Introduction

For roughly a century during the height of Muslim power in predominantly Hindu South Asia—coinciding with the reigns of the emperors Akbar, Jahāngīr, and Shāh Jahān from 1556–1658 CE—Muslim elite of the Mughal Empire patronized the translation of a large body of Hindu Sanskrit treatises into the Persian language. The Hindu texts chosen for translation included the *Atharva Veda,* various *Upaniṣads,* the *Mahābhārata* (particularly the *Bhagavad-Gītā*), the *Rāmāyaṇa,* several *Purāṇas,* and numerous other Sanskrit works, among them a popular philosophical tale known as the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* composed by one Gauḍa Abhinanda. This Hindu narrative treatise, produced sometime between the tenth and fourteenth centuries CE and teaching a variety of esoteric knowledge meant to liberate an aspirant from the vagaries of the phenomenal world, became an object of such enduring Muslim interest that the Mughals (re)translated it into Persian several times. One of the earliest of these translations, personally commissioned by the soon-to-be emperor Jahāngīr and known as the *Jūg Bāsisht,* was completed in 1597 by a team of three collaborating translators: the Muslim court scholar Niẓām al-Dīn Pānīpatī and the Hindu *paṇḍits* Jagannātha Miśra Banārasī and Paṭhān Miśra Jājīpūrī (henceforth, the "translation team").

The Sanskrit *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*, alongside its early Persian translation, the *Jūg Bāsisht,* constitutes my central object of inquiry in this book. In particular, I aim to reconstruct the intellectual processes that underlay this translation, tracing the exchanges through which the translation team of Pānīpatī, Jagannātha Miśra, and Paṭhān Miśra, working in tandem, successfully crafted a novel vocabulary with which to express Hindu Sanskrit philosophical ideas in an Islamic Persian idiom. In the process, I argue, these Hindu and Muslim translators engaged in a mode of what we might today term an inter-religious or cross-philosophical

"dialogue." Indeed, though recent studies have (rightly) interpreted the Mughal "translation movement" as an enterprise aimed at Mughal political legitimation and imperial political self-fashioning, hardly any work has been done to establish a fuller *intellectual* conceptualization and context for these translation activities. Accordingly, I will analyze these Sanskrit-to-Persian translations as the joint efforts of Hindu and Muslim scholars to draw upon the vast resources provided by their respective religio-philosophical-literary traditions in order to forge a new, cosmopolitan, interreligious lexicon in the Persian language. How did these translators find a vocabulary with which to express Hindu, Sanskrit philosophical and theological ideas—including Hindu notions of God, conceptions of salvation and the afterlife, ritual notions, etc.—in the Islamic idiom of Persian? How did these two communities of scholars, one Muslim and the other Hindu, devise a shared language with which to communicate and to render one another's religious and philosophical views comprehensible, not only to each other, but to any educated Persian-reader (Muslim, Hindu, or otherwise)? In short, I aim to illustrate how, through the venue of Sanskrit-to-Persian translation, early modern Muslim and Hindu scholars found the words and the means to put their respective intellectual traditions into a certain conversation with one another.

The Sanskrit *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* and its 1597 Persian translation, the *Jūg Bāsisht,* thus serve as a case study for this line of inquiry. The members of this translation team were each formed and intellectually shaped by a long scholarly heritage, largely tied to Arabic and Persian, in the case of the Muslim scholar Pānīpatī, and to Sanskrit, in the case of the Hindus Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra. With only sporadic exceptions, prior to their historical encounter in South Asia, these Arabo-Persian and Sanskritic intellectual universes had matured and developed for many centuries in effective isolation from one another. Speaking only of the branches of knowledge we might now term "philosophy" or "theology," over six hundred years of Arabic and Persian learning predate the figure of Pānīpatī, while Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra, in turn, were preceded by more than a millennium of Sanskrit philosophical dialectics; the numbers grow only larger in relation to other branches of learning. What the translation team had inherited, accordingly, were two historically distinct intellectual traditions whose basic scholarly terms, categories, discursive patterns, and intellectual habits had long since been entrenched, along with all the erudite inscrutability that accompanies centuries of concerted refinement, contention, and debate over well-trodden, discipline-specific questions and academic minutiae. It was by no means obvious how either one of these intellectual traditions, laden with such disciplinary specificity and inertia, could be translated into the terminology and conceptual schemas of the other, but such was a crucial dimension of the task that confronted the translation team. Both the Arabo-Persian and Sanskrit philosophical traditions, furthermore, exhibited an overwhelming historical propensity to utterly ignore, if not actively disdain, one another.

How Pānīpatī, Jagannātha Miśra, and Paṭhān Miśra nevertheless managed to draw upon these very same intellectual resources in order to forge a kind of conversation between the two traditions—translating the Hindu Sanskritic into the terms of the Islamic Arabo-Persian—is the broad subject of this book. In the process, the three figures evinced an approach and implicit *theory* of translation that was deeply and simultaneously informed by the conceptual and cultural worlds of Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit thought. I thus hope to offer a multi-textured glimpse at the complex ways early modern Muslim and Hindu intellectuals coexisted, interacted, and comprehended one another's neighboring presence within a particular historical moment of the Indian subcontinent.[1] At the same time, the fruit of the translation team's endeavors—the rendering of the Sanskrit *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* as the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht*—contributed a significant piece to the cosmopolitan Indo-Persian courtly culture that had recently developed under Emperor Akbar's impetus at the Mughal court, a culture which aimed to synthesize the contributions of Muslims, Hindus, and other religious groups within a unified political order. Given the increasingly strident religious conflicts, nationalisms, and identity politics that we face in our present day—not only within South Asia, but globally—I would suggest that there is much to learn, both within the academic study of religion and also in our broader public discourse, from this historical case study of dialogue-fashioning between two religious civilizations.

Before jumping into this study proper, however, a number of preliminaries are in order. Most readers will find some portion of the following rudimentary, but hardly any, I suspect, will be familiar with all or even most of it. Since, for a study of this nature, I cannot presume a common background on the audience's part—most Hindu-studies readers will be unfamiliar with Islamic studies, and vice versa—I hope the reader will bear with the long, perhaps tedious preliminaries that occupy much of the remainder of this introduction, as it is important background for the story I aim to tell in this monograph and the logic of my intervention. Chapter 1 will then turn to the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* and *Jūg Bāsisht* in closer detail.

RELIGIOUS INTERACTIONS IN EARLY MODERN SOUTH ASIA

Recent academic literature has done much to illuminate the broad variety of ways and contexts in which South Asian Hindus and Muslims have historically interacted. Though approaching the topic through an array of lenses and methodologies, a common trend that pervades much of this literature is a repeated and persistent critique of earlier generations of nationalist South Asian historiography, wherein the entire premodern history of Hindu-Muslim relations is understood as a sequence of events ineluctably treading towards the India-Pakistan Partition of 1947. As Carl Ernst explains the issue: "[t]he main distorting

presupposition in Indian historical thinking today reads the medieval past in terms of modern religious nationalism. In this view, historical events are implicitly seen as prefiguring the partition of British India into an Islamic Republic of Pakistan and an overwhelmingly Hindu Indian Union."[2] In such nationalist histories, "Hinduism" and "Islam" are assumed to be discrete, bounded realities that are fundamentally, mutually opposed or even hostile, but for the individual (proto-secular) forces that would manage and mollify them. In depictions of the Mughal Empire, for instance, one routinely finds the period being characterized by two "factions": on the one hand, a "pluralistic," "tolerant" group, including Emperor Akbar (d. 1605) and Prince Dārā Shikōh (d. 1659), supporting such "liberal" initiatives as the Mughal translation movement (and prefiguring a modern, secular India); and then another, "orthodox" faction, represented by the likes of Emperor Awrangzēb (d. 1707), resistant to any such engagement with anything deemed to fall beyond the pale of a narrowly defined "puritan" or "legalistic" Islam (prefiguring the Pakistani nation-state). To quote just one characteristic depiction of the "process of peaceful co-existence" supposedly represented by the likes of the Mughal translation movement:

> This process of rapprochement and mutual adjustment suffered temporary setbacks at times . . . due to conflicts between the forces supporting orthodoxy and liberalism, between bigotry and the spirit of tolerance. Within Muslim society itself there were small sections which clung fast to orthodoxy and shunned every gesture of reconciliation with other religious groups, while there were also quite a large number of them who condemned the attitude of the bigoted sections and stood for mutual good-will and tolerance. These divergent trends—one leaning towards revivalism, the other towards 'peace with all'—had their own lists of supporters and opponents from amongst the Muslim community.[3]

On this reading of South Asian history, the over thirteen hundred years of variegated historical interactions between Hindus and Muslims can largely be reduced to these two, competing inclinations, vying over generations to fashion either an "orthodox," religiously exclusive environment (in service of either a "legalistic" Islam or a "casteist, Brahminical" Hinduism), or else a tolerant, pluralistic—and, many would add, necessarily "heterodox"—liberal state that manages to reconcile Islam and Hinduism to one another, despite their natural, innate reciprocal hostility.

