

Abstracts and Bios

June 1, 15:50-17:50, Panel 4

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The Role of the Prophet and ‘Alī in the Muḥammad Ḥanafīyya Epics

This presentation explores a cycle of epics centred on Muḥammad Ḥanafīyya (d. 701), a key figure in early Islam and the son of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib, who appears as the hero of stories transmitted in various languages from Anatolia to Southeast Asia. More specifically, I examine three versions in Anatolian and Eastern Turkish, Persian, and Kurdish, focusing on the role and representation of the two most prominent figures in Islamic history and religiosity, namely the Prophet Muḥammad and ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib.

In introducing himself, Muḥammad Ḥanafīyya constantly refers to the Prophet and ‘Alī, both of whom occupy a prominent symbolic and narrative place in the stories. Muḥammad Ḥanafīyya shares a special connection with the Prophet, who is responsible for his naming and appears, physically or spiritually, at the beginning and end of the stories. The role of ‘Alī is somewhat different, and indeed dual, as he appears both as the feared Commander of the Faithful and as a caring and protective father. Importantly, Muḥammad Ḥanafīyya stories are also often found as part of *majmū‘as* including stories focused on the Prophet, or on ‘Alī and other ‘Alid figures. By analysing the role of the Prophet and ‘Alī, I also aim to recontextualize the stories of Muḥammad Ḥanafīyya within the broader current of Islamic religious epics and to address questions of performance and audience reception.

Sacha Alsancakli is an assistant professor at The Hakubi Center for Advanced Research and Graduate School of Letters, Kyoto University. He received a PhD in Oriental Languages, Societies, and Civilizations from Sorbonne Nouvelle University, Paris (2018), and has held fellowships and positions at Sorbonne Nouvelle University (2019–21), the National Institute of Oriental Languages and Civilizations, Paris (2021–25), the University of Münster (2024–25), and the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa (ILCAA), Tokyo (2025–26). Alsancakli is a cultural historian of the Turco-Iranian world, with a notable interest in Kurdistan, the Caucasus, the South Caspian, and other borderland regions. He is co-editor of two collective volumes: *Authorship and Textual Transmission in the Manuscript Age: Contextualising Ideological Variants in Persian Texts* (Paris: AAEI, 2023), and *Texts as Living Objects: Dhayls and Knowledge Transmission in the Islamic World* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming). He has also published in journals such as *Iranian Studies*, *Eurasian Studies*, and *Kurdish Studies Archive*.

June 1, 15:50-17:50, Panel 4

Bernard ARPS

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The Javanese Amir Hamza in the Sultan of Palembang's Palace, c. 1800, the Motif of Haste, and Cultural Flows in the Java Sea World

The epic of Hamza, son of the governor of Mecca, uncle of the Prophet Muhammad, and leader of the faithful used to be told orally and in texts across Muslim Asia from Ankara to Xinjiang and Mindanao. It was embraced with enthusiasm in Java and around the Java Sea. Between the sixteenth century, when it was rendered in Javanese verse from the Malay *Hikayat Amir Hamzah* (itself probably a translation from Persian in the late 1300s) until around 1940, the epic was narrated in several major literary works, oral storytelling, puppetry, and even dance. In this presentation I will discuss two remarkable manuscripts which have not been properly studied. They are from Palembang in Sumatra, probably from the palace of the Sultan, c. 1800. Both texts are in Javanese—in fact a rather archaic variety—although the Sultanate of Palembang was primarily Malayophone. I will also look at the Javanese story of Iskandar Dulkarnain in another manuscript from Palembang. The intertextual relationships of these texts to renditions elsewhere in Java Sea World, and the corresponding cultural connections and flows, largely remain a mystery. I hope to shed some light on them by examining one seemingly small feature of the epic of Amir Hamzah in Javanese: the remarkable prominence in the narrative and its narration of speed, haste, vigorous movement, and intensity of action.

Bernard Arps, professor of Indonesian and Javanese language and culture at Leiden University, is fascinated by worldmaking through language, performance, media, and texts, especially in encounters between religious and intellectual traditions. In his latest book *Tall Tree, Nest of the Wind: The Javanese Shadow-Play Dewa Ruci Performed by Ki Anom Soeroto* (NUS Press, 2016) he describes the principles of a philology of performance. His current book projects are a study of the epic of Amir Hamza across the Java Sea world, and an annotated edition and English translation of the sixteenth-century Javanese verse narrative *Stories of Amir*.

