

# Curriculum Vitae

Matthew Thomas Miller

## Contact Information

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## Professional Positions

**2018- Assistant Professor of Persian Literature and Digital Humanities**, Roshan Institute for Persian Studies, University of Maryland

**2020- Director, Roshan Initiative in Persian Digital Humanities at the University of Maryland (PersDig@UMD)**

**2016- PI, Persian Manuscript Initiative (PMI)**

**2016- Co-PI, Open Islamicate Texts Initiative (OpenITI)**

**2015-2020 Associate Director, Roshan Initiative in Persian Digital Humanities at the University of Maryland (PersDig@UMD)**

**2014-2018 Roshan Institute Research Fellow**, University of Maryland

## Education

**2016 PhD, Comparative Literature**, Washington University in Saint Louis  
Graduate Certificate in Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies

**2009 MA, Islamic and Near Eastern Studies**, Washington University in Saint Louis

**2007 BA, International and Area Studies** (with University

Honors and Phi Beta Kappa), Washington University in Saint Louis

## Honors, Awards, and Grants

- \$1,750,000 grant from The Mellon Foundation for Phase II of The Open Islamicate Texts Initiative Arabic-script OCR Catalyst Project (OpenITI AOCF) (Role: Principal Investigator) (2022)
- \$600,000 grant from the National Science Foundation for the “Unsupervised Islamicate Manuscript Transcription via Lacunae Reconstruction” (Role: Co-Principal Investigator) (2022)
- \$10,000 Independent Scholarship, Research and Creativity Award (IS-RCA) (Spring Semester 2022 teaching release)
- \$100,000 grant from The Mellon Foundation for bridge funding phase of “The Open Islamicate Texts Initiative Arabic-script OCR Catalyst Project (OpenITI AOCF)” (Role: Principal Investigator) (2021)
- \$282,905 Level III Digital Humanities Advancement Grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities for the project entitled, “Automatic Collation for Diversifying Corpora: Improving Handwritten Text Recognition (HTR) for Arabic-script Manuscripts” (Role: Principal Investigator) (2020).
- HathiTrust Research Center Advanced Collaborative Support Award for “Detecting and Transcribing Arabographic Texts” (Role: Co-Principal Investigator) (2020)
- \$800,000 grant from The Mellon Foundation for Phase I of “The Open Islamicate Texts Initiative Arabic-script OCR Catalyst Project (OpenITI AOCF)” (Role: Principal Investigator) (2019)
- Ehsan Yarshater Fellowship in Iranian and Persian Studies, Yale University (2017-2019) (declined)
- £5,000 Collection Care and Emergency Response Grant, Islamic Manuscript Association (2017) (for PMI project in the Raja of Mahmudabad Palace Library) (Role: Principal Investigator)
- DRIF Conference Grant for “Manuscripts in the 21st Century” workshop (2016)
- \$15,000 Global Classroom Initiatives Grant for development of the *Islamicate World 2.0: Studying Islamicate Cultures through Computation Textual Analysis* course (2015) (Role: Principal Investigator)

- Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute Fellowship for Excellence in Persian Studies (2012-2013)
- Mellon-Sawyer Graduate Fellowship (2011-2012)
- Phi Beta Kappa Honor Society (Spring 2007)