Seeking correctives to these anachronistic, dichotomous, teleological nationalist histories, scholars such as Richard Eaton, Will Sweetman, Dominique-Sila Khan, Richard King, David Lorenzen, and many others have cautioned against the view that "Hinduism" and "Islam" are objective, ontological entities, emphasizing instead the historically, humanly-constructed nature of these categories.[4] As Ernst again explains regarding "assumptions about the immutable essences of Islam and Hinduism":

> I would like to argue that this kind of approach is fundamentally misleading . . . this approach is ahistorical in regarding religions as unchanging, and it fails to account

> for the varied and complex encounters, relationships, and interpretations that took place between many individual Muslims and Hindus . . . it assumes [for example] that there is a single clear concept of what a Hindu is, although this notion is increasingly coming into question; considerable evidence has accumulated that external concepts of religion, first from post-Mongol Islamicate culture, and eventually from European Christianity in the colonial period, were brought to bear on a multitude of Indian religious traditions to create a single concept of Hinduism.[5]

Accordingly, such scholars assert, preoccupied as we are with the seemingly intractable (and often traumatic) modern realities of a feuding India and Pakistan, rising Hindu-Muslim communal strife and religious nationalisms, we all too often concoct a problematic narrative of the past in these contemporary terms; if we today remark that, in seventeenth-century Mughal South Asia, a struggle was being waged between the irreconcilable forces of "orthodoxy" and "rapprochement" between "Hinduism" and "Islam," then it is because we are projecting distinctively modern categories back into the premodern past. A better framework would instead see a cumulative history of particular interactions between particular individuals and institutions, in which concepts, ideas, social and religious identities, political agendas, etc., are being constantly reshaped, challenged, and renegotiated through complex historical processes embedded in a variety of South Asian contexts. Thus, through this analytical lens, any discussion of "Hindu-Muslim interaction" must be immediately qualified, lest we inappropriately categorize as either "Hindu" or "Muslim" historical individuals who simply would not have described themselves in this way—or even possessed the necessary concepts to be able to do so—even as the categories of "Hindu" and "Muslim" are themselves ever subject to the changes, shifts, and transformations of historical forces and processes.

Hence, emerging from this academic literature is not only a better appreciation of the sheer diversity of the modes of Hindu-Muslim interactions, but also the broad variety of agendas and motivations exhibited by the individuals who engage in those encounters. In the realm of more quotidian exchanges, for instance, ethnographic studies of South Asian shrines and the tombs of Sufi saints (*dargāh*/*mazār*) have illuminated distinctively local patterns of religious identity that differ markedly from more "elite" contexts. Muslims and Hindus alike (and, at certain sites, Christians, Sikhs, and others) regularly visit such intercommunal spaces in search of healing and blessings for life's everyday challenges, participating in a "shared ritual grammar" which exhibits the sort of "permeable religious boundaries" that frustrate the usual categories of "Hindu" and "Muslim";[6] though not ethnographic in orientation, historical studies into the Muslim appropriation of yogic postural and breathing techniques have yielded comparable insights.[7] Accordingly, scholars have sometimes innovated new or modified categories such as "vernacular Hindu"[8] or the "ambiguously Islamic"[9] in order to capture these "popular, non-institutional" iterations of South Asian religious practice.[10] Studies of South Asian rural lives have similarly challenged the field's "exclusive emphasis

on religious community," arguing that lived individual experience is simply too multivalent, socially interconnected, and contextually specific to be reduced to a singular religious label.[11] Such interventions have served not only to problematize the static "Hindu-Muslim" binary of nationalist historiography, but also to dramatically widen the possibilities for how scholars can conceptualize the actions and decisions of South Asian actors, inviting us to consider social, political, economic, cultural, aesthetic, and even emotional motivations alongside—and intertwined with—religious explanations. Such scholarship has furthermore steered the field away from outdated descriptions of "hybrid" or "syncretistic" religious identities, terminologies which tend to cast the group in question as an unnatural admixture of a static and reified "Hinduism" and "Islam," both of these categories problematically "presumed to be self-evident" by modern observers.[12]

Another sphere of recent scholarly activity has explored Hindu-Muslim literary exchanges, where, once again, the critique of ahistorical reifications of "Hinduism" and "Islam" features prominently. Numerous studies have examined the migration, adaptation, and reimagining of terms, concepts, figures of speech, themes, characters, stories, etc., across Hindu and Muslim literary cultures, spanning both elite and vernacular literary registers. The examples are abundant. To name just a few: a seventeenth-century Muslim biography (*sīrah*) of the Prophet Muḥammad, the *Cīrāppurāṇam,* is told in the language and literary conventions of a "Hindu" Tamil *Purāṇa,* complete with references to the Qur'ān as a "Veda," the Islamic testimony of faith ("there is no god but God"[13]) as a *mantra,* and the Prophet Muḥammad as an *avatāra* (a divine "descent" or incarnation),[14] even as the Arabian desert is reimagined as a lush South Indian jungle.[15] The fourteenth-century Kashmiri poetess Lal Dēd writes primarily in a non-dualist Śaiva,[16] Yogic, Tantric idiom, but also incorporates Sufi (Islamic "mystical") tropes of wine-taverns and Persian gardens into her verse.[17] The eighteenth-century Sufi poet Bullhe Shāh delicately interweaves Qur'ānic, Sufi, Hindu devotional (*bhakti*), and local Punjabi literary forms into his *kāfī* lyrics.[18] The "Hindu-Turk Dialogue" of the sixteenth-century Hindu poet-scholar Eknāth satirically imagines a religious debate between a stubborn Muslim and his equally obstinate Hindu interlocutor in the Marāṭhī language.[19] Ismāʿīlī Muslim authors saturate their vernacular devotional hymns (*gināns*) with such "Hindu" literary motifs as the bride pining in separation from her beloved, while praising the Shīʿī Imāms in terms of the "Hindu" cosmology of Viṣṇu's ten *avatāras*.[20] Such boundary-crossing literary cross-fertilizations immediately complicate any simplistic "Hindu-Muslim" dichotomy, revealing, in many cases, that certain boundaries taken for granted today simply did not exist prior to the modern period. This is perhaps nowhere more evident than in the deeply divisive politics surrounding the languages of Urdu and Hindi, nationalistically coded in the modern imagination to Muslim/Pakistan and Hindu/India, respectively, but exhibiting no such divide in the languages' common origins.[21] Indeed, some of the earliest Hindavī literature to come down to us,[22] including the

Muslim Mawlānā Dā'ūd's *Cāndāyan* (1379) and the subsequent narrative romances (*premākhyānas*) that it would inspire, exhibit a profound and simultaneous participation in multiple literary sources, including Persian narrative conventions, classical Islamic ethics, Sufi metaphysical teachings, Hindu heroes and folk tales, yogic ritual practices, classical Hindu mythology, and Sanskritic notions of desire (*kāma*) and aesthetic relish (*rasa*).[23]

Indeed, these Hindavī *premākhyāna* romances provide a lucid illustration of the multiple motivations and agendas that can simultaneously exert themselves within a given literary work, which recent scholarship has teased out in a manner reminiscent of the ethnographic studies cited above. Aditya Behl has led the way in reconstructing the plainly Sufi goals of several of these *premākhyānas:* for Muslim Sufi practitioners, especially novice initiates, these tales of a hero's quest in search of his elusive beloved serve as a quasi-allegorical guidebook for the steps, states, and stations of the Sufi path, illustrating the means to transform the self and transmute worldly desire into desire for God via a combination of practices, virtues, and asceticism.[24] And yet, this "Sufi objective" of the *premākhyānas* is not incompatible with other kinds of motives, including patronage, praise for the sultan, prestige for oneself and the court, "secular" poetic and musical pleasure, competition with rival Hindu groups, or even little more than a "good laugh."[25] Given this panoply of possible authorial motivations—none of which especially bespeak a "tolerant," "liberal" project for Hindu-Muslim unity, à la nationalist historiography—what is one to make of a Muslim poet's abundant adaptation of "Hindu" features into his composition, as in the *premākhyānas*' pervasive incorporation of Hindu theological terms, mythological episodes, divine and heroic figures, yogic tropes, and *bhakti* themes? A number of scholars have regarded this phenomenon as a popularizing or proselytization strategy;[26] in another recovery of quotidian possibilities, however, Tony Stewart has influentially suggested, by way of contemporary Euro-American translation theory, that Muslim authors' deployment of an "ostensibly Hindu" vernacular terminology simply represents the pragmatic process of an author wishing to convey his religious thoughts in his own mother tongue. Much like an American Muslim today using the English, *ostensibly* Christian term "God" to express her substantially Islamic notion of "Allāh"—because "God" is the nearest option available in English, even though, given the terms' particular histories, they are not perfectly equivalent—South Asian Muslim writers were similarly drawing upon the stock of historically Hindu terms readily available within their respective vernacular tongues and then reimagining them for "thoroughly Islamic" purposes.[27]

Following in a similar vein, the bulk of recent studies to address Hindu-Muslim interactions have turned to the overtly political realm, with particular attention paid to the affairs of imperial courts. This copious literature is far too broad to attempt a summary here, though one can again observe an emphasis upon the historically constructed nature of "Hindu" and "Muslim" identities, with political

exigencies, political thought, and military conflict supplying the threatening—or, at times, politically useful—"other" against which a group might shape and sharpen its own identity.[28] Further mirroring the above scholarly trends, these politics-oriented studies also exhibit a pervasive, self-conscious move away from reified religious identities as the exhaustive explanations for a given Hindu king or Muslim sultan's deeds. A number of scholars have challenged the presumption, for instance, of an essential Islamic iconoclasm, as though a ruler's Muslim identity somehow obliged him, as a matter of earnest religious fervor, to destroy Hindu temples and idols wherever he encountered them.[29] Countering this longstanding supposition via a combination of empirical data and critical re-readings of primary sources, scholars have instead made the case for more multilayered imperial motivations of a simultaneously political, economic, military-strategic, administrative, diplomatic, or even personal character.[30] Often highlighting the "inconvenient" data—such as allegedly iconoclastic Muslim sultans issuing land grants to Hindus, mandating the protection of Brahmins and temples, and minting coins stamped with the image of a Hindu deity,[31] or else beleaguered Hindu kings, purportedly hostile to the bloodthirsty Muslims *en masse,* patronizing the construction of mosques while imitating Muslim forms of dress, architecture, and imperial vocabulary[32]—a cumulative picture emerges wherein pragmatics and *realpolitik* shaped royal behavior far more immediately than any religious or theological considerations. Indeed, in many scholars' analyses, it would seem that religion hardly ends up being a relevant factor at all.

