persian counterpart with additional commentary on the margins. This talk takes the contents of the English annotations and its physical placement within the body of the text as a platform to investigate the socio-cultural contexts of the manuscript’s circulation. In doing so, it illustrates the life of its owner, Charles Hamilton, an eighteenth-century military official and Orientalist at the East India Company. The content of the annotations suggests the manuscript’s function as a tool for language acquisition in the midst of Orientalist attempts at colonising Indian knowledge; its physical placement, an embodiment of British encounters in India. The talk will also build on the nature of manuscript collecting by Company officials and the role that objects can play as they intersect with intellectual history.

**Zahra Kazani**, is interested in scripts and their visual meanings across media in the medieval Islamic world. She is currently a Fellow at the Aga Khan Program for Islamic Architecture at Harvard University. She completed her BA from the University of Texas at Austin. She has an MA from the Institute for the Study of Muslim Civilizations, Aga Khan University, and from the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. She also has extensive museum experience, including with the Aga Khan Museum, British Museum, and the Royal Ontario Museum. Zahra recently defended her Ph.D. from the University of Victoria, Canada.

**‘“Arabic Rare Texts”: Abraham Yahuda and Chester Beatty’**

This paper investigates the provenance histories behind the renowned Islamic Collections of the Chester Beatty, in Dublin. Between 1927 and 1949, the scholar and book-dealer Abraham Shalom Yahuda (1877-1951) would sell over 1,000 manuscripts and early printed books to Alfred Chester Beatty (1875-1968), the mining financier who later bequeathed his entire collection to the people of Ireland. Sourced from across the Arab world, these were principally Arabic manuscripts, but also works in Persian, Turkish, Hebrew and Syriac as well as early printed books and papyrus. Early correspondence strongly suggests that Yahuda’s encyclopaedic conception of a civilisational library collection, surveying all branches of Middle Eastern intellectual culture, impacted Beatty’s decision to collect “Arabic Rare Texts” so intensively.

**Moya Carey** (PhD SOAS, 2001) is Curator of Islamic Collections at the Chester Beatty in Dublin, where she curated the 2022 exhibition *Meeting in Isfahan: Vision and Exchange in Safavid Iran*. In 2009-2018, she was the Iran Heritage Foundation Curator for the Iranian Collections, at the Victoria and Albert Museum (V&A) in London. Her research addresses the arts of Iran, the history of collecting in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and the



correspondence between Safavid carpets and contemporary arts of the book. Her publications include *Persian Art: Collecting the Arts of Iran for the V&A* (London, 2017).

**‘Provenance research into Islamic South Asian manuscripts: Reconstructing the evidence’**

My talk will propose that the collection known as the 'Delhi Collection' currently housed in the British Library, London needs to be analysed with greater attention to the provenance of its manuscripts. The Delhi Collection was long considered to be the remnants of the Mughal library, consisting of roughly 1957 volumes of Arabic manuscripts, 1550 Persian, and 157 Urdu.

Through a close examination of the scribal output of one particular nineteenth-century scholar whose manuscript library seems to have been included in the Delhi Collection - but who was not part of the milieu of the Mughal court but rather associated with the anti-colonial network of Muslim scholars of the Madrasah Rahimiyah - not only can the intellectual network of this scholar be reconstructed, but it also becomes possible to argue that the Delhi collection contains the libraries of private scholars whose collections were looted in 1857 when this was brought into being. By using evidence from colophons and inscriptions in tandem with the content of the manuscripts, this scholar's biography, patronage connections, as well as intellectual motivations and trends that caused him to copy the texts can be outlined, capturing something of the pre-1857 Muslim intellectual world of Delhi that British colonial violence attempted to destroy.

