



ASSOCIATION FOR IRANIAN STUDIES

انجمن ایران پژوهی

<http://associationforiranianstudies.org>

AIS Newsletter | Volume 39, Number 2 | November 2018



PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

Ladies and Gentlemen, dear Colleagues,

It has been a great honor to be the President of the Association for Iranian Studies in one of the most challenging times of our organization. I do know that we must stay away from taking sides and not insert our views on what is going on today in the world of politics. However, I would like to share with you what we as an organization have faced in the past year. Our 2018 biennial conference was planned two years ago when we were in Vienna, but we were not sure how badly we would be treated as a result of the current American government's sanctions and travel ban.

But first some good news to report. In the 2018 conference, a total of 356 speakers presented in 86 Panels and 3 Special Sessions. 4 documentaries were shown with some of the film makers present. The total attendance was more than 500 participants, representing 26 countries on five continents. There were some 22 publishers present at the conference. Since there is a large Iranian population in Southern California, we had hundreds of visitors who came to learn about the Iranian world, which made it one of the largest conferences in the association's history. We have also increased our membership with this conference, both among academics and the educated public interested in Iranian Studies. We are indebted to the Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute, the Farhang Foundation, ILEX Foundation, Farzaneh Family Foundation, and ROXCEL Group, and for their support of the 2018 AIS Conference.

I have had the support of a number of people who have made this conference possible, namely Rivanne Sandler who is our Treasurer and Executive Director; Camron Michael Amin who put the conference panels together; Hamoun Hayati who took care of our website and much more. Kourosh Beigpour designed our posters and the conference booklet. Finally, Mateo Farzaneh who took on the enormous task of organizing the conference as its chair. I thank them for their dedication and effort. Our volunteers, from Los Angeles and Orange County, as well as students at the UCI Jordan Center for Persian Studies stepped in and helped out.

Lastly, I would like to thank Mr. Saeid Jalalipour, the Jordan Center for Persian Studies Program Manager, who spent many hours on the weekends and late nights to make sure everything has been prepared for the conference.

Please note that the Association's web address has changed to
<http://associationforiranianstudies.org/>
Please update your bookmarks.

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE
2018

TOURAJ DARYAEE
PRESIDENT
UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE

ALI GHEISSARI
JOURNAL EDITOR
UNIVERSITY OF SAN DIEGO

RIVANNE SANDLER
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR & TREASURER
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

CAMRON MICHAEL AMIN
PRESIDENT-ELECT
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN-DEARBORN

TOURAJ ATABAKI
PAST-PRESIDENT
INTERNAT'L INST. SOCIAL HISTORY, AMSTERDAM

COUNCIL 2018

TOURAJ DARYAEE
ALI GHEISSARI
RIVANNE SANDLER
TOURAJ ATABAKI
CAMRON MICHAEL AMIN
JAMES GUSTAFSON
MARYAM MOAZZEN
NAGHMEH SOHRABI
FARZIN VEJDANI
MARYAM N. SABBAGHI
BEETA BAGHOOLIZADEH
ARNOLD ALAHVERDIAN

FOR PAST COUNCILS AND
BOARDS, PLEASE VISIT:

HTTP://ASSOCIATIONFORIRANIANSTUDIES.ORG/
ABOUT/OFFICERS/2017

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS CONT'D

I am also thankful to UC Irvine, specifically the Dean of School of Humanities, Tyrus Miller and its administration who shielded our organization and supported organizing the conference with almost no cost to our association.

Having said this, it must be known that we as an organization have been pushed to the brink of disaster by the actions of the US government, sometimes directly and sometimes indirectly. Our bank account in the US has been closed and no bank in this country has been willing to open an account for us. There are no direct answers as to why they are not allowing us to have an account in the United States. Our methods of payment have been blocked in the US. This includes Stripe which has returned the money we were owed by the vendors and the publishers or individuals, without any explanation. It is only our bank in Canada, RBC, which allows us to operate as an organization.

The US Government has refused visas to most of our presenters from Iran, as well as from Armenia and India. I personally wrote for everyone who asked for a letter of support, but almost none were given visas. I am very disappointed that our distinguished Professor Garnik Asatryan was not able to be with us. Despite two letters and e-mails in his support, the US embassy in Armenia simply did not respond to his application request. Graduate students in Canada were denied visas; professors in Europe, including for example from Marburg University were denied visas to present papers at the AIS Conference in Irvine. Most of our colleagues and wonderful artists from Iran were denied visas without grounds.

However, I think that it is indeed in these difficult times that we should make a case for the study of Iranian Civilization in its largest sense, from Badakhshan and Pamir to Iraq and the Caucasus, so that we are not pigeonholed and made into cartoon characters by the media and the governments. I am happy to write to you that indeed the 2018 AIS Conference was a great success, but also that we have had our message heard by the local and international media, such as BBC Persian, Voice of America, National Public Radio and others.

Lastly, I am thrilled to announce that the AIS 2020 Conference will take place in Salamanca, Spain. I would like to thank Professor Miguel Ángel Andrés-Toledo at the University of Salamanca for agreeing to host us.

We will still be facing challenging times, but with your support the Association for Iranian Studies will continue to grow and exist, not only in the US but as an international organization which studies Iranian civilization in its largest sense. That is our mission and no entity or government can stop us from continuing our research and work as academics and scholars.

Touraj Daryaei, President of AIS

MEMBER NEWS

Abbas Aghdassi has published the textbook *Persian Academic Reading*, Routledge, 2018. For a 20% discount, please enter code FLR40 at the [checkout](#).

Juan Cole has authored the monograph *Muhammad: Prophet of Peace amid the Clash of Empires*, Nation Books, 2018.

Devin DeWeese and **Jo-Ann Gross** have published the edited volume *Sufism in Central Asia: New Perspectives on Sufi Traditions, 15th-21st Centuries*, Brill, 2018.

Willem Floor has published three new books: *Khark: The Island's Untold Story*. Washington D.C.: MAGE, 2017; *Salar al-Dowleh. A Delusional Prince & Wannabe Shah*. Washington, D.C.: MAGE, 2018; and *Studies in the Medical History of Iran*. Washington, D.C.: MAGE, 2018. Further, he has translated from Latin and annotated (with Colette Ouahes): Engelbert Kaempfer. *Exotic Attractions in Persia, 1684-1688. Travels & Observations*, D.C.: MAGE, 2018; and published two chapters in *Crisis, Collapse, Militarism & Civil War: The History & Historiography of 18th Century Iran*. ed. Michael Axworthy, Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2018: "The Iranian Economy in the Eighteenth Century: A Dismal Record," pp. 125-50; and "Tribal resurgence in the eighteenth century, a useful label?" pp. 151-62.

Erika Friedl and **Mary Elaine Hegland** co-edited a special issue of *Anthropology of the Middle East* about "Popular Religious Practices and Perceptions," (Spring 2018, 13:1), with contributions by Erol Saglam, Elene Gavashelishvili, Aidarbek Sulaimankulovich Kochkunov, Erika Friedl and Reinhold Loeffler, William O. Beeman, Ashraf Zahedi, and Ellen Vuosalo-Tavakoli, Mahmoud Ghasempouri and Younes Yaghobzadeh. Mary Elaine Hegland also published a review essay in the same issue, titled "Popular Religious Practices and Perceptions in Some Shi'i Muslim Communities: Women's Voices Rising".

Maral Karimi has published the monograph *The Iranian Green Movement of 2009: Reverberating Echoes of Resistance*, Lexington Books, 2018. For a 30% discount, please use code LEX30AUTH18 at the [checkout](#).

Homa Katouzian has authored the book *Khalil Maleki: The Human Face of Iranian Socialism*, London: Oneworld, 2018.

MEMBER NEWS CONT'D

Rudi Matthee has contributed the chapter “Historiographical Notes on the Eighteenth Century in Iranian History: Chaos and Decline, Imperial Dreams, or Regional Specificity?,” to Michael Axworthy’s edited volume, *Crisis, Collapse, Militarism and Civil War: The History and Historiography of 18th-Century Iran*, Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 21-42. He has also published the chapter “The Dutch East India Company and Asian Raw Silk: From Iran to Bengal via China and Vietnam,” in Dagmar Schäfer, Giorgio Riello, Luca Molà, eds., *Threads of Global Desire: Silk in the Pre-Modern Period* (Martlesham, Suffolk: Boydell Press), pp. 75-101; and “Zar-o Zur: Gold and Force: Safavid Iran as a Tributary Empire,” in Uyama Tomohiko, ed., *Comparing Modern Empires: Imperial Rule and Decolonization in the Changing World Order* (Sapporo: Slavic Eurasian Research Center), pp. 35-64.

Jalil Nozari has published a book on the author of *Rustam ut-Tawarikh* with Miras Maktoob Research Center, 2017. After many years of research, Nozari has identified the true author of *Rustam ut-Tawarikh* as Reza Qoli Khan Hedayat who masked himself behind the fictitious name of Mohammad Hashem Assef Rustam ol-Hokama (please also see the brief research note on the topic later in this newsletter).

Anousha Sedighi and **Pouneh Shabani-Jadidi** have jointly edited the *Oxford Handbook of Persian Linguistics*, Oxford University Press, 2018. (Please also see the brief outline of the book later in this newsletter).

Ali Shabani has authored *The Thousand Families: Commentary on Leading Political Figures of Nineteenth Century Iran*, with annotations and explanations by **Patricia J. Higgins** and **Pouneh Shabani-Jadidi**, Peter Lang, 2018.

Ali Mohammad Tarafdari has published the monograph *Nationalism, Historiography, and Formation the National Identity in Iran*, Tehran: AmirKabir Publication, 2018; and “Approaches of European Orientalists in Archeological Excavations in Iran during Qajar Era”, *Journal of Historical Studies* (University of Isfahan), No. 38, summer 2018.



ملی گرایی، تاریخ نگاری و شکل گیری
هویت ملی نوین در ایران

دکتر علی محمد طرفداری



OBITUARY

Eulogy for Dr. Ehsan Yarshater (1920-2018)

Delivered by Prof. Rudi Matthee on September 12, 2018, New York City

Dear members of the Yarshater family; dear friends and colleagues, Speaking for myself as well as in my capacity as President of the Persian Heritage Foundation, let me first express my deeply felt sorrow about the loss of Dr. Yarshater and extend my sincere condolences to the members of the family assembled here, especially to Mozhdeh Yarshater and her husband, Tony.

We are mourning the passing of a great man.

We are also here to memorialize and celebrate the life of a great man, the long, rich and rewarding life of a remarkable individual who dedicated his life to scholarship and research, and who put his passionate and unrelenting quest for knowledge and insight in the service of a higher ideal.

The higher ideal was Iran, its history, its cultural patrimony, its language and, ultimately, its people, all of which he loved and really inhabited and incarnated. Dr. Yarshater represented the best Iran has to offer. He stood for the Iran of openness, of tolerance, of the acknowledgement and exploration of diversity, of cultural capaciousness; the Iran, in sum, of universal values and humanism as expressed by its literati, luminaries such as Sa’di, Jalal al-Din Rumi, and Hafez. He represented the adage of Zoroastrianism: pendar-e nik, goftar-e nik, kerdar-e nik, good thoughts, good words, good deeds.

Dr. Yarshater was not obviously political, something that has been held against him. His values went far beyond the political. Indeed, he had to be non-political in order to represent and serve Iran and its people, in a way that reminds one of another great Iranian who left us a few years ago, Dr. Iraj Afshar. What Dr. Yarshater and Dr. Afshar stood for goes far beyond the Iran of the Shah and his monarchy and the Iran of the Islamic Republic. Like Dr. Afshar, Dr. Yarshater was only non-political in a superficial way. Yet in a broader, more fundamental way, he was very political, embodying and defending transparency, curiosity, the value of critical thinking and open-ended debate. This stance allowed him to be unencumbered, free to pursue a higher goal, the exploration of ma ‘naviyat, the lofty realm of meaning.

Dr. Yarshater was a man of remarkable academic accomplishment. In his scholarship—the many groundbreaking books and articles he wrote on language and literature—he connected ancient, pre-Islamic Iran to the country’s Islamic period, seeing unity in diversity, continuity amid disruption, in the course of a turbulent history spanning millennia. In addition, he edited and oversaw the editing of an astonishing array of scholarly series such as the 40-volume Tabari Translation Project; the History of Beyhaqi; the ongoing History of Persian Literature, of which six volumes have come out to date; the Persian Text Series, the Persian Heritage Series, the Persian Studies Series, among others.

