



ASSOCIATION FOR IRANIAN STUDIES

انجمن ایران پژوهی

<http://associationforiranianstudies.org>

AIS Newsletter | Volume 43, Number 2 | November 2022

EDITOR'S NOTE

It is difficult to find words to introduce an academic newsletter when students and pupils, their parents, grandparents, their siblings and friends risk their lives on the streets for the simple demand of living in circumstances in which they can fulfil their potential. Is it too much to ask to be allowed to be who you want to be? To believe what you want to believe? To love who you want to love? As long as you are prepared to also grant these same rights to others?

Nobody knows at present where the protests on the streets of Iran's cities and villages will lead, but perhaps we can find comfort in the long-term view that they epitomize a social shift that will, at some point in the future, be the soil on which a freedom-enhancing and freedom-securing political system will be built.

The AIS has much to report. The past months gave opportunity to rebuild initiatives and relationships that had lain dormant for the most part of the pandemic. From August 30 to September 2, 2022, AIS held its biennial conference at the Faculty of Philology at the University of Salamanca, founded in 1218 by King Alfonso IX of León (also remembered for convening one of the earliest parliaments on the European continent). Reports from the conference and from individual panels and roundtables are featured in the newsletter, as are reports of the sumptuous awards ceremony. On December 1, a new president and new officers will take their seats on the AIS board, and a new editor of the association's flagship journal is in the process of being appointed.

The Iranian Studies community has once again contributed richly to this edition, with reports of new publications and recent research, notices of upcoming workshops and conferences, an interview with the Arab Iranian artist Samira Abbasy, and an eye-catching take on the image of Alexander the Great in Firdawsi's Book of Kings.

I wish everyone a peaceful read and hope you may find the one or other report or contribution to be a source of inspiration.

Best wishes, Mirjam Künkler

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OUTGOING PRESIDENT’S FAREWELL

Dear AIS Members,

I am pleased to announce the new AIS Council members who will begin their service to the association on December 1, 2022. Profs. Niki Akhavan (Catholic University of America) and Amir Moosavi (Rutgers University) are the newly elected Council members and Sara Mashayekh (UC Santa Barbara) is our new student representative on the Council. On behalf of all of us at AIS, I extend a warm congratulations to them!

The entry of new Council members means a grateful farewell to Profs. Fatemeh Shams and Hosna Sheikholislami, along with Dr. Rowena Abdul Razak all three of whom served the association with great passion, energy, and thought. AIS thanks you all for your service and knows that our field will continue to benefit from you in a variety of ways in the years to come.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank you all for allowing me to serve as your president for the past two years. Since I began serving AIS as a Council member in 2017, I have been truly blessed to witness the myriad of ways that our field is shaped and enriched by all of you. I owe a debt of gratitude to all the Council members, AIS officers, past presidents, and AIS members who were gracious in sharing their counsel and expertise, and from whose tireless work I benefited enormously.

Last but not least, a warm welcome to our new president, Prof. Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet. Already this past year as president-elect, Prof. Kashani-Sabet brought great vision, care, and enthusiasm to the leadership of AIS. I am excited to officially hand things to her, and I look forward to the wonderful ways in which she will lead AIS in the coming years.

Warm regards,
NaghmeH Sohrabi
(Soon-to-be-former) President, Association for Iranian Studies

JOURNAL NEWS

Report from the Editor of Iranian Studies Journal

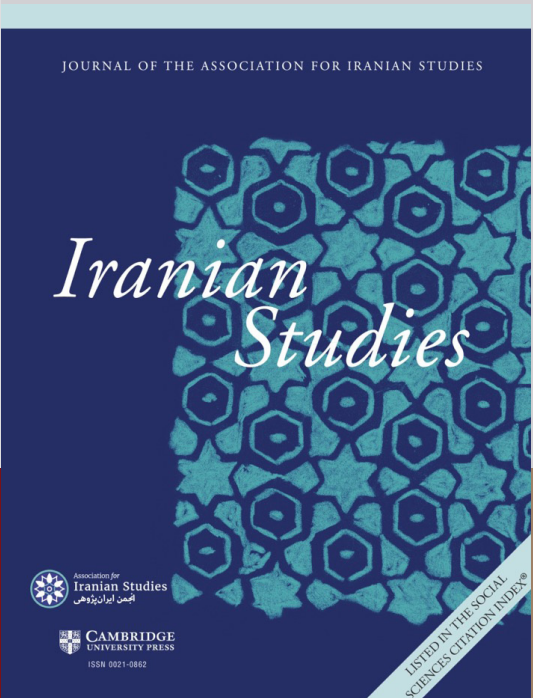
In its fifty-fifth year of publication, *Iranian Studies* is a library of evolving knowledge unto itself. Our responsibility is to continue the work by seeking and publishing high-quality manuscripts and adhering no less to a rigorous editorial process. Nevertheless, there is nothing set in stone about the organization of the journal, so a few changes are in the works.

One recent change is that our publisher is now Cambridge University Press. It has been a pleasure working with them. In keeping with the purpose of a multidisciplinary and international publication, the current editorial team hopes to expand our geographical reach by providing greater exposure for research by scholars working outside the United States and Europe and to increase contributions from certain underrepresented fields, the social sciences in particular. One initial step we have taken is to include short reviews of books written in Persian. The first appearance of this section is found in the July issue of this year. Our intention is to extend this feature with reviews of books written in other non-European and regional languages. Bringing in more good reviewers who are based in Iran and neighboring countries would also be a step towards expanding publishing opportunities for them in the Journal.

As for more representation in the social sciences, we have invited scholars to organize roundtables, and now anticipate publishing a set of related short articles based on one such forum. Entitled, “Writing Capitalism into Iran,” with contributions from several social scientists, including one by an Iran-based scholar, this roundtable will appear in the last issue of 2022 or at the latest in the first issue of 2023.

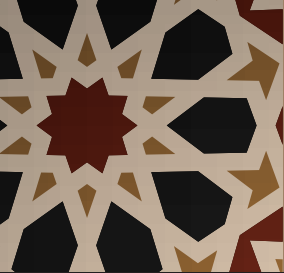
The journal depends, as it always has, on attracting the best scholarship. It represents the talents and dedication of many and seeks to encourage contributions from younger scholars. May all scholars of our fields think first of Iranian Studies in submitting their best work for publication and urge their colleagues to do so as well.

Sussan Siavoshi
Editor, Iranian Studies



VOLUME 55 OF IRANIAN STUDIES, ISSUES 3 AND 4, JULY AND OCTOBER 2022,
HAVE BEEN PUBLISHED!
PLEASE SEE

[HTTPS://WWW.CAMBRIDGE.ORG/CORE/JOURNALS/IRANIAN-STUDIES/ALL-ISSUES](https://www.cambridge.org/core/journals/iranian-studies/all-issues)



JOURNAL NEWS CONT'D

ISSUE 3, 2022

Editor's Note
Sussan Siavoshi

Special Issue *Persianate Pasts; National Presents: Persian Literary and Cultural Production in the Twentieth Century*
Guest Editors' Introduction
Aria Fani, Kevin L. Schwartz

From Persianate Cosmopolis to Persianate Modernity: Translating from Urdu to Persian in Twentieth-Century Iran and Afghanistan
Alexander Jabbari

Soviet Persian Anthologies: Transnational, Multinational, International
Samuel Hodgkin

The Guide to Knowledge: The Journal Rahbar-i Dānish and Its Role in Creating a Soviet Tajik Literature (1927–1932)
Thomas Loy

Disciplining Persian Literature in Twentieth-Century Afghanistan
Aria Fani

Soundwaves of Dissent: Resistance Through Persianate Cultural Production in Afghanistan
Mejgan Massoumi

Sources Uncovered
Persian Studies in India and the Colonial Universities, 1857–1947
Gregory Maxwell Bruce

Forlorn Arabs and Flying Americans: National Identity in the Early Childhood Curriculum of Postrevolutionary Iran, 1979–2009
Shervin Malekzadeh

Marche Triomphale: A Forgotten Musical Tract in Qajar-European Encounters
Mohsen Mohammadi

Archival Report
Not By Archives Alone: The “Revolution” in Soviet Central Asian Literary Studies
Claire Roosien

Afterword
Afterword to *Persianate Pasts, National Presents: Persian Literary and Cultural Production in the Twentieth Century*
Rebecca Ruth Gould

Article
Transcendence between Expression and Secrecy: A Critical Cognitive Perspective on the Metaphorical Discourse of Yārsān Religion
Rahman Veisi Hasar, Kianoosh Rezanian

Reviews

ISSUE 4, 2022

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Sussan Siavoshi

Literary Studies

Telling a Different Story: Redeployment of the Narrative Alexander Tradition in a Medieval Persian Dāstān
Julia Rubanovich

Intertextuality and Subversion: Nezāmi in Modern Persian Literature
Christoph U. Werner

