

GODEFROID DE CALLATAÿ AND LAURA TRIBUZIO
A RUBY WHICH IS NOT A RUBY: SYMBOL, SUBSTANCE, AND POLITICAL IMAGINATION IN TIMURID
AND MUGHAL THOUGHT

Monday Majlis Online on the 10th of November, 17:00-18:30 (UK time)

[Centre for the Study of Islam](#), Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter

Register please on this link:

<https://Universityofexeter.zoom.us/meeting/register/m2hq7EbfSBSoc1dFFG3X8g>



Laura Tribuzio is a historian of Islamic sciences and philosophy, with a strong engagement in Arabic and Persian manuscript traditions. She is currently a Research Fellow at UCLouvain on the ERC Synergy Project *MOSAIC* (Mapping Occult Sciences Across Islamicate Cultures) and Adjunct Professor of Arabic Language, Literature, and Translation at the University of Bari “Aldo Moro.” Her research focuses on the *Mujmal al-Ḥikma* (*Compendium of Wisdom*), a Persian adaptation of the *Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’s Epistles*, which she sees as a bridge between the Old Brethren of Purity and later intellectual traditions. After a sixteen-year break from academia, during which she worked in teaching and immigration officer, she has returned to research with a renewed perspective, bringing together philological rigor and lived experience.
<https://uclouvain.academia.edu/LauraTribuzio>

Godefroid de Callataÿ is Professor of Arabic and Islamic Studies at the Oriental Institute of the University of Louvain (UCLouvain), specialized in the history of science and philosophy. Amongst other subjects, he has published extensively on the encyclopaedic corpus known as *Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’* (*Epistles of the Brethren of Purity*). He is also the leading PI of the ERC Synergy project *MOSAIC* (Mapping Occult Sciences Across Islamicate Cultures, 2025–2031), now just started at UCLouvain in collaboration with Matteo Martelli (Bologna), Petra Schmidl (Erlangen-Nürnberg), Matthew Melvin-Koushki (South Carolina), and Sinem Eryilmaz (Barcelona).
<https://uclouvain.academia.edu/GodefroiddeCallataÿ>



Timur hunting. *Zafarnāma* of Sharaf al-Dīn ‘Alī Yazdī. Shiraz, AH 839/1436 CE.

Abstract: The ‘Timur Ruby’, a famous gemstone, long accepted as a ruby though it is not, illustrates how easily appearances are taken for granted. Something similar has happened with the doctrine of the *Ṣāhib al-Qirān* (Lord of the Conjunction), central to Timurid and Mughal political imagination but rarely examined in its early formulations. The *Mujmal al-Ḥikma* (*Compendium of Wisdom*, 13th c.), usually defined as a mere Persian abridgment of the famous *Rasā’il Ikhwān al-Ṣafā’* (*Epistles of the Brethren of Purity*), offers one of the earliest known systematic accounts of Saturn–Jupiter conjunctions as heralds of rulership. This innovation, not attested in the *Epistles* nor in any other earlier encyclopaedic traditions, introduced a powerful cosmological paradigm through which Timur was later cast as *Ṣāhib Qirān*. Mughal rulers inheriting this vision, even reinscribed the so-called ‘Timur Ruby’ with their own names, binding material symbols to celestial cycles. The talk reconsiders this doctrine not as an eternal given, but as a distinctive product of its textual context in the *Mujmal*, where cosmology, astrology, eschatology and political imagination were brought together into a framework that proved remarkably enduring.

In the spirit of the label ‘Majlis’ and also to make the talks even more interesting, our speakers present the topic discussed as embedded in their own journey. You can watch the previous Majlises here

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8YRkUahFj_81oJzCSDLTx4kVQQgeHLC-, but we don’t record the Q&A in order to keep the discussion free. Please come and enjoy the talks and the discussions :) If you’d like to be included in the CSI (Centre for the Study of Islam, Institute of Arab and Islamic Studies, University of Exeter) mailing list, please write to me (I.T.Kristo-Nagy@ex.ac.uk).

We’ll be happy to welcome you!

István T Kristó-Nagy

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