OBITUARY CONT'D

Dr. Yarshater was not an easy person. For one, he was a challenging boss. His work ethic and his frugality were legendary, becoming the stuff of many tales. I remember how, about ten years ago, he came to Virginia on the train from New York to attend a ceremony in honor of my father-in-law, the late Nosrat Allah Amini, who was a long-time friend of his. Asked why he had taken the train, he pointed out that the train allowed him to work. Instead of staying overnight, he also insisted on returning the same day, so he could go back to his office to do some more work.

The long hours, the discipline, and the parsimoniousness had a purpose. And it wasn't self-aggrandizement and least of all self-enrichment. Dr. Yarshater was a leader. As all good leaders he demanded a lot from those who worked for him. But as all exceptional leaders, he demanded even more of himself, working twelve-hour days, rarely taking time off from his labors. It was all in the service of a higher goal—his scholarship.

The goal was lofty, but no cause, however elevated, can be achieved without material means. Dr. Yarshater proved to be astute here as well. His breath of vision extended well beyond scholarship. He proved to be a great scholar as well as a great entrepreneur. He invested wisely and traveled around the world and organized galas to solicit money from donors and benefactors. Here, too, the goal was not personal gain but service to the cause, to plumb the depths of Iranian civilization in order to make the results available to humankind.

Central to his concerns and crucial to his legacy is the Encyclopedia Iranica, a monumental work of scholarship, the beating heart of Iran-studies for being the ultimate reference work of a whole civilization, encompassing not just Iran the country, but the entire Persianate world, from the Balkans to Bengal, including the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent. Unique in its conception as the sum total of all knowledge about the Iranian universe, the Encyclopedia was his brainchild and his crowning achievement; he founded it more than forty years ago and shepherded it along with total devotion and dedication until the end of his life.

As President of the Persian Heritage Foundation I am very proud that we—the board of PHF—have been able to secure Dr. Yarshater's legacy and fulfill his dearest final wish by endowing the Yarshater Center of Iranian Studies at Columbia University last month. The Encyclopedia Iranica, Dr. Yarshater's pride and joy, will naturally be at the core of this enterprise, firmly embedded at Columbia University, where it has been since its inception, and where it should stay and continue to flourish indefinitely. My colleagues and I, Ali Gheissari, Elton Daniel, Joe Cooper, and Mozhdeh Yarshater, as well as the unsung heroes who labor every day to edit the Encyclopedia, the likes of Mohsen Ashtiyani, Manouchehr Kasheff, Mahnaz Moazami and, until recently, Ahmad Ashraf, very much regret that Dr. Yarshater will not be able to attend the ceremonial opening of the Center on October 25th. Yet we console ourselves with the thought that knowing that his legacy would not be squandered after his departure must have made preparing for the end to his terrestrial existence quite a bit easier.

I would like to end this brief eulogy by reading a poem from the hand of an unknown late 16th-century poet.

روز مرگم هر که شیون کند از دور و برم دور کنید
همه را مست و خراب از می انگور کنید
مزد غسل مرا سیر شرابش بدهید
مست مست از همه جا حال خرابش کنید
بر مزارم مگذارید بیاید واعظ
پیر میخانه بخواند غزلی از حافظ
جای تلقین به بالای سرم دف بزنید
شاهدی رقص کند جمله شما کف بزنید
روز مرگم وسط سینه من چاک زنید
اندرون دل من یک قلمه تاک زنید
روی قبرم بنویسید وفادار برفت
آن جگر سوخته خسته از این دار برفت



Photo credit: Fariba Amini



EHSAN YARSHATER CENTER

Columbia University Ehsan Yarshater Center for Iranian Studies

Columbia University has received a *\$10 million gift* from the Persian Heritage Foundation to endow the *Ehsan Yarshater Center for Iranian Studies*. Formerly known as the Center for Iranian Studies, the Center will be renamed to recognize Professor Yarshater, the founding director of the Center whose legacy and dedication to the study of Persian history and culture were exceptional.

This gift will enable the Yarshater Center to significantly advance the field through scholarly publications, including the *Encyclopædia Iranica*, A History of Persian Literature series, a Persian art series, and a Persian text series.

“In a career that has spanned seven decades, Ehsan Yarshater has distinguished himself as a pioneering and brilliant scholar of Persian culture, history, and literature,” said Columbia University Provost John H. Coatsworth. “This gift is a fitting tribute to his critical work and will support publications that are essential to the future of this vibrant area of study.”

A member of the Columbia faculty for more than 40 years, Professor Yarshater set the standard for generations of scholars as the first full-time professor of Persian Studies at an American university since World War II. He also served as the general editor of a 40-volume translation of al-Tabari’s 10th-century history of the world and the founding editor of the *Encyclopædia Iranica*.

The *Encyclopædia Iranica* is a scholarly, groundbreaking, and comprehensive research tool authored by multiple scholars. It is dedicated to the broad and inclusive study of Iranian civilization in the Middle East, the Caucasus, Central Asia, and the Indian subcontinent and the history of Persian literature, offering a comprehensive and detailed history of its subject.

According to Professor Yarshater, “I am deeply honored as well as delighted to witness the creation of the Ehsan Yarshater Center for Iranian Studies. Having devoted my entire life to the preservation and advancement of Persianate culture, I am thankful that through the establishment of this Center, my life’s work will continue unabated.”

He continued, “It is a source of great comfort to me that through the support of the Persian Heritage Foundation, and the stewardship of Columbia University, such internationally acclaimed projects as the *Encyclopædia Iranica* and *A History of Persian Literature*, as well as many other future projects will find a secure home at the Yarshater Center.”

Professor Yarshater was born in Hamadan, Persia (Iran) in 1920 and earned a PhD in Persian language and literature from the University of Tehran (1947) before studying with W.B. Henning at London University, where he received a master’s degree and a PhD in Old and Middle Iranian (1960). He came to Columbia in 1958 and founded the Center for Iranian Studies in 1968. Professor Yarshater has authored several books, including *Persian Poetry in the Second Half of the 15th Century* (1953) and *Southern Tati Dialects* (1970).

The Yarshater Center is dedicated to a wide-ranging and comprehensive vision for Iranian studies with the Persian Heritage Foundation’s continuous support. The Center will be located within the Arts and Sciences at Columbia University and its director will report to the Executive Vice President for Arts and Sciences.

Professor Yarshater, 98, passed away on September 2, 2018 in Fresno, California—approximately two weeks after the announcement was made to rename the Ehsan Yarshater Center for Iranian Studies in his honor.

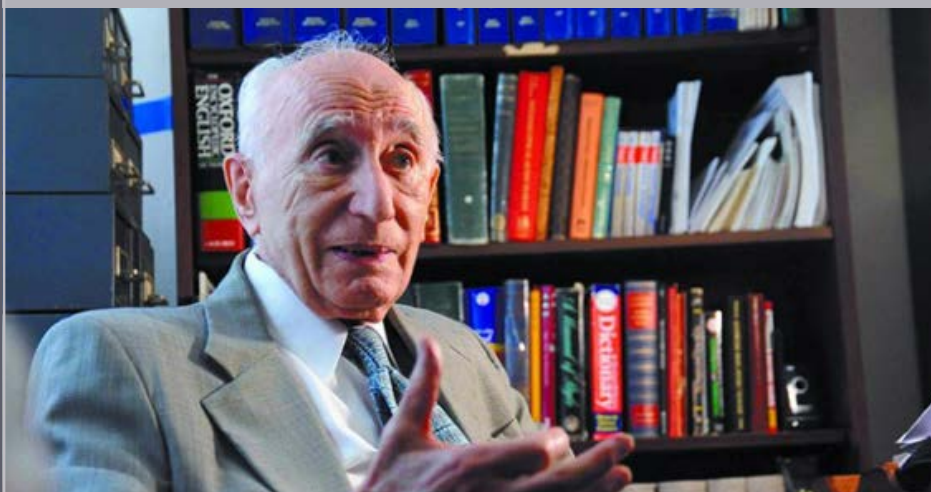


Photo credit: Eileen Barroso

OBITUARY

Maryam Mirzakhani: Mathematician and Visionary

Mathematics, rightly viewed, possesses not only truth, but supreme beauty—a beauty cold and austere, like that of sculpture ... and capable of a stern perfection such as only the greatest art can show.

*Bertrand Russel, *Mysticism and Logic and Other Essays* (42)*

Her name was Maryam Mirzakhani. Aside from a few notable biographical details, most of us hardly knew her or her work when she left us. She was born in 1977 in Tehran, Iran, in the lee of the ancient formations of snowcapped Alborz Mountains to the north. To the south, there was *Dasht-e Kavir*, with the immensities of its undulating desertscapes and oases. She died in 2017 in Palo Alto, California, the land of legendary tall coastal redwood trees. In retrospect, her brief life as a mathematician and a visionary theorist appears to have been a long journey from one set of Riemannian natural geometric designs and broken surfaces or fractals to another. Her odyssey formed her own intricate inner mindscape. It provided her with an inmost transcendent intellectual horizon of irregular but self-repeating natural configurations of fractals and Riemann surfaces and their geometric moduli spaces.

Mirzakhani earned perfect scores in International Mathematical Olympiads for high-school students, receiving gold medals in 1994 and 1995. Later, she completed her BA degree in mathematics at Sharif University of Technology in Tehran. She earned her Ph.D. from Harvard University for her dissertation *Simple Geodesics on Hyperbolic Surfaces and Volume of the Moduli Space of Curves*. She taught mathematics at Princeton and Stanford University. In 2014, at age 37, Mirzakhani won the distinguished Fields Medal, the coveted equivalent in mathematics to a Noble Prize, bestowed for the first time ever on a woman and an Iranian. Endowed with an acute and persistent theoretical curiosity at an early age, she led an intense life as a mathematician, theorist, and intellectual explorer. The bestowal of the Fields Medal on Mirzakhani recognized her groundbreaking achievements and properly honored them. Much to the sorrow of many who valued her life and work as a mathematician adventurer, she ventured into that mysterious country of no return all too early.

With all due respect, which in my case is considerable, I must confess I privately prefer to think of Maryam Mirzakhani simply as Maryam. I believe her given name partakes of a certain sense of wonder, even astonishment in the fullness of its connotations.

It suited her well; and continues to do so by being reminiscent of a certain magnanimity and benevolence. For me, Maryam resonates in many registers, which are at once personal and affective, historical and spiritual, simple and yet complex. The appellation Maryam emblematically suits Mirzakhani's exemplary modesty, her high intellectuality and naturalness as well as her exceptional creativity. It all bespeaks of her courage in unassumingly advancing along difficult knotty conceptual roads rarely taken. Wading in the shallows was not for her.



The Interdisciplinary Dimension of Mirzakhani's Contributions to Mathematics

Mathematics is a subject set apart from all other human achievements, the interface between intellect and imagination, where the real and unreal are precisely configured.

Tom Jackson (Mathematics: An Illustrated History of Numbers (6))

Non-mathematicians have gradually learned more about Mirzakhani's imaginative mathematical explorations. Their broad and in-depth implications have become less mysterious to the intellectual community worldwide. She possessed imaginative capabilities that permitted her to see the unseen and the as-yet-unknown – the nonknowledge one brushes against every day. Her love of knowledge (epistemophilia if you prefer) could detect the intimate but secret correspondences of known and the unknown existing in side-by-side configurations. Using nontechnical language in his presentation, "Maryam Mirzakhani and the Universe of All Possible," mathematician Jordan Ellenberg explains Mirzakhani's research methodology to his audience in the following passage:

OBITUARY CONT'D

Her work expertly blends dynamics with geometry. Among other things, she studies billiards. But now, in a move very characteristic of modern mathematics, it gets kind of meta [creative]: She considers not just one billiard table, but the universe of all *possible* billiard tables. And the kind of dynamics she studies doesn't directly concern the motion of the billiards on the table, but instead a transformation of the billiard table itself, which is changing its shape in a rule-governed way; if you like, the table itself moves like a strange planet around the universe of all possible tables ... This isn't the kind of thing you do to win at pool, but it's the kind of thing you do to win a Fields Medal. (No pagination)

Ellenberg simply makes clear the dialectics of the particular lived experience versus the universal and its mathematical syntheses in Mirzakhani's work. The particular-universal synthesis founds the matrix of all creative works in arts and sciences; but it is by no means an effortless straightforward synthesis.