## Publications

- “Fakhr al-Dīn ʿIrāqī: Poet, Mystic, ‘Ocean of the Persians’” In *Mystical Landscapes: Voices and Themes in Medieval Persian Literature*, edited by Fatemeh Keshavarz and Ahmet T. Karamustafa. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2024.
- (fourth author, with David A. Smith, Jacob Murel, and Jonathan Parkes Allen). “Automatic Collation for Diversifying Corpora: Commonly Copied Texts as Distant Supervision for Handwritten Text Recognition.” In *Proceedings of the Computational Humanities Research Conference 2023*, Paris, France, December 6-8, 2023, edited by Artjoms Sela, Fotis Jannidis, and Iza Romanowska, 3558:206–21. CEUR Workshop Proceedings. CEUR-WS.org, 2023. <https://ceur-ws.org/Vol-3558/paper1708.pdf>.
- “Genre in Classical Persian Poetry.” In *The Routledge Handbook on Persian Literature*, edited by Kamran Talattof, 76-120. New York: Routledge, 2023.
- (third author, with Nikolai Vogler, Jonathan Allen, and Taylor Berg-Kirkpatrick). “Lacuna Reconstruction: Self-Supervised Pre-Training for Low-Resource Historical Document Transcription.” In *Findings of the Association for Computational Linguistics: NAACL 2022*, edited by Marine Carpuat, Marie-Catherine de Marneffe, and Ivan Vladimir Meza Ruiz, 206–16. Seattle, United States: Association for Computational Linguistics, 2022. <https://doi.org/10.18653/v1/2022.findings-naacl.15>.
- “The Poetics of the Sufi Carnival: The Rogue Lyrics (*Qalandariyyāt*) as Heterotopic Countergenre(s).” *Al-ʿUṣūr al-Wustā: The Journal of Middle East Medievalists* 30 (2022): 1-46. url: <https://journals.library.columbia.edu/index.php/alusur/article/view/uw30mmiller>.
- “The Qalandar King: Early Development of the *Qalandariyyāt* and Saljuq Conceptions of Kingship in Amir Moʿezzi’s Panegyric for Sharafshāh Jaʿfari.” *Iranian Studies* 55:2 (2022): 521-549. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/irn.2021.8>.
- (with Benjamin Kiessling, Gennady Kurin, and Kader Smail). “Ad-

vances and Limitations in Open Source Arabic-Script OCR: A Case Study,” *Digital Studies / Le champ numérique* 11:1 (2021). doi: <https://doi.org/10.16995/dscn.8094>.

- (third author, with Benjamin Kiessling and Daniel Stökl Ben Ezra). “BADAM: A Public Dataset for Baseline Detection in Arabic-script Manuscripts.” *HIP '19: Proceedings of the 5th International Workshop on Historical Document Imaging and Processing, September 2019*. Pages 13–18. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1145/3352631.3352648>.
- (fourth author, with Maxim Romanov, Masoumeh Seydi, and Sarah Savant). “Open Islamicate Texts Initiative: a Machine-Readable Corpus of Texts Produced the Premodern Islamicate World.” *DH2019* (Utrecht University 9-12 July 2019). doi: <https://dev.clariah.nl/files/dh2019/boa/0838.html> (Received the *DH2019* prize for the most “innovative and interdisciplinary research”).
- “Embodying the Beloved: (Homo)eroticism, Embodiment, and the Construction of Desire in the Hagiographic Tradition of ‘Irāqī.” *Journal of Middle Eastern Literatures* 21:1 (2018): 1-27. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/1475262X.2018.1492134>.
- (with Bridget Almas, Emad Khazraee, and Joshua Westgard). “Manuscript Study in Digital Spaces: The State of the Field and New Ways Forward.” *Digital Humanities Quarterly* 12/2 (2018). doi: <http://www.digitalhumanities.org/dhq/vol/12/2/000374/000374.html>.
- (with Maxim G. Romanov, Sarah Bowen Savant, and Benjamin Kiessling). “Important New Developments in Arabographic Optical Character Recognition (OCR).” *Al-ʿUṣūr al-Wuṣṭā: The Journal of Middle East Medievalists* 25 (2017): 1-13. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17613/M6TZ4R>.

## Edited Volumes

- (with Domenico Ingenito). *Medieval and Early Modern Persian Poetry: Welcoming New Directions and Forgotten Geographies*. Edinburgh University Press, Forthcoming.
- (with Kristina Richardson). A special issue/thematic dossier, entitled “From the Margins, From Below: Theoretical and Analytical Interventions in Premodern Middle Eastern Studies.” *Al-ʿUṣūr al-Wuṣṭā: the Journal of Middle East Medievalists* (scheduled to be published 2026).