This book builds upon a number of the crucial interventions modeled by this recent academic literature, while also seeking to address certain of its as yet underexplored avenues and implications. Given the field's much-needed turn against anachronistic categories, this study, too, aims to follow suit with careful attention paid to the concepts and terms that it deploys (a task to be taken up in the next section). Certainly the monolithic, reified notions of "Hinduism" and "Islam" that typify nationalist histories are ill-suited to any of the figures and materials examined here. And yet, none of the correctives just surveyed provides quite the right fit for the Sanskrit-to-Persian translations that will be analyzed in the coming chapters. Far from a religiously "ambiguous" or "vernacular" space, Mughal-era translations generally self-consciously present two discrete religious traditions—each with its own distinct scripture(s), religious law, ritual regimens, etc.—which can nevertheless be fruitfully compared with one another; the adopted vantage point within each tradition, furthermore, is typically elite. Similarly, in comparison with Hindu-Muslim literary exchanges, although aspirations for patronage, prestige, etc., are certainly part of the story with the translation movement, nevertheless, many of the Mughal translations were rendered into Persian *prose,* thus rendering sheer "secular" literary pleasure an unlikely motive. In the same way, with regard to the analysis of empire, although practical considerations of political legitimation and imperial political self-fashioning certainly played a very large role in the

Mughal court's interest in Sanskrit materials, any consideration of the contents of the translations themselves, as I will argue, reveals a pronounced religious or theological dimension that might coexist with political intentions, but cannot be readily reduced to them. Some participants in the translation movement, in other words, exhibited pronounced *philosophical* interests which may well have been deeply intertwined with the Mughal court's multifaceted politics, but such framing fails to fully appreciate these participants' articulations of the philosophical quest for knowledge and liberation in their own terms. The continued production and circulation of such texts outside of court sponsorship and after the decline of the Empire is indicative of the other sorts of interests and motivations that the field has so far tended to overlook.

Hence, in the face of nationalist history's almost exclusive emphasis upon religion, the contemporary field has understandably sought to delimit or even marginalize religion's role in directing the course of South Asian history; this study wonders, however, whether the pendulum has shifted somewhat too far in the opposite direction. While much of the recent literature thus tends to underemphasize or explain away the potentially religious, theological, or philosophical dimensions of historical Hindu-Muslim encounters, I will argue that such an approach neglects certain central features of the Mughal translation movement which the field has yet to develop a sufficient and effective vocabulary for addressing. Indeed, Carl Ernst, in his seminal typology of Arabic and Persian translations from Indian languages, does identify a certain category of "metaphysical and mystical" translations that are interested in "a particular kind of mystical and esoteric knowledge that is shared . . . by a small elite" within the Hindu and Muslim communities.[33] Now, for centuries Hindu and Muslim philosophers and theologians have sought to articulate, elaborate, and refine just what this esoteric knowledge is, so surely there is considerably more to be said on this front. And yet, with only sporadic exceptions, the field has been slow to attempt to robustly reconstruct South Asian Hindu-Muslim encounters in the terms of these scholarly traditions themselves.[34] Tony Stewart's influential articulation of translation theory cited above, for instance, is derived entirely from contemporary Euro-American theorists, without any reference to the theories and conceptualizations of Hindu and Muslim translators, themselves the products of centuries-long traditions of scholarly inquiry and theoretical reflection. When the field is effectively unanimous, however, in its desire to cease projecting modern categories back into the premodern past, it seems only appropriate that the emic conceptualizations of these historical Hindu and Muslim actors should themselves feature more prominently in the discussion, informing the etic and standing in conversation with it.

Accordingly, if the discipline's recovery of emic Hindu and Muslim philosophical and theological conceptualizations should require giving a larger space, once again, to some iteration of "religion" in our analytical frameworks, then so be it, if this is what will allow the field to be consistent with its own interventions; it must,

however, be done in a manner that is carefully, historically, contextually sensitive, without falling back into problematic nationalist categories. Hindu studies is comparatively further along in this endeavor, in large part because scholastic materials in general have remained a more vibrant arena of interest within that discipline. As such, recent titles to address Hindu scholastic traditions' notions of "religion" and their varied responses to the Muslim presence in the subcontinent, such as Andrew Nicholson's *Unifying Hinduism,* represent the latest in a somewhat more established thread of disciplinary inquiry—though there still remains considerable work to be done.[35] The field of South Asian Islam, in contrast, suffers from a notable dearth of attention paid to Islamic philosophical and theological materials, itself one of the most pronounced instances of a broader neglect of "post-classical" Islamic intellectual history.[36] As such, conceptualizations of "religion" or "Hinduism" in premodern South Asian Islamic philosophy and theology remain a predominantly unexplored territory, with only a handful of preliminary overviews available to provide sketches of the vast materials still awaiting in-depth study.[37]

This considerable lacuna notwithstanding, many scholars have nonetheless recognized Muslim philosophical and theological perspectives as constituting a significant dimension of historical Hindu-Muslim encounters, extending well beyond the specific confines of scholastic tomes. Aditya Behl, for instance, in his reconstruction of the "Sufi objectives" of the *premākhyāna* romances described above, repeatedly cites the centrality of Islamic metaphysics—particularly the tradition of Sufi metaphysics known as *waḥdat al-wujūd* ("unity of being")—as a framing vision that pervades and structures the narratives and, indeed, mediates the manner in which the "Arabic- and Persian-speaking world encountered cultural difference" among both elite and popular audiences.[38] With scores of vernacular poets, such as the abovementioned Bullhe Shāh, likewise exhibiting a clear investment in this Sufi metaphysics, *waḥdat al-wujūd*'s widespread influence and prominence in both scholarly and non-scholarly spaces across much of the early modern subcontinent is unmistakable.[39] Scholarship on Mughal political culture has similarly noted the myriad ways that Mughal elites, the retinues of Emperor Akbar and Prince Dārā Shikōh foremost among them, drew from Sufi thought and Islamic philosophy in crafting the empire's ornate courtly culture, for instance, in projecting the emperor's authority in the "illuminationist" language of the *ishrāqī* philosophical tradition or else in terms of the "perfect human" (*insān-i kāmil*) of the Sufi *waḥdat al-wujūd* tradition.[40] Most relevantly for this study, Mughal translators' typical recourse for rendering Hindu thought into Persian was the technical terminology of the Sufi and Islamic philosophical traditions.[41] It is thus acknowledged that Islamic philosophy played an important constituent role in broadly shaping Mughal discourses of "religion" and the "religious other," but, in scholarship to date, such acknowledgments are usually made only in passing; in-depth treatments of the subject remain very much a desideratum. At the same time, for a field currently invested in the delicate task of reconstructing premodern

categories of thought rigorously denuded of modern baggage, the South Asian Islamic scholastic corpus stands as a promising but under-mined resource in the search for premodern emic iterations of "religion" carefully distinguished from the reified, essentialist categories of modern nationalist histories.

Accordingly, this study proposes to examine the Mughal translation movement with an eye to the above observations and concerns. With the aim of moving beyond mere overviews and introductory sketches, I will devote sustained attention to the single treatise introduced at the outset: the *Jūg Bāsisht,* the 1597 translation of the popular medieval Sanskrit work, the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha.* This Persian translation represents a complex confluence of multiple philosophical currents hailing from the Arabo-Persian and Sanskritic intellectual worlds: on the Arabo-Persian side, one encounters the distinctive technical terminology of Islamic Peripatetic (*mashshā'ī*) philosophy, philosophical Sufism in the *waḥdat al-wujūd* tradition, and even occasional offerings of Islamic Illuminationist (*ishrāqī*) philosophy. On the Sanskrit side, one can discern contributions from the Hindu Advaita Vedānta tradition, non-dualist Kashmiri Śaivism, Yogācāra and Madhyamaka Buddhism, Sāṃkhya, and Yoga (alongside other philosophical threads more marginally present), all translated into Persian terms and thus often obscured under thick layers of Islamic philosophical expression. This multifarious synthesis was, again, accomplished by the translation team of Niẓām al-Dīn Pānīpatī, Jagannātha Miśra Banārasī, and Paṭhān Miśra Jājīpūrī, and a central goal of this book is to attempt to reconstruct the inner workings of their intellectual processes and translation choices.

This task is immensely complicated, however, by the utter dearth of available biographical information on the three figures: other than their names and the treatise they have left behind, we know precious little, at present, about any individual member of this Hindu-Muslim translation team. In such a situation, I propose, among our most promising options is to pursue a *philosophical* context for the text at hand through thoroughly locating the technical, scholastic features of the *Jūg Bāsisht* within the intellectual traditions from which they were drawn. Rather than contextualizing the treatise atemporally within abstracted philosophical "schools," as scholarship has often done—as though all of Advaita Vedānta could be reduced to the figure of Śaṅkarācārya (fl. 8th–9th c.) or all of *waḥdat al-wujūd* to Ibn al-ʿArabī (d. 1240)—this study follows the field's current emphasis upon context and historical process, examining the *Jūg Bāsisht* as a text in conversation with the scholarly discussions of its own day. Accordingly, in an effort to map the translation team's particular reception and reimagining of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* in the form of the *Jūg Bāsisht,* I contextualize the treatise within the careers of three further thinkers roughly contemporaneous with the Persian translation: Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (fl. ca. 1600), Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī (d. 1648), and Mīr Findiriskī (d. 1641). These figures, one Hindu and two Muslim, were active during roughly the same time period that the *Jūg Bāsisht* was being composed, and were each uniquely invested in or associated with the early

modern study and interpretation of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha.* Each figure, furthermore, was also a prominent representative of one of the particular schools of Hindu and Islamic philosophy most relevant to the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* and its Persian translation: the Hindu Advaita Vedānta tradition, *waḥdat al-wujūd,* and Islamic Peripatetic philosophy, respectively. Through locating the treatise within the careers of these three thinkers, I aim to trace how dimensions of each figure's oeuvre played a role in the translation team's interpretation and rendition of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* into Persian.