Traveling through an Ocean of Wonders: Muḥammad Rabī's Safīna-yi Sulaymānī and Southeast and East Asian Geography
Francesco Calzolaio

From Dengbêj to Modern Writer: Heritagization of the Kurdish Oral Tradition and Revitalization of the Kurdish Language in the Works of Mehmed Uzun and Mehmet Dicle
Joanna Bocheńska

History
“A Priest does not consider the toppling of the Shah as an option” The KGB and the revolution in Iran
Dmitry Asinovskiy

The Gharib Shah Rebellion of 1629
Nazak Birjandifar

“Islam Says We Are All Equal”: The Islamic Turn in Soviet Propaganda in Iran, 1921–25
Alisa Shablovskaya

JOURNAL NEWS CONT'D

Linguistics

Aspectual Verb Constructions in Persian

Mohammad Rasekh-Mahand, Mehdi Parizadeh

dastan and tuwān, Adjectives or Nouns? A Discussion about Their Grammatical Category and Meaning in Middle Persian

Mohammad Hasan Jalalian Chaleshtari

The Metaphorical Use of Body Parts in Forming Counting expressions: Evidence from Tāti Language Group

Jahandust Sabzalipur, Raheleh Izadifar

Varia

Sedigheh Vasmaghi: A new voice of Iranian religious reformism

Ali Akbar

Second-Generation Iranian Zoroastrians in a New American Homeland: A Case Study in California

Paulina Niechciał

Reviews

ACADEMIC FREEDOM

AIS-CAF has made the following statements since spring 2022:

AIS-CAF Statement in solidarity with the Iranian academics' petition in response to the unfolding events in Iran
September 20, 2022

Statement in Support of Students at Sharif University of Technology in Tehran
October 3, 2022

Thirteenth Biennial Iranian Studies Conference

August 30 – September 2, 2022

University of Salamanca, Spain

IMPRESSIONS FROM THE 13TH BIENNIAL IRANIAN STUDIES CONFERENCE

INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY AIS PRESIDENT NAGHMEH SOHRABI

This year's conference is the accumulation of labours of love by a wide spectrum of people who lifted up this association in extraordinary times. First and foremost is Conference and Program chair, Miguel Ángel Andrés-Toledo, who took on the work of organizing not one but two conferences in the span of four years. I have had the privilege of seeing first-hand the work that he has put into manifesting our field's creativity and ideas in the form of the conference we are all now attending, and I am in awe of his diligence, ethics, hard work, and good humour.

AIS Council, as the decision-making body of our association, has provided me with unwavering support for a number of initiatives these past two years and has, in turn, initiated necessary programs to alleviate the isolation and hardship brought upon by the global pandemic. These include but are not limited to:

- The Graduate Student Travel Grant to provide financial support for those participating in our biennial conference. The Travel Grant committee, chaired by our President-Elect, Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, worked with great deliberation and thought to support as many of our graduate students as possible. I am grateful to not only the AIS Council for initially providing funds but also to the ILEX Foundation for a generous grant and the contributions of an anonymous donor that allowed us to support over 20 students to travel to Salamanca.



CONFERENCES CONT'D

- The re-formation of the Association for Iranian Studies Committee for Academic Freedom (AIS-CAF), composed of three members of the AIS community who have put untold hours into defending academic freedoms for Iranian Studies, broadly defined. Due to the sensitive nature of their work, they remain anonymous, but the fruit of their labour is available on our website and the community remains grateful for all that they do.

- In August 2021, led by two tireless Council members, Fatemeh Shams and Khodadad Rezakhani, AIS Council members came together for several weeks to help find ways to evacuate and find new placements for our Afghan colleagues whose lives and livelihoods were in danger. It was both a heart-breaking time but also inspiring to see the passion and ethics of care on display in our field. Some of our Council members, alongside many of you, are still working to bring Afghan scholars to our various institutions. Our field is truly enriched by all those involved.

A special thanks goes to the following individuals and institutions for all they have done to both support the conference and the association: former AIS president, Camron Amin who laid the foundation for this conference in 2020 and admirably turned it into one of the first association conferences online; Council member Khodadad Rezakhani, our conference's Book Exhibit coordinator; James Gustafson, AIS Treasurer who with his care and diligence makes it financially possible for AIS to expand; Vahid Mazdeh, AIS social media coordinator and design master extraordinaire; Hamoun Hayati, AIS web manager; Rivanne Sandler, AIS Executive Director; the Center for Iranian Diaspora Studies San Francisco State University (funders of the Neda Nobari and Hamid Naficy awards); the Persian Heritage Foundation (funders of the Saidi-Sirjani and Latifeh Yarshater awards); ILEX Foundation (funders of 10 Graduate Student Travel awards); our institutional members, and the Crown Center for Middle East Studies at Brandeis University for their financial and logistical support during my time as president of AIS. May the conference bring you intellectual inspiration, heart-warming collegiality, and a lot of fun and laughter!

Naghmeh Sohrabi

President, Association for Iranian Studies

TREASURER'S REPORT FOR 2022 BIENNIAL CONFERENCE PROGRAM

The treasurer's role is to ensure we have the resources we need to promote the field of Iranian studies around the world and use those resources to help fulfil our association's core mission. Over these past few years, Presidents Camron Amin, Naghmeh Sohrabi, and the elected AIS Council members have emphasized building a truly inclusive, equitable, and transparent organization and I have been immensely proud to be here in support of those efforts. We have put a number of

new policies in place to ensure we communicate detailed information on how your money is being used, develop clear guidelines for honoraria and travel expenses, and create safeguards to ensure against fraudulent activities.

Our organization is in great financial shape today. This has allowed us to pursue a few new important initiatives. Through Council action and a generous grant from the ILEX Foundation, we were able to support travel grants for more than twenty graduate students around the world to attend this year's conference. We have also put together programs for professional development, including grant writing, navigating the academic job market, and publishing a first monograph. A Council subcommittee is currently working on mentoring initiatives to help build connections between our members. We are also conducting an Institutional Membership campaign. Member institutions receive ten complimentary AIS conference registrations, a listing on our website and conference program, and discounts on advertising in our journal and newsletter. We welcome ideas on new initiatives you would like to see your association pursue. Please also consider making a tax-deductible donation to AIS using the Donation Portal on our website.

Thank you again to Dr. Miguel Ángel Andrés-Toledo and the University of Salamanca for putting on a truly world-class academic conference for us. And, of course, thank you to all of you for being here and participating in an exchange of ideas, exploring new research, and deepening and enriching our community of students, scholars, and professionals.

James M. Gustafson

Treasurer and Secretary for Financial Affairs

MENTORSHIP COMMITTEE REPORT 2022

In early 2021, AIS Council appointed a task force to brainstorm ideas for facilitating a mentorship program for AIS members in all levels and stages of their career by harnessing the good will and talent of the association's membership. The task force included Naghmeh Sohrabi, Arang Keshavarzian, Mana Kia, Hosna Sheikholeslami, and me. The task force suggested several projects including the establishment of a permanent AIS mentorship committee, a celebration of first books published by AIS members and the creation of a mentorship database that linked early career scholars to senior members.

In Fall 2021, the Council announced the launch of the AIS Mentorship Committee. The first committee members include Afshin Marashi, Hosna Sheikholeslami, Paola Rivetti (representing the journal *Iranian Studies*), and myself as chair.

The Mentorship Committee sent out a call for all members who have published either first or new books since our last biennial meeting in Irvine in 2018. AIS will celebrate these accomplishments by recognizing them at the awards ceremony on the first day of the conference in Salamanca. We hope to carry this forth as a permanent

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feature of our biennial conferences. The Mentorship Committee is also hosting a lunchtime panel on research and publishing in Iranian Studies with the participation of journal and book series editors, and recent authors.

Additionally, in late Spring 2022, we announced a Conference Paper to Journal Article Award, for which we invited advanced graduate students or early career scholars presenting at Salamanca to apply. This collaborative project of the AIS Mentorship Committee and the journal *Iranian Studies* provide the award winner to work with experienced senior mentors to transform their presentation paper into an article that would skip *Iranian Studies*' desk review and immediately go through the journal's peer-review process. The award also carries a \$300 prize.

Lastly, the Mentorship Committee with the approval of AIS Council established a senior mentorship award to recognize outstanding recently retired members in our ranks who went above and beyond to train and mentor others in Iranian Studies. The award will be given out in every biennial starting with Salamanca 2022. This important recognition carries a lifetime membership to AIS. We will be announcing the inaugural recipients of the Conference Paper to Journal Article Award and the Senior Mentorship Award at the ceremonies on opening day.

In the future we hope to regularly facilitate 2-3 annual manuscript workshops. We are looking forward to receiving the membership's feedback and suggestions for additional undertakings.

We invite all AIS members to visit our Mentorship program page on the Association's website. On that page you can sign up to be a mentor or request mentorship. We will post our updates on that page as well.