## Translations

- *God's Wild Lovers: The Ecstatic Lyrics of Sufism's Rogue Poets*. University of California Press, Forthcoming.

## Submitted Works (Under Review)

None currently.

## Invited Contributions

- (with Jake Benson, Ali Khan Mahmudabad, and Columba Stewart). “The Raja of Mahmudabad Palace Library Project.” *Shi'i Studies Review* 3 (2019): 271-279. doi: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17613/ap4q-zw79>.
- (with Maxim G. Romanov and Sarah Bowen Savant). “Digitizing the Textual Heritage of the Premodern Islamicate World: Principles and Plans.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 50 (2017): 103-109. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743817000964>.
- (with Sarah Bowen Savant). “‘Tell Me Something I Don't Know!': The Place and Politics of Digital Methods in the (Islamicate) Humanities.” *International Journal of Middle East Studies* 50 (2017): 135-139. doi: <https://doi.org/10.1017/S0020743817001027>.

## Works in Progress

- *Feeling Like Lovers: Affect in Medieval Sufism*. Book manuscript in preparation.
- *Reading Classical Persian: A Comprehensive High-Frequency Introduction to Classical Persian*. Book manuscript in preparation.

## Public Scholarship

- “Sufi love poetry is in vogue, but few grasp its radical meaning.” *Aeon Psyche*, October 13th, 2021. url: <https://psyche.co/ideas/sufi-love-poetry-is-in-vogue-but-few-grasp-its-radical-meaning>.
- The Kite Runner Critiqued: New Orientalism Goes to the Big Screen.” *CommonDreams* (Jan 2008). Available for download here. Translated into Persian: “Ravâyati neo-orientâlisti az khâvarmiyâneh: naqdi digar bar ‘Bâdbâdak-bâz’” *Jahân-e Ketâb sâl-e sizdahom, shomâreh-ye 3 va 4* (Khordâd va Tir 1387). Translated by Ahmad Sayf. Available here: <http://dx.doi.org/10.17613/M6KF99>.

## Areas of Teaching and Research Interests

**Primary Areas of Interest:** Sufism; Persian literature of all periods; (global) digital humanities; Orientalism; literary and cultural theory (especially, gender & sexuality studies, affect theory, history of emotions, sensory history, cognitive literary theory, and translation studies)

**Secondary Areas of Interest:** Arabic literature of all periods; contemporary Islamic political thought

## Teaching Experience

- Instructor, *Sex, Gender, and Sexuality in the Islamic World* (Spring 2017, Fall 2018, Fall 2022, Spring 2024)
- Instructor, *Iranian Cinema* (Fall 2019, Fall 2020)
- Instructor, *Lyrics of Mystical Love: Rumi, Song of Songs, and St. Teresa of Avila to Mirabai and Manhae* (Spring 2019, 2014)
- Instructor, *Sex, Love, and Desire in Persian Poetry* (Spring 2018)
- Instructor, *The Islamicate World 2.0: Studying Islamic Cultures through Computational Textual Analysis* (Fall 2016, Spring 2021).
- Instructor, *Introduction to Global Digital Humanities* (Spring 2016)
- Instructor, *Introduction to Persian Literature in Translation* (Spring 2015, Fall 2017)
- Instructor, *Lyrics of Mystical Love, East and West* (Fall 2014)
- Instructor, *Words and Worlds: A Critical Literacy Approach to Reading and Writing* (4/2014-7/2014)

## Invited Talks

- “Towards a Digital Persian Philology: Digital Infrastructure, Corpus Construction, and the Possibilities for Algorithmic Analysis.” Iran Lecture Series, University of Texas-Austin (March 3rd, 2021).
- “The Open Islamicate Texts Initiative Arabic-Script OCR Catalyst Project.” *International Workshop on Digital Humanities: Theory and Praxis*, Jamia Millia Islamia University, New Delhi, India (December 14th, 2020).