**Nur Sobers-Khan** (Independent Researcher). See above (discussant Panel 1).

Discussants:

**Mira Xenia Schwerda** (PhD, 2020, Harvard University) is a historian of global modern and contemporary art, visual culture, print and photography. Her book manuscript-in-progress, tentatively titled *Between Art and Propaganda: Photographing Revolution in Modern Iran (1905-1911)*, focuses on the imagery of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution and presents a new history of the visual narratives of political violence brought about by the triad of the telegraph, printing press, and photography. She has previously worked at the Harvard Art Museums, where she curated the photography section of the exhibition *Technologies of the Image: Art in 19th-Century Iran*. After her fellowship at the Institute for Advanced Studies in the Humanities at the University of Edinburgh, Dr. Schwerda will put the finishing touches on her book during a Getty-ACLS Postdoctoral Fellowship in the History of Art.

**Yashaswini Chandra** is the Lecturer in South Asian Art History at the University of Edinburgh. Her research interests include the arts and cultures of the Himalayas, Rajasthan and Mughal India combined with animal history and women's studies, and she works across the premodern and colonial periods. Her first book is *The Tale of the Horse: A History of India on Horseback*, while her next book is intended to be a women's history of colonial India intertwined with colonial spaces. She holds a PhD from SOAS University of London.

### **PANEL 3: *Buying, Selling and Dismembering Islamicate Manuscripts***

#### **‘For the Sake of the Image, or How to Make a Collection: A "Copy" of *Aja’eb al-Makhluqat* in Jean Pozzi's Collection’**

*For almost all collectors, the text is nothing; only the paintings count. Aren't there enough calligraphic copies of the Shah Nameh and the Hariri Assemblies in the world?* This is how Seymour de Ricci (1881–1942), a French art historian, justifies the manuscripts' dismemberment and mutilation in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. The Persian collection of Jean Pozzi (1885-1967) witnessed this "habitual" facet of collecting Oriental manuscripts in Europe. His collection displays several folios of the same manuscripts, albeit of unknown patrons and workshops. We may note 55 folios from a refined 17th-century Isfahani *Aja’eb al-Makhluqat* of Qazwini, where only some 15 folios are "full" and intact pages. The main manuscript- victim of its stunning illustrations- has indeed suffered from various treatments: in several cases, the folios are cut in two or fit on cardboard with only illustration visible. Only tiny (less than 5x8 cm) illustrations are retained in the worst cases.

By analysing these 17th-century *Aja’eb* folios and comparing them with other manuscript folios in the Pozzi collection, this paper aims to delve into the lives and fates of several Islamicate manuscripts gathered in the "Western" collections throughout the 20th century.

**Negar Habibi** is an art historian and lecturer of the arts of the Persianate and Islamic worlds at the University of Geneva. She is the author of *'Ali Qoli Jebadar and The Safavid Occidentalism* (in French, Brill 2018) and several articles on painting productions, women patronage, and Iranian society in 17th-century Isfahan. Habibi's current project, financed by the Soudavar Memorial Foundation in Geneva, consists of cataloguing the Jean Pozzi Persian art collection in Geneva's Museum of Art and History (MAH).

#### **‘Dismembering the Qur’an’**

While the dismemberment of Qur’an manuscripts and the dispersal of their fragments predates the modern era, the early twentieth century saw the broader spread of this custom for commercial ends. The practice continues still. The sale of individual leaves in the private art or rare books market, after all, is likely to bring dealers greater profit than an intact codex would. Most major fine arts museums around the world, unsurprisingly, include Qur’an manuscript folios among their holdings. But in many of these cases they are treated as standalone exemplars of calligraphic and illuminating expertise, and their original codex contexts are, in turn, elided. The display of these folios as individually matted and framed leaves on gallery walls only heightens this effect. The dismemberment of the Qur’an manuscript in these instances occurs twice over.

This paper will consider how museums, academia, and the art market together perpetuate the physical and conceptual dismemberment of Qur’an manuscripts today. It will consider, in

particular, how the epistemologies that inform current understandings of cultural property, art, and museum objects may even contribute to the trafficking and illegal sale of these objects and their parts.