Lior B. Sternfeld
Mentorship Committee, Chair

REPORT FROM THE CONFERENCE CHAIR

Dear AIS Members and Friends,

The Thirteenth Biennial Iranian Studies Conference (AIS 2022) had, for the first time, a hybrid format and congregated in 95 panels, roundtables and special sessions more than 300 participants, 85 of whom presented online. We opted for this format not only to avoid eventual travel restrictions, unpredictable in the context of the global pandemic of COVID-19 that had already forced us to cancel our conference in 2020, but also to enable members to accommodate their participation to their personal, financial and/or academic needs. In spite of the last minute problems with some online sessions, we hope it was the right choice.

Prof. Alberto Cantera (Institute of Iranian Studies, Free University of Berlin) inaugurated the conference with his keynote lecture "Great Avesta and Zoroastrian Rituals. The Avestan Texts in the 21st century" at the historical building of the University of Salamanca on August 30. That very day and at the same place, the AIS Welcome and Award Ceremonies took place. These were followed by a wine and snacks reception, where participants could get together, greet old colleagues and friends, and meet new ones in a relaxing atmosphere.

Apart from the rich academic program (ranging from linguistics, literature, history, history of religions, gender studies, arts, diaspora studies, anthropology, and sociology to politics and economy), members who attended the conference in person could join a sightseeing tour of Salamanca on the evening of August 31, and enjoy the concert of the Spanish-Iranian ensemble Badieh on the evening of September 1.

The organization of this conference could have never been possible without the constant support of the former and current AIS Executive Committee, AIS Council Members, Program Committee Members, AIS Web Manager Hamoun Hayati, and our sponsors and Institutional Members. Finally, I want to express my deepest gratitude for their great work and kindness to my great team in Salamanca, composed by Marcos Medrano Duque, Carmen Pérez González, Jorge Noreña Almeida, Isabel Varillas Sánchez and Julián Bautista Bernal. You are the best!

Miguel Ángel Andrés-Toledo
(Program Chair / Conference Chair of the AIS 2022)

CONFERENCES CONT'D

PRESIDENT'S OPENING REMARKS FOR THE 13TH BIENNIAL IRANIAN STUDIES CONFERENCE

I want to welcome all of you gathered here today from near and far. It has been 4 years since our association held its conference in person in Irvine, CA. As many of you know, we were meant to convene in Salamanca in 2020 but the pandemic led to the cancelation of the conference. Our 2020 conference ended up being what I think was one of the first associational conferences fully online, made possible through the vision, energy, and will of my predecessor, Cam Amin, then and current conference and program chair, Miguel Angel Toledo, and Hamoun Hayati, AIS's remarkable Web manager and superhero. Over the past several days, on social media and in private messages, I've watched friends and colleagues take precious time off from their families, work, and studies and make the journey to beautiful Salamanca. My ever-cynical self has melted a bit at the meaning of all of this; at what it means to be a community of colleagues, friends, and, as I have come to believe, a family of sorts with all that the word family entails.

When I was younger, much younger, you would always find me on the outer edges of Iranian Studies conferences. I would never present a paper but would meander around the margins, primarily hanging out with my friends and stealthily planting myself in the shadow of scholars I deeply admired. Some would say, I basically skulked. To be honest, my non-participatory participation was rooted in fear of being judged, fear of not being good enough, fear of being told I don't belong. Like all fears, it was a bit rooted in reality and like all fears, the emotions I felt were an exaggeration of reality itself.

As such, no one was probably more surprised than myself that I have ended up standing in front of you today, welcoming you to our biennial conference. In the past 5

years that I've had the honor of serving AIS, first as council member, then president-elect, and now president, a text that I kept visiting and re-visiting was Houchang Chehabi's short history of the association, printed in the 2018 Irvine conference program. It's a text I highly recommend everyone to read, for in that history lies the DNA of our association and a fundamental truth about what AIS was and continues to be.

In that history, Prof. Chehabi provides the fascinating story of how AIS was born out of the efforts of several enterprising graduate students, among them Ali Banuazizi who is present today. These "young turks" as Prof. Chehabi calls them at some point, began a journal in the late 1960s to reflect a new kind of scholarship on Iran, one that stood above the impassioned politics of the period and reflected the cutting-edge work being done on contemporary Iran. The association itself was born to ensure the longevity of the journal by "embracing scholars from various disciplines who worked on Iran." It was, unsurprisingly, attacked for both being pro-Shah and being anti-Shah as was the requirement of the times. In its early years, this association, created by these remarkable graduate students, was supported by some senior scholars and resisted by some others. But they persevered and became the umbrella under which the field of Iranian Studies stands. Reflecting the spirit of its times, the association did not have a hierarchical leadership structure until it ratified the position of president in 1996, close to 30 years after the it was created. Its constitution then, as now, made explicit that the elected Council remains the main body through which decisions are made.

It's against this background that I want to reflect on my use of the word family in welcoming you all to our 13th biennial conference. I began thinking about AIS as a family when I tried to figure out why it was that while I experienced fear, anxiety, and let's be honest, discontent, as a young scholar-to-be, I kept returning to Iranian Studies. And the answer is that it was in this community, this community born of a rebellious vision, that I found and continue to find, true comfort, a sense of wonder, and an unspoken understanding and intimacy rooted not just in shared interests but shared genealogies and histories.



Registration Team
of the 2022
AIS Biennial Conference



CONFERENCES CONT'D

This quality of AIS permeates every part of my experience these past several years. It is why every single person I asked to serve on a committee or task force or just reached out to for guidance said yes. Why so many remarkable scholars, most of them in their early careers, many of them with young families, agreed to throw their names in the hat for Council when asked. It is why the Council created a mentorship committee, a CAF committee, and a new graduate travel grant committee that has, along with generous support by the ILEX foundation, made it possible for over 20 graduate students to travel here today. It is why for some weeks in August 2021, AIS Council with zero publicity or fanfare heeded the call of two of its Council members Fatemeh Shams and Khodadad Rezakhani, each of whom were already spending untold hours on this, to help our Afghan colleagues. It is why many serve tirelessly for so many years, most of whom I have thanked in the conference program though I was remiss in not mentioning Mirjam Künkler the editor of our beautiful newsletter that I have come to see as a regular record of where the field is.

And it is why since 1996, many illustrious scholars have accepted to be the association's president, some of whom are here today—those that I have had the privilege of working with are the distinguished scholar Cam Amin who brought his signature good humor to the task of restoring AIS' irrefutable character as an association open to all who come to it and the president elect, Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet whose commitment to mentorship and inclusivity is only matched by her groundbreaking scholarship. It is why, a scholar of Miguel Angel Toledo's stature, doesn't have to, but nonetheless chooses to, take on the herculean task of organizing our biennial conference not once but twice. Several nights ago, I asked him: Why in the world would someone do this to themselves? It is nothing, was his usual modest response. Take my word for it: It was whatever is the opposite of nothing.

Let's be honest: All families have ups and downs. No family is all unicorns and roses. I recently took my parents who are near 80 for a two week trip to Italy. Once a day at least, I would roll my eyes, mutter under my breath, and send long missives to my siblings, complaining of this or that. But I'd drop everything again and again, to travel the world with them or to just be in their presence. Much like all of you who have taken planes, trains, and automobiles to spend the next several days here in pursuit of knowledge, intellectual exchange, and community.

So in the next week, if you catch yourself standing on the margins, or if you see someone else doing so, with eyes full of inquisitive thought tinted with a touch of anxiety, don't worry. It's just a sign that new ideas for what we can and should be are being hatched. For this is the Iranian Studies community and that is what we do.

Naghmeh Sohrabi

President, Association for Iranian Studies



BADIEH

AFTER YEARS OF PLAYING TOGETHER, MICHEL GASCO (SPAIN) AND MOHAMMAD MIRAGHAZADEH (IRAN) DECIDED TO START THEIR FIRST MUSICAL PROJECT AND 'BADIEH' WAS BORN.

BETWEEN 2018 AND 2019, THEY STARTED WORKING ON SEVERAL KHORASANI PIECES FROM BOTH SIDES OF THE AFGHAN-IRANIAN BORDER AND WENT TO THE STUDIO TO RECORD THEIR FIRST ALBUM.

PLAYING INSTRUMENTS LIKE THE OUD, TAR, SETAR, TOMBAK OR KUZE, ALONG WITH THE AFGHAN ROBAB AND TABLA, BADIEH OFFERS A DIFFERENT AESTHETIC APPROACH TO THOSE OLD PIECES. THE PERCUSSION PARTS IN THE ALBUM WERE RECORDED BY THREE DIFFERENT PERCUSSIONISTS: OMID HATAMI ON THE DAFF, KUZE AND... RAMIN AHMADI ON THE TABLA AND ARASH AZADEE ON THE TOMBAK

BADIEH APPROCHES THESE PIECES WITH INSTRUMENTS LIKE THE OUD, TAR, SETAR, TOMBAK OR KUZE, ALONG WITH AFGHAN ROBAB, TABLA, GIVING THEM A DIFFERENT AESTHETIC TOUCH.