- “The Beautiful Faces of Persian Culture: Love and Beauty in Persian Poetry and Spirituality.” *To Iran With Love: Scholars and Lawyers Speaking about Iran’s History and Cultural Heritage*, Institute for Advanced Studies, Princeton (January 27th, 2020).
- “Developments in Arabic-script Optical Character Recognition: Technical Advances and Organizational Barriers.” *Whither Islamicate Digital Humanities*, Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences Amsterdam (NLD) (December 14th, 2018).
- (with Alexander Jabbari and Austin O’Malley), “Persian OCR and the Future of the Persian Digital Humanities.” *Persian Digital Humanities Research Workshop*, University of Oklahoma (November 6th, 2018).
- “Distant Reading Persian Poetry: A Topic Modeling-Driven Approach to Studying Generic Categories in Medieval Persian Poetry.” *DHAsia Conference*, Stanford University (April 27th-28th, 2018).
- “Developments in Arabic-Script OCR at OpenITI.” *Agenda for an Agenda for Historical and Multilingual OCR*, Northeastern University (February 7–8, 2018).
- “What is ‘Digital Humanities’ and What is it Doing in Islamicate/Middle Eastern Studies?” Tufts University (October 18th, 2017).
- “Poetic Performance as Argument: Hasan the Singer’s Embodied Performance-cum-Defense of Sufi (Homo)Eroticism in ‘Erâqi’s Hagiography.” Harvard University (April 21st, 2017).
- “Making a Digital Persian Manuscript Archive: The Persian Manuscript Initiative and Manuscript Studies in the Digital Age.” *Rediscovering Words and Worlds – Arabic Script Collections at Columbia University Workshop*. Columbia University (February 16th-18th, 2017).
- “PersDig@UMD, OpenITI, and the Construction of the Infrastructure for ‘Digital Humanities’ Scholarship on the Premodern Islamicate World.” Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ (November 11th, 2016).
- “The Persian Digital Humanities: Projects, Possibilities, and the New Collaborative Humanities.” University of Tehran (Delivered over Skype, October 2nd, 2016).
- “PersDig@UMD: PMI, PDL, OpenITI, and the Persian Digital Humanities.” *Activism, Advocacy, and Scholarship on Islam in the Digital Realm: Prospects, Progress, and Challenges Workshop*, Boston University (September 16th, 2016).

- “Bodiless Forms: Embodiment, (Homo)eroticism, and the ‘Straightening’ of Sufi Desire.” University of Pennsylvania (February 1st, 2016).
- “Embodying the Beloved: (Homo)eroticism and Embodiment in Medieval Sufism.” *The Persian Book Lecture Series*, Library of Congress (September 3rd, 2016).
- “The ‘Rogue Lyrics’ of Medieval Persian Poetry: The Qalandariyyat as Heterotopic Countergenre of the Sufi Carnival.” *Fools and Vagabonds: Non-Violence in the Islamic Mystical Tradition Conference*, Leiden University (June 4th, 2015).
- “Hafez and The Persian Ghazal (Lyric).” Georgia College & State University (April 8th, 2014).

## Conference Presentations

- “(Dis)embodying Sufi Poetry: Theories of Poetic Imagery and the Mistranslation of the Imaginal Body.” *Middle East Studies Association Conference* (December 3rd, 2021).
- “‘Seduced by Beautiful Images and Idols’: ‘Erāqī’s Poetic Meditation on the Role of Embodied Forms of Beauty in Sufi Eroticism.” *American Comparative Literature Association Convention* (April 8th-11th, 2021).
- “Imagery as Imaginal Embodiments and Performances of Meaning: A Case Study of a Poem of ‘Iraqi.” *Middle East Studies Association Conference* (October 6th, 2020).
- “A Tale of Two Interpretations: Wine as Symbol and Wine as (Embodied) Metaphor in Sufi Poetry.” *Iranian Studies Conference* (August 25th-28th, 2020). (Cancelled due to COVID19.)
- “‘Seduced by Beautiful Images and Idols’: ‘Erāqī’s Poetic Meditation on the Role of Embodied Forms of Beauty in Sufi Eroticism.” *American Comparative Literature Association Convention* (March 19th-22nd, 2020). (Cancelled due to COVID19.)
- “‘Meaning in the Clothing of Forms’: An Embodied Poetics.” *Yarshater Young Scholars Workshop*. University of Maryland, College Park (May 16th-17th, 2019).
- “Topic Modeling Genre in Medieval Persian Poetry: A Computational Approach to Medieval Thematic Collections of Poetry.” *Middle East Studies Association Conference* (November 18th-21st, 2017).