Such an approach will not only permit a fruitful contextualization of the *Jūg Bāsisht* as a creative work of interreligious, cross-philosophical synthesis, but carries the additional benefit of privileging a robust emic reconstruction of the terms of this Hindu-Muslim "dialogue." To state the matter differently, between this treatise and the philosophical traditions that inform it—represented, for the purposes of this study, by Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī, and Mīr Findiriskī—one can encounter not only the internal conceptualizations of "religion" maintained by early modern Hindu and Muslim intellectuals, but also their own methodologies for how multiple such "religions" could be studied comparatively. In order to initiate this excavation of the translation team's own terms, concepts, and methods, let me begin by defining my own central terms and methods.

TERMS OF THE INQUIRY

With the aim of avoiding anachronistic categories, I seek to draw this study's most basic terms, as much as possible, from the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century materials and contexts to be examined here. While this can never be done perfectly, it strikes me, in light of the observations above, as the soundest course with which to proceed, while subsequent scholarship can hopefully correct any deficiencies in my usages. Accordingly, throughout this study, I strive to use the Arabic terms *islām* and *muslim* (Persian *musalmān*) in the senses in which they were used by the primary Arabic- and Persian-writing thinkers explored in this book, including the translator Niẓām al-Dīn Pānīpatī and the Muslim philosophers Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī and Mīr Findiriskī. For these Muslim thinkers, being "Muslim" means to follow in the footsteps of the Prophet Muḥammad, a historical individual who received a revelation or "descent" (*nuzūl, tanzīl*) from God (*allāh*) in the form of a book (*kitāb*)—the Qur'ān—articulating and supported by a body of distinctive and normative teachings and doctrines, rites, laws, ethical formations, etc., to which every Muslim is expected to adhere in some fashion. As we shall see in more detail in subsequent chapters, however, for each of these thinkers, this general notion of "Islam" is not monolithic, accommodating within itself a considerable range of practices, beliefs, and ways of being Muslim that are, furthermore, not incompatible with historical change over time. As such, this notion of Islam needs to be sensitively distinguished from the reified, ahistorical iterations that populate much of nationalist historiography.

Indeed, for the time being, at the outset of this study and pending further nuancing in the chapters to follow, to approximate these three Muslim thinkers' conceptualization of the historical body of doctrines, practices, and ethical cultivations that comprise Islam, we could profitably invoke Talal Asad's well-known idea of Islam as a "discursive tradition." As Asad defines it, a "discursive tradition" is an assemblage of "discourses that seek to instruct practitioners regarding the correct form and purpose of a given practice that, precisely because it is established, has a history . . . an Islamic discursive tradition is simply a tradition that addresses itself to conceptions of an Islamic past and future, with reference to a particular Islamic practice in the present."[42] According to this conceptualization of "Islam," the Islamic tradition would consist of a set of discourses that methodically refer to prior Muslim generations in which doctrine and practice were (according to the discourse-makers in question) instituted properly, that is to say, what Asad identifies as "orthodoxy" and "orthopraxy."[43] This conceptualization does not, however, reduce "tradition" to the static and slavish repetition of prior generations; rather, since the present moment poses ever-new questions, doubts, situations, and challenges, the discursive tradition must, with reference to past practice, respond to these challenges in novel and innovative ways that can nevertheless claim to regulate, stabilize, and secure correct doctrine and practice for present and future Muslim generations. The Islamic discursive tradition thus authorizes what should be called "Islamic" and marginalizes what should not by means of the tradition's own internal standards and criteria of reasoning and disputation—standards and criteria which may themselves, too, be subject to historical adjustment over time.[44]

More in the terms of Pānīpatī, Muḥibb Allāh, and Findiriskī, accordingly, we might say that "Islam" comprises a series of discourses that cut across numerous intellectual disciplines and contexts, including Qur'ānic exegesis (*tafsīr*), the study of the sayings of the Prophet Muḥammad (*ḥadīth*),[45] law (*fiqh*), theology (*kalām*), philosophy (*ḥikmah*), logic (*manṭiq*), Sufism or Islamic "mysticism" (*taṣawwuf*), and other related disciplines. In line with Asad, these discourses do indeed endeavor to discriminate between "true" (*ḥaqq*) and untrue doctrine and practice. Furthermore, each of these Islamic discourses continuously refers to past thinkers within the tradition, but relates itself with especial dedication to certain foundational reference points, not only the Qur'ān and the Prophetic example (*sunnah*), but also to certain watershed figures within a given discipline, such as Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037) in the case of philosophy or Ibn al-ʿArabī in the case of Sufism. If anything needs to be added to Asad's account of the Islamic discursive tradition here, it would only be that, for the three Muslim thinkers under consideration, the Islamic tradition exerts its efforts to ensure present and future Muslims' correct alignment with the Qur'ān, Ibn Sīnā, orthopraxy, etc., not only as an end in itself, but also because this alignment is thought to ensure the possibility of such further goals as salvation (*najāt*) or some variety of knowledge, wisdom, or spiritual realization (*maʿrifah, kashf, taḥqīq,* and so on), deemed to be matters of ultimate import.

I would hasten to add, however—taking a cautionary cue from J.Z. Smith[46]—that this particular formulation of the concept "Islam" is not intended to be universal or generalizable to all contexts and academic inquiries; rather, it is only intended provisionally, in reference to these particular Muslim thinkers and for the purposes of this particular study, as is the case for all the terms to be discussed here.

According to Pānīpatī, Muḥibb Allāh, and Findiriskī, furthermore, the Prophet Muḥammad was not the sole prophet, but, as the Qur'ān itself affirms, only the most recent in a long line of prophets. Hence, the Qur'ān is not the lone "descended book" (*kitāb munazzal*), but the latest in a series of revelations, every human civilization having received at least one book, at some stage of its history, through the tongue of its own corresponding prophet(s). Although, as the Qur'ān insists, these multiple Divine "paths" or "ways" (*sharīʿah, minhāj*) all communicate the same core truth of "divine unity" (*tawḥīd*), they are nevertheless mutually distinguished in language, laws, and other specific characteristics. Furthermore, according to these three Muslim thinkers, as is the case with Islam, flowing forth from every revelation and its attendant prophet is a larger body of legal specifications, doctrines, rites, ethics, customs, etc., that may cumulatively be called a "tradition" (*dīn*) or "path" (*madhhab*)—or, as we may perhaps be willing to say in an English-language context, a "religion."[47] Hence, for these Muslim figures, Islam is only one of many such "religions" that, collectively, span every human society and civilization there has ever been. It is in this specific sense that the generic term "religion" is intended throughout this study.

Indeed, this rough iteration of "religion" also provides a serviceable working concept for the Hindu materials to be examined below. Although the author of the original Sanskrit *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* Gauḍa Abhinanda, never provides a systematic account of what a notion like "religion" or "Hinduism" might mean to him, nor do the two Hindu translators, Jagannātha Miśra and Paṭhān Miśra, these three voices nonetheless plainly affirm an absolute Truth (*brahman*) that can be known to an aspirant by way of a combination of correct doctrine, a ritual method, and the cultivation of certain virtues, at the end of which path lies the ultimate goal of "liberation" (*mokṣa*). The reality of scriptural "revelation" (*śruti*)[48] is likewise affirmed by all three figures in the form of the Vedas, though the Vedas' precise role in the life of the aspirant is not clearly expounded. The other central Hindu figure considered in this study, Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, on the other hand, leaves little space for uncertainty: his vision is one directly conceived on the basis of scriptural "revelation," one of his basic distinctions being the "Vedic" (*vaidika*) as contrasted with that which is "external to the Vedas" (*vedabāhya*). Indeed, if not for how strange it would sound in modern English, my use of the word "Hindu" throughout this book could most often be replaced by the word "Vedic" in Madhusūdana's sense of the term. Madhusūdana additionally conceptualizes what could be considered a robust "discursive tradition" built around the Vedas, wherein eighteen "sciences" (*vidyās*) or disciplines of learning—each

of them investing fundamental authority in the scholars and thinkers of prior generations—support the recitation, ritual performance, and correct interpretation of the Vedas. As with the Muslim thinkers explored in this study, for all of these Hindu thinkers the tradition's maintenance of "orthodox" ritual practice and philosophical truth is not simply an end in itself, but rather, an endeavor whose ultimate aim is knowledge of the ultimately Real (*brahman*) and the attainment of liberation (*mokṣa*) from the bondage of the phenomenal world. One thus encounters in these Sanskrit materials a conceptualization of a Vedic tradition or "religion" to be explored in greater detail in chapter 2, and which coincides with the intended meaning of "Hindu" throughout this study.