**Yael Rice** is associate professor of art history and Asian languages and civilizations at Amherst College, Massachusetts. She specialises in the art and architecture of South Asia, Central Asia, and Iran, with a particular focus on manuscripts and other portable arts of the fifteenth through eighteenth centuries. Recent publications include, with Stephennie Mulder, “The Mystery of the Timurid Qur’an” (*Prospect Magazine*, published online July 22, 2020), on the commercial sale of Islamic manuscripts lacking any publicly-stated authenticating provenance. She is the author of the forthcoming *The Brush of Insight: Artists and Agency at the Mughal Court* (University of Washington Press, 2023).

### **‘Book-banditry only? Ethics in the world of exploiting manuscripts.’**

A London-based bookseller's take on the ethics of buying, selling, and retaining manuscripts from the Muslim world as trade, individual, or institution, highlighting the gulf between legal compliance and ethical practice, with practical examples considered and some thoughts on the uses and limitations of cultural heritage controls and export regimes. Practical questions addressed will include the perversely evergreen “At what historical remove does documented looting simply become good provenance?” and “What is the price-point where people simply cease to care about provenance?”

**Nick McBurney:** Based in London, I have been an independent antiquarian bookseller since 2019, focused on printing and manuscripts from the Muslim world, defined as inclusively and expansively as possible. My interests range from early lithographic printing to contemporary West African calligraphy, while my professional work has stretched from individual printed miniature Qur’an to entire manuscript libraries. Prior to setting up on my own, I worked for John Randall (Books of Asia), Heywood Hill, and Bernard Quaritch, where I ran the Islamic Department.

### **‘Provenance in Practice: Re-Assessing Curatorial Approaches to Acquiring Islamic Manuscripts and Rare Works at MIT’**

The art news outlets over the past years have frequently spotlighted cases of artefact repatriation, while also noting the opacity of provenance statements from auction houses and dealers. However, efforts to prevent these dynamics (rather than rectify them) have often remained sidelined as office conversations or buried in the legalese of institutional statements. Thus, over the course of the past year, MIT has embarked on developing a codified provenance protocol for its manuscripts and rare acquisitions, starting with those that the Aga Khan Documentation Center recently has begun to collect. The journey to realising this goal revealed a range of

approaches between curators at museums and premier libraries who were surveyed and/or consulted. Yet it also highlighted the lack of overarching best practices on the market among professionals, whether from the curatorial or seller side. This talk investigates these tensions in practice in order to propel larger dialogues about our processes in acquiring Islamic manuscripts and rare works. It also presents case studies from MIT, which not only highlight the challenges faced in verifying provenance, seldom discussed in detail in academic studies. These anecdotes illuminate how approaches to curator/dealer interactions can invite higher standards in provenance documentation and enact greater transparency in the circulation of historical works, alongside the institutional complexities they invite.

**Gwendolyn Collaço** is Collections Curator at the Aga Khan Documentation Center at MIT. Gwendolyn received her PhD from the joint program for History of Art + Arch. and Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University in May 2020, specialising in Islamic art (early-modern Ottoman focus) and cultural history. Previously, she received her M.A. from the University of Chicago in Middle Eastern Studies and her B.A. from Vassar College in Classics and Medieval/Renaissance Studies. Her research interests span artistic exchanges between early-modern Islamic empires, Ottoman painting, print production in the Islamic world, histories of collecting, art markets, and women's material worlds.

#### **PANEL 4: *The Texts and Subtexts of Early Islamicate Manuscripts***

##### **‘Illustrations of Sīmurgh in Persian manuscripts’**

An investigation of the iconography of the Sīmurgh in different manuscripts held in collections all over the world shows it was based on different birds, such as the eagle, peacock, cockerel, owl, dove, and parrot, of which the eagle, peacock, and cockerel were the most popular birds. In Sassanian times also a composite creature was known as Sīmurgh. In this paper, I will briefly discuss why the Sassanian Simurgh did not survive in Persian manuscripts despite being a very popular design motif, and why birds such as the eagle, peacock and cockerel were used in the Islamic era.