BADIEH'S ALBUM HAS BEEN RELEASED BY THE AUSTRALIAN RECORD LABEL WORLD WITHIN WORLDS.

MICHEL GASCO IS A SPANISH MUSICIAN AND DOCUMENTARY FILM MAKER. HE STUDIED THE OUD IN ALEPPO, SYRIA, WITH THE OUD MASTERS MOHAMMAD QADRI DALAL AND AYMAN JESRY AND THE AFGHAN RUBAB IN MASHHAD, IRAN, WITH USTAD NASSIM KHUSHNAWAZ.

MOHAMMAD MIRAGHAZADEH IS AN IRANIAN MUSICIAN AND MUSIC TEACHER. HE STUDIED THE TAR, SETAR AND RADIF WITH USTAD MOHAMMAD REZA LOTFI AND USTAD JALAL ZOLFONUN.

I WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY PARISA DELSHAD, THE IRANIAN TOMBAK PLAYER BASED IN SPAIN.

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INSIGHTS FROM AIS 2022 CONFERENCE PANELS

Approaches to the Study of the Iranian Left

The 2022 AIS Conference included a roundtable and a panel that examined the diverse histories and approaches to the study of the Iranian Left. The roundtable, a reconstructed version of a roundtable originally organized for the 2020 conference, was held on Tuesday, August 30, under the title “The Iranian Left: Continuity and Change Across Three Generations.” Its organizer, Afshin Matin-Asgari, explained that the new lineup of participants reflected more attention to topics such as gender and ethnic minorities, adding that two of the slated participants were unable to attend due to personal circumstances. The first speaker was Shahrzad Mojab, who joined via Zoom, and reflected on the trajectory of her engagement with leftist politics and the lived experiences of Kurdish women. The next three speakers, Touraj Atabaki, Eskandar Sadeghi-Boroujerdi, and Siavush Randjbar-Daemi addressed broader questions of methodology and primary sources for the study of the Left. The final speaker, Siavash Saffari, spoke of the need to critically reassess the history of the Left in relation to the question of religion. The roundtable also featured nearly twenty-five minutes of animated questions, feedback and comments by an audience of approximately thirty scholars. Noting a renewed interest in the scholarly study of the Iranian Left, Matin-Asgari concluded the session by inviting the attendees to explore the possibility of launching a Left Studies Group within the AIS.

The panel on the history of the Left was held on Wednesday, August 31, and it featured presentations by Siavash Saffari, Leonard W. Michael, Bianca Devos, and Alisa Shablovskaja.

Titled, “Between Critique and Acquiescence: Marxism, Islam, and the Ambivalent Secularism of the Tudeh Party,” Saffari’s presentation addressed the paradoxical positions of two Tudeh Party intellectuals, Ehsan Tabari and Hushang Nazemi (Amir Nika’in), in their engagements with the question of religion. The paradox, Saffari proposed, was rooted in a fundamental tension between an orthodox Marxist-Leninist skepticism toward religion pervading Tabari’s and Nazemi’s essays on dialectical materialism and the critique of idealist (including religious) ontology, and a contingent political pragmatism propelling the Tudeh Party not only to refrain from explicit anti-religious propaganda but also to endorse Ruhollah Khomeini’s brand of political Islam in the course of the 1979 revolution. Problematizing the tendency to reduce the Tudeh Party’s interaction with religion to the party’s support for revolutionary Islamism, Saffari’s conclusion stressed the need for further research on the historical context and intellectual origins of the Tudeh’s ambivalence toward religion.

Also focusing on the Tudeh Party, Michael explored the personal links between the Tudeh Party and members of the short-lived radically nationalist, allegedly pro-fascist, “Jahansuz Group”, which was created by several junior military officers around Mohsen Jahansuz in 1939. Titled “The Modernist Opposition in Late Reza-Shah Iran: The Origins of the Tudeh Party Revisited,” his presentation drew on memoirs and court files regarding the Jahansuz Group in order to analyze and explain the surprisingly significant role of former associates of Jahansuz in the Tudeh. Emphasizing the blurriness of the line between “Left” and “Right” in late Reza-Shah Iran, he argued that it was the Tudeh’s convincing modernist appeal which attracted even former sympathizers of nationalist and even fascist ideologies. In several cases, the attractiveness of the party’s ideological orientation was reinforced by personal ties, which Michael’s study uncovered by using digital tools for the analysis of social networks.

In her presentation, “Religion, Media and Politics: Mohammad Reza Shah’s Pilgrimages to Mecca and Mashhad,” Devos examined the representations of the Shah’s pilgrimages in the state-directed Iranian press. She argued that while the press coverage of the Shah’s pilgrimages to Mecca in 1957 and 1968 mixed pan-Islamic rhetoric with the rhetoric of progress and Western-style modernism in order to counter the pan-Arabist and socialist orientation of countries such as Egypt and Iraq, the reports on the Shah’s regular visits to Mashhad depicted him as the caring ruler of the nation who was fulfilling his constitutionally defined role as protector and promoter of the Twelver Shia. According to Devos, assessing the media representation of the Shah’s religiosity confirms the view that the Pahlavi state did not pursue a rigorously secular policy, but rather propagated its own interpretation of Islam (as a kind of “state Islam”).

In the panel’s final presentation, titled “Religious Transnationalism of Iranian Revolutionaries in the Late Qajar Period (1920-1925),” Shablovskaja examined the mutual impact of pan-Islamism and revolutionary communism in the early twentieth century. According to Shablovskaja, from its very inception in 1920, the Iranian Communist Party (ICP) was influenced by the transnational revolutionary networks seeking to undermine British hegemony in the Middle East and Asia. Initially tending toward pan-Islamism, these networks were finally overridden by the Soviet forces, which for a brief moment favored a certain fusion of communism and Islam in the Bolshevik propaganda and academic literature. These developments not only propelled the ICP to evaluate the Iranian anti-imperialist struggle in terms of its impact on the global Islamic community, but also laid the basis for the further development of the pan-Islamic revolutionary movement in the region.

*Written by Siavash Saffari,
based on reports by Afshin Matin-Asgari and other co-panelists*

INSIGHTS FROM CONFERENCE PANELS CONT'D

Publishing in the Field of Iranian Studies

In the framework of the AIS Biannual conference in Salamanca, the Mentorship Committee organised a roundtable titled “Publishing in the Field of Iranian Studies”, with Rachel Bridgewater, editor at Edinburgh University Press, Pamela Karimi, from UMass Dartmouth and recently published author with Stanford University Press, Ali Mirsepassi from New York University and editor of the “Global Middle East” series with Cambridge University Press, and Sussan Siavoshi from Trinity University and editor-in-chief of the journal *Iranian Studies*. Lior Sternfeld, from Penn State University, chaired the panel.

The goal of the panel was twofold. On the one hand, it aimed at discussing the new trends in our field, what is missing in terms of the latest theoretical debates and what contributions our field is making to larger disciplines. On the other hand, the panel wanted to provide the opportunity to younger scholars and prospective authors to engage with editors, receive suggestions from them and discuss publication strategies.

During the panel, the participants talked about the ‘state of the field’ and highlighted the following points:

- ‘Iranian exceptionalism’ remains one of the biggest obstacles for Iranian Studies to reconnect with and contribute to larger disciplines; the most interesting trends are in the direction of overcoming methodological nationalism, putting in dialogue our field with what is going on in the disciplines. Editors agreed that there is ample room for this endeavour.
- Scholars of Iranian Studies should also diversify the topics and the historical eras they examine. Some topics are more popular than others, as much as some periods in history are, and this might possibly harm the quality of the knowledge that is produced. Equally, less Tehran-centric research in the social sciences also benefits the larger process of knowledge production.
- Disrupting the nation state-based geography of Iran can also enrich the way in which we understand social and historical processes. The diffusion of ideas and how they are translated across the borders, but also the impact of trade and imperial politics, surpass national borders and bring to light processes and dynamics that make the nation-state more marginal to research. In line with this, conceiving of “Iran” as something different than a nation-state – a culture, an idea used to mobilise emotions and a sense of belonging – may be fruitful.

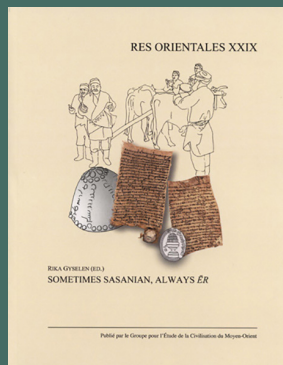
- Empirically-grounded research is fundamental to make our field progress. The panellists noticed a tendency to privilege theorisation and articulated theoretical frameworks, rather than first-hand empirical research results, to read complex social and historical phenomena. Methodologically, the use of case-studies could be useful to revert this tendency toward speculation, and foreground the importance of heavily empirical work.
- All editors participating in the roundtable have attempted at increasing the contributions by scholars based in Iran. While this delivered mixed results, the importance of the voices of our colleagues in Iran was emphasised during the session.

