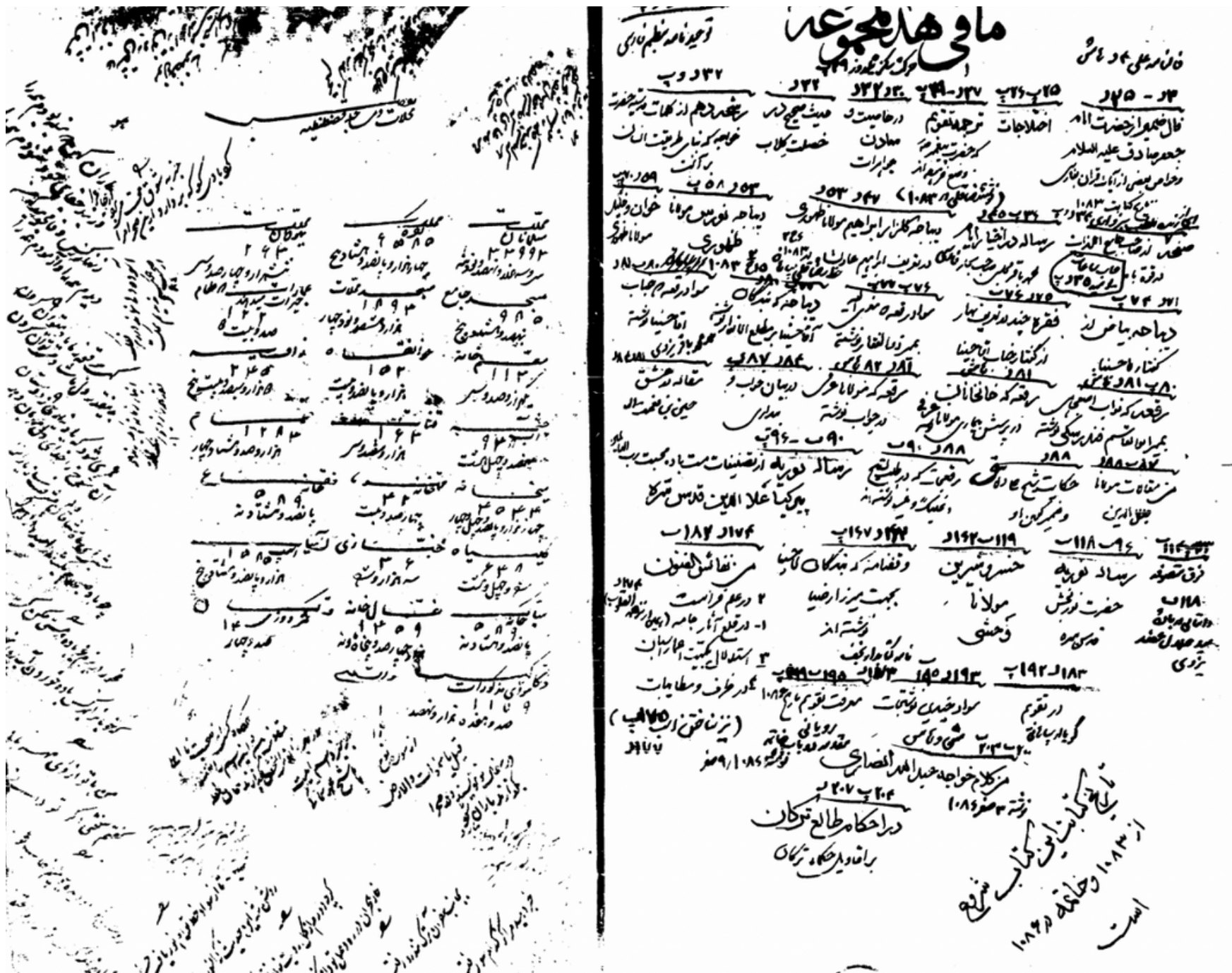


Archival Practices Beyond the State: Microhistories of Households in Early Modern Isfahan

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3-5PM

Graduate Seminar
Girvetz 2320

KATHRYN BABAYAN
Near Eastern Studies,
University of Michigan



Kathryn Babayan specializes in the social and cultural history of the early-modern Persianate world, gender studies, and the history of sexuality. She is the author of two award winning books, *Mystics, Monarchs and Messiahs: Cultural Landscapes of Early Modern Iran* (Cambridge M.A.: Harvard University Press, 2003), and *The City as Anthology: Eroticism & Urbanity in Early Modern Isfahan* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2021).

In recent scholarship, family archives in the form of a manuscript have been posited as sites for more broadly rethinking archives in the pre-modern Islamicate world. In the context of Isfahan, household anthologies provide a particularly rich ground for theorizing and reassessing pre-modern archival mechanisms and spaces. The anthology referred to in Persian as the *majmu'a* (from the Arabic root j.m.), literally “gathered together,” was a codex which assembled professional and urban texts. Generated and then collected and assembled in the interior spaces of the house, such anthologies were also objects fashioned with the precise purpose of traversing the spaces between households—as letters, paintings, and gifts, bringing the city and its many forms of urbane dialogue into focus.

Multiple practices of collecting, copying, and authoring anthologies are preserved in the thousands of *majmu'a* produced in seventeenth century Isfahan. We will focus on two family archives, microhistories of two households, one religious (Khwansari) and the other bureaucratic (Urdubadi). Although Safavi “state” archives have not survived the trials of time, these archives provide us important clues as to what knowledge circulated in the city and what would have been included in notarial and imperial archives

This event is organized by the King Abdul Aziz Ibn Saud Chair in Islamic Studies, with CMES.