To my mind, there remains an unlimited series of such syntheses to find and illuminate interpretively in Mirzakhani's work. So much still remains for us to get to know by giving voice to the unvoiced components in her work. The desire for such discovering, learning, and explicating acts can only mark the point of departure of all that is to learn about Mirzakhani's significant all-embracing and enduring work. Mathematicians and non-mathematicians alike who care for her fundamental innovative interdisciplinary work will find it rewarding. It will lead to a valuable new epistemology of nature's hyperbolic planes and geodesic designs. It will extend itself from the concept of a point in a straight line to curved human-made spaces such as, say, the upper part of the domes of most synagogues, churches, mosques, and domed stadiums. Further studies of such matters in Mirzakhani's work will not be easy, but we must persist and undertake them in spite of their difficulty. We must do it because such studies create new ways of trespassing artificial intellectual boundaries by bold, integrative, transdisciplinary hard work. In this context, I would maintain that within mathematics itself there are connections between Mirzakhani's rich contributions to it in relation to geometry of Riemann surfaces and their moduli geometric spaces and Benoit Mandelbrot's fractal dimension of natural and computer-generated designs.

In *The Fractal Geometry of Nature*, mathematician Benoit Mandelbrot writes, "I coined fractal from the Latin adjective *fractus*. The corresponding Latin verb *frangere* means to "break": to create irregular fragments" (4). They are so because they concurrently appear in our consciousness at the crossroads of being and nonbeing, chaos and order, the ordinary and the surprising. It brings to mind the flowering crest of cauliflower, a broccoli head, or the magical dry dandelion head, as Mirzakhani does in her own extraordinary way. Mandelbrot makes us more cognizant of the mathematical aesthetics of nature's fractal dimension of natural patterns such as vegetables, flowers, trees, seashores, seashells, and the rest. To reiterate, fractals appear as an in-between space that separates the chaos of free proliferations of

natural patterns and their predetermined "self-sameness." The French language simply designates "self-sameness" as *mêmeté* (sameness).

Mirzakhani and the Aesthetics of Mathematics

[F]ractal geometry reveals that some of the most austere formal chapters of mathematics had a hidden face: of a world of pure plastic beauty unsuspected till now.

Benoit Mandelbrot, The Fractal Geometry of Nature (4)

The concept of the beauty of mathematics is singularly noteworthy as a lived experience of mathematics, which acquires an intricate aesthetic and therefore philosophy of its own. The American writer, philosopher, and essayist Jim Holt writes:

So powerful are these impressions [of beauty in mathematics], that one great mathematician G. H. Hardy, declared that beauty, not usefulness, is the true justification for mathematics. To Hardy *mathematics was first and foremost a creative art. The mathematical patterns, like the painter's art or the poet's, must be beautiful*," he wrote in his classic 1940 book *A Mathematical Apology*. Beauty is the first test: there is no permanent place in the world for ugly mathematics (Jim Holt (*When Einstein Walked with Gödel: Excursion to the Edge of Thought* 69, emphasis added))

Consequently, the mathematicians who are concerned with the beauty of mathematics resemble alchemists ("Kimiâgar" in Persian) as well. They transmute the lead of formulae into the gold of mathematical beauty— a concept that in and of itself possesses an aesthetic dimension of its own. This mathematical aesthetic dimension comprises a philosophical treatment of principles of beauty, which generates a wide array of interdisciplinary reflections. With fractals, one directly engages the problematics of interface of chaos and harmony, in which harmony as a component of beauty takes the upper hand.

Additionally and above all for our present purposes, Riemann surfaces and fractals reveal much about the necessity of adopting a wide-ranging methodology to Mirzakhani's approach to what one might think of as the aesthetics of symbolic mathematical visualization. So let us see how far we can now advance with taking a more wide-ranging look at Mirzakhani's symbolically inclusive mathematical work. Here, I would suggest taking a glance at the etymology of mathematics as a discipline. In his "Etymology & Definition of Mathematics," Benny Ribeiro writes:

The word *mathematics* comes from the Greek *μάθημα* (*máthēma*), which, in the ancient Greek language, means "what one learns", "what one gets to know", hence also "study" and "science", and in modern Greek just "lesson" ... In particular, *μαθηματική τέχνη* (*mathēmatikḗ tékhne*), Latin: *ars mathematica*, meant "the mathematical art." (No pagination)

OBITUARY CONT'D

Hence, etymologically, the Greek language describes the essence and scope of mathematics as *a learning* or as *a getting to know process*. It seems to hint at a long, self-perpetuating, evolutionary journey, beginning with the dawn of human self-consciousness as a transcendent challenge to the immanent and invariant in human condition. One learns and one is transformed by what one learns. It is so because mathematics shapes up as one mode of human language in the family of open-ended and transformative languages. It comes complete with its own lexical, syntactic, and semantic elements; therefore, with its own heuristics, its own epistemology and hermeneutics. Just as our dialogical oral and scriptural language does, mathematics permits us to apprehend our environing world and to alter it to suit our evolutionary purposes as much as possible. Here, I use the verb to “apprehend” in its dual significations of apprehension as understanding and seizing or capturing, and appropriating it... It is a process of appropriation of acquired comprehension of knowledge. Thus, mathematics originally was and continues to be a dynamic symbolic universal way of learning and acquisition of symbolic knowledge, akin, or rather kin, to all symbolic phenomena in arts such as painting and music and sciences such as physics and astronomy. I am certain Mirzakhani was thoroughly aware of mathematics as such a process

Mirzakhani astutely had a vision of purposive process of *getting to know* and *appropriating* the known as it reveals itself in a veritable progression of fundamental lived or embodied learning experiences. In her work, she would persistently brush against the unknown, trying to make it known by getting to know it at once the *mathematically* theoretical and *imaginatively* visual. That was the site where her originality would manifest itself so strikingly. That is the reason why her work partakes a profound sense of resurgence. She rigorously avoids what the late Iranian philosopher (self-professed freethinker) Daryush Shayegan in his book *Le Regard Mutilé* (the mutilated vision), alludes to as “*la sclérose de scolastique*” (scholastic sclerosis), a thoroughly regressive phenomenon (57).

Mirzakhani privileged her persistently novel academic and research approaches through the mediation of her drawings as articulation of direct visual perceptions of concepts. Not an easy task by any means, one must admit. This visualization of the conceptual required a high degree of intellection and embodied skill. In its phenomenological sense, her doodling incorporated a phenomenological mode of embodiment of lived experiences of her advanced conceptual activities.

Her art of conceptual doodling adds credibility to her deep-seated desire to achieve a broader, all-inclusive interdisciplinary approach to mathematics, as “*mathematical art*” is subject to the whole gamut of interpretive activities. In moments of exuberance, I think of them as modes of Zen doodles. In his introduction to his *Zen Doodling*, David Williams tells us that “Zen doodling, which originates neither in Zen Buddhism nor the informality of most doodling in general, *borrowed from all these things, and refines them into a captivating, contemplative form of drawing*” (No pagination, emphasis added).

I would go as far as to say Mirzakhani as a mathematician was a seer because, as the Persian language so incisively refers to it, she was a “gheib bîn” (literally a seer of the invisible, the absent). In turn, as a seer, she also became a “gheibgû” (prescient foreteller of the as-yet unknown and unarticulated). In her subliminal doodling, she saw the mathematical logic of the invisible as the ground of emergence of the field of all visibility. Her way of seeing went beyond what the latest microscope would make visible to a scientist. One might justifiably say that she X-rayed constellations of symbolic crossovers among arts, and sciences.

It bears reiterating that this human symbolic enterprise serves as connection that enables Douglas R. Hofstadter to write his long magisterial work *Gödel, Escher, Bach: an Eternal Golden Braid*. Even though Hofstadter’s book is clearly not about the influence of mathematics on painting and music, it bears witness to the commonality of their unlimited symbolic structures. “The Eternal Golden Braid” interlaces the limitless symbol-making enterprise – symbols, which might be referential, or self-referential, univocal or plurisignificant. Hofstadter offers us a theoretically expansive and helpful analogy that “likens inanimate molecules to meaningless symbols [in themselves]”, and further likens selves (or ‘I’s or ‘souls,’ if you prefer – whatever it is that distinguishes animate from inanimate matter) to certain special, swirly, twisty, vortex-like, and *meaningful patterns*” (2). I locate Mirzakhani’s art of mathematical doodling within the domain of such meaningful patterns.

Mirzakhani’s interest in mathematical teaching and research appears to have begun with linearity, which eventually she would expand in her mind to complex manifold surfaces in the natural world such as, for example, patterns such as Riemann surfaces. One needs to differentiate here between “*scientific representations*,” which is the subject of a lengthy treatise, *Scientific Representations* by Bas C. van Fraassen, and Mirzakhani’s mathematically speculative probing- and exploratory drawings. Fraassen focusses on “representation of the empirical phenomena, by means of artifacts, both physical and mathematical” (1). From my viewpoint, Mirzakhani in her doodling was advancing along a more difficult path: giving a visual model of her lived experiences of Riemannian fractal phenomena as mathematical concepts. Her approach resulted in its own epistemology and its unrestricted interpretive possibilities. In that respect, Mirzakhani’s approach was far more holistic than the scientific representation model offered by Fraassen. It simultaneously juxtaposed the empirical basis of scientific knowledge as sensory experience with its phenomenological complement bodily experience of the conceptual and abstract.

In this regard, Mirzakhani had a number of illustrious predecessors: The above-mentioned German mathematician Bernhard Riemann (1826-1866); and mathematicians such as Polish-American Stanislaw Ulam (1909-1984) who discovered spirals as visualization of prime numbers; English computer scientist and mathematician Alan Turing (1912-1954); and the Polish-born, French-American

OBITUARY CONT'D

mathematician and self-described “fractalist” Benoit Mandelbrot (1924-2010). Similar to Mirzakhani, they all, each in his own way, shared an interest in drawings as conceptual visualization of hyperbolic surfaces such as geodesics. This method of inquiry corresponds with what American phenomenologist Don Ihde designates as the hermeneutics of visualism in science: “It is, rather, perceptually oriented – but more, primarily visually oriented in its hermeneutics dimension. It has developed a complex, sophisticated visual hermeneutics which retains the advantages of visual perception but has infused these with a world of things never before included in naked, bodily perception” (*Expanding Hermeneutics: Visualism in Science*, 184). In short, conceptual conscious-unconscious doodling opens up a field of perpetual revelatory activities of what one sees and figures out.

At this juncture, it is of interest to keep in mind that etymologically the verb to “see” has consequential double meanings: to look, behold, and perceive as well as to *comprehend* and grasp through the act of seeing. It involves a visual foreclosure and conceptual appropriation of an object of consciousness, which manifests itself as a veritable embodied lived experience. In other words, perceiving an object with the eyes and then understanding it conceptually signify what one might refer to as seeing through the seen – a revelatory activity, and the disclosure of its kernel of truth(s). As Don Ihde reminds us, “visual as opposed to other sensory examples are implicitly taken to be paradigm examples for all perception and knowledge. Seeing is clear and distinct and is the external counterpart for the internal sense of reason which is insight” (*Experimental Phenomenology* 25).



By seeing *through the seen*, Mirzakhani in her doodling made manifest the emergence of the visible from the invisible, and therefore the unseen. It is what primarily defines a visionary such as mathematician, astronomer, and poet Omar Khayyam (1048-1131). Her Zen-like doodling, taking as her point of departure the first dot of an unlimited dots constituting a line, Mirzakhani appears to render what surfaced from the infinite depth of invisibility as one-dimensional to manifold complex surfaces and geodesic designs. That dot is the ground zero of visibility, which transmutes the as-yet-unseen and unknown into the visible known. It strikes one as an alchemical operation.