A long discussion and a lively Q&A session followed the initial contributions. These are some points that the participants highlighted in their capacity as editors and authors, along with some reflections resulting from the interaction with the audience:

- It is good practice to carefully consider if and how a certain book publisher or journal is the best venue for the publication of a piece of work. Close attention to catalogues and what the journal has already published is good practice, along with retrieving information about the publishing process. Some publishers are in fact slower than others, but they may offer advantages such as attention to details, open access to publications, and others.
- There are a number of factors that should be considered when building a strategy for career development. Institutions and countries may vastly differ, with some education systems more geared towards quantitative indicators (number of citations, number of publications, amount of research funding raised, etc) and others less so. It is important to collect information about the environment and act accordingly.

After a fruitful discussion, Lior Sternfeld thanked the participants and remembered the audience that the prizes offered by the Association and the Mentorship Committee are an excellent way to advance and consolidate a scholarly career.

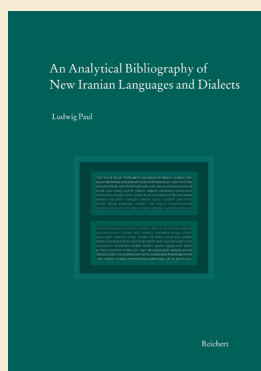
Written by Paula Rivetti



Sometimes Sasanian, Always Ēr edited by Rika Gyselen

This volume brings together articles that present, comment on and interpret primary sources from the Sasanian and post-Sasanian periods. The objects and documents treated in this volume are of recent appearance. Some come from official excavations like the bullae of Takt-e Soleyman, but the majority have come through the antiquities trade. The book enables us to add to our knowledge of legal vocabulary and Sasanian law.

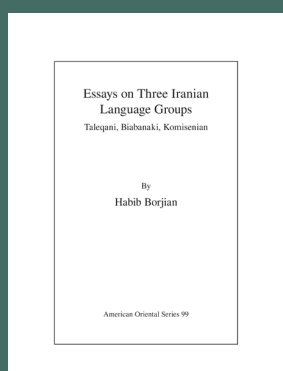
172 pages | Peeters Publishers | *Res Orientales* 29 | March 2022
paperback | ISBN 9791097059033 | \$107.00



An Analytical Bibliography of New Iranian Languages and Dialects by Ludwig Paul

The work presented here is the first of its kind and breaks new ground in Iranian dialectology and bibliography. It aims to provide a reference work for all disciplines that are interested in the languages spoken in Iran: Iranian, Turkic, Semitic and Kurdish studies. The comprehensive coverage of literature in minority languages and dialects also has the potential to provide new impulses to literary and folklore studies in these disciplines.

448 pages | Dr Ludwig Reichert Verlag | March 2022
hardcover | ISBN 9783752006087 | \$147.00



Essays on Three Iranian Language Groups: Taleqani, Biabanaki, Komisenian by Habib Borjian

This volume studies three West Iranian language groups that are either undefined or have been scantily analyzed. Each chapter addresses phonology, morphosyntax, and lexis. Special attention is given to ethnolinguistics and the language contact phenomenon, as well as the historical geography of each region.

236 pages | American Oriental Society | *American Oriental Series* 99 | February 2022
paperback | ISBN 9781948488983 | \$59.50

AWARD NEWS

The following scholars were recognized with awards in 2022:

- **Saidi-Sirjani Book Award:** Co-Awardees Talinn Grigor and Mikiya Koyagi
- **Lifetime Achievement Award:** Awardee Jane Lewisohn
- **AIS Book Prize for Ancient Iranian Studies:** Awardee Arash Zeini; Honourable mentions Domenico Agostini and Samuel Thrope
- **Latifeh Yarshater Award:** Awardee Liora Hendleman-Bavuur; Honourable mentions Alyssa Gabbay and Mateo Farzaneh
- **Mehrdad Mashayekhi Dissertation Award:** Awardee William Figueroa; Honourable mentions Mira Schwerda and Delbar Khakzad
- **Parviz Shahriari Book Award:** Awardees *Editors & translators* Emilie Savage-Smith, Simon Swain, and Geert Jan van Gelder; et al (Essays)
- **Sharmin and Bijan Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Iran and the Persian Gulf Studies Book Award:** Awardee Arzoo Osanloo; Honourable mentions Talinn Grigor and Mikiya Koyagi
- **Hamid Naficy Book Award:** Awardee Farzaneh Hemmasi; Honourable mentions Afshin Marashi and Laetitia Nanquette
- **Neda Nobari Dissertation Award:** Awardee Amir Sayadabdi; Honourable mention Nazli Akhtari
- **AIS Conference to Journal Paper Award:** Awardee Amanda Leong; Honourable mention Isabelle Headrick
- **AIS Senior Mentorship Award:** Awardee Houchang Chehabi

Congratulations to all awardees!

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AWARD NEWS CONT'D

Persian Heritage Foundation, Saidi-Sirjani Book Award, 2022

The Saidi-Sirjani Book Award is given on behalf of the Persian Heritage Foundation at the Association for Iranian Studies biennial conferences. Established in 1995, the Award aims 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 and his courage in the struggle for freedom of expression.

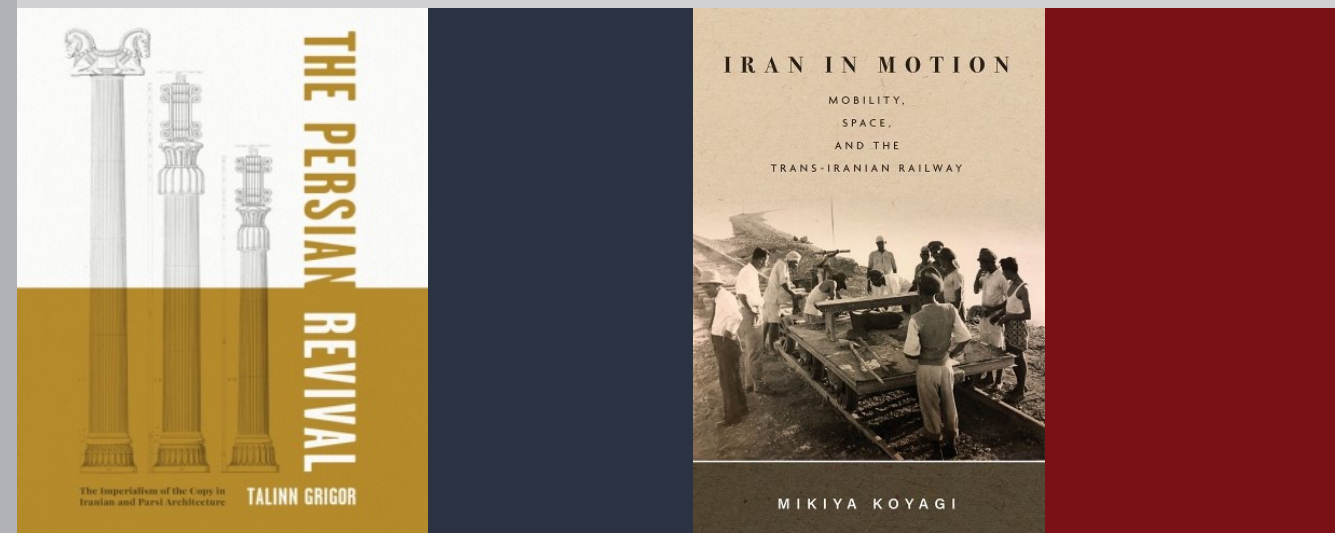
Now in its 27th year, the Saidi Sirjani Book Award is given to original studies or syntheses in the field of Iranian Studies, critical editions of significant texts in Iranian Studies, or translations from an Iranian language, based on extensive research and accompanied by scholarly annotations. This year the Committee had a particularly difficult task, given the exceptional calibre of the submissions, both by established scholars and by a new generation of specialists in the field.

On behalf of the Persian Heritage Foundation, the Saidi-Sirjani Book Award Committee is pleased to present with unanimous vote the 2022 award jointly to Talinn Grigor for her book, *The Persian Revival: The Imperialism of the Copy in Iranian and Parsi Architecture* (Penn State University Press, 2021); and to Mikiya Koyagi for his book, *Iran in Motion: Mobility, Space, and the Trans-Iranian Railway* (Stanford University Press, 2021).