June 2, 9:30-11:30, Panel 5

Zeynep AYDOĞAN

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From Frontier Lore to Historical Authority: The Anatolian Turkish Warrior Epics in the Turco-Persianate World

This paper traces the long trajectory through which three interrelated warrior epics—the *Battālnāme*, *Dānişmendnāme*, and *Saltuknāme*—moved from oral frontier lore to written historical authority. Rooted in the oral traditions of the Arab-Byzantine frontier, these narratives circulated for centuries before being compiled into written form in administrative centers of medieval Anatolia, gradually becoming part of Ottoman historiographical production in the fifteenth century. In later periods, they came to be treated as history proper: incorporated into the Janissary curriculum at Topkapı Palace and used as historical sources by Ottoman historians. This process reveals how orally transmitted frontier lore acquired the status of written authority.

The paper examines this transformation across three interlocking dimensions: the performance of these narratives in army camps, court gatherings, and public spaces, where they entertained and instructed mixed audiences of Muslim warriors and new converts; the ideological motivations behind their composition, reproduction, and patronage; and the interventions of authors, copyists, and editors whose voices surface throughout the texts. Drawing on internal textual evidence—such as *meclis*-based structuring, recurrent narrative formulae, and manuscript variants preserving traces of live performance—as well as external witnesses ranging from Byzantine observers to Ottoman chroniclers, it reconstructs a model of textual production in which orality and literacy were mutually constitutive practices. Situating this long-durée transmission within the broader conference theme, the paper proposes that the Anatolian case illuminates the variable directions in which epic traditions could travel and accumulate authority within the Turco-Persianate world.

Zeynep Aydoğan earned her B.A. and M.A. in History from Boğaziçi University, Istanbul, and her Ph.D. from Humboldt University, Berlin, in t Central Asian Studies. Her research focuses on the cultural history of Anatolia and the Balkans between the eleventh and fifteenth centuries, with particular emphasis on Turkish religious-heroic literature and the early historiography of the Ottoman state. She is currently a postdoctoral researcher at the Institute for Mediterranean Studies/FORTH in Rethymno. Her first monograph, *Forging Paths of Continuity: “Borderline” Miracles in the Early Menākıbnāme Literature (13th–15th Centuries)*, emerged from the ERC-funded project GHOST. She is now advancing a new project that reconceptualizes epic narratives as interconnected historical sources, using geography to rethink the cultural history of medieval Anatolia.

June 1, 9:15-10:35, Panel 1

Victor BAPTISTE

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An Indo-Persian Tale: The Story of Madhumālatī and its Metamorphoses

This paper focuses on the tale of Madhumālatī, a romance telling the love story of prince Manohar and princess Madhumālatī, initially authored by Malik Mañjhan Rājgīri in 1545/46 AD. This text, titled *Madhumālatī*, was written in eastern medieval Hindi (Awadhi) and borrows from an earlier narrative archetype that can be traced back to Somadeva's *Kathāsaritsāgara* (9th century AD). As a consequence, it shares a common paternity line with the tale of Qamar ul-Zamān and princess Budūr from the *Thousand and One Nights*. *Madhumālatī* was rewritten in Persian in 1654/55 AD by 'Āqil Khān 'Rāzī' 1617?-1696 AD, who titled his work *Mihr-u māh* ("The Sun and the Moon"). This text is a *masnavī*, written in the same meter as Niẓāmī's *Khusrau-u Shīrīn*, and inserting itself in the literary tradition set out by the famous poet from Ganja and furthered by authors such as Amīr Khusrau or Faiẓī. In this paper, I will argue that some of the emendations that Rāzī brought to the narration (as initially outlined by Mañjhan) can be explained by his will to refer to the niẓāmīan tradition. Such referential elements can be highlighted in the broad 'pre-islamic' setting of the tale, but also in the general scheme of the storyline as well as in the ethical discourse on the appropriate behaviour for princes that surfaces episodically. However, other innovative elements brought into play by Rāzī are reminding of the story of Budūr and Qamar ul-Zamān in the *Nights*. Some hypotheses on this remote connection will be shared.