In her article, “*Maryam Mirzakhani’s Pioneering Mathematical Legacy*,” Siobhan Roberts writes:

[Mirzakhani] was known to her colleagues as a virtuoso in the dynamics and geometry of complex surfaces ... and to her young daughter, Anahita, as something of an artist. At the family’s home, near Stanford University, Mirzakhani would spend hours on the floor with supersized canvases of paper, sketching out ideas, drawing diagrams, and formulae, often leading Anahita, now six, to say, “Oh, Mommy is painting again!” (No pagination)

Mirzakhani’s Mathematical Concerns and Science Fiction

In a nutshell, let’s say: scientific theories are truths about “being” itself (mathematics) or the “natural” laws of the worlds about which we can have experiential knowledge....
Alain Badiou, *In Praise of Mathematics* (71-72)

In his perceptive article on Mirzakhani for The New York Time Magazine, journalist Gareth Cook relates that

At a Stanford memorial service, Curtis McMullen, Mirzakhani’s thesis adviser and chairman of Harvard’s Department of Mathematics, said that when she was a student, she would come to his office and pose questions that were “*like science fiction stories, vivid scenes she saw in some unexplored corner of the mathematical universe — strange structures and beguiling patterns, all in motion and interconnected*.” Then she would look at him with her blue-gray eyes. “Is it right?” she would ask, as if he might know the answer. (“*Maryam Mirzakhani: She Drew Her Way to Mathematical Greatness*.” (No pagination, emphasis added)

McMullen’s keen observations on Mirzakhani’s questions are far-reaching, consequential, and most salutary. Mirzakhani’s interrogative approach being similar to science fiction stories immediately suggests to me another question: to what category of science fiction story is it similar. As we know, there is science fiction fantasy (contrary to reality as we know it and experience it); soft science fiction

OBITUARY CONT'D

(based on social sciences, such as sociology, and hard science fiction (based on sciences such as physics or biology, and often science-based technology). It would seem to me McMullen is assigning Mirzakhani's questioning to the hard science fiction category. Thus, our literary works are extensions of an embodied self and their lived experiences, with all the intricacies this implies. They result in the work of our visual, auditory, tactile, gustatory, and olfactory perceptions, and their reconfigurations as ideas and imagination. The fact that McMullen describes Mirzakhani's vision luminously as "vivid scenes she saw in some unexplored corner of the mathematical universe — strange structures and beguiling patterns, all in motion and interconnected" make them a part of imaginative rather than fantasy science fiction. For those who truly love mathematics, it offers the joy of clearly seeing, that is, experiencing through the eyes a universe with far corners to travel to and explore with the immense curiosity of a newborn infant. Simultaneously, it all creates a new ontology.

This would be a universe of mesmerizing imaginal patterns and structures as nooks and crannies of embodied lived experiences of animate beings. Cook quotes a Stanford graduate student as saying, "Mirzakhani portrayed problems in mathematics not as daunting logical conundrums but as animated tableaux. " It's almost like she had a window on the math landscape, and she was trying to describe how the things living there interacted with each other," says Jenya Sapir, now an assistant professor at Binghamton University. To her, it was all happening at once" ("Maryam Mirzakhani: She Drew Her Way to Mathematical Greatness." (No page, emphasis added)



I should think what McMullen so astutely considers as Mirzakhani's imaginal "science fiction stories" will satisfy the requirement of literary fiction as expression of embodied experiences. For it symbolically conveys a world of existential embodied experiences and its ontology as "hard science fiction." As a dual configuration, it reminds us of Carl Sagan's memorable novel *Contact* (1985). The combinatory scientific and novelistic components of Mirzakhani's vision of writing literary fiction as a teenager and her adventures in the aesthetic pleasures of creative mathematics as an adult happily conjoin. One is grateful to McMullen for giving us a palpable descriptive web of Mirzakhani's fundamental desires, which created the inscape of Mirzakhani's mind as a mathematician and intellectual. This inscape made it possible for Mirzakhani to create a highly ambitious interdisciplinary intermediate creative zone, which is and will be her considerable parting gift to us. We shall remember her in every rare moment of prescience, revelation, and insight into her work. She encourages us to seek arduous occasions of gaining new knowledge to understand our world better, and to struggle against its utterly discouraging limitations.

Mirzakhani told us: "The more I spent time on math, the more excited I got" (Interview with *The Guardian* (no pagination). It is my hope that our colleagues and friends, wherever they might be regardless of their discipline, continue that discussion through intermediation of the progressive legacy she has left us. It is no easy task by any means. However, keeping her work alive as a part of that enormous symbolic "golden braid," is also a recognition of our being human worth defending, always and everywhere.

Erik Nakjavani, Professor Emeritus of Humanities at the University of Pittsburgh

Works cited:

- Badiou, Alain. *In Praise of Mathematics*. Trans. Susan Spitzer. Polity Press: Malden, MA, 2016.
- Cook, Gareth. "Maryam Mirzakhani: She Drew Her Way to Mathematical Greatness." <garethcook.net/maryam-mirzakhani>
- Ellenberg, Jordan. "Maryam Mirzakhani and the universe of all possible." <<https://blogs.umass.edu/kratzer/2017/07/15/maryam-mirzakami>>
- Fraassen, Bas C. van. *Scientific Representation*. Oxford UK: Oxford UP, 2018.
- Holt, Jim. *When Einstein Walked with Gödel: Excursion to the Edge of Thought*. New York: Farrar, Strauss, and Giroux, 2018.
- Ihde, Don. *Expanding Hermeneutics: Visualism in Science*. Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern UP, 1998.
- Jackson, Tom, (ed.) *Mathematics: An Illustrated History of Numbers*. New York: Shelter Harbor Press, 2017.
- Mandelbrot, Benoit. *The Fractal Geometry of Nature*. New York W. H. Putnam, 1983.
- Mirzakhani, Maryam. <www.theguardian.com/science/2014/aug/13/>
- Ribeiro, Benny. "Etymology & Definition of Mathematics." <<https://mathbenny.wordpress.com/2013/02/28/etymology-definition-of->>
- Roberts, Siobhan. "Maryam Mirzakhani's Pioneering Mathematical Legacy." *The New Yorker*, Jul 17, 2017.
- Russel, Bertrand. *Mysticism, Logic, and Other Essays*. Anodos Books: Humphries and Galloway: Scotland, 2017.

RESEARCH REPORT

Iranian Studies at Jagiellonian University, Kraków, Poland

Mateusz M. Kłagisz

Iranian Studies at Jagiellonian University, Krakow, Poland, has a long tradition. The first lectures on Persian language and literature were held by Wilhelm Münnich in the first half of the 19th century. Currently, the academic research group of the Department of Iranian Studies (DIS) consists of eight researchers, two teachers of Persian (native speakers), three research fellows, and four PhD students. Although the main focus of the didactics and research is pre-Islamic and Islamic Iran, the term “Iranian” is understood in a broad sense and the study program also includes courses on Afghan, Kurdish and Central Asian issues. This report covers the section on Kurdish issues and broader Oriental Studies at the department of Iranian Studies at Jagiellonian University, while a further report dealing with the activities of the section on Afghan studies will follow in the newsletter of spring 2019. The interests and foci of the researchers are in the fields of linguistics and literary studies. This results from the fact that the DIS is located within the Faculty of Philology of the Jagiellonian University. Nevertheless, in order to meet the challenges of the time, Krakow’s Iranologists conduct interdisciplinary research combining various scientific disciplines.

The Section for Kurdish Studies and the activities of Dr. Joanna Bocheńska as well as Dr. Artur Rodziewicz may serve as a good example of interdisciplinarity. Dr. Bocheńska is the director of the research project: *How to make voice audible? Continuity and Change of Kurdish Culture and of Social Reality from Postcolonial Perspectives*, supported by a grant from the National Science Center (NSC) of Poland. Her group is the first Polish research team devoted to the culture and socio-political reality of the Kurds, as until recently research on the Middle East in Poland concentrated on the context of the nation-state and as such on Turkey, Iraq, Iran, Syria etc. along with their national cultures. The Kurds had been mainly presented from the perspective of those states. Yet, it is also very important to see the Middle East from the perspective of the Kurdish nation as one of the major Middle Eastern minorities and as one of the defeated nations. Together with her team, which includes Dr. Rodziewicz, Dr. Bocheńska has prepared a publication, titled *Rediscovering Kurdistan’s Cultures and Identities: The Call of The Cricket*, forthcoming with Palgrave Macmillan this year. Dr. Rodziewicz is a philosopher by profession and between 2016-19 he cooperates with the DIS within the framework of the *Fuga 2* grant. The subject of his research is *Eros and the Pearl in the Yazid Cosmogony*.

Prof. Anna Krasnowolska and Dr. Renata Rusek-Kowalska are members of the research team *Orientalia Polonica. Polish Traditions of Research on the Orient*. It was created under the auspices of the Jagiellonian Library in cooperation with the Faculty of Philology and the Faculty of International and Political Sciences of Jagiellonian University. The main goal of this project is to develop and publish historical, theoretical and literary texts, biographies and documentaries as well as translations, adaptations and summaries that are products of Polish researchers and authors (17th-19th c.) widely interested in phenomena related to the culture and tradition of the Orient. This work, which constitutes a rich scientific legacy of significant importance for the culture-forming processes taking place in Poland between the 17th and 19th centuries, is now almost completely forgotten and often unfamiliar (or quite unknown) even among specialists. Historical or political conditions have often resulted in breaks in the continuity of research within the Polish humanities, including the tradition of Polish research on the Orient. The aim of this project is also to restore the Polish academic environment’s obscure or forgotten scientific heritage while remaining within the thematic confines of the project, which is an integral and constitutive part of the Polish identity in its cultural and national dimension.

PLEASE USE THE LINK BELOW TO ACCESS A SHORT FILM ON
ASSOCIATION FOR IRANIAN STUDIES TWELFTH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE
HELD AT THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA, IRVINE, AUGUST 14-17, 2018:

[HTTPS://VIMEO.COM/290795254?REF=FB-SHARE&1](https://vimeo.com/290795254?REF=FB-SHARE&1)

Roshan Undergraduate Persian Studies Journal

The Roshangar Editorial Board is proud to announce the fourth issue of Roshangar: Roshan Undergraduate Persian Studies Journal. The newest edition of the journal is available for download [here](#). The journal features interdisciplinary student research in numerous fields including ethnic studies, history, and film.

CONFERENCE REPORT

Yale University's Program in Iranian Studies held a successful conference titled "Popular Music and Society in Iran" on 26-27 January 2018 at the MacMillan Center for International and Area Studies, organized by Nahid Siamdoust, currently Ehsan Yarshater Postdoctoral Associate and Lecturer at Yale University. This was the first conference of its kind to bring together scholars and practitioners with a focus specifically on popular Iranian music (see <https://iranianstudies.macmillan.yale.edu/popular-music-and-society-iran-new-directions>).

The political and sociological study of music in early modern and modern Iran is a growing field, and this conference convened researchers and academics carrying out groundbreaking work in this area. During a two-day symposium, researchers from North America presented on topics as varied as the study of Safavid and Qajar musical traditions (16th to 19th centuries) and their direct implications for practices in the Pahlavi period, the sounds of Lalehzar in mid-century Tehran, the precarious condition of women musicians following the 1979 revolution, emerging trends in musical theater, the status of contemporary Iranian rock and hip hop, the politics of impiety in expatriate music productions, and the intersection of religious rituals and pop music. The conference also included a special session in which Jane Lewisohn presented on her ambitious Golistan Project, which aims to create a virtual museum of the performing arts of Iran, from 1880 onward (see <http://www.golistan.org>).

A highlight of the conference was the presentation of perspectives from musicians, recognizing the importance of including their voices in academic research on the subject. As such, there were three musician sessions, featuring among them performances and conversations with Iran's first female Hip-Hop artist Salome MC, the Persian classical musician Amir Hosein Pourjavady, who talked about the "radif" with historian Abbas Amanat, as well as fusion/alternative musicians Mohsen Namjoo, Salmak Khaledi of 127, and Hooman Hamedani of Gazhpazh. The synergy between scholars, practitioners and audience members led to deep and fruitful discussions, provoking reflections in many directions. All presentations were united in their quest to take music as a serious register for the political and sociological study of contemporary Iran. The conference was concluded with a live performance by Mohsen Namjoo. The proceedings will culminate in an edited volume, currently in production, co-edited by Nahid Siamdoust and Houchang Chehabi. For video recordings of some of the sessions, please see:

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLqHnHG5X2PXCNyfqHdOIFbosNw74iHWSP>



AIS AWARD NEWS

The 2018 Saidi-Sirjani Book Award

The Saidi-Sirjani Book Award Committee is pleased to announce its nominations for the best books published in the field of Iranian Studies during the period January 2016 through December 2017.

