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École Pratique
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4th Young Researchers' Indo-Persian Conference: Patronage in Persianate South Asia

June 11th-12th 2026

at

Centre de la Vieille Charité,

2 Rue de la Charité, 13002, Marseille (France) and Online

Organized by:

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While in today's world cultural production, whatever be its definition, can emerge from a variety of sources—from music-industry-crafted so-called “plants” to obscure single-person bands on the underground scene—many of the surviving cultural pieces produced in Persianate South Asia, were the result of courtly or individual patronage. This holds true in different fields such as literature, music, gastronomy, science and architecture. Poets, musicians and scholars were a staple of any South Asian court and depended on sovereigns or wealthy individuals for their livelihood: a privileged relationship with such providers was, as a result, actively sought out.

Though it is well-known that patronage played an important part in the development of cultural artifacts in Persianate South Asia, this year's conference aims to better understand its economic and political implications. The Mughals, for example, are largely understood to be patrons of the arts, sponsors of translations and music connoisseurs: however, recent contributions have highlighted the social, political and economic dimensions of patronage (Katherine Butler Schofield:2020; Sunil Sharma:2017; Ebba Koch:2001).

Such questions that may be asked are the wages that court-sponsored artists might hope to receive, the training and overall turnover rates that could have existed. Furthermore, why

would sovereigns, such as the Mughals in our example, need to extensively engage in court patronage of the arts? What meaning, if any, can be found in the development of specific styles of painting, music and architecture? To what extent does the influence or lack thereof of a given painting style, musical mode or poetic idiom translate political relationships between regions? This enquiry is of course not limited to the Mughals or even the political sphere: merchants and other wealthy individuals are known to have engaged in patronage or sponsor of texts, buildings or other cultural endeavors. One such example can be found in Śantidās Jhaverī's financing of the Cintāmaṇi temple in Aḥmedābād in the 17th century.

We welcome contributions that engage with explicit patronage of cultural artifacts, be they textual, architectural, musical or material. As the conference deals with Persianate South Asia, as defined by Richard M. Eaton (2019) it covers the period going roughly from 1000 CE to 1750 CE, and welcomes contributions focusing either on patrons and artists active within Islamicate polities or directly engaging with Persianate or Islamicate cultures in South Asia.

Conference format:

The conference will be held at the Vieille Charité, in Marseille (France) and will take place in **hybrid format, both online and on site**, allowing presenters to participate from wherever they are in the world. Presenters will be given **30** minutes to present their paper. Presentations can be given **in French and in English**, provided any support, such as a PowerPoint, is in English. True to our intentions to make this conference as accessible as possible, there are **no fees** to either attend or present at the conference. This conversely means that, owing to a limited budget, we are not able to finance accommodation or travel expenses.

Paper submission:

Abstracts are to be submitted in English to the following address: indopersian.workshop@gmail.com. They should not exceed **500** words and are to be submitted by **November 28th, 2025**. Candidates whose abstract has been accepted will be notified by **December 18th, 2025**.