Victor Baptiste has completed doctoral research at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris. His dissertation focuses on the life and work of a 17th-century Indo-Persian poet named Mīr 'Alī 'Askarī Khwāfi (1026?-1108 AH, 1617?-1696 AD), bearing the title 'Āqil Khān and using Rāzī as his nom de plume. Victor Baptiste completed a critical edition and a French translation of a *masnavī* written by this author, entitled *Mihr-u māh*, completed in 1065 AH (1654/55 AD), being a rendition of *Madhumālatī*, a romance written in medieval Hindi during the sixteenth century. He currently teaches Sanskrit at the Sorbonne Nouvelle University and is an associate researcher at the National Library of France (BnF) where he works on a project concerning the provenance and circulation of the Indo-Persian Manuscript collections.

June 1, 13:30-15:30, Panel 3

Michele BERNARDINI

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The *Timurnāme* of 'Abdallāh Hātefī (1498) and his fame in the Ottoman Empire

The *Timurname* has often been regarded as a work of little historical interest. In reality, its circulation within the Ottoman and Mughal worlds, as well as in other contexts, provides the basis for numerous interpretations of the text and its influence on the Ottoman and Mughal worlds. In particular, my interest lies in the influence that the *Timurname* had on certain works of Ottoman historiography, notably Sa'deddin Efendi's *Tac üt-tevarih*. This paper aims to explore this theme within the framework of a discussion on the new spread of the Persian language in the Islamic world during the 15th and 16th centuries.

Michele Bernardini is Full Professor of Persian Language and Literature and History of Medieval and Modern Iran at the University of Naples L'Orientale. He is a scientific advisor to the Istituto per l'Oriente C. A. Nallino (Rome) where he directs the journal *Eurasian Studies* and is a member of the scientific committee of the *Series Catalogorum* dedicated to the cataloguing of Islamic manuscripts preserved in little-known and unpublished collections. He is a member of the Académie des Inscriptions et Belles Lettres (Paris). As a historian, he has devoted himself to the interactions between the Iranian and Turkish worlds between the 10th and 18th centuries. His major publications include the volumes *Storia del mondo islamico (VII-XVI secolo)*, II. *Il mondo iranico e turco*, Turin, 2003; the Introduction, translation and notes to *Ghiyāsoddīn 'Alī di Yazd, Le gesta di Tamerlano*, Milan, 2009; *Tamerlano*, Rome, 2022, as well as numerous articles on Iran and Central Asia in the Turkish-Mongolian period, from the Seljuk to the Safavid period.

June 2, 9:30-11:30, Panel 5

Majid DANESHGAR

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Persianate Stories in the Malay-Indonesian World: Reading the *Durr al-Majalis*

The book of *Durr al-Majalis* (7th-8th AH/13th-14th centuries CE) by Sayf Zafar was widely circulated throughout the East. Containing thirty-six short and long stories in Persian, they cover various legal, emotional, theological, philosophical, metaphysical, chivalrous and mystical accounts. Malay-Indonesians were among the main readers of *Durr al-Majalis* since the 9th AH/15th century CE. One may wonder whether Malay-Indonesian Muslims received it with/out implementing conceptual modifications. In order to examine this issue particular attention will be paid to invocations, supplications, and malediction literature that are found in abundance in *The Killing Tale of Hasan and Husayn* and the *Tale of Muhammad Hanafiyyah*.

Majid Daneshgar is Associate Professor of Area Studies, Center for Southeast Asian Studies, Kyoto University, Japan. He is the former Munby Fellow in global bibliography at Cambridge University Library in association with St John's College, University of Cambridge, and George Grey Scholar at Auckland Libraries, New Zealand. He has frequently published on Islamic studies, orientalism, Persianate-Malay literature and manuscript studies. His main monographs are *Persianate Prose and the Making of Malay Muslim Literature: Text, Translation and Commentary of the Durr al-Majalis* (Edinburgh University Press, 2025), *Reconstructing Erpenius' Library: The First Collection of Oriental Manuscripts at Cambridge University Library* (Brill, 2024), *Studying the Qur'an in the Muslim Academy* (Oxford University Press, 2020), *Tantawi Jawhari and the Qur'an* (Routledge, 2018; Arabic translation 2023), and several co-edited volumes such as *Malay-Indonesian Islamic Studies* (Brill, 2023), *Islam and Science in the Future* (Zygon, 2020), *Deconstructing Islamic Studies* (Ilex-Harvard University Press, 2020), *Islamic Studies Today* (Brill, 2017) and *The Qur'an in the Malay-Indonesian World* (Routledge, 2016).