The Saidi-Sirjani Book Award is granted biennially by the Association for Iranian Studies on behalf of the Persian Heritage Foundation. Established in 1995, the purpose of the Award is to recognize and promote scholarship in the field of Iranian studies, as well as to honor the memory of Ali-Akbar Saidi-Sirjani, the noted Iranian historian, literary critic, and author, in appreciation of his scholarship, his courage, and his struggle for freedom of expression.

The Award is given to original studies or syntheses in the field of Iranian Studies, critical editions of significant texts in Iranian Studies, or translations from an Iranian language, accompanied by scholarly annotations and extensive research. This year the Committee had a particularly difficult task, given the exceptional caliber of works published by both eminent scholars as well as promising works by new generation of specialists in the field.

Among the former category, Professor Abbas Amanat's *Iran: A modern History* (Yale University Press, 2017), and Professor Angelo Piemontese's *Persia in Vatican: Rome and Persia in Codes and Texts* (published in Italian by Vatican Library, 2017), deserve to be singled out and especially recognized.

Professor Amanat's book will be the standard reference work on Iran's modern history for many years to come. In its depth and breadth of coverage and sophisticated conceptual frameworks it presents a broad narrative of Iran's political, social, cultural, and intellectual history from the Safavids to the present.

Professor Piemontese's work opens up Vatican's vast Persian records, single manuscripts, diplomatic letters, poetic volumes, treatises on astronomy, Qur'ans, Muslim-Christian disputations, and anything related to Iran and the Persian language, all arranged and equipped with abundant explanatory footnotes.

Very deservedly, both of these works have thus far received many praises and tributes.

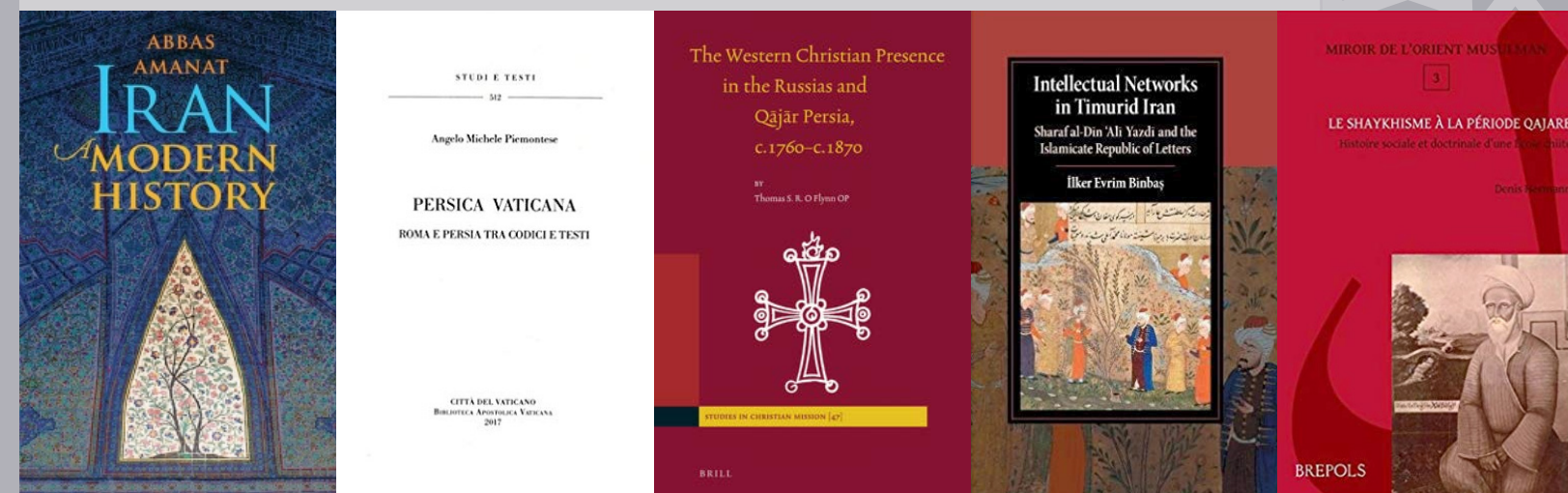
With the above observations in mind, and with its unanimous vote, the Committee is pleased to present this year's award to **Rev. Dr. Thomas O. Flynn**, for the publication of *The Western Christian Presence in the Russias and Qājār Persia, c. 1760-c. 1870*, published by Brill, 2017.

Also with unanimous vote, the Committee is further pleased to present two Honorable Mentions to Dr. İlker Evrim Binbaş for the publication of *Intellectual Networks in Timurid Iran: Sharaf al-Dīn 'Alī Yazdī and the Islamic Republic of Letters* (Cambridge University Press, 2017); and to Dr. Denis Hermann for the publication of *Shaykhism in the Qajar Period: Social and Doctrinal History of a Shiite School* (published in French, by Brepols, 2017).

Dr. Flynn's work, the product of a lifetime of totally dedicated scholarship, is by all accounts a monumental enterprise: not only in its sheer volume with over 1,000 pages of text, exploring around 25 different archives, and providing some 2500 printed sources listed in the bibliography; but also in its scope, aspiration, and achievement: it covers the entirety of the Western missionary enterprise in Iran and the Caucasus between the mid-18th and the mid-19th centuries, connecting the Safavid period to the Qajar era thorough the lesser known post-Safavid 18th century.

Dr. Binbaş's works is a deeply researched work on intellectual networks in the Timurid period. It makes highly original contributions to our understanding of the intellectual history of late medieval Iran within a broader transregional context. Dr. Hermann's book on the Shaykhism is pioneering and foundational in filling a major gap in our understanding of rupture and continuity in religious thought and practice between the Safavids and the Qajars.

The 2018 Saidi-Sirjani Book Award Committee consisted of Professors Ali Banuazizi (Boston College), Sheila Blair (Boston College), Rudi Matthee (University of Delaware), Yann Richard (Sorbonne Nouvelle, Emeritus), and Ali Gheissari (University of San Diego, Committee Chair).



AIS AWARD NEWS CONT'D

The 2018 Mehrdad Mashayekhi Dissertation Award

The Mehrdad Mashayekhi Dissertation Award is presented biannually to the author of an exceptional Ph.D. dissertation dealing with the broad themes of politics and the public sphere in Iran, written in Persian or English. Dissertations written in other languages are accepted, if they are accompanied with condensed translation of chapters into English or Persian. This award is established by the Mehrdad Mashayekhi Foundation in memory of his dedication to the cause of democracy and social justice in Iran.

The Winner of the 2018 Mehrdad Mashayekhi Dissertation Award is **Hosna Sheikholeslami**, for her dissertation: **“Thinking through Translation: Translators, Publishers, and the Formation of Publics in Contemporary Iran,”** submitted to Yale University. The advisor to the dissertation was J. Joseph Errington. The committee found this dissertation to be analytically strong, clearly focused, and methodologically sound. Drawing on two years of ethnographic fieldwork and first-hand interviews, Dr. Sheikholeslami’s dissertation explores the politics of translation and censorship in Iran and offers a fine-grained analysis of the relationship between the state and the public sphere. It carefully analyzes “the negotiations and contestations between translators, publishers, and government censors through which Western philosophical and social scientific texts are chosen for translation, publication, and circulation in intellectual circles”. As Dr. Sheikholeslami demonstrates, the shifting and conflicting nature of censorship policies at times help the expansion of translation activities and at other times hinder them.

Both methodologically and theoretically, Dr. Sheikholeslami’s work represents a sound work of anthropology/sociology of intellectual production and transplantation. Her dialectical understanding of the mediating role of the translator, the publisher, and the censor in production of texts as foundational elements of a public sphere is fascinating and ground-breaking. She skillfully demonstrates that without a political-economic understanding of the concept of publics and of the materiality of ideas we would be amiss in grasping the movement and transformative role of ideas carried by texts across spaces and times.

In short, the committee was impressed with the quality and quantity of work put into this research and believes that her research will contribute to the general understanding of the role of the state and publics in the movement of ideas across different geographical, cultural, political, and philosophical terrains.

Further, the committee found Dr. **Assef Ashraf**’s dissertation, titled *“From Khan to Shah: State, Society, and Forming the Ties that Made Qajar Iran,”* submitted to the Department of History, Yale University, a substantial work of scholarship worthy of **“Honorable Mention.”** Though not fully within the scope of the award, Dr. Ashraf’s work is an original research that makes important new contributions to Qajar historiography by producing a new angle in historiography and political analysis of governance during Qajar period. The pre-existing narratives of the Qajars regard

them as usurpers who squeezed the land and its people to fund their own pleasure harems and foreign travels. Contrary to this view, Dr. Ashraf demonstrates that the Qajars were able to consolidate power and maintain a large polity that outlasted great historical upheavals because their governance was rooted in keeping the “public sphere” committed to their rule through various measures such as land assignments, gift exchange, the issuance of royal decrees, and marriage alliances. As Dr. Abbas Amanat has noted, in his nomination letter, Ashraf’s research “demonstrates the exceptional circumstances that allowed Qajar Iran to survive, even to thrive, as a sovereign state despite military setbacks and loss of territory.” In short, the amount of work and dedication gone into this research are incredible and commendable, especially Dr. Ashraf’s vast and diverse primary sources including several languages and venues. The committee congratulates Dr. Ashraf and honors this research of great significance for the study of Qajar Iran.

The Mehrdad Mashayekhi Dissertation Award Committee 2018 consisted of Professor Afshin Matin-Asgari (California State University, Los Angeles), Dr. Nahid Siamdoust (Yale University), Professor Nayereh Tohidi (California State University, Northridge), and Professor Ali Akbar Mahdi (California State University, Northridge; Committee Chair).

The 2018 Latifeh Yarshater Award

The Latifeh Yarshater Award was instituted by the Persian Heritage Foundation to honor the memory of Latifeh Yarshater and her lifelong dedication to the improvement of Iranian women’s human rights. The purpose of the award is to encourage scholarship in Iranian Studies focused on the condition of women in Persian speaking societies and to promote women’s rights in these societies.

The 2018 Award was awarded at the 2018 Biennial Conference, University of California, Irvine to Dr. **Ida Meftahi**, Lecturer in contemporary Iranian culture and society at the Roshan Institute for Persian Studies, University of Maryland, for her book *Gender and Dance in Modern Iran: Biopolitics on Stage* (Routledge, 2016). The committee praised the book’s originality in situating dance at the center of the nationalist and Islamist cultural and political contestations of the 20th century, offering an absorbing account of the transformation of cabaret dancing into “national dance” and the sublimation of the latter into Islamic counter-dance or “rhythmic movement.” Based on original Persian sources, Dr. Meftahi historicizes the offstage politico-ideological narratives of dancing women in competing nationalist, leftist, and Islamist discourses. Exploring the public emergence of the “rhythmic movement” in the 1990s, which sought to endow dance with Islamic modesty and chastity, she demonstrates how this Islamizing project successfully sublimated an earlier nationalist conception of dance. Despite politically charged presumptions of dance as moral decadence, in the decade after the Islamic Revolution, dance has emerged as an integral part of social life in Iran. The Committee also recognized Professor **Nima Naghibi**’s book, *Women Write Iran: Nostalgia and Human Rights from the Diaspora* (2016), University of Minnesota Press, as the Honorable Mention.

AIS AWARD NEWS CONT'D

The 2018 Ehsan Yarshater Book Award

The purpose of this award is to advance the scholarship on Ancient Iranian Civilization and its cognate fields. Professor Ehsan Yarshater is an internationally recognized scholar who has made a major contribution to the field of Iranian Studies. The AIS Council designated Professor Yarshater an honorary member in 1999.

The Committee received four very valuable books dealing with different aspects of pre-Islamic Iran, each important in its own field. Having studied the four volumes carefully, the three members decided the following:

The winner of the 2018 Ehsan Yarshater Book Award is **Mark B. Garrison** for his work entitled *The Ritual Landscape at Persepolis: The Glyptic Imagery from the Persepolis Fortification and Treasury Archives*. From Lectures delivered at the Collège de France, Studies in Ancient Oriental Civilizations 72, The Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 2017. An Honorable Mention is awarded to **Khodadad Rezakhani** for his work entitled *Reorienting the Sasanians: East Iran in Late Antiquity*, Edinburgh Studies in Ancient Persia, 2017.