- “The Qalandariyyāt as Heterotopic Countergenre: A Case Study of a Distant Reading Approach to the ‘Rogue Lyrics’ of Early Persian Poetry.” *2nd Khamriyya Workshop*, University of Cambridge (June 21st, 2016).
- “Embodying the Beloved in Textual Performance Contexts: A Queer Reading of Medieval Bio-/Hagiographical Accounts of Poetic Performance.” *Modern Language Association Convention* (January 9th, 2016).
- “Computational Explorations of Genre in ‘Classical’ Persian Poetry.” *Digital Arabic and Digital Persian Research Workshop*, University of Leipzig (December 17th, 2015).
- “Workshop on the Persian Digital Library (PDL): Status Update and Strategic Planning.” *Digital Arabic and Digital Persian Research Workshop*, University of Leipzig (December 17th, 2015).
- “Queering the Qalandariyyat: The Poetics and Cultural Politics Desire in the Poetry and Biographical Tradition of the Qalandari Poets.” *American Comparative Literature Association Convention* (March 26th-29th, 2015).
- “A Cognitive Poetics of the ‘Winehouse of Love’ in the Qalandariyyat of ‘Erāqī.” *Modern Language Association Convention* (January 10th, 2015).
- “Queering Love and Desire in the Antinomian Lyrics of ‘Erâqi.” *Modern Language Association Convention* (January 9th, 2014).
- “Reconceptualizing Medieval Poetic Biographical Traditions as Interpretative and Discursive Constructs: A Case Study of the Biographical Tradition of Fakhr al-Din ‘Eraqi.” *Middle East Studies Association Conference* (October 11th, 2013).
- “Aesthetic Homonormativity in Medieval Persian Sufism: A Cultural Poetics of Sufi Homoeroticism in the Biographical Traditions of Fakhr al-Dīn ‘Erāqī.” *Middle East Studies Association Conference* (November 18th, 2012).

## Conferences, Workshops, and Panels Organized

- (co-organized with Raffaele Vigiante and Mathew Barber). *Digital Publication of Right-to-Left Script Corpora*. University of Maryland, College Park (June 29th-30th, 2023). Url: <https://openiti.org/2023workshop/>.
- *Into the Digital Islamic Future: An Experts Workshop*. University of Maryland, College Park (September 29-30th, 2022).

- (co-organized with Jane Mikkelson) *Erotic Entanglements: Forms and Structures of Desire in Premodern Persian Literature*. American Comparative Literature Association Convention (April 8th-11th, 2021).
- (co-organized with Jane Mikkelson) *Erotic Entanglements: Forms and Structures of Desire in Premodern Persian Literature*. American Comparative Literature Association Convention (March 19th-22nd, 2020). (Cancelled due to COVID19.)
- *OCR and Digital Text Production: Learning from the Past, Fostering Collaboration and Coordination for the Future*. University of Maryland, College Park (January 29th-30th, 2020).
- *Yarshater Young Scholars Workshop*. University of Maryland, College Park (May 16th-17th, 2019).
- *A New Corpus for the Islamicate World and Methods for Its Exploration*. Middle East Studies Association Conference (November 18th-21st, 2017).
- *Manuscripts in the Twenty-First Century Workshop*. University of Maryland, College Park (November 4th-5th, 2016).
- *Topic Modeling Persian Workshop/Hackathon: Scripts and Work Flows for Pedagogical and Research Applications*. University of Maryland, College Park (March 3rd-4th, 2016).
- *Permutations of Desire in Persian Literature*. American Comparative Literature Association Convention (March 26th-29th, 2015).
- *New Approaches to Love in Medieval Persian Poetry: Critical Interventions*. Modern Language Association Convention (January 10th, 2015).
- *Re-Interpreting Love and Desire in Medieval Persian Literature: Case Studies on 'Attar, 'Eraqi, and Gurgani*. Modern Language Association Convention (January 9th, 2014).
- *Persian Literary Historiography: Perspectives on the History and Interpretation of Persian Literature*. Middle East Studies Association Conference (October 11th, 2013).