June 1, 10:55-12:15, Panel 2

Matteo DE CHIARA

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***Pirs* in Pashto Folktales and Legends**

Pashto, an Iranian language spoken in present-day eastern Afghanistan and western Pakistan, has a rich oral tradition, which began to be recorded in writing by Western travelers as early as the second half of the 19th century, and whose collection continued into the 20th century thanks to the efforts of the Pashtuns.

Among the short stories found in the Pashto collections, there are various types of narratives (*qisse*), notably *afsāne*, *naqluna* and *hikāyatuna*. The first (*afsāna*) are true folk-tales, linked to adventure and to the magical, whose purpose is to entertain the audience. The second category (*naql*) consists of legends and epics deeply rooted in the specificities of local customs and traditions, situated halfway between popular culture and official religion. The final category (*hikāyat*) has a distinctly moral and religious character, to the extent that it has been adopted as an educational and edifying tool within Islam, also including accounts of the lives of Sufis.

In the *hikāyat*, we find tales dedicated to specific figures in Islam, the *Pirs*, who were originally historical figures but were later mythologised and fictionalised. In the *naql*, on the contrary, religious figures do appear, but only marginally, almost always anonymously and with traits that are more folktale-like than historical. As for the *afsāna*, it contains none of these elements, save for a superficial veneer of Islamisation.

In this lecture, I will present some aspects and traditions relating to the *Pirs* found in various types of Pashto folktales, highlighting their prestige and the high regard in which they are held.

Matteo De Chiara is a professor of Pashto language and literature at Inalco. He focuses primarily on the historical phonetics, etymology and lexicology of Pashto and the Iranian languages. He is a member and vice-director of CerMI and leads an ANR project on Pashto literature. After completing his PhD at the University of Naples "L'Orientale", he published a critical edition of the Khotanese *Sudhanāvādāna*. Throughout his career, he has published many works on Pashto (*Le verbe pashto*, with D. Septfonds, 2 volumes; *Fonologia storica del pashto*; the series of articles on *Pashto Preverbs*; *Dizionario pashto-italiano*; *Dictionnaire pratique pashto-français*, with H. Kabir), as well as on the *Toponymy of Swāt* and on folk-tales in Iranian languages (Kurdish and Ossetian).

June 1, 10:55-12:15, Panel 2

Shamim HOMAYUN

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The Legend of Salsāl: Imagining the Bamiyan Buddhas After the Mongol Conquest

Salsāl and Shamāma are the names given by locals to the two giant Buddha statues of Bamiyan, Afghanistan. The origin of these names has long been uncertain, and this mystery has generated both folk etymologies and scholarly speculation. Some have proposed that “Shamāma” may be a corruption of “Shakyamuni,” suggesting a survival of its Buddhist name in everyday storytelling. Instead, this paper traces Salsāl and Shamāma to fifteenth-century Turco-Persianate legends that recount the heroic exploits of ‘Ali b. Abi Talib and his companions as they conquer fortresses and bring Islam to the “eastern lands.” I examine the legend’s probable sources, how it was transmitted, and its relation to related oral narratives. The central problem is how the imaginary place-worlds of Turco-Persianate popular romances became mapped onto real geographies. In Bamiyan, shifts in place narratives tended to follow critical historical events. In 1221, during the Mongol conquests, the town was completely destroyed and its inhabitants were massacred. This caused a sudden demographic collapse, and consequently, a profound rupture to pre-Mongol landscape narratives. When newcomers arrived in Bamiyan over the following centuries, they appear to have had little knowledge of the Buddhist statues or their pre-Mongol significance. This left the landscape of ruined castles and other curiosities open to imagination. As the veneration of ‘Ali proliferated from the fifteenth century onwards, his legendary battles and miracles were mapped onto real-world geographies. The story of ‘Ali’s battle with the giant Salsāl became attached to the Bamiyan Buddhas as part of this broader process.