Finally, a note on a set of related terms that I have so far been employing without proper definition: "philosophy," "theology," and "wisdom." The early Islamic intellectual tradition maintained a distinction between *falsafah* ("philosophy," later known as *ḥikmah*), on the one hand, and *kalām* ("[dialectical] theology"), on the other, for which one could schematically assert that *falsafah,* drawing its method primarily from the Greek Aristotelian-Neoplatonic tradition, pursued the rational demonstration of philosophical truths without (or, at least, with an aspirational bare-minimum of) reliance on scripture, while *kalām* sought the rational interpretation and clarification of revealed scripture (the Qur'ān) alongside the dialectical defense of conventional Islamic beliefs and creeds. This aspect of the distinction between *falsafah/ḥikmah* and *kalām,* centered upon revelation's role—or lack thereof—within rational argumentation, mirrors what I intend by the more generic terms "philosophy" and "theology." Without intending a stark binary and allowing for considerable overlap, "philosophical" discourses will pursue an inquiry comparatively independent of scripture, aiming (in principle) to persuade any given rational interlocutor, regardless of whether that interlocutor happens to share the author's own scriptural commitments; "theological" discourses, by contrast, will tend to be more immediately oriented around scripture, and will admit scripture as an authoritative resource in the context of argumentation and polemics. The terms "philosophy" and "theology," however, ultimately prove to be more etic than emic, given the trajectory of post-classical Islamic intellectual history, as influential Muslim scholars such as Abū Ḥāmid al-Ghazālī (d. 1111), Fakhr al-Dīn al-Rāzī (d. 1210), and Naṣīr al-Dīn al-Ṭūsī (d. 1274) served to normalize much of the intellectual apparatus and dialectical tools of *falsafah* within mainstream *kalām* traditions and otherwise progressively blurred the line between *falsafah* and *kalām.*[49] As a result, it becomes increasingly difficult to categorize a great many post-classical figures as exclusively "philosophers" or "theologians"; rather, it can at best be affirmed that a given author writes in more of a philosophical mode at one moment, and then in a more theological mode the next. Complicating the scenario even further is the rise of increasingly speculative forms of philosophical Sufism, particularly in the wake of Ibn ʿArabī and Ṣadr al-Dīn al-Qūnawī (d. 1274), who furnished even more profoundly

category-blurring articulations of what could be called "philosophical mysticism" or "mystical theology" (*'irfān*).[50]

The philosophy-theology distinction appears even more thoroughly etic in the case of Hindu Sanskrit intellectual traditions, which boast a wide variety of overlapping terms related to rational inquiry—*śāstra* (scientific or technical knowledge), *darśana* (system or school of thought), *ānvīkṣikī* (logical analysis), *nyāya* (logic, syllogistic argumentation), *vicāra* (dialectical inquiry), *tarka* (suppositional reasoning), etc.—but possess no evident vocabulary that would track with "philosophy" and "theology." Despite this absence of equivalent terms, however, a certain space for "philosophy" and "theology" to make some emic sense is offered by the pan-Sanskritic, *pramāṇa*-based analytical framework which, following the seminal contributions of the likes of the Buddhist thinker Dignāga (d. ca. 540) and the Hindu figure Kumārila Bhaṭṭa (fl. 660), would come to characterize the majority of Sanskrit dialectical practices.[51] This *pramāṇa*-based discourse is a mode of dialectic wherein the "valid means of knowledge" (*pramāṇas*), such as "perception" (*pratyakṣa*) or "inference" (*anumāna*), are explicitly identified, queried, and (ideally) agreed upon by all relevant interlocutors so that the debate can proceed on common, mutually-legible epistemological grounds. Though by no means accepted by all thinkers or schools, another of the standard *pramāṇas* is that of "testimony" (*śabda*), that is, the statements and affirmations of trustworthy people. One of the subdivisions of "testimony" is, of course, "Vedic testimony" (*vaidika śabda*), that is, *scriptural* statements and affirmations: this refers first and foremost to the Vedas, but, depending upon the thinker and context in question, may also include other works such as the *Bhagavad-Gītā,* the *Bhāgavata-Purāṇa,* or various *Sūtras* or *Āgamas,* each of which might be authoritative for only particular delimited groups or sects within the larger Sanskrit universe. Accordingly, within the shared, pan-Sanskritic terms of this *pramāṇa* framework, an author may choose in one context to lean more heavily upon scriptural testimony alongside rational argumentation—presumably for an audience of coinciding scriptural commitments—or else to privilege perception, inference, and other non-scriptural *pramāṇas,* a sensible strategy in the context of debates between opponents of divergent scriptural allegiances (Hindus vs. Buddhists vs. Jains, etc.) or else if a writer simply wished to conduct an inquiry on more "purely rational" grounds for whatever reason. In this study, the former end of this spectrum would correspond with the intended meaning of "theology," while the latter would coincide with "philosophy."

With regard to both the Muslim and Hindu materials considered here, however, one must take care to differentiate this practice of "philosophical argumentation formally independent of scripture" from a kind of Western, Enlightenment-era ideal of "pure reasoning unconstrained by tradition."[52] Quite to the contrary, both Arabo-Persian and Sanskrit philosophical writing embodied the ethos of a "discursive tradition," overwhelmingly proceeding in the exegetical mode of

commentaries, sub-commentaries, super-commentaries, glosses, etc., upon the treatises of prior generations, while the basic concepts, categories, and queries of even non-commentarial works were typically framed in terms dictated by the prior tradition.[53] Nearly every school of Hindu philosophy, for instance, possessed its own canonical source text, typically in an aphoristic (*sūtra*) format mediated through several intervening commentaries, with which any subsequent author would be expected to engage for his own philosophical reflections even centuries or, in some cases, millennia later; watershed works such as Ibn Sīnā's *Shifāʾ* and *Ishārāt* or Ibn ʿArabī's *Fuṣūṣ al-ḥikam* performed a comparable function for Muslim intellectuals. Thus, given this shared exegetical character of both "philosophy" and "theology" in premodern South Asia, the distinction between the two should not be overwrought, as is so often the case in the Euro-American academy today; a single South Asian thinker, or even a single Arabic, Persian, or Sanskrit text, could readily participate in both dialectical modes.

Relatedly, even this "dialectical" character of Arabic, Persian, and Sanskrit philosophy and theology should not be rendered too exclusively: the Muslim and Hindu philosophers examined in this study all crafted sophisticated, highly technical argumentation in numerous compositions, and yet, at the same time, each figure elsewhere affirmed that this same philosophical knowledge could be acquired in non-philosophical ways, for example, through the media of narrative, poetry, or aesthetic experience. Most relevant for our purposes here, the *Jūg Bāsisht* and other Mughal translations regularly occupy this ambiguous middle space, utilizing technical terms, concepts, and resources culled from decidedly philosophical sources, but deploying them in the context of non-dialectical narrative literature and metaphysical exposition. In this study, I indicate this middle space by the term "wisdom" and its adjectival form "sapiential," in reference to a variety of knowing in which philosophical, dialectical discourse, on the one hand, and literary, metaphorical, paradoxical, or otherwise *non*-philosophical expression, on the other, are deemed to be non-contradictory or even complementary in purpose and function. In more emic terms, this notion of "wisdom" overlaps with such Arabo-Persian terms as *ḥikmah* (in its generic, non-technical sense of "wisdom"), *ʿirfān* ("gnosis" or "mystical knowledge," often with philosophical connotations), *kashf* ("unveiling"), and *dhawq* ("tasting"), or else such Sanskrit terms as *jñāna* ("knowledge," again in a generic, non-technical sense), *vijñāna* ("wisdom," "discernment"), and *saṃvid* ("understanding"). Taking my lead from several of these Arabo-Persian and Sanskrit terms that can polysemously refer both to "philosophy" and to "wisdom," I will similarly employ the English term "philosophy" at times in this more general sense of "wisdom," and, at other times, in its more restrictive, technical, dialectical sense, as context should make clear.

Now, this acknowledgment of the pervasively exegetical, tradition-bound character of early modern South Asian philosophy bears important implications for the methodology of this study. In seeking to trace the influence of Hindu and

Islamic philosophical traditions on Mughal translations such as the *Jūg Bāsisht,* it is important to take this feature of dialectical inquiry into account: although South Asian philosophical texts are often far more innovative than they may appear,[54] it is true nevertheless that this commentarial orientation of philosophical practice renders a certain conservative character to the enterprise, defining and delimiting the field of possible innovations that can feasibly occur within a given philosophical work. If one should ask why, for instance, despite centuries of sharing the same soil, Sanskrit philosophical writings never discussed—and, overwhelmingly, never even acknowledged the existence of—Muslim thought, the controls set up by the philosophical "discursive tradition" are a significant part of the explanation: if the tradition has no precedent for such an endeavor, and if no foundational texts within the tradition provide any particular encouragement or even pretext to do so, then, in such an environment, any dramatically new intellectual initiative would find scarcely any space to take root. The prospect of translating Sanskrit wisdom into Persian, however, was precisely the sort of genuinely novel enterprise that would require immense intellectual creativity effectively without precedent, so how could tradition-bound Hindu and Islamic philosophical traditions possibly take part? To answer this question requires a broader view on South Asian intellectual cultures, the figures who participated in them, and how multiple intellectual cultures could simultaneously operate side by side.

