



Post-custodial archives from Sufi shrines of the Afghan-Pakistan frontier

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Part of the Middle East Librarians Association (MELA) Virtual Social Justice Lecture Series 2022-2023 season, ["Lives in the Margins: Ethnic and Religious Minorities in the Middle East."](#)

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Register here: <https://bit.ly/MELAZarkarZiad>

"Endangered archives from Sufi shrines of the Afghan-Pakistan frontier" is a project sponsored by UCLA Library's Modern Endangered Archives Program, with the aim of cataloguing and digitizing endangered archives of Sufi monasteries and shrines within Pakistan's Pashtun tribal regions. Beginning in February 2022, the team consists of 14 members who have been archiving materials ranging from locally produced biographies and letters, to texts on magic, metaphysics, and poetry, anti-extremist posters, audio recordings of Sufi masters documenting their struggle against fundamentalism. In this presentation, co-investigators Waleed Ziad and Rustin Zarkar will explore the history of the Sufi networks in the region as well as how the post-custodial model empowers local stakeholders in their ability to preserve their collections and build preservation infrastructure for sustainable community-driven archiving.

Rustin Zarkar is the Middle East & Islamic Studies Librarian at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. He is responsible for collecting and curating vernacular language materials from the Middle East and North Africa for UNC Libraries. He is also PhD candidate in Middle East & Islamic Studies at New York University, where he specializes in imperial state formation in the Caspian region. Along with UNC Professor Waleed Ziad, he is the co-investigator for the "Endangered archives from Sufi shrines of the Afghan-Pakistan frontier" project, funded by UCLA's Modern Endangered Archives Program (MEAP).

*Waleed Ziad is Assistant Professor and Ali Jarrahi Fellow in Persian Studies in the Department of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Prior to this, he was an Islamic Law and Civilization Research Fellow at Yale Law School. He completed his PhD in History at Yale University, where his dissertation won the university-wide Theron Rockwell Field Prize. In the last decade, Ziad has conducted fieldwork on historical and contemporary religious revivalism and Sufism in over 140 towns across Afghanistan, Uzbekistan, and Pakistan. His recent book *Hidden Caliphate: Sufi Saints beyond the Oxus and Indus* (Harvard, 2021) won the Albert Hourani Book Award. His books also include *In the Treasure Room of the Sakra King: Votive Coinage from Gandharan Shrines* (American Numismatic Society, 2022), *Sufi Masters of the Afghan Empire: Bibi Sahiba and Her Spiritual Network* (Harvard, exp. 2024), and *Beyond the Khutba and Sikka: Sovereignty and Coinage in Sindh* (in progress). His articles on historical and ideological trends in the Muslim world have appeared in the *New York Times*, *International Herald Tribune*, the *Wall Street Journal*, *Foreign Policy*, *Christian Science Monitor*, *The Hill* and major dailies internationally.*