Shamim Homayun is a JSPS postdoctoral fellow at the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia at the University of Tokyo. His postdoctoral project examines the late medieval and early modern history of Bamiyan. In 2025, he obtained his PhD in anthropology from the Australian National University, focusing on senses of place and landscape in Afghanistan. In 2023, as a visiting fellow at the Bodleian Libraries, he conducted research on Bamiyan’s post-Mongol history and the medieval geography of the Hindu Kush. His publications include “Unearthing Rabi‘a’s Grave: Placemaking, Shrines, and Contested Traditions in Balkh, Afghanistan” (*International Journal of Middle East Studies*, 2023) and “Deceptive Sanctity: The Geopolitics of Shrines and Concealed Antiquities in Afghanistan” (*Cultural Anthropology*, 2026).

June 2, 9:30-11:30, Panel 5

Yui KANDA

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Epigraphic Traces of Heroization: ‘Alī and His Descendants on Ilkhanid Lustre Tiles

This presentation examines epigraphic evidence for the heroization of ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and his descendants in the Ilkhanid period. Rather than focusing on narratives preserved in manuscripts, it turns to ceramic as a more durable medium of transmission. The study centres on Persian and Arabic inscriptions on lustre tiles, whose principal centre of production in Iran from the late twelfth to the mid-sixteenth century was Kashan, a city described in contemporaneous geographical sources as predominantly Twelver Shi‘i even before the rise of the Safavids. While many Ilkhanid lustre tiles are now dispersed across museums worldwide and lack secure provenance, others remain in situ or can be reliably linked to mausoleums of ‘Alid descendants and Sufi saints, as well as to mosques and a palace in Iran, Azerbaijan and Iraq.

The first part of this presentation examines inscriptions on tiles that remain in situ or are preserved in museums with relatively secure provenance, including examples from the mausoleum of Imām Riḍā in Mashhad, the mausoleum of ‘Alī b. Ja‘far in Qumm, and the mausoleum of Muḥammad Ḥanafīyya on Kharg Island. It highlights the striking rarity of inscriptions conveying narratives about ‘Alī b. Abī Ṭālib and his descendants, especially in comparison with Qur’anic quotations and well-known verses from the *Shāhnāma*. The second part analyses a pair of unprovenanced but highly informative tiles of distinctive shape—one with a horseshoe-shaped border and the other with a camel-footprint-shaped border—dated 711/1312 (Musée de Sèvres, MNC 22688 and MNC 26903), which preserve a narrative in which a sayyid from Kashan dreams of encountering Imām ‘Alī and Imām al-Mahdī on their way to India to convert unbelievers to Islam. On this basis, the paper argues that ceramic inscriptions provide an important, if partial, window onto the ways in which ‘Alī and his descendants were represented as heroic agents in Ilkhanid Iran.

Yui Kanda is Assistant Professor at the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. She received an MPhil in Islamic Art and Archaeology from the University of Oxford in 2015 and a PhD in Art History from the University of Tokyo in 2021. Her research focuses on the material culture of Iran and adjacent regions in the late medieval and early modern periods, as well as its later reception in a range of cultural contexts. Her recent publications include “May the World Be Slave to King Kā’us’: Formation and Reception of Qānī‘ī Ṭūsī’s Versified Persian *Kalīla va Dimna*,” in *Textual Transmission in the Islamic Manuscript Age*, ed. Philip Bockholt and Yui Kanda (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming), and “An Englishman in Baghdad: Claudius James Rich (1786–1821) as Collector, Reader, and Patron of Persian Manuscripts,” *Journal of Persianate Studies* (forthcoming). She has also published book chapters and articles in peer-reviewed journals such as *Muqarnas*, *Iran: Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies*, and the *Journal of Islamic Art and Architecture*.