SANSKRIT, ARABIC, AND PERSIAN INTELLECTUAL CULTURES IN EARLY MODERN SOUTH ASIA

In the centuries leading up the early modern period, three languages had become distinguished as the primary media for scholastic learning and intellectual inquiry for both South Asian Hindus and Muslims. Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian all flourished in various ways during the period of Mughal Muslim rule in fields ranging from astronomy, mathematics, medicine, and law to poetry, linguistics, theology, logic, philosophy, and mysticism.[55] While, in various regions of South Asia throughout this period, texts continued to be produced in numerous vernacular languages and regional dialects—Telugu, Kannada, Awadhi, Brajbhāṣā, Punjabi, Bengali, and many others—none of these languages could claim an elite and "pan-imperial" status in quite the same way as Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian.[56] These latter three were available only to educated South Asians, and were able to be read and understood by similarly learned figures in every corner of the empire.[57] Modern studies on Mughal intellectual cultures have tended to focus on one or, at most, two of these trans-regional, language-bound discursive traditions, but an account that simultaneously considers all three is nearly unheard of.[58] Accordingly, this study takes preliminary steps to address this lacuna, utilizing the aforementioned Madhsūdana Sarasvatī, Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī, and Mīr Findiriskī as representative case studies for their respective intellectual cultures.

Madhusūdana Sarasvatī stands as the exemplifying case study of Sanskrit intellectual culture at work. A native of Bengal active in the city of Banaras, one of the great centers of Sanskrit learning of the era,[59] Madhusūdana was arguably the most famous and respected representative of the Hindu non-dualist Advaita Vedānta tradition writing within Mughal lands. The Muslim thinker Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī, meanwhile, was one of the preeminent seventeenth-century representatives of the Sufi *waḥdat al-wujūd* tradition, thus representing, for the purposes of this study, a significant slice of South Asian Arabic and Persian intellectual cultures. Mīr Findiriskī, an Iranian native and frequent journeyer to South Asia, similarly ranked among the most renowned Muslim philosophers of his day, composing treatises primarily in the Peripatetic (*mashshā'ī*) tradition of Islamic philosophy, and also the author of a Persian commentary on the *Jūg Bāsisht.* Although he wrote predominantly in Persian, given the deeply interconnected character of Persian and Arabic scholarship historically, Findiriskī can function for this inquiry as an exemplar of both Persian and Arabic intellectual cultures, representing a different slice of those discursive traditions than Muḥibb Allāh. Another significant feature of these three figures is their parallel relationships with the Mughal imperial order: each was recognized as a scholar of the highest caliber by Mughal rulers and nobles, yet none of the three ever became formally attached to the administration, setting foot in the Mughal court merely a handful of times if at all. This means that the majority of Madhusūdana's, Muḥibb Allāh's, and Findiriskī's intellectual energies were directed at scholarly conversations situated squarely within their respective discursive traditions, but able to be largely disambiguated from the complicating motives, agendas, and politics of the Mughal court.

As for the early modern Sanskrit intellectual culture of which Madhusūdana Sarasvatī was both product and participant, it was marked by what Sheldon Pollock has called the "breath-taking degree of continuity in Sanskrit knowledge systems." On account of this continuity, understanding a given figure's contributions within a given Sanskrit discipline, "let alone understanding the motivation behind them," is "impossible without having a grasp of a millennium and a half of writing on the subject."[60] Throughout the early modern period, Sanskrit intellectuals—that is to say, individuals who wrote in Sanskrit or were educated in Sanskrit curricula—had consistent access to an effectively "unbroken" line of conversation with centuries of previous writers in the language, embracing such classical philosophical and theological disciplines as *mīmāṃsā* (Vedic ritual exegesis[61]), *nyāya* (logic), *yoga,* and numerous branches of *vedānta* (Upaniṣad-exegesis), including the *advaita* (non-dualist), *dvaita* (dualist), and *viśiṣṭādvaita* (qualified non-dualist) schools. What this primarily means, for my purposes in this study, is that participation in Sanskritic knowledge systems required a remarkable degree of learning in the authors, texts, issues, technical terms and concepts that had long been standardized in those disciplines, demanding such preoccupation that it should cause little surprise if early modern authors in Sanskrit disciplines refer almost exclusively

to one another, manifesting scarcely any concern or interest in contemporaneous Arabic or Persian intellectual disciplines.[62] Madhusūdana was no exception in this regard, as will be discussed in chapter 2. Though a number of possible reasons will be explored, certainly the sheer enormity, complexity, and robustness of Sanskrit intellectual culture—which meant that no casual student could hope to learn the language easily and functionally—contributed to the near complete absence of any Muslims conversant in Sanskrit in the early modern period.[63]

Indo-Arabic and Indo-Persian intellectual cultures—Muḥibb Allāh's primary intellectual home and, insofar as these discursive networks also extended beyond South Asia, Mīr Findiriskī's as well—exhibited a similar (if less longstanding) continuity across the interrelated disciplines of Qur'ānic exegesis (*tafsīr*), *ḥadīth,* jurisprudence (*fiqh*), *ḥikmah, kalām,* logic (*manṭiq*), Sufism (*taṣawwuf*), and other associated fields.[64] As a language of scholarship, Arabic, in rather the converse scenario from Sanskrit, displayed an "almost absolute Islamic identity" in sixteenth- and seventeenth-century India, the purview of Muslim scholars almost exclusively.[65] Again, much like Sanskrit, the sheer technical complexity and eruditeness of Arabic scholastic traditions was likely one significant deterrent, among others, preventing direct Hindu participation in Arabic intellectual culture.

Persian-language scholarship, on the other hand, in contrast to both Sanskrit and Arabic in this time period, was somewhat more fluid and unpredictable, in large part due to Persian's complex standing vis-à-vis Arabic since nearly the beginning of Islam itself. Certain fields of scientific and practical knowledge, for instance, including mathematics, astronomy, medicine, and ethics, were traditionally pursued in Arabic, the undisputed language of elite learning throughout most of medieval Islamic civilization. In early modern South Asia, however, even though treatises continued to be composed in Arabic, as many if not most scholars in these fields in fact opted for the thitherto unconventional choice of Persian.[66] In certain other fields of "secular" learning, such as history, philology, and lexicography, Persian was the rather clear language of choice over Arabic, though often composed with a comparative interest in Arabic (and/or Sanskrit).[67] In yet another broad field, namely, South Asian works on Sufism, although Persian had long been an option for non-dialectical Sufi works, including poetry, practical guidebooks, and the discourses (*malfūẓāt*) and letters (*maktūbāt*) of Sufi masters,[68] it was only in the Mughal period that Persian became a common option for works of *philosophical* mysticism (*'irfān*), as was the case in Muḥibb Allāh's career.[69] Works of *kalām* and *ḥikmah* (as well as *tafsīr,* Qur'ānic exegesis[70]), similarly, once overwhelmingly composed in Arabic with only occasional Persian exceptions, became increasingly composed, commented upon, and translated into Persian as well. A sort of Persian scholastic "discursive tradition" thus came to the fore in early modern South Asia that was in many respects deeply interpenetrated with Arabic scholarship—and, in this regard, better referred to as a singular "Arabo-Persian" intellectual culture—and yet, in other respects, was comparatively independent of Arabic.

Undoubtedly, recent developments in the Mughal court were closely connected with this rise of Persian intellectual culture. Of particularly far-reaching impact was the third Mughal emperor Akbar's decision, in 1582, to adopt Persian as the official language of the imperial administration: the first two Mughal emperors, Bābur (d. 1530) and Humāyūn (d. 1556), legitimized their rule primarily with reference to their Chaghatāy Central Asian lineage, and thus continued to conduct government affairs in their native Turkic dialect. Akbar, in contrast, notably the first Mughal ruler to be born in South Asia, made much more extensive efforts to fashion the Mughals as a decisively *Indian* empire, while simultaneously pursuing relations with the neighboring Persianate empires around him (particularly Safavid Iran), thus requiring a language that could facilitate the inclusion, involvement, and support of myriad religious and ethnic groups with diverse mother tongues. The Persian language emerged for Akbar as the best linguistic choice for establishing a globally consequential empire in the midst of the overwhelmingly non-Muslim, linguistically heterogeneous population of India.[71] Akbar and his successors amplified this administrative shift to Persian with generous patronage to Persian learning and culture, extended both to Indian intellectuals native to the empire as well as a steady stream of scholars hailing from further lands, including Persia, Central Asia, and the Middle East.[72] Persian's role as a (comparatively) religiously and ethnically "neutral" language of bureaucracy and courtly prestige meant that everyone working within the administration, including large numbers of Hindus, could conduct their affairs in Persian; in many cases, Hindus would excel in the language and proceed to master various literary genres of Persian high culture.[73] An early modern Hindu hence was able to be fully "at home" within Persian intellectual culture, a scholarly space which they shared with Muslims and other religious groups populating Mughal territories.

At least three factors thus converged to furnish early modern Persian intellectual culture with certain key capacities relevantly distinct from Sanskrit and Arabic. In the first place, the Mughal choice of Persian as its administrative language for the purpose of, precisely, integrating the local population into the empire, and its attendant, lavish patronizing of Persian, provided a significant precedent and impetus for Hindus to participate fully and vibrantly in Persian intellectual culture. Second, in comparison with Sanskrit and Arabic's rather inexorable religious identities—Sanskrit being the language of the Veda and Arabic that of the Qur'ān—Persian's relative "religious neutrality," even despite its lengthy prior history within Islamic culture, opened further possibilities for Persian to serve not only as a vehicle for Muslim religious thought but for Hindu thought as well. Lastly, Persian's in many ways still nascent and emerging role as a scholastic, technical language—certainly so in the case of philosophical writing—while still retaining a dynamic role within non-technical literatures afforded it a sort of malleability and flexibility largely unavailable to Sanskrit and Arabic. Whereas the fundamental terms, methods, norms, and animating questions of Sanskrit and Arabic philosophy

had already long since been crystallized and entrenched, philosophy in Persian was not yet so hyper-determined, still able to be remolded and refashioned in ways that could creatively draw from the respective heritages of Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian for the sake of innovative and wholly exploratory endeavors. Accordingly, of the three elite, trans-regional languages of scholarship operative in the Mughal Empire, Persian was, effectively, the only feasible medium for the meeting of Hindu and Muslim sapiential traditions that characterizes works like the *Jūg Bāsisht,* as well as much of the Mughal translation movement more broadly.