Mark B. Garrison, *The Ritual Landscape at Persepolis*, The Oriental Institute, Chicago IL, 2017. This is a truly innovative volume that studies the ritual landscape in the Marvdasht area from an original point of view. Both subject and treatment are novel and the analysis is extremely thorough. The main focus of Garrison's volume is the seal impressions on many of the tablets found in Persepolis by missions of the Oriental Institute. On the face of it the material is unpromising, but Garrison shows that it is possible to obtain a great deal of information from it. The book makes an important contribution to much debated themes such as the supposed Achaemenian fire-altars and the status of Zoroastrianism amongst the various religious currents under the Achaemenids. It sets a new course for research on the Persepolis archives, suggesting that similar studies of other classes of seals could also be very illuminating for different aspects of cultural history.

Khodadad Rezakhani's *Reorienting the Sasanians* (Edinburgh University Press, 2017), essentially attempts (neatly punning) to "re-Orient" the Sasanians, who, the author argues, have traditionally been viewed too exclusively from a western point of view and on the basis of western sources. There is originality in this approach, and also in his use of the very substantial sources which have recently become available for the history of Eastern Iran in this period, such as the Bactrian documents, the Rag-e Bibi sculpture and the large numismatic collections made available by recent projects developed in Vienna. The author deserves great credit for successfully narrating the history of the eastern part of the Sasanian Empire on a solid foundation combining these new sources with earlier research.

The 2018 Ehsan Yarshater Book Award Committee consisted of Professors Nicholas Sims-Williams, Matthew Canepa, and Carlo Giovanni Cereti (Chair).

The 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award

The 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award was awarded to the British art historian Robert Hillenbrand. He is Professor Emeritus, University of Edinburgh, a Fellow of the British Academy and of the Royal Society of Edinburgh, and is currently Professor of Art History at the University of St Andrews. Author of ten books, co-author or editor of another twelve, and author of over 170 book chapters and articles in the most prestigious publications, Professor Hillenbrand's research is informed by rigorous scholarship, his extensive field work and especially his close study of buildings and archeological sites.

The 2018 Lifetime Achievement Award Committee consisted of Professors Houchang Chehabi (Chair), Kazuo Morimoto, Sussan Babaie, and Touraj Daryaee (ex officio).

LIKE OUR AIS FACEBOOK PAGE!

[HTTPS://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/ASSOCIATIONFORIRANIANSTUDIES/](https://www.facebook.com/associationforiranianstudies/)

Iranian Studies Vol. 51, Number 5, November 2018 has been published:
<http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/cist20/current>.

AIS members are able to access the current as well as all back issues of the journal by logging into their membership account and visiting Publications/Journal/Journal Archives.

Radio Rumi

Fatemeh Keshavarz (Director, School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures, University of Maryland, College Park) would like to make readers aware that a series of podcasts called *Radio Rumi* are available on the internet and through a free phone application. To listen to the existing episodes, visit <http://radiorumi.umd.edu/>

The podcast is also available through iTunes <https://itunes.apple.com/us/podcast/radio-rumi/id1359872057>.

OTHER AWARD NEWS

Foundation for Iranian Studies Best Ph.D. Dissertations on a Topic of Iranian Studies, 2018

The Foundation for Iranian Studies is pleased to announce that the Committee on Selection of the Best Ph.D. Dissertation of the Year on a Topic of Iranian Studies of the Foundation for Iranian Studies has chosen Viola Allegranzi's dissertation "Les Inscriptions Persanes de Ghazni, Afghanistan: Nouvelles sources pour l'étude de l'histoire culturelle et de la tradition épigraphique ghaznavides (Ve-VIe/XIe-XIIe siècles)," submitted to the Universities Sorbonne Nouvelle Paris 3, Sorbonne Paris Cité, and Naples, L'Orientale, as the recipient of the Foundation's annual best Ph.D. dissertation award for the academic year 2017-2018.

In making its decision, the Committee, following the criteria established by the Foundation's Board of Directors, noted that **Viola Allegranzi** has made an "exceptional contribution to the field of Iranian and Middle Eastern Studies" by, among other achievements, "stating clearly the study's problematic... constructing an adequate and efficient theoretical framework... developing and using successfully a rigorous methodology to bring together a significant array of primary and secondary sources... mastering critical knowledge of Persian language and Iranian history... adopting an innovative multidisciplinary approach to derive intellectually reasonable meaning and purpose from half-survived Persian poetic inscriptions on broken plaques in late Ghaznavid royal structures in the city of Ghazni... establishing an important connection between epigraphic inscriptions and courtly poetry... methodically connecting data, text, and socio-political information to achieve a credible framework for studying how as yet a historically very young Persian poetry by affecting otherwise prosaic expression proved instrumental in expanding and enabling Persian culture to spread and achieve dominance in the pre-Mongol Abbasid-Turkic world... demonstrating originality in approach, balance in reaching conclusions, adeptness in conjoining art, architecture, literature, and history to support the dissertation's findings.... excellent organization of the work."

The Committee also cited **Ahoo Najafian**'s dissertation "Poetic Nation: Iranian Soul and Historical Continuity" submitted to the Department of Religious Studies and the Committee on Graduate Studies, Stanford University, Robert Landau Ames' dissertation "Looking for the Human: Sufism, Subjectivity, and Modernity in Iran" submitted to the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations, Harvard University, and- this year exceptionally also a third- Shaftolu Gulamadov's dissertation "The Hagiography of Nāṣir-i Khusraw and the Ismā'īlīs of Badakhshān" submitted to the Department for the study of religion, University of Toronto, with honorable mention for superior scholarship, originality, clarity, and significant contribution to the field of Iranian Studies.

DISSERTATION NEWS

Maral Karimi's dissertation at the University of Toronto, which has just been published as a book (*The Iranian Green Movement of 2009: Reverberating Echoes of Resistance*, Lexington Books, 2018) provides a historical link between the political discourse of Ayatollah Khomeini and that of the leaders of the Green Movement. Such a historical approach facilitates an understanding of the impact and implication of key Iranian uprisings since the revolution of 1979. The dissertation-turned-book asks, was the discourse of the leaders of the Green Movement oriented towards building bridges or systematically distorted communication oriented to electoral success? This work successfully tests the viability of a constellation of critical and cultural theories in the Iranian context. More specifically Jürgen Habermas' Theory of Communicative Action, his conception of the Public Sphere as well as Anthony Giddens Theory of Structuration serve as the theoretical foundations of this inquiry. Furthermore, the book takes the unique approach of analysing YouTube videos of the protests, for the counter hegemonic role played by this social media platform as well as its broadcast capabilities in authoritarian regimes where mass media are in the service of the ruling class. This study takes a Critical Discourse Analysis approach to analyse the collected data. The investigation uncovers evidence of systematic communication distortion in the public discourse of both Ayatollah Khomeini and the leaders of the Green Movement and discusses the impact of said distortions on the direction and shaping of the movement. This book also offers a brief analysis of the 2018 protests in comparison with Green Movement and explores ways to unify the nation and move forward.

Saghar Sadeghian's dissertation on "Iranian Non-Muslim Communities during the Constitutional Revolution (1891-1911)", submitted to Sorbonne Nouvelle, Paris 3 in France, is currently being turned into a book. The book provides a history of four major non-Muslim communities – Zoroastrians, Jews, Christians, and Baha'is –in majority Shi'a Muslim Iran during a period of national redefinition. This spans the era from 1891 – when the Tobacco Movement took place and the notion of an 'Iranian Nation' became central to public discourse, to 1911 – the closure of the second Constitutional Parliament which is considered the end of the Constitutional Movement. This history describes and analyzes issues of interaction, co-habitation, and negotiation between diverse groups in society. Zoroastrianism was born in ancient Iran; Judaism and Christianity were introduced by their followers to Iran in the first centuries of existence. The Babi/Baha'is Faith, on the other hand, only appeared in Iran in 1844. Ancient or recent, non-Muslims established their communities based on 'us' versus 'others'. 'Otherness' was practiced from all sides of the many boundaries among and between these groups for distinction and protection.

DISSERTATION NEWS CONT'D

Temporally, the study focuses on the moment of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution because of its promising political environment. The Revolution of 1906-1911, which was inspired by several democratic movements inside and outside the Middle East, developed one major objective: "Iran for all Iranians." In this period, boundaries between Muslim and non-Muslim populations seemed to crumble. That gave motivation to non-Muslims to join their Muslim fellow citizens in supporting the Revolution. One of the challenges, however, was how to apply Islamic laws while respecting constitutional demands. Some Muslim clerics (mujtahids) supported the Revolution and its ideals, others opposed it. The narrative reviews the arguments on both sides. Harsh political turmoil interrupted democratic initiatives, as when the first parliament was bombarded and closed by the new shah in 1908, and the second parliament was closed by the Iranian government after the Russian occupation of the north of Iran in 1911-1912.

The narrative takes account of the local, the national, as well as the international level. At the local level it describes the daily life of the members of these communities and their interactions with the greater Muslim society. At the national level, it explores the ways Iranian citizenship was defined for non-Muslims. At the international level, it examines the economic, social and political relationship between Iran and Western countries concerning its non-Muslim populations. The book argues that attempts were made at creating democracy by the revolution but bore little fruit in legislation. A new universalist discourse transcending boundaries of religious identity emerged, but was interrupted and could not survive the harsh aftermath of the Constitutional Movement.

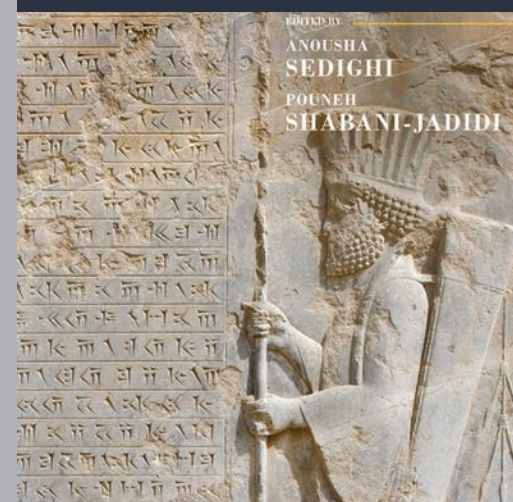
The existing literature of the field engages different elements of this topic. Employing extant sources, the manuscript makes significant contributions to the literature by exploring the experiences of groups often left out of the discussion, introducing critical new sources, and drawing on recent social theory to frame the analysis. Instead of studying only one religious community in Iranian society, the study compares the experiences of four major communities: Zoroastrians, Christians, Jews, and Babi/Baha'is. In addition, it draws on a wide range of primary and secondary sources. Apart from journals and memoirs of the time, documents from the National Archives and Foreign Affairs Archives in Iran were consulted, as were the Diplomatic Archives in Paris and Nantes, the Alliance Israélite Archives, the Lazaristes Archives (France), the British National Archives in London, and E.G. Browne Archives in Cambridge (U.K.). Many documents are introduced here to the academic world for the first time. Finally, this research studies the Constitutional Revolution with regard to non-Muslims. Although much research deals with the Revolution, the role of non-Muslims and the impact of the Revolution on non-Muslim communities have not been explored in depth.

The dissertation-turned-book contributes to academic debates in the fields of Middle Eastern and Iranian history, Subaltern/Minority History, and the histories of Social Mobility and Identity. It also addresses undergraduate and graduate students in history, political science, and international studies. To date, the author has published two peer-reviewed articles on the subject:

- "Tabriz New Catholic Church: a Construction of Urban Constitutional Crisis (1908-1912)," *Iran and the Caucasus*, Vol.21, Issue 1 (March 2017): 55-72.
- "Minorities and Foreigners in a Provincial Iranian City: Bahā'is in the Russian Consulate of Isfahan in 1903," *Journal of Persianate Studies*, vol.9, issue 1 (June 2016): 107-132.

Saghar Sadeghian is now Assistant Professor of History at Willamette University and Associate Director of the Yale Iranian History Internet Archives.