Talinn Grigor (Professor of Art History, at the University of California, Davis), in *The Persian Revival* examines Europe's discovery of ancient Iran in literature and art history. She explains the use of a revivalist architectural style from the time of the Safavids onwards and the rise of the Parsi industrialists as a cosmopolitan community in British India. Drawing on a wide range of primary material, Grigor shows the complexities of artistic appropriations in a wider context of colonial ambivalence and aspirations. She argues that while Western imperialism was instrumental in shaping high art as mercantile-bourgeois ethos, it was also a project that challenged Eurocentric historiography of taste.

Mikiya Koyagi (Assistant Professor of Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Texas at Austin), in his book *Iran in Motion*, by drawing on a wide range of primary sources and archival material, perceptively engages patterns of mobility, both ideational and physical, through a careful analysis of the trans-Iranian railway project across time. Weaving together various individual experiences, this book considers how the infrastructural megaproject reoriented the flows of people and goods. In so doing, the railway project simultaneously brought the provinces closer to the center and pulled them away from it, thereby constantly reshaping local, national, and transnational experiences of space among mobile individuals.

The 2022 Saidi-Sirjani Book Award Committee consisted of Touraj Atabaki (the International Institute of Social History), Sussan Babaie (Courtland Institute of Art), Ali Banuazizi (Boston College), Rudi Matthee (University of Delaware), and Ali Gheissari (University of San Diego, chair).



The Hamid Naficy Book Award is awarded biennially by the Association for Iranian Studies on behalf of the Center for Iranian Diaspora Studies at San Francisco State University to acknowledge and support recent scholarship in the emerging field of Iranian diaspora studies. This award honors the pioneering work of Dr. Hamid Naficy, whose critical scholarship on Iranian cinema and media, and exilic and diasporic subjects has been instrumental in laying the foundation for this field. Books published within the last two years of the AIS conference are read and considered for this prize.

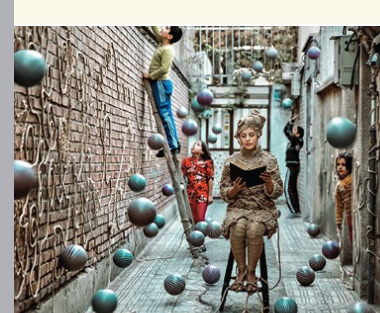
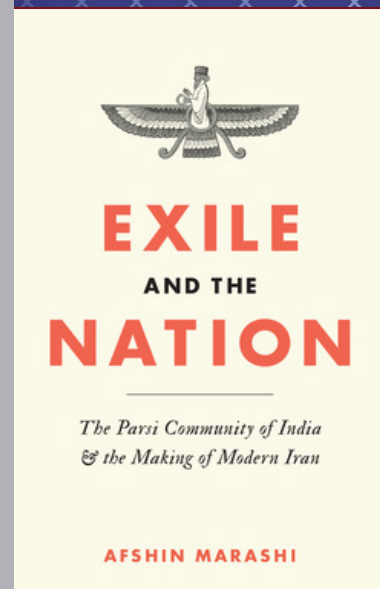
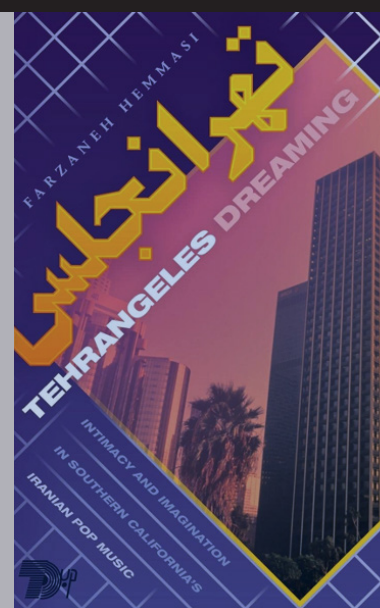
This first book prize, made possible by the Center for Iranian Diaspora Studies, was awarded at the 2022 conference in Salamanca to Dr. Farzaneh Hemmasi, University of Toronto (Ethnomusicology), for her book, *Tehrangelles Dreaming: Intimacy and Imagination in Southern California's Iranian Pop Music* (Duke University Press, 2021). The award committee, composed of Professors Persis Karim (chair) of San Francisco State University, Camron Amin, University of Michigan, Dearborn, and Kevan Harris, University of California, Los Angeles, selected Hemmasi's book for its rigorously researched study of Persian pop music in Los Angeles and its wider influence globally.

This book provides an in-depth investigation of the intersection of history, politics, cultural production and distribution of this genre of music in the numerous cultural contexts in which it resides. Hemmasi's work explores the ways that music, and the communities that consume it, maintain a dialogue with the heritage of the homeland,

AWARD NEWS CONT'D

while also nurturing its own musical brand in a globalized mediascape. The committee was impressed with the project's scope, as well as the ways it contributes to the emerging field of Iranian Diaspora Studies. Additionally, two other outstanding books received honorable mentions for this prize. They are: *Exile and the Nation: The Parsi Community of India and the Making of the Modern Iranian Nation* (University of Texas Press, 2020) by Dr. Afshin Marashi (University of Oklahoma) and *Iranian Literature After the Islamic Revolution: Production and Circulation in Iran and the World*, (Edinburgh University Press, 2021) by Dr. Laetitia Nanquette (University of New South Wales). These awards were presented by Persis Karim at the conference in Salamanca.

The Neda Nobari Dissertation Award is awarded biennially by the Association for Iranian Studies on behalf of the Center for Iranian Diaspora Studies at San Francisco State University to the author of an exceptional PhD dissertation (completed within the last three years of the nomination) that investigates topics connected to the global Iranian diaspora. Dissertations written in languages other than English are accepted if they are accompanied by a condensed translation of chapters into English. This award was established in honor of SF State University alumna and philanthropist Neda Nobari, whose generous gift established the Center for Iranian Diaspora Studies at SF State University in 2017. Ms. Nobari's vision to support new research and scholarship about the global Iranian diaspora is critical to expanding our understanding of transitional experiences and to developing interdisciplinary approaches to this emerging field. The first award of the Nobari Dissertation Prize in Iranian Diaspora Studies was made to Dr. Amir Sayadabdi (University of Canterbury, New Zealand) for his dissertation, "Food and Identity: The Iranian Diaspora in New Zealand." This beautifully written dissertation offers a nuanced account of how Iranians in Christchurch, New Zealand, negotiate the vicissitudes of migration through cooking, eating, and sharing food within and beyond their own community. Sayadabdi offers a deeply thoughtful account of his fieldwork in family homes, at parties and celebrations, in Iranian restaurants and grocery stores, in which he observes the



IRANIAN LITERATURE AFTER THE ISLAMIC REVOLUTION

Production and Circulation
in Iran and the World

LAETITIA NANQUETTE

symbolic and affective dimensions of food and foodways. Additionally, the award committee, composed of Dr. Manijeh Moradian (Barnard College), Dr. Nima Naghibi (Toronto Metropolitan University), Dr. Amy Malek (Oklahoma State University), and Dr. Neda Maghbouleh (University of Toronto) awarded an honorable mention to Dr. Nazli Akhtari for her dissertation in Performance Studies from University of Toronto for her dissertation, "Diasporic Constellations: Performing on the Periphery of the Archives." Manijeh Moradian presented the award in Salamanca at the AIS conference.

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 committee received ten nominations in this cycle, reflecting a diversity of research agendas and institutions around the world. In addition to trying to assess how successful each scholar was in realizing their academic vision, the members of the committee took into consideration which works opened up new lines of inquiry - either by incorporating new or neglected sources or by the intellectual imagination that shaped their research agendas. The committee also took into account the logistical difficulties each scholar had to overcome to complete their work. All these works were commendable on those metrics, but it was the committee's consensus view that Dr. William Figueroa's dissertation on "China and the Iranian Left: Transnational Networks of Social, Cultural, and Ideological Exchange, 1905-1979" has taken one of the boldest steps in adding to our understanding of Iran in the modern world. It fills glaring lacunae in the English-language historiography on China's connections to the Middle East. For decades, scholars have investigated the role of the West (including Russia) on Iran and the Middle East. We know far less about the formal and informal networks that forged political and social ties between China and the Middle East. Predictably, the historical narrative has tended to focus on oil, as well as on diplomatic exchanges. To address these gaps, Dr. Figueroa has sifted through various resources such as the Shanghai Library Republican periodical and late Qing and Republican-era Chinese newspapers, and documents from the Chinese Foreign Ministry Archives through the Wilson Center Digital Archives. Dr. Figueroa contends that China pursued a self-interested diplomacy that enabled it simultaneously to court dissident groups, as well as the shah himself. Two other dissertations were found to be noteworthy as honorable mentions. Dr. Mira Schwerda's dissertation on "How Photography Changed Politics: The Case of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution (1905-1911)" answers the need to integrate a broader array of sources into even well-established narratives in our field. Dr. Delbar Khakzad's work "Iranian Calendric Modernity" challenges us to reflect on broader cultural forces - such as how a society decides to record time - and how those forces might shape the more familiar explanations we've been holding onto about how

AWARD NEWS CONT'D

modern Iran came to be. The 2022 award committee consisted of Camron Michael Amin (Chair), Kevan Harris and Pamela Karimi.