## Roundtables

- Invited participant in “Sustaining Digital Scholarship Roundtable.” *The Association for Computers and the Humanities* (July 22nd, 2021).
- Invited participant in “MELA DSIG Virtual roundtable on Arabic script

OCR / HTR. *Middle East Studies Association Conference* (October 1st, 2020).

- Participant in *Non-traditional methods for Teaching Traditional Languages* roundtable, discussing collaborative, global classroom learning model of the *Islamicate World 2.0* course. *Middle East Studies Association Conference* (November 19th, 2016).

### **Service to University**

- Founding Member, University of Maryland Chapter of American Association of University Professors (UMD AAUP) (Spring 2021-now)
- Member, Race, Equity, and Social Justice Committee, School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures (Fall 2020—Spring 2021)
- Member, Search Committee for “Roshan Lecturer in Persian Studies” (Spring 2020)
- Director, Afghan Refugee Accompaniment Program (Fall 2017-Spring 2020)
- Member, University-wide Super Computing Committee (Fall 2017-Spring 2018)
- Member, advisory board for the joint College of Arts and Humanities/Maryland Institute for Technology and Humanities Graduate Certificate in Digital Studies in the Arts and Humanities (DSAH) (2016-Now)
- Member, Roshan Institute Scholarships Review Committee (2016-Now)
- Member, Global Classrooms Evaluation Committee (2017)

### **Service to Profession**

- Member, Alpheios Advisory Board
- Member, Board of Islamicate Digital Humanities Network
- Member, ALTO (Analyzed Layout and Text Object) International Editorial Board for OCR standards.
- Member, vHMML Board of Advisors, Hill Museum and Manuscript Library (HMML)
- Served on two National Endowment for the Humanities grant review

panels.

- Institutional Trustee, Board of Trustees, American Institute of Afghanistan Studies (AIAS)

### **Professional Association Memberships**

- International Society for Iranian Studies (ISIS)
- Middle East Studies Association (MESA)
- Association for the Study of Persianate Societies (ASPS)
- The Islamic Manuscript Association (TIMA)
- Modern Language Association (MLA)
- American Comparative Literature Association (ACLA)
- American Academy of Religion (AAR)
- American Institute of Afghanistan Studies.
- Middle East Medievalists

### **Languages**

- English: native language
- Persian: advanced in all skills
- Arabic: advanced skills in reading and writing
- Spanish: advanced skills in reading and writing, conversational speaking skills
- French: reading
- Programming languages: R (advanced), Python (basic)

### **Additional Language Education**

- Persian Summer Institute (6/2013-8/2013), University of Maryland, College Park

- Online Persian Institute (10/2012-05/2013, 8/30/2013-4/2/2014), University of Texas at Austin
- Intensive Arabic Language Study with Private Tutor (6/2009-7/2009), Damascus, Syria
- Intensive Arabic Language Courses (1/2008-6/2008), International Language Institute, Cairo, Egypt
- Intensive Persian Program (6/2007-8/2007), Eastern Consortium for Persian and Turkish Summer Program at the University of Chicago
- Semester Study Abroad (7/2005-11/2005), University of Cape Town
- Intensive Spanish Language Courses (1/2005-6/2005), Proyecto Lingüístico Francisco Marroquín (La Antigua, Guatemala)

## References

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