**Alireza Sadeghi** grew up in Iran and earned his PhD in Persian Language and Literature at the University of Tarbiyat Mudarris. He worked for the Persian Department of the Institute of Humanities and Social Sciences in Tehran, where he could do both research and teaching. His main area of research is in the Shahnamah of Firdwasi. He also worked on a project in Tehran about nativism in Persian contemporary fiction. He is currently working for the Asian and African Studies department at the British Library and teaching Persian at SOAS Language Centre. Alireza has published over 20 articles on the Shahnamah and contemporary Persian fiction in various Iranian journals. In addition to research Alireza writes poems and short stories.

### **‘al-Maqrīzī’s Use of Manuscripts’**

Egyptian historian Taqī al-Dīn Aḥmad b. ‘Alī al-Maqrīzī (d. 845/1442) provides an interesting case study for studying how Arab historians used their sources. This is because we have both several holographs of his works and a large number of manuscripts of his sources with his reading marks on them. This means that we can see quite clearly the whole process of reading, excerpting, and quoting in al-Maqrīzī’s works.

This talk will concentrate on one work of his, *al-Khabar ‘an al-bashar* to show how al-Maqrīzī worked, which liberties he took when quoting his sources, and which mistakes he made in the process. The results will underline the fact that quoting authorities meant something completely different for Mamluk author from what it means to modern scholars.

**Jaakko Hämeen-Anttila** received his PhD in 1994 (University of Helsinki). He served as Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies (University of Helsinki) 2000-2016 and is since 2016 Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the University of Edinburgh. He has published extensively on Classical Arabic and Persian literature and historiography. His recent monographs include *Al-Maqrīzī’s al-Ḥabar ‘an al-bašar* (Vol. V, section 4) *Persia and Its Kings. Part I* (Brill 2018) and *Part II* (Brill 2022), *Khwadāynāmag. The Middle Persian Book of Kings* (Brill 2018), and *Portrait of an Eight-Century Gentleman. Khālīd ibn Ṣafwān (d. 135/752) in History and Literature* (Brill 2020).

### **‘In the margins of Maghribī manuscripts: paratext, subtext, context’**

The presentation will focus on a selection of notable marginalia, colophons, and endowment certificates preserved in Maghribī manuscripts dating from the ninth to the thirteenth centuries. The aim is to show their relevance not only for reconstructing learning and transmission practices, or the history of book production and circulation, but also for tackling broader questions of ideology and cultural identity.

**Umberto Bongianino** teaches Islamic Art at the University of Oxford. He is principally interested in the architecture and material culture of the Islamic dynasties that ruled across the medieval Mediterranean between the 10th and the 15th centuries. His doctoral research concentrated on the arts of the book and manuscript culture in the Maghrib and al-Andalus, between the 10th and the 13th centuries. That resulted in his first monograph, titled "The Manuscript Tradition of the Islamic West: Maghribī Round Scripts and the Andalusī Identity" (Edinburgh University Press, 2022).

Discussant:

**Glaire D. Anderson** (PhD, MIT) is Senior Lecturer in Islamic Art and founding director of the Digital Lab for Islamic Visual Culture & Collections at the University of Edinburgh. She is a historian of medieval Islamic architecture, art, and visual culture with a focus on the caliphal period (c. 650-1250) and Umayyad Córdoba. Anderson is the author of *A Bridge to the Sky: The*

*Arts of Science in the Age of ‘Abbas Ibn Firnas* (Oxford UP, in production) and *The Islamic Villa in Early Medieval Iberia: Aristocratic Estates and Court Culture in Umayyad Cordoba* (Ashgate, 2013). Her work has been recognised by the American Council of Learned Societies, the College Art Association, among others, and she served on the Historians of Islamic Art Association (HIAA) Executive Board.