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Amīr Ḥamza and Muḥammad Ḥanafīyya: A Comparison

Ḥamza b. ‘Abd al-Muṭallib (d. 625) and Muḥammad b. Ḥanafīyya (d. 700 or 701) share several notable characteristics. Both figures belong to the family of the Prophet Muḥammad: Ḥamza was the Prophet’s uncle, while Muḥammad b. Ḥanafīyya was the son of ‘Ali, the Prophet’s cousin and son-in-law. Each serves as the central character in popular Persian and Turkic romances, respectively. This presentation examines the similarities and differences between the Ḥamza romance and the Muḥammad Ḥanafīyya romance. Multiple versions of Muḥammad Ḥanafīyya’s romance exist in Persian and Turkic traditions; this analysis focuses on the Persian version titled *Zī-funūn-nāma* (*Zīghanūn-nāma*), which integrates themes of love and jihad. In this narrative, Zī-funūn (or Zīghanūn) is an infidel princess with whom Muḥammad Ḥanafīyya falls in love. He engages in battle with infidels, including Zī-funūn and her father Shāh Iram, ultimately converting them to Islam following his victory. Both poetic and prose versions of the story exist, with the prose version more closely resembling the classic Ḥamza romance. While Jean Calmard provided a synopsis of *Zī-funūn-nāma* in his 1998 article, the present analysis offers a detailed examination and comparison with the Ḥamza romance. This study aims to elucidate the close relationship between these two romances.

Nobuaki Kondo is a professor at the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. He received the Ph. D. degree from the University of Tokyo in the Department of the Oriental History in 1997. He is working on the early modern history of Iran and the Persianate Societies. His current project concerns book endowment of Iranians in early modern India on behalf of the Mashhad shrine and madrasas. His recent publications are “*Ā’in-i Akbarī as a Tazkira of Poets*,” *Journal of Asian and African Studies, Supplement 3* (2024), “Shi‘ite Donations in the Early Modern Period,” in *Comparative Study of Donation Strategies* edited by Toru Miura (Tokyo, 2024), and “*Ahd-nāmes in a Persianate Context before 1500*,” *Acta Asiatica* 130 (2026). His forthcoming publication will be “Comparing Manuscripts of a Popular Romance: The Persian Classic Version of the *Ḥamza-nāma*.”

Renaud SOLER

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The *Maghāzī al-nabī* in the *Khamsa* of the Kashmiri sufi poet Ṣarfī (1521-1595): the multifaceted Prophet as spiritual guide and exemplary warrior

Shaykh Ya‘qūb Ṣarfī stands among the most remarkable intellectual figures of sixteenth-century Kashmir. A Sufi of the Kubrawī-Hamadānī order, scholar of ḥadīth, Quranic exegete, and Persian-language poet, he embodies the integration of Kashmir into the broader cultural networks of the Turco-Persianate and Islamic world: he had studied in Central Asia and India, went to the pilgrimage in Mecca, and even transmitted ḥadīth sciences to Aḥmad Sirhindī. His talents earned him the epithet of Jāmī-e Thānī. Ṣarfī composed a *Khamsa* in imitation of those of Niẓāmī or Jāmī, made of five poems: *Aslak al-Akhyar* (on sufism), *Vāmiq-o Adhrā*, *Laylā-vo Majnūn*, *Maqāmāt-i Pīr* (on the Kubrawiyya and sufism), and *Maghāzī al-nabī*. The *Maghāzī al-Nabī*, completed in 1000/1592, takes the place of the story of Alexander the Great in Niẓāmī’s and Jāmī’s *Khamsa*. This Persian epic of around 8.000 verses is the longest of Ṣarfī’s *Khamsa* and is devoted to the military campaigns of the Prophet Muḥammad. It is preserved in manuscript form, in at least two copies in the library of the Srinagar University, and is still not edited.

The *Maghāzī al-nabī* illustrates the reinvention of the Prophet, not usually depicted as a warrior in sufi literature, as the hero of an epic narrative, written following the formal conventions of the learned Persian tradition. Placed in the context of the whole *Khamsa*, it should nevertheless be read against the other sufi mathnavis and romances: Ṣarfī shows how the Prophet of Islam can be considered not only as an example of spiritual, greater *jihād*, but as well as a warrior on a par with more famous epic warriors like Ali and Hamza.