The Oxford Handbook of Persian Linguistics, Oxford University Press, 2018 (edited by Anousha Sedighi and Pouneh Shabani-Jadidi).



The Oxford Handbook of PERSIAN LINGUISTICS

Consider this crowdfunding initiative for a project on "Voices from Gilan" by Mauro Maggi, Associate Professor at Sapienza University and one of the authors of the chapter on the history of the Persian language from antiquity to the present in the featured Oxford Handbook: <http://sostieni.link/19683>

The handbook offers a comprehensive overview of the field of Persian linguistics, discusses its development, and captures critical accounts of cutting-edge research within its major subfields, as well as outlining current debates and suggesting productive lines of future research. Leading scholars in the major subfields of Persian linguistics examine a range of topics split into six thematic parts. Following a detailed introduction from the editors, the volume begins by placing Persian in its historical and typological context in Part I. Chapters in Part II examine topics relating to phonetics and phonology, while Part III looks at approaches to and features of Persian syntax. The fourth part of the volume explores morphology and lexicography, as well as the work of the Academy of Persian Language and Literature. Part V, language and people, covers topics such as language contact and teaching Persian as a foreign language, while the final part examines psycho- neuro-, and computational linguistics. The volume will be an essential resource for all scholars with an interest in Persian language and linguistics.

LIBRARY AND ACQUISITION NEWS

The **Iran Data Portal** (IDP) is delighted to announce the following recent additions:

Family Ties of the Iranian Political Elite

To shed light on one of the most under-studied aspects of the Islamic Republic, the Iran Data Portal now also features the family ties of the Iranian Political Elite, put together by Prof. Mehrzad Boroujerdi, one of the principal investigators of the IDP. The file published by the IDP is in Persian; the English version is printed in *Postrevolutionary Iran; A Political Handbook*, edited by Mehrzad Boroujerdi and Kourosh Rahimkhani (Syracuse University Press, 2018).

<http://irandataportal.syr.edu/family-ties-of-the-iranian-political-elite>

Statistical Yearbooks

The Statistical Yearbook of 2016-2017 (1395) has been added to the IDP. The yearbook, published by the Statistical Center of Iran, is in Persian and covers a wide range of subjects from agriculture to judicial and political affairs. Moreover, the English edition of the statistical yearbooks of 2014-2015 (1393) and 2015-2016 (1394) are also now available on the IDP:

<http://irandataportal.syr.edu/socio-economic-data/statistical-yearbook>

2017-2018 Budget

The 2017-2018 (1396) budget law as approved by the parliament can now be found on the IDP. The budget bill had been added previously. The budget law includes amendments made by the parliament to the budget suggested by President Rouhani's administration: <http://irandataportal.syr.edu/annual-budgets>

Energy Balance Sheets

The energy balance sheets of Iran from 1967 to 2015 have been added to the IDP. These balance sheets include data on production and consumption of different parts of the energy sector, from oil and gas to coal and electricity. Statistics on energy consumption can be found on this section at provincial level:

<http://irandataportal.syr.edu/energy-environment>

Follow the IDP on twitter for updates @IranDataPortal

The IDP research staff can be reached at irandataportal@maxwell.syr.edu

EXHIBITION NEWS

“Transforming Traditions: The Arts of 19th-Century Iran” at the Aga Khan Museum Toronto

The 19th century marked a time of significant upheaval and change in Iran. Engagement with the West challenged and transformed time-honoured traditions, bringing military, economic, technological, and cultural innovations to the country. At the same time, the Qajar dynasty, which ruled Iran from 1785 to 1925, consciously revived local artistic and religious traditions with the active patronage of Iranian religious customs, poetry, and the arts.

Transforming Traditions: The Arts of 19th-Century Iran, which opened at the Aga Khan Museum in September 2018, brings together a selection of masterpieces created during the Qajar dynasty. The exhibition aims to highlight the complex dynamics that impacted the arts of a society at a crossroads between tradition and transformation, arts that tell powerful stories about the persistence and revival of Iranian traditions and about how new “Western-style” art forms, entering the country from abroad, ushered in unprecedented artistic departures.

The objects in the exhibition speak of these dynamics in many different ways. Among the highlights is a lacquered bookbinding, on loan from the Louvre Museum Paris. It is decorated with roses and nightingales, common themes in Persian mystical poetry, but painted in a naturalistic style inspired by European engravings and botanical manuals.

Stories by the 12th-century Persian poet, Nizami Ganjavi, inspired the themes of two ceramic tiles on loan from the Louvre, their artistic style a blend of contemporary Persian and European influences, including lithographs. Like many of the objects in the exhibition, the tiles represent a successful fusion of tradition and the trends of the time, inviting us to contemplate how art transforms and is transformed in any society faced with major change.

Included in *Transforming Traditions: The Arts of 19th-Century Iran* are also lithographed Persian manuscripts, and photographs. “The newly introduced technologies of lithography and photography were used in Iran to promote historical awareness of Iranian identity,” says Bitā Pourvash, co-curator of the exhibition and Assistant Curator, Aga Khan Museum.

For instance, the illustrations of an 1859-60 lithographed edition of the *Shahnameh (Book of Kings)* by Ferdowsi widely disseminated the images of legendary Iranian kings and heroes. Subsequently, the images were used on various art forms such as tiles, textiles, and metalworks.



AGA KHAN MUSEUM

EXHIBITION NEWS CONT'D

The exhibition also includes a number of photographs by Antoin Sevruguin, who was active as a photographer in Tehran between 1870 and 1930 and whose photographs captured the people and landscapes of a society at the crossroads. One street scene shows Tehran's Gas Street, named for the gas lamp factory established there in 1877, crowded with horse-drawn streetcars on the city's rail system and with people in both traditional and European-style dress.

"The purpose of *Transforming Traditions: The Arts of 19th-Century Iran* is not simply to present a host of beautiful artifacts," says Dr. Ulrike Al-Khamis, co-curator of the exhibition and Director of Collections and Public Programs at the Aga Khan Museum. "It is also to provide insights into a dynamic, creative, sophisticated country."

Transforming Traditions: The Arts of 19th-Century Iran runs until February 10, 2019 at the Aga Khan Museum Toronto. For more information please visit: <https://www.agakhanmuseum.org/exhibitions/transforming-traditions>



RESEARCH REPORT

The Author of *Rustam ut-Tawârikh* and Insights into his Views of Iran

Jalil Nozari

The publication of *Rustam ut-Tawârikh* (Tehran, 1969) created enthusiasm among historians and researchers of Iranian Studies. The text presents itself as a historical narrative of Iran during the late Safavid and early Qajar eras, composed in 1820-1830, by someone conceitedly referring to himself as "Rustam ol-Hokamâ". The text is a peculiar account, unequalled by other sources in that it relates certain historical events in an unprecedented context and 'colour'. A number of events, such as the presence of foreign envoys at the Safavid court and their abuse by the Persians, did not happen literally. Its pattern of narration and ridiculing the endless cycle of warlords' enthronement and dethronement challenges the book's claim to provide an account of history in its ordinary sense. A posteriori views of the events, the use of simple prose unlike the prevalent style used in the Qajar era, the presence of modern discourses and anachronistic evidences that can be found throughout the book are hard to explain if the book is viewed to be a product of the early Qajar period. Moreover, there are problems with identifying the author. There is no record available for or reference to him in writing, except for the details he provides about himself in the book. What makes it more complicated is that he has been a prolific writer evident through the manuscripts bearing his name as the author. If the claims of the text are accepted, we will be faced with questions pertaining to the beginning of contemporary Persian prose, the formation of modern Iranian national identity, the discourse in favour of a separation of religion and politics, and efforts to bridge Shi'a and Sunni doctrines in the early nineteenth century. Moreover, the question remains of how, for an author with the vast relations he claims to have with the court and historical figures of his time, there is no public or private record of any kind. If, by contrast, the author's claims about his own identity are assumed to be untrue, we have to unveil the true writer and research his motivations for misleading his readership. Either way, we have to question our perceptions of the Qajar period and its historiography of Iranian history after the Safavids.

A literature review of the published material on the subject reveals that no serious study has so far been conducted on the authorship of *Rustam ut-Tawârikh*, and that the reactions to the book's publication have been varied. The book has either been uncritically referred to as a source for the history of its covered period or been rejected for the alleged madness of its author. A few researchers have pointed to the modern elements in the author's discourse and consequently challenged the text as a history book, identifying it rather as an example of satirical production.

RESEARCH REPORT CONT'D

There are a number of ways to examine the three assumptions of genre, period of composition and the identity of the author. These include analysis of prose, diction, narrative styles, and discourses prevailing in the alleged time of composition with those permeating the text, and a close reading of the text for clues to events and sources not readily at the disposal of Iranian writers at the time. Literature by prose writers, published and unpublished, from the time of Mohammad Shah Qajar to the early Pahlavi era needs to be re-read in order to comparatively study their style of writing and compare it with that of *Rustam ut-Tawârikh* in order to ascertain whether Rustam ol-Hokamâ should be viewed as a historical figure or rather as an undisclosed pen name.

The research I have carried out has led me to conclude that Rustam ol-Hokamâ is indeed a pen name, and specifically it is the pen name for Reza Qoli Khan Hedayat (1800-1871). As a result of this finding, two more questions pose themselves: why the author was led to disguise himself behind a false identity and, the more important, what might be the impact of this revelation on our reading of the Iranian history during the covered period and, also, a reading of Hedayat's own legacy.

In my book on the topic, *Nevisandeh-yi Rustam at-tawârîh kîst? Pažūheshi dar negāh-ye ū bi Īrān, Mīrāt-i Maktūb* 1396 [2017], I show how the writing of Rustam ol-Hokamâ is identical stylistically with those of Reza Qoli Khan Hedayat in comparison to those by other writers of the Qajar era. Afterwards, the similarities between the details of family and personal lives of the two authors are brought to light. Two short chapters on Hedayat's motives for choosing a false name and the grounds for later research bring the book to its conclusion. The concern for Iran and its future is shown to occupy a focal position in *Rustam ut-Tawârikh*.

DONATIONS

The Association of Iranian Studies gratefully acknowledges donations by

- Cyrus Ashayeri (California)
- Mahshid Darabi-Farsi (California)
- Roman Dudka (Canada)
- Rudi Matthee (Delaware)
- Soosan P. Yeganegi (California)

PHOTOS FROM A FIELD TRIP: SHIA MUSLIMS IN GOMBORI, GEORGIA

In March 2018, the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies convened its biennial conference in Tblisi, Georgia. Mary Hegland, who presented a paper there ("From Agriculture to Urban Real Estate: A 21st Century Perspective on the 1962 Aliabad Land Reform") kindly provided two visual memories of her trip:

Noruz in the village of Gombori, Georgia, where anthropology student Tatia Kalatozishvili has been conducting research about how Georgian Orthodox Catholics and Shia Muslims originally from Persia wield their cultures and rituals to help them cohabitate the village in harmony. Photo provided by Tatia Kalatozishvili.

Anthropology professor Ketevan Gurchiani and Mary Hegland in the Gombori Shia cemetery just across the road from the Georgian Orthodox Catholic cemetery, March 2018. First some Persian men came to make charcoal a couple of generations ago, and then their womenfolk joined them in Gombori. One grandmother, a leading religious figure, remembers her father telling her stories in Persian but today Persian is not spoken in the village anymore.



CONFERENCE REPORTS

Modern Iranian Art and Architecture in the Shadow of the Classical Persian Past Conference held at the University of Manchester, 17 May 2018

In May 2018 the School of Arts, Languages and Cultures at the University of Manchester hosted a conference on Persian and Iranian Art and Architecture.

The conference addressed an on-going challenge in academic work on the history of the art and architecture of Iran: it is divided into two fields, one much more populated than the other. One of these is the widely studied historical field with its focus on pre-modern, medieval and ancient 'Persian' art and architecture; the other is the field of modern and contemporary 'Iranian' art and architecture. The problem arises in the fact that there is often little communication or appreciation between these two fields. Modern and contemporary artists and scholars reflect on classical art and architecture, but from the historical side there tends to be considerably less interest in the modern and contemporary field. Methodological practices also differ between the two: contemporary art history uses 20th and 21st century theoretical perspectives, whereas in the historical field, more often than not, historical and traditional art historical methods are used. Yet, the two fields are connected – artists and historians of art do not live in a vacuum, and Persian and Iranian art is by definition connected. There has always been a looking back at, and awareness of, the past among historians of art, but modern and contemporary artists too are rooted in, and make reference to, the past.