And so one can identify three robust, pan-imperial, language-bound intellectual cultures operating simultaneously within sixteenth- and seventeenth-century Mughal South Asia. Indian scholars in this period were carrying on erudite disciplinary conversations in Sanskrit in a manner that, in the great majority of cases, entailed no reference to any other learning in any other language, as was very much the case for Arabic as well; Persian, too, was growing into this sort of role at this time, though with other capacities and qualities peculiar to it. The question then arises as to whether or how these intellectual cultures could interact or influence one another. To date, as described above, scholarship has been ill-equipped to consider such a question: recent works such as Audrey Truschke's *Culture of Encounters* only considers Sanskrit and Persian to the exclusion of Arabic, while Jonardon Ganeri's ambitious *Lost Age of Reason,* an incisive examination of early modern Sanskrit philosophy, is only able to examine Persian philosophical materials comparatively superficially and in translation (and, again, to the exclusion of Arabic).[74] The perceived "religious divide"—wherein Islamic-studies scholars tend to view Sanskrit as a "Hindu language" outside of their field, and Hindu-studies scholars view Arabic and Persian as "Muslim languages" beyond the scope of their own specialty, however problematically—no doubt contributes to this circumstance. Accordingly, a new framework must be derived to analyze these simultaneous, side-by-side activities of Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian intellectual cultures.

To describe the life of these three South Asian languages in terms of "intellectual cultures," in my usage, is to envision *networks* of scholars in debate and conversation with one another, often across wide expanses of time and geographical space. Resort to the idea of "networks" is beneficial, as Bruno Latour suggests, because it helps to avoid reifying or ontologizing the historical processes under examination: rather than projecting "Hinduism" or "Islam" as discrete agents unto themselves with the causal power to shape history according to their will, as nationalist historians tend to do, Latour would instead have us observe the specific connections and linkages between concrete people, places/contexts, and discourses.[75] A prominent trend within current "network theory," however—particularly theories building on the influential "rhizome" model of Deleuze and Guattari—sets out to destabilize the very notion that a network possesses any recognizable structure, organizing form, detectable pattern, or center, a suggestion that would undermine my isolation of "language" or "discourse" as discernible

structural features of Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian intellectual cultures.[76] Caroline Levine's recent intervention, however, cites evidence to the effect that "even apparently chaotic networks depend on surprisingly systematic ordering principles . . . suggest[ing] that we can understand networks as distinct forms—as defined patterns of interconnection and exchange that organize social and aesthetic experience."[77] An issue arises only when scholars seek to isolate a single network as a totality unto itself, which, though analytically "clarifying," fails to understand that "[i]t is the rule, not the exception, to be enmeshed at one and the same time in . . . [multiple] different networks."[78]

Taking and developing this latter cue, this study seeks in turn the "analytical clarity" of examining these three language-bound intellectual cultures in isolation—indeed, at the level of individual figures participating and enmeshed within them—and then the apparent "incoherence" or "messiness" of a site where those intellectual cultures concertedly but unpredictably meet, in this case, the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht.* But what conceptual framework might assist in envisioning how these three intellectual cultures intersect?[79] Prolonging the environmental theme but eschewing the "rhizome" model as too dispersed and unstructured for these particular materials, the far more encompassing analogy of multi-structured "ecologies," as deployed, for instance, by Alexander Beecroft, makes appropriate space for Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian intellectual cultures as an assemblage of networks intersecting and interpenetrating with countless other networks possessed of their own myriad structures, shapes, and forms.[80] Just as scores of different patterns and formations—temperature, precipitation, soil quality, organismal life-cycles, food chains, etc.—simultaneously act and interact to form an irreducibly complex ecosystem, a *civilizational* ecology, similarly, encompasses multifarious formations within itself, traversing the linguistic, political, social, economic, religious, cultural, and technological, etc., realms. Intellectual cultures are just one formation (of various possible types) embedded within this civilizational ecology.

For the purposes of this study, I propose that, among the various structures and systems inhabiting the Mughal "ecosystem," one can envision Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian intellectual cultures in the form of "jet streams." A jet stream—a band of forceful air currents traversing large regions of the globe—possesses a certain, unmistakable structural integrity of its own, though its precise shape, location, force, direction, etc., is influenced by the other environmental systems that surround and interact with it (temperature, atmospheric pressure, weather fronts, cloud cover, and so forth). This formation, I would suggest, captures the character of Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian philosophical cultures rather nicely: the language-bound discussions, debates, and polemics that occur internal to each of these three jet streams possess a certain structural integrity and self-sustaining independence unto themselves—hence the incredible continuity across centuries described above—and yet, concurrent economic, social, political, etc., systems also play roles in shaping the life of each jet stream, influencing who receives patronage, who has

access to education, which cities become centers of which field(s) of learning, etc. The jet stream analogy, I hope, captures the manner in which the integrity of these intellectual cultures is sustained through processes in history, rather than appealing to any ahistorical "essence." Atmospheric jet streams, furthermore, possess considerable internal complexity, with streams routinely splitting into branches and tributaries or even containing currents flowing in the opposite direction from the remainder of the jet stream, all while nevertheless retaining a definite overall direction and orientation (itself subject to more gradual transformations over longer stretches of time). Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian philosophical traditions, analogously, exhibit a great internal diversity of competing schools, sects, and voices vying to out-argue one another, and yet still participating in a shared, discernable "discursive tradition." Additionally, atmospheric jet streams exert a substantial influence over global weather patterns, much as philosophical cultures exert an influence over cultural realms situated well beyond philosophical discourse proper. Most typically, atmospheric jet streams also traverse multiple ecosystems (forests, grasslands, deserts, tundra, etc.) across their considerable extension; the three intellectual cultures in question, similarly, extend well beyond the borders of the Mughal Empire into other regions of South and Southeast Asia, in the case of Sanskrit, and across a vast geographic expanse from North Africa and the Balkans into China and Indonesia, in the case of Arabic and Persian.

Most significant for this study, however, is the atmospheric phenomenon of two jet streams, after meandering into close proximity, proceeding to interact and combine with one another, intermixing wind currents despite otherwise retaining their separate structures over the remainder of the two formations. In this respect, the analogy can provide an useful framework for conceptualizing interactions between Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian intellectual cultures, with small currents or even "wisps" of one philosophical jet stream interacting with another and then, potentially, taking on a new life within the newly formed discursive environment.[81] Despite the novel intellectual phenomena that often result from such unexpected moments of cross-philosophical encounter, however, it is important to note that the larger Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian jet streams do not lose their overall, effectively independent structural integrity in the process; quite to the contrary, the three substantial discursive traditions continue to march on largely unaltered, though with a few nascent, innovative philosophical possibilities now sprinkled into the mix. With this framework in mind, accordingly, this study must first trace the contours of the Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian jet streams in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries through the lens of three leading intellectuals' participation in and contribution to their respective jet streams: Madhusūdana Sarasvatī, Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī, and Mīr Findiriskī. Having reconstructed these relevant slices of each jet stream, the stage will be set to illustrate how, through the intellectual efforts of the Hindu and Muslim translators Jagannātha Miśra, Paṭhān Miśra,

and Pānīpatī, elements or "wisps" from each jet stream coalesced in the translation team's interpretation and rendition of the Sanskrit *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* as the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht*. This approach to the study of the *Jūg Bāsisht* will thus furnish not only a case study of the interactions between Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian intellectual cultures, but also an exemplifying glimpse of the complex ways that early modern Hindu and Muslim intellectuals co-existed, interacted, and comprehended one another's religious and philosophical traditions.

Regarding the first stage of this study—the reconstruction of the thought of Madhusūdana, Muḥibb Allāh, and Findiriskī as contextualized within their respective intellectual cultures—my approach is perhaps most indebted to the intellectual historian Quentin Skinner,[82] though adapted to the unique challenges posed by the South Asian archive. As Ganeri has observed, while Skinner's "fundamental object of analysis" is, above all, "text in context"—and the attendant recovery of the illocutionary force of the text in light of its context—premodern Indian resources offer decidedly more material on the side of "text," and, often, next to nothing on the side of "context."[83] This is particularly true in the case of Sanskrit authors, for whom we typically possess virtually no reliable biographical records (nor even a decisive estimation of where or when they lived!); contextual information is often rather limited, similarly, in the case of South Asian Arabic- and Persian-writing figures, especially those who conducted their main activities outside of the imperial courts. This means that the "superabundance" of available texts must be mined as thoroughly as possible for the sake of reconstructing context; indeed, the texts themselves must perform a dual function, standing as the primary object of analysis ("text") while also serving as the primary means for situating themselves ("context").[84] A central goal of the coming chapters, accordingly, is to establish Madhusūdana, Muḥibb Allāh, and Findiriskī's respective intellectual contexts, pursuing which textual traditions or philosophical schools each figure drew from or echoed, against whom each debated, what sort of intellectual "intervention" each sought to enact, etc. Although I attempt, to the extent possible, to plumb any available resources external to the three authors' and their interlocutors' writings, given the nature of the archive, this study has little choice but to lean towards what has been called an "internalist" trajectory of intellectual history.[85] Accordingly, for each of the three thinkers in turn, extant biographical data and a robust-as-possible reconstruction of their sociopolitical contexts will be brought to bear on an examination of their particular compositions, the close reading of which will allow a mapping of the disciplinary conversations and intellectual networks in which each of three scholars participated.