Renaud Soler is a lecturer in Islamic Studies at the University of Strasbourg. His work focuses on the history of Islam in the modern and contemporary periods and on multilingualism. In 2021, he defended a PhD thesis entitled “A History of the *Sīra* in the Ottoman Period (15th-19th Centuries). Production and forms of historical knowledge about the life of the Prophet Muhammad” (Presses Universitaires de France, 2026-2027, 2 vol.). Specialized in the history of the Ottoman Empire and its Arab provinces, he develops a comparatist approach with Mughal and post-Mughal India.

June 1, 13:30-15:30, Panel 3

Maria SZUPPE

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“Producing “Twin Texts”: Editorial Practices in the Transmission of Persian Historico-legendary Epics in the Early Modern Period”

The manuscript transmission of Ferdowsi’s *Shāhnāma* (*Book of Kings*, 10th century) has been widely studied in modern Persian scholarship as well as in other historiographical traditions (e.g. Western and Soviet). It is well established that these manuscripts were often produced by professional calligraphers, sometimes working in teams, who specialized in copying particular texts, and especially the *Shāhnāma*.

This paper examines a specific aspect of this transmission: a possible editorial tradition in which certain texts were regularly bound together to form coherent reading ensembles. Evidence for this practice can be found in a number of extant manuscripts, which include not only the main epic—often in the form of selected excerpts—but also at least one additional work from the secondary *Shāhnāma* cycle, devoted to figures such as Rostam, Esfandiyār, or Barzu.

Such an editorial practice may not have been unique to the *Shāhnāma* tradition. Comparable patterns can be observed in other genres, including religious and legal writings, suggesting that these compilations responded to readers’ preferences and served both educational and practical purposes.

Maria Szuppe (PhD, Sorbonne Nouvelle; Habilitation, EPHE) is a Senior Researcher at the CNRS and a member of the *Centre de recherche sur le monde iranien* (CeRMI, UMR 8041), which she directed (2020–2024). Her research focuses on the medieval and early modern history of Iran and Central Asia, with an emphasis on Persianate societies, as well as codicology and the history of the book.

She is Scientific Director of the *Series Catalogorum* and has led major international projects on knowledge transmission in the early modern Middle East. She has taught at INALCO and held visiting professorships at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Leiden University, and the University of Naples “L’Orientale”. Her recent publications include *Tamerlan et les Timourides. Asie centrale et Iran, mi-XIV^e – début XVI^e siècle* (2023) and co-edited volumes on knowledge transmission (*Families, Authority, and the Transmission of Knowledge in the Early Modern Middle East*, 2021; *Channels of Transmission: Family and Professional Lineages in the Early Modern Middle East*, 2017).

June 1, 13:30-15:30, Panel 3

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Paris, France

Islamic Values and Other Didactic Aspects in Ḥamzavī (d. 1412-13)'s Ottoman *Iskendernāme*

The figure of Alexander the Great inspired countless epics and romances across the Turco-Persian world. During the formative period of the Ottoman Empire, the conqueror's adventures were so widely celebrated that they gave rise to several *Iskendernāmes*. Among the most popular was the *Ḳiṣṣa-ı İskender*, composed by Ḥamzavī (d. 1412-13?). Blending prose and verse, this version is said—according to contemporary sources—to have spanned as many as twenty-four volumes. To date, however, no complete manuscript has been discovered. One of the most extensive surviving copies is held in Ankara by the Turkish Language Association (TDK), under reference number A/150.

The text preserved in the Ankara manuscript reads like a true adventure novel. The reader is plunged *in medias res* into the conqueror's exploits in India and China. Yet Alexander is always accompanied by his philosophers, who consistently advise and guide him. Far from playing a secondary role, the speeches of Aristotle, Plato, Socrates, and Hippocrates occupy a central place in the narrative. Significantly, these are rendered in verse, setting them apart from the prose account of the story's many twists and turns. The values these sages of ancient Greece promote through their counsel often carry an Islamic tone. This presentation will explore how the author of this popular romance used the story of Alexander to showcase Islamic teachings and Sufi ethics, all within a narrative framework that ostensibly emphasizes the conqueror's conquests and exploits.

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