The Conference brought together scholars from both the historical and contemporary fields to discuss certain issues which run across their respective subjects. The iconic and historic John Rylands Library, Deansgate in central Manchester was the location for this two-day conference. There was an opportunity to view some examples of the John Rylands Collection of a thousand Persian manuscripts.

Speakers included Robert Hillenbrand, Paul Luft, Hamid Keshmirshekan, Alan Williams, Aida Foroutan, Mina Talaee, Elizabeth L. Rauh, Saeid Khaghani, Aban Tahmasebi, Ilse Sturkenboom, Abbas Daneshvari, Keivan Moussavi-Aghdam, Elizabeth Gow, Ali Ansari, David Hodge, Roberta Marin, David Lomas, Bobak Etminani, Siavush Randjbar-Daemi, Hosein Eyalati, Combiz Moussavi-Aghdam, Jamal Arabzadeh, Nicoletta Torcelli, Tim Cornwell, Chaeri Lee, Anita Hosseini, Agnes Rameder, Janet Rady, Dafne Gotink, and Abbas Hosseini. For more information, please visit www.mihan.org.uk.

The Idea of Iran: The Safavid Era Conference held at SOAS, October 27, 2018

The sixteenth and seventeenth centuries saw the establishment of the new Safavid regime in Iran, heir not only to the succession of leadership of the Safavid sufi order, but also to the Aq Qoyunlu dispensation of western Iran and more remotely to the Timurid Empire in the East. Along with reuniting the Persian lands under one rule, the Safavids initiated the radical transformation of the religious landscape by introducing Imami Shi'ism as the official state faith and in this as in other ways, laying the foundations of Iran's modern identity. While sometimes viewed as a period of decline from the highpoints of classical Persian literature and the visual arts of preceding centuries, the Safavid era was nevertheless a period of great literary and artistic activity in the realms of both secular and theological endeavour. In addition, with the establishment of comparable polities in across western, southern and central Asia at broadly the same time, interactions with Ottoman, Mughal and Uzbek neighbours ensured fruitful interactions with other Muslim states also making the transition for the medieval to the modern world. Finally, European encounters with these worlds provide rich new layers of information and evidence of material and intellectual transmission.

What does the Idea of Iran mean at this period? Can we discern the ways that contemporaries viewed their traditions and their environment (natural or built); what was the view of outsiders, and how does modern scholarship define the distinctive aspects of the period? These were some of the questions explored in the symposium dedicated to this rich and highly productive period that took Iran to the eve of modernity. The conference was convened by Sarah Stewart, SOAS and Charles Melville, University of Cambridge. Speakers included Gregory Aldous (University of Pittsburgh at Greensburg), Ali Anooshahr (University of California, Davis), Ferenc Csirkés (Sabanci University), Negar Habibi (University of Geneva), Rudolph Matthee (University of Delaware, Newark), Colin Mitchell (Dalhousie University, Halifax), Andrew J. Newman (University of Edinburgh), Sajjad Rizvi (University of Exeter), and Daniel J. Sheffield (Princeton University).

The proceedings are now viewable at :

(Part1)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IXyKoBWpiWk>

(Part 2)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pPCwsAkvQso>



LANGUAGE TRAINING

ASPIRANTUM Armenian School of Languages and Cultures in Yerevan organizes International Persian Language Summer School in Yerevan, Armenia, to take place from July 07 to August 17 (6 weeks) and July 07 to July 27 (3 weeks), 2019.

The 42 or 21 days summer schools offer participants the opportunity to master skills in written and oral modern Persian, reading and interpreting Persian texts from different periods as well as rapidly deepening their knowledge in colloquial Persian.

To apply, please click on the websites below and fill in the application form.

- Persian Language 6 weeks Summer School (Jul 07 - Aug 17, 2019)
<https://aspirantum.com/courses/persian-language-summer-school-07-jul-17-aug-2019-yerevan-armenia>
- Persian Language 3 weeks Summer School (Jul 07 - Jul 27, 2019)
<https://aspirantum.com/courses/persian-language-summer-school-07-jul-27-jul-2019-yerevan-armenia>

The Soudavar Memorial Foundation offers one full scholarship in the amount of \$3590 for the 6 weeks summer school. To be eligible for this scholarship, applicants must be students or researchers engaged in academic activities related to Iranian Studies. Nationals of any country can apply for this scholarship. For application details, see here: <https://aspirantum.com/scholarships/soudavar-full-scholarship-for-farsi-persian-language-summer-school>

Previously ARMACAD has organized summer and winter schools on Armenian and Persian Language. For testimonials of alumni, see here: <https://aspirantum.com/testimonials>

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Iranian Revolution as a World Event

13 and 14 December 2018, University of Amsterdam

Marking the 40th anniversary of the Iranian Revolution, this workshop is organised to stimulate research on its causes, dynamics and global ramifications.

Panels: The Subaltern and the Iranian Revolution; International Relations of the Iranian Revolution; Transnational Networks and Ideas; The International Left and the Iranian Revolution; Rethinking Revolutionary Islam; Intellectual Receptions of the Iranian Revolution

Keynote lecture by Dr. Behrooz Ghamari-Tabrizi: The Iranian Revolution and Its Detractors: "A Leap into the Open Air of Historical Possibilities"

Speakers will include: Touraj Atabaki, Craig Daigle, Arash Davari, Peyman Jafari, Michiel Leezenberg, Mojtaba Mahdavi, Kamran Matin, Manijeh Moradian, Negar Mottahedeh, Siavush Randjbar-Daemi, Simon Fuchs, Naghmeh Sohrabi and others.

The conference is organised by Peyman Jafari at the History Department of the University of Amsterdam. For the full program, please see on <http://acmes.uva.nl/content/events/conferences/2018/12/the-iranian-revolution-as-a-world-event.html?origin=5g96beWdRFikMSg0E4SDGA>

Forty Years and More: International Conference on Iranian Diaspora Studies

March 28-30, 2019 at San Francisco State University

The **conference** will mark the anniversary of the 1979 Iranian Revolution by understanding the ways that Iranians as exiles, immigrants, and as second and third generation hyphenated citizens of their respective nations, have met with both challenges and opportunities of diaspora experience. It will be the first conference of its kind to highlight the work of new scholarship and research on the Iranian diaspora with participants from around the globe.

Conference presentations in the arts, humanities, and social sciences will present new scholarship and research about the Iranian diaspora from a variety of perspectives and national contexts.

Conference speakers will include Dr. Hamid Naficy, Dr. Neda Maghbouleh, Dr. Amy Malek, Dr. Shiva Balaghi, and many others.

In addition, the first annual **Aftab Prize for Best Research/Creative Work for Iranian Diaspora Studies** will be awarded at the March 2019 conference. The Aftab Prize, established in collaboration with the **Aftab Committee** of Washington, D.C., will award two \$250 prizes for undergraduates and two \$750 prizes for graduate level students:

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENTS CONT'D

- Best Graduate Prize for a Paper Focusing on Research that emphasizes Iranian Diaspora Studies
- Best Graduate Prize for a Creative Project in Arts and Humanities utilizing creative writing, photography, visual arts, audio, etc.
- Best Undergraduate Prize for a Paper Focusing on Iranian Diaspora Studies in Fields of humanities and social science that emphasizes Iranian diaspora issues, communities, culture.
- Best undergraduate prize for a creative project in arts and humanities utilizing creative writing, photography, visual arts, audio, etc.

CALL FOR PAPERS | SYMPOSIA IRANICA

FOURTH BIENNIAL CONFERENCE ON IRANIAN STUDIES

Hosted by the University of Cambridge at St John's College, Cambridge, UK, 9-10 April 2019

Deadline: 30 December 2018

We welcome proposals that engage with any aspect of Iranian studies within the arts, humanities and social sciences. These include but are not limited to prehistory through to the ancient and post-antique, modern, and contemporary histories; historiography; art and architecture history; anthropology; archaeology; cultural heritage; film and cinema; music and musicology; new media and communication studies; the performing arts; poetry and literature; languages and linguistics; Diaspora and migration studies; diplomatic studies, international relations and political science; social and political theory; law and legal studies; economics, philately and numismatics; sociology; philosophy; religions and theology. Comparative themes and interdisciplinary approaches are also very welcome.

Proposals are open to early career scholars at postgraduate and post-doctoral levels from any disciplinary background within the arts, humanities and social sciences:

1. Postgraduate students (MA, MPhil, MSt, etc. who are currently enrolled or who graduate/d in 2019 or 2018);
2. PhD students and PhD candidates at any stage of their degree; and
3. post-docs who graduated within the last three years (2018, 2017, 2016, 2015).

Persons falling into any of these categories are eligible to submit a proposal for an individual paper or pre-arranged panel. Submission is conducted electronically through the website. For any questions, please email us at office@symposia-iranica.com.

The language of the conference is English. All submissions undergo double-blind peer review.

Symposia Iranica is Iranian studies' leading forum for early career scholars. A dedicated, multidisciplinary, peer-reviewed platform open to emerging scholars working on any aspect of Iranian or Persian Studies within the arts, humanities, and social sciences, our three previous conferences were hosted by the University of St Andrews at St Mary's College in 2013 and the University of Cambridge at Downing College in 2015 and Pembroke College in 2017.

The full call for papers is available at: symposia-iranica.com

A virtual preview of the programme is available at: symposia-iranica.com/preview

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

Ehsan Yarshater Post-Doctoral Fellowship in the Yale Program in Iranian Studies at The MacMillan Center, Yale University

The Yale Program in Iranian Studies accepts applications for the Ehsan Yarshater Fellowship in Iranian and Persian Studies for 2019-20 (renewable for one year).

The Post-Doctoral Associate will teach one course during the year, either in the Fall or the Spring semester, pursue his/her own research, and participate in the activities of the Iranian Studies Program and Council on Middle East Studies. Post-doctoral Associates are expected to be in residence from August 2019 to May 2020. Applicants in all fields of humanities and social and political sciences who have recently received their PhDs or are in the early stages of their academic career may apply. Requirements include a viable research project, teaching an undergraduate seminar in the field of specialization, and normally residence in New Haven.

We will begin accepting applications immediately with review beginning on December 2018 (and continuing until the selection is final).

Yale University is an Affirmative Action/Equal Opportunity employer. Yale values diversity among its students, staff, and faculty and strongly welcomes applications from women, persons with disabilities, protected veterans, and underrepresented minorities.

To apply, send a one-page statement, CV, synopsis of your research project, and a draft of a syllabus of a 13 week seminar you propose to teach at Yale. You'll also need to have two letters of recommendation submitted on your behalf.

All information from the applicant should be submitted electronically through Interfolio: apply.interfolio.com/55263

Please contact Cristin Siebert by email, cristin.siebert@yale.edu, for any questions related to the application process. You may visit the Program in Iranian Studies website here: <http://iranianstudies.macmillan.yale.edu/>

Edinburgh Historical Studies of Iran & the Persian World



Published in association with Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali,
Founder and Chair, Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute

Series General Editor: Stephanie Cronin, Elahé Omidyar
Mir-Djalali Research Fellow, University of Oxford

Series Advisory Board:

- Janet Afary, UC Santa Barbara
- Abbas Amanat, Yale University
- Touraj Atabaki, International Institute of Social History
- Joanna de Groot, University of York
- Vanessa Martin, Royal Holloway, University of London
- Rudi Matthee, University of Delaware
- Cyrus Schayegh, The Graduate Institute, Geneva

Studies of the political, economic, social and cultural history of medieval and modern Iran and the Persian world

Covering the history of Iran and the Persian world from the medieval period to the present, this series aims to become the pre-eminent place for publication in this field. As well as its core concern with Iran, it will extend its interests to encompass a much wider and more loosely defined cultural and linguistic world, including Afghanistan, the Caucasus, Central Asia, Xinjiang and northern India.

Books in the series will present a range of conceptual and methodological approaches, looking not only at states, dynasties and elites, but at subalterns, minorities and everyday life.

Find out more: www.edinburghuniversitypress.com/series/EHSIPW



@EdinburghUP



www.euppublishingblog.com

EDINBURGH
University Press

www.edinburghuniversitypress.com