Persian Heritage Foundation, Latifeh Yarshater Book Award, 2022

The Latifeh Yarshater Book Award is given on behalf of the Persian Heritage Foundation at the Association for Iranian Studies biennial conferences 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 that is focused on the condition of women in Persian speaking societies and to promote women's rights in these societies.

On behalf of the Persian Heritage Foundation the Latifeh Yarshater Book Award committee is pleased to present with unanimous vote the 2022 award to Liora Hendelman-Baavur for her book *Creating the Modern Iranian Woman: Popular Culture between Two Revolutions* (Cambridge University Press, 2020) as main recipient and to Mateo Mohammad Farzaneh for his book *Iranian Women and Gender in the Iran-Iraq War* (Syracuse University Press, 2020), and Alyssa Gabbay for her book, *Gender and Succession in Medieval and Early Modern Islam: Bilateral Descent and the Legacy of Fatima* (I.B. Tauris/Bloomsbury, 2020) jointly as Honorable Mentions.

Liora Hendelman-Baavur (Director of the Alliance Center for Iranian Studies at Tel Aviv University), in *Creating the Modern Iranian Woman: Popular Culture between Two Revolutions*, offers a multifaceted analysis of Iranian women's magazines within a broader economic, social, political and cultural context, demonstrating how representations of the modern woman in Iranian popular culture were influenced by the intricate nature of cultural contact and exchange between Iran and the West. Mateo Mohammad Farzaneh (Associate Professor of History at Northeastern Illinois University), in *Iranian Women and Gender in the Iran-Iraq War*, offers an in-depth and innovative analysis of Iranian women's participation in the Iran-Iraq War and the

evolution of gender roles in the Islamic Republic. Alyssa Gabbay (Associate Professor of Religious Studies at the University of North Carolina Greensboro), in *Gender and Succession in Medieval and Early Modern Islam*, examines episodes in pre-modern Islamic history in which individuals or societies recognized descent from both men and women. Fatima, daughter of the Prophet Muhammad, features prominently in this study, for her example constituted a striking precedent for acknowledging bilateral descent in both Sunni and Shi'i societies, with all of its ramifications for female inheritance, succession and identity. The 2022 Latifeh Yarshater Book Award Committee consisted of Mirjam Künkler, (Royal Netherlands Academy of Arts and Sciences), Rudi Matthee (University of Delaware), and Mojdeh Yarshater (Fresno, CA, chair).

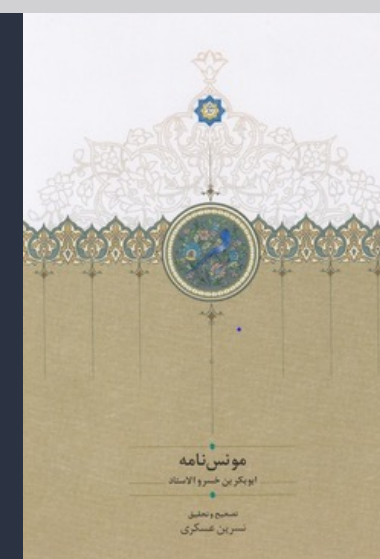
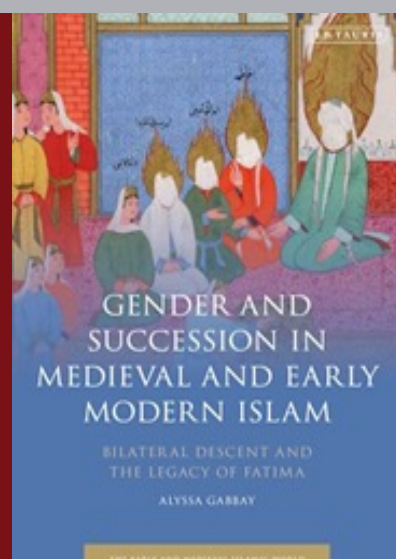
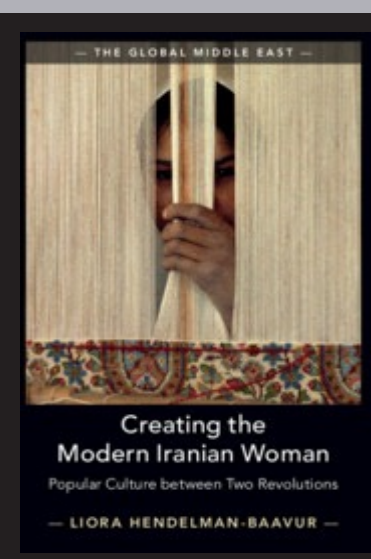
MEMBER NEWS

Mahnaz Afkhami's memoir *The Other Side of Silence: A Memoir of Exile, Iran, and the Global Women's Movement* has been published by UNC Press, 2022.

Nasrin Askari has published a critical edition of the *Mūnis-nāma* compiled by Abū Bakr b. Khusrau al-Ustād and dedicated to the Eldigüzid atabeg of Azerbaijan Nuşrat al-Dīn Abū Bakr (r. 1191–1210) (Tehran: Bunyād-i Mauqūfat-i Duktur Maḥmūd Afshār), (see also page 46 of this newsletter).

Neda Bolourchi has published "Overlooked but Not Forgotten: The Jewish Exemption Claim and the Society of Tehran Jews," the first in-depth look at both the Exemption Claim and Jewish participation in the Iran-Iraq War, in *History and Anthropology*, published online 11 Aug 2022.

Mehrzad Boroujerdi has received a Jack Shand Research Grant from the Society for the Scientific Study of Religion for a project entitled "How Religious is Iran's New Elite?"



MEMBER NEWS CONT'D

Willem Floor announces the publication of his book *Food Security in Iran. Edareh-ye Arzaq, 1910-1935* (Washington DC: MAGE 2021). He has also translated (with Hasan Javadi) Thomas Herbert's *Safarnameh-ye Herbert* (Tehran: Abadbum, 1400/2021).

Willem Floor and **Amélie Couvrat Desvergnés** have published *History of Paper in Iran, 1501-1925* (Washington DC: MAGE 2022).

Pamela Karimi's book *Alternative Iran and Critical Spatial Practice* has been published by Stanford University Press. (See also the corresponding research report on pages 47-51 of this newsletter).

Rudi Matthee's *The Politics of Trade in Safavid Iran: Silk for Silver, 1600-1730* (1999), was translated into Persian by Mani Salehi 'Allameh as *Siyasat-e tejarat dar Iran-e Safavi. Abrisham dar barabar-e noqreh 1600-1730* (Tehran: Farhang-e Javid, 1401/2022).

Charles Melville has published the edited volume *The Contest for Rule in Eighteenth-Century Iran* (Bloomsbury 2022).

Fred Mushkat, **Lois Beck** and **Naheed Dareshuri** have published the edited volume *Weavings of Nomads in Iran: Warp-faced bands and Related Textiles*, (Hali Publications 2020).

Laetitia Nanquette has published *Iranian Literature after the Islamic Revolution: Production and Circulation in Iran and the World* (Edinburgh University Press, 2022). (See also the corresponding research report on pages 50-51 of this newsletter.) The book has received an honorable mention by the Hamid Naficy Book Award Committee

of the Association for Iranian Studies 2022. Nanquette's 2013 book *Orientalism versus Occidentalism: Literary and Cultural Imaging Between France and Iran since the Islamic Revolution* (I.B. Tauris) was translated into Persian in 2021 by Ehya Amalsaleh and Manijeh Abdollahi and received the Book of the Year award of the Islamic Republic of Iran in the category of literary criticism. Congratulations!