### **PANEL 5: *Creating and Reading Manuscripts as Devotional Materials***

#### **‘Production and Transmission of Sufi Futuwwa Manuscripts from Anatolia to the Balkans and Beyond’**

Although always maintaining a strong link with Sufism, futuwwa represents the more popular strand of its religiosity, and futuwwa manuscripts belong to the more popular variety of its textual culture. This paper examines a number of futuwwa manuscripts from Anatolia and Bosnia, in order to assess what the production and transmission of these manuscripts tell us about the wider social and cultural milieu in which they were used and circulated. In the process, it will address some of the following questions: which futuwwa works were copied and widely spread across the Ottoman realm? Who were the copyists and where were these copies produced? Although some manuscripts were produced in Sufi lodges, their intended readership would have been wider and – as their contents intertwined with practical aspects of the crafts – much more diverse than the narrow circle of the lodge. Does this overlap between Sufis and craftsmen indicate an important wider social and cultural role of Sufis and Sufi lodges in those areas? What other social classes were involved in this network and what does this tell us about the latter’s influence in society? Finally, how and why did some of these manuscripts end up in European collections beyond the Balkans?

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#### **‘The Intention of Ghubari Script in OR MS 443’**

Edinburgh Or MS 443, is a eighteenth century Quranic scroll written in ghubari script. The question becomes what is the intention of miniscule ghubari script? Is it to fit a whole text on an object yet communicate a larger prayer or devotional verse from the Quran? In the Edinburgh scroll (Or MS 443), it clear that the ghubari script creates the apotropaic Throne verse. According to Nabil Safwat, ghubar which implies the script that is “as delicate as particles of

dust.” (Safwat 1996, 184) It narrated via al-Qalqashandi ghubar script is a combination of rika’ and naskh (Safwat 1996,184). In the following paper, I will compare the Edinburgh scroll with other ghubari devotional material and attempt to understand the purpose of the use of this script.

**Yasmine Al-Saleh** has a bachelor’s degree in Philosophy from Bryn Mawr College (1996), and a master’s degree in History of Art from the University of Pennsylvania (2002). Dr. Al-Saleh has a second master’s degree in Middle Eastern Studies from Harvard University (2006) and she completed her PhD dissertation at Harvard University (2014), a joint degree in Middle Eastern Studies and History of Art and Architecture. She was an adjunct professor at the American University of Kuwait (2016-2021). Dr. Al-Saleh recently moved to Wellesley, MA and is an independent scholar.

### **‘Rashid al-Din’s Jami‘ al-Tawarikh and its Hamline Superscripts’**

Historians of Islamic art have traditionally studied illustrated manuscripts’ pictorial cycles, their textual contents, authorial subtexts, historical contexts, marginalia, and peregrinations. However, the very recent debacle at Hamline University, where an instructor was accused of Islamophobia and fired for teaching Rashid al-Din’s *Jami‘ al-Tawarikh* in her global survey of art, presents a new codicological conundrum for Islamicists: namely, that they must contend with contemporary identity-based discourses whose superscripts effectively divert and distort historical evidence. This talk examines the tricky ideological terrain scholars increasingly must navigate, which themselves add new strata of method and meaning to the archaeology of the book.

**Christiane Gruber** is Professor of Islamic Art in the History of Art Department at the University of Michigan as well as Founding Director of [Khamseen: Islamic Art History Online](#). Her scholarly work (available [here](#)) explores medieval to contemporary Islamic art, especially figural representation, depictions of the Prophet Muhammad, manuscripts and book arts, architecture, and modern visual and material cultures. Her two most recent publications include [The Praiseworthy One: The Prophet Muhammad in Islamic Texts and Images](#) and [The Image Debate: Figural Representation in Islam and Across the World](#), and her public-facing essays have appeared in *Newsweek*, *The Conversation*, *New Lines*, and *Prospect Magazine*, among others.

Discussant:

**Professor Nacim Pak-Shiraz** is Personal Chair of Cinema and Iran at the University of Edinburgh. Her research focuses on cinema and visual culture in the Middle East, particularly Iran. She has published in the fields of visual cultures, gender, and the engagement of religion and film, including *Shi‘i Islam in Iranian Cinema: Religion and Spirituality in Film* (2011& 2018), and *Visualizing Iran: From Antiquity to Present* (ed. 2017), and *A Video Essay: Making Space: Women and Freedom of Movement* (2022).

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