Having laid out Madhusūdana, Muḥibb Allāh, and Findiriskī's respective intellectual networks and contributions to philosophical discourse, the next task will be to trace the "wisps" from each network/discourse that converge within the text of the *Jūg Bāsisht*. Although Skinner remains the overall model here, the even more

gaping lack of a recoverable context for the translation team's endeavors demands a somewhat more nimble approach. In addition to the acute paucity of even basic biographical information on Jagannātha Miśra, Paṭhān Miśra, or Pānīpatī, the internal text of the *Jūg Bāsisht* itself also lacks any genre, set of interlocutors, clearly defined audience (other than "cultured Persian-readers"), or other formal features that might help to specify it. Aside from the general environment of the Mughal court itself, seemingly the best context one can hope to provide is an intertextual one, achieved through tracing features of the *Jūg Bāsisht* that have been borrowed from other, more standard works and genres and then reimagined for the purposes of Sanskrit-to-Persian translation. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the result of the translation team's efforts is a creative, unpredictable, and, at times, internally inconsistent Persian treatise, for which reason Skinner—whose method might tend to present too unified and univocal a text with internal tensions and contradictions ironed out—must be supplemented by the likes of a Dominic LaCapra, a consistent champion of the unceasing complexity and indeterminacy of historical works in ways that go far beyond the scholar's capacity to "objectively" reconstruct.[86] Situated somewhere betwixt and between these two historical-methodological poles, I will attempt to use Madhusūdana, Muḥibb Allāh, and Findiriskī—and the philosophical discursive traditions they represent—to render a plausible reconstruction of the *Jūg Bāsisht* translation team's creative Hindu-Muslim intellectual synthesis.

CHAPTER OUTLINE

The common thread that anchors this study is an examination of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* and its early modern interpretations, centered upon the Persian translation of the text, the *Jūg Bāsisht.* Chapter 1 provides an introductory overview of the original Sanskrit *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* and the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht.* Chapters 2, 3, and 4 investigate the careers and contributions of the three early modern interpreters of this treatise who are relevant to this study: the Hindu philosopher Madhusūdana Sarasvatī and the Muslim thinkers Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī and Mīr Findiriskī, all of whom still largely await in-depth treatment in modern scholarship. The cumulative ground covered by these chapters, in turn, enables a sustained and contextualized examination, in chapter 5, of the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht,* both as an act of translation and as a venue for the confluence of Hindu and Muslim thought.

Chapter 1 introduces readers to the contexts and content of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* a Sanskrit treatise comprising a series of philosophical narratives and articulating a brand of esoteric knowledge meant to liberate an aspirant from the phenomenal world, but who nevertheless continues to live a life within the world. Over the course of the early modern period, the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* had become increasingly popular throughout South Asia across a surprising array of Hindu sectarian and linguistic boundaries. The Mughal court was no exception to this

trend, patronizing multiple translations of the treatise. The Persian *Jūg Bāsisht* was the earliest of these translations to be composed, commissioned by the soon-to-be Mughal emperor Jahāngīr (r. 1605–27) and completed by Jagannātha Miśra, Paṭhān Miśra, and Pānīpatī in 1597. Having reviewed this historical context, the chapter then turns to the Sanskrit source text's metaphysics. Known for articulating a unique variety of Indian non-dualism (distinct from the more famous Advaita Vedānta tradition and owing much to the Kashmiri Śaiva milieu), the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* presents a dynamic divine Reality that is in some respects identical with the phenomenal universe that it manifests, and in other respects totally other than that universe. This metaphysical framework furnishes the underlying basis for the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*'s pointedly ecumenical approach to religious boundaries, affirming that the various Hindu and Buddhist schools and sects are all actually describing one and the same Reality, even if they disagree with each other over how to designate it. Such pluralistic notions may well be a part of what drew Muslim interest to this treatise in the first place.

Chapter 2 turns to the life and thought of the influential Hindu philosopher Madhusūdana Sarasvatī (fl. ca. 1600). As perhaps the most famous representative in his era of the Hindu Advaita Vedānta tradition—recognized even by the Mughal court as one of the "most learned men of [Emperor] Akbar's time"—Madhusūdana critically engaged a large swath of the Sanskrit intellectual tradition across his various treatises. In the process, he arguably delineated a more sharply demarcated and unified vision of the Hindu/"Vedic" tradition, as distinguished from the "non-Vedic," than had perhaps ever before been articulated; and yet, Madhusūdana's writings hardly acknowledge the existence of Muslims, much less engage Islamic thought in any meaningful way. At the same time, Madhusūdana actively undertook the interpretation of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* in several of his works, penning pointed exegeses of this treatise on the topics of yogic practice, metaphysics, and the relationship between the individual soul (*jīva*) and divine Reality. This chapter begins to explore how, despite an exclusive interest in Sanskrit thought and the absence of any mention of Islam in his writings, Madhusūdana's philosophical contributions nevertheless found their way into the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht*, as the translation team resorted to and incorporated Madhusūdana's exegeses of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* into their Persian translation. Of particular interest, apparently, was Madhusūdana's exegesis of a multi-part metaphysical query posed by the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha:* is the phenomenal world the product of a creator who is external to our individual souls (*sṛṣṭi-dṛṣṭi-vāda*), or the product of our own individual perceptions and ignorance (*dṛṣṭi-sṛṣṭi-vāda*)? If the latter, then can those individual souls remain genuinely many, or must they somehow be essentially a single soul (*eka-jīva-vāda*)?

Chapter 3 takes up the Muslim Chishtī Sufi thinker Muḥibb Allāh Ilāhābādī (d. 1648). Muḥibb Allāh was one of the foremost authorities of his day in the

tradition of philosophical Sufism known as *waḥdat al-wujūd* ("unity of being"), achieving renown to the extent that the Mughal emperor Shāh Jahān and Prince Dārā Shikōh repeatedly sought his attendance at the imperial court. Although likely not a direct influence upon the translation team, Muḥibb Allāh's formulations of Sufi metaphysics, I argue, are nevertheless representative of the particular Islamic discourses most central to the *Jūg Bāsisht,* coinciding with the primary Islamic vocabulary to which the translation team would resort in order to render the Sanskrit *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* into Persian. Accordingly, this chapter surveys a number of Muḥibb Allāh's major writings, focusing in particular on his extended reflections on the phenomenon of religious diversity across the myriad societies and civilizations of humankind. Muḥibb Allāh's framework for conceptualizing religious diversity, I suggest, became the principal overall lens through which the translation team would interpret and categorize the "Indian religion" represented by the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha,* a thread to be further teased out in chapter 5.

Chapter 4 turns to the Iranian Muslim philosopher Mīr Findiriskī (d. 1641). Findiriskī enjoyed considerable renown in the neighboring Safavid Empire, earning a reputation, even among the Safavid emperors, as a leading expert in the Avicennan tradition of Islamic Peripatetic (*mashshā'ī*) philosophy. Apart from this success in his native Iranian homeland, however, Findiriskī also undertook several extended journeys into Mughal South Asia, where he came to know of the *Jūg Bāsisht* and, ultimately, composed his own Persian commentary upon it. In this commentary, Findiriskī makes manifold comparisons between Hindu thought and Islamic Peripatetic philosophy, drawing equivalences between such central Sanskrit notions as "consciousness" (*cit*) and "mind" (*manas*), on the one hand, and the Islamic "intellect" (*'aql*) and "soul" (*nafs*), on the other. Findiriskī thus helps to illuminate how "wisps" of another robust current of Arabo-Persian Islamic intellectual culture would provide an additional formative layer of the *Jūg Bāsisht.* Additionally, the chapter also explores Findiriskī's fascinating decision to engage and encounter Hindu thought through the medium of poetry and "imagination" (*khayāl*), despite a career otherwise largely focused on philosophical dialectics.

With the pieces provided by these preceding chapters in place, chapter 5 returns to the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht,* which may now be more effectively contextualized and analyzed as a translational act. Setting specific passages of the original Sanskrit *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha* alongside the Persian *Jūg Bāsisht,* these chapters illustrate how the translation team drew upon these various "wisps" of the Sanskrit, Arabic, and Persian intellectual cultures examined in chapters 2, 3, and 4: Madhusūdana provides a Hindu metaphysical foundation, alongside his specific interpretations of the *Laghu-Yoga-Vāsiṣṭha*; Muḥibb Allāh instantiates the corresponding Islamic metaphysics most central to the *Jūg Bāsisht,* as well as an Islamic framework for conceptualizing religious diversity; Findiriskī, in his own turn, highlights the *Jūg Bāsisht*'s Peripatetic layers, while affirming the equivalences drawn by the translation

team between Hindu and Muslim philosophical concepts. Through these means, these chapters retrace the creative deployment of these various intellectual resources effected by the translation team, who made inventive use of these scholarly tools, with every technical Sanskrit term that they encountered, in search of a vocabulary with which to render Hindu Sanskrit thought within the language of Arabo-Persian Islamic philosophy. This chapter additionally reconstructs the approach and implicit theory of translation deployed by the *Jūg Bāsisht*'s translation team, who thus succeeded, I argue, in bringing the Hindu and Islamic intellectual traditions into a sort of synthetic "dialogue" with one another.

The conclusion, finally, reflects on what we might learn today, both within South Asia and without, from this historical case study in dialogic translation. I consider in particular what these early modern South Asian materials might contribute to contemporary academic discussions on translation theory, cross-cultural dialogue, and the academic study of religion.