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Significance of this Presentation on Pakistan Studies

This presentation, “Kashmir Studies, Whither or Bloom?” on the Round Table panel, “Kashmir Pre-47,” situated the current state of academic studies of Kashmir, whether scholars from different fields and disciplines whose work focus on Kashmir pre-47 could establish and engage in a long-term collaborative, interdisciplinary project (overcoming the relative isolation or siloing of such work), and what problems, issues, questions, and potential such a project may hold. This presentation contributes significantly to Pakistan Studies as it simultaneously engages Pakistan and examines the salience of Pakistan, per se, in an interdisciplinary and diachronic project that focuses upon a contested region(s) currently partially administered by Pakistan yet during periods in the past preceding the establishment of Pakistan as a separate nation-state. Thus, it brings into focus how contemporary claims and politics in and about Pakistan play a pertinent role in how we [should] approach studies of a time prior to the official emergence of “Pakistan” regarding a territory and people that Pakistan claims as its own. It is my firm position that Pakistan Studies should not focus entirely upon the territories currently held by the Pakistani nation-state after the formal establishment of Pakistan as a nation-state, as integral to every society, culture, and state are claims regarding a deeper past as well as its relation to others. Thus, in addition to the question of the possibility of a potential long-term collaborative project on the study of Kashmir, this presentation brings a secondary question regarding how taking Pakistan and Pakistan Studies into serious consideration may impact such a study as well as how such a study may impact Pakistan and Pakistan Studies as a result.