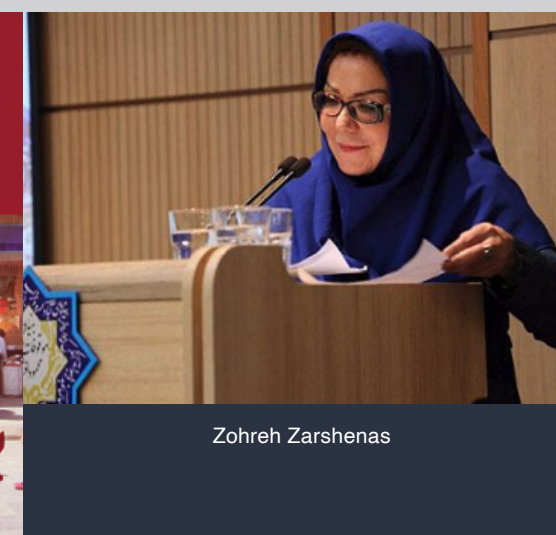
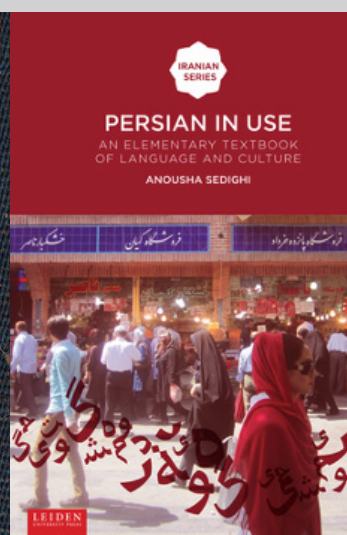
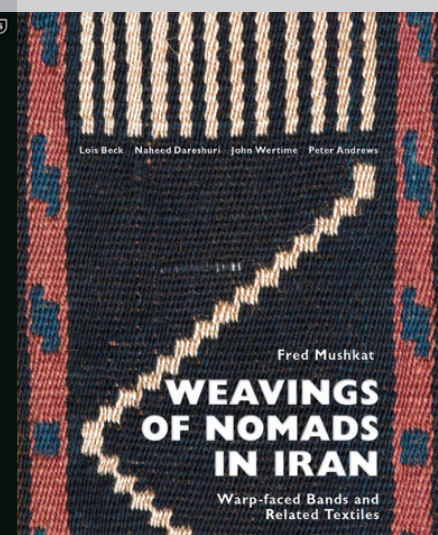
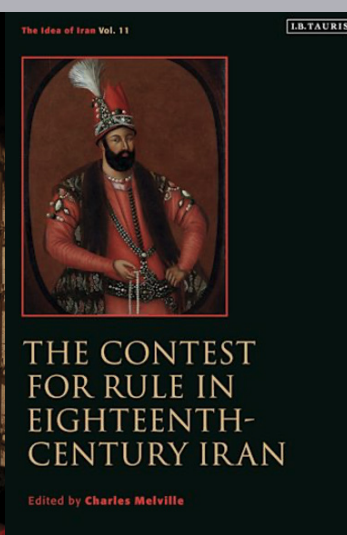
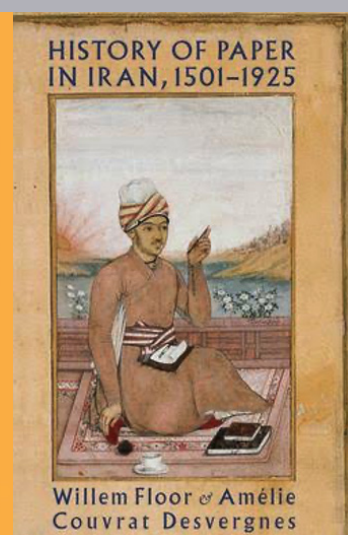
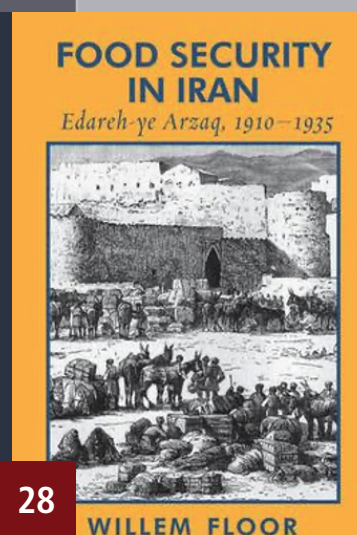
Reza Pourjavady and **Kianoosh Rezaia** have edited an open-access special issue titled "Safavid and Mughal Empires in Contact: Intellectual and Religious Exchanges between Iran and India in the Early Modern Era", in *Entangled Religions*, Vol. 13, no. 5, 2022.

Anousha Sedighi's *Persian in Use, an Elementary Textbook of Language and Culture* (Leiden University Press, 2015) was translated into German by the Iranian Studies faculty at Bamberg University and published as *Persisch aktiv: Eine Einführung in Sprache und Kultur*, Wiesbaden: Reichert Verlag, 2022.

Sussan Siavoshi has published the article "Afghans in Iran: the state and the working of immigration policies" in the *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies*, published online 24 Aug 2022.

Aziza Shanazarova has published "The book of women's rituals: the Central Asian adaptation of the 'Aqā'id al-nisā'" in *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, 03 August 2022.

Zohreh Zarshenas, Head of the Faculty of Iranology at the Iranology Foundation, has been selected "Researcher of the year in the field of Humanities Studies in 2021 in Iran". Congratulations!



OBITUARY

Death of Iranian writer Abbas Maroufi (1957-2022)

Engaged in cultural dialogue

Following a serious illness, writer, publisher and journalist Abbas Maroufi has died at the age of 65 in a hospital in Berlin. He was best known for his novel “Symphony of the Dead”.

The death of the Iranian writer, playwright, poet, publisher and journalist was announced by the Instagram page “House of Art and Literature Hedayat” – in a short post. Maroufi died in hospital at 4 am on 1 September 2022. In the summer of 2019, he revealed he was suffering from lymphatic cancer. The owner of the Gardun Publishing House and director of the cultural centre “Haus Hedayat” had lived and worked in Germany since 1996.

Cain and Abel in northern Iran

Abbas Maroufi was born in Tehran on 27 May 1957. He studied dramatic literature at the Faculty of Fine Arts of Tehran University and began his literary career under the guidance of Houshang Golshiri and Mohammad Ali Sepanlou. Maroufi’s debut novel, “Symphony of the Dead”, was a notable success on the Iranian literary scene in 1989.



In 2001, Maroufi was awarded the Suhrkamp Philosophical-Literary Publishing Foundation prize for “Symphony of the Dead”. In 2021, the book was published in a new German edition, translated by Anneliese Ghahraman-Beck at Sujet-Verlag. “Farhad’s Body”, “Fereydoon Had Three Sons”, “The Year of Sedition” and “Completely Special” are other important works that are still awaiting translation.

Original and intricate, the novel tells the story of the brothers Aidin and Urhan in the northern Iranian town of Ardebil between 1940 and 1970. The father deals in dried fruit and wants to pass on his flourishing business to his children. But Aidin has no interest in the shop – he loves books more than anything and begins to acquire knowledge himself. His money-hungry brother Urhan is quite different. He and their father eye Aidin’s literary interests with suspicion – until he even ends up burning his brother’s books and manuscripts.

Straddling two cultures

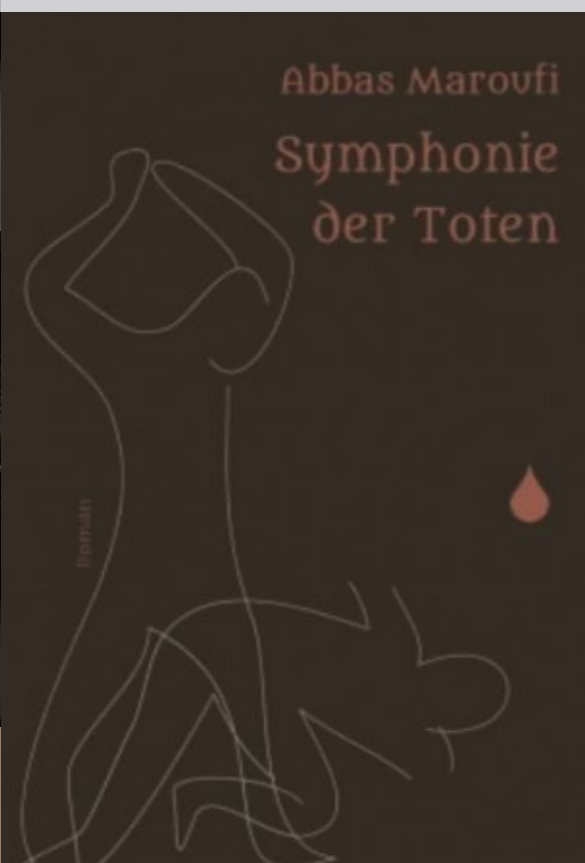
In 1986, Maroufi founded the publishing house Gardun in Tehran, following this up four years later with a literary magazine of the same name, of which he was the editor.

But as early as 1993, the Iranian censorship authorities banned the publishing house and the magazine – Maroufi was sentenced to flogging and imprisonment. Thanks to international pressure, the sentences were suspended.

With the help of the German writers’ association PEN and Günter Grass, Maroufi managed to leave his home country in 1996 and continue his publishing activities in Germany.

In spring 2002, he founded the “House of Art and Literature Hedayat”, which ensured publication in Germany of more than 300 titles by exiled authors banned in Iran. For many years, Maroufi offered creative writing courses at his cultural centre – where he encouraged Iranians to write their own stories.

*Pedram Habibi
© Deutsche Welle 2022*



OBITUARY CONT'D

Commemorating Professor Shaul Shaked (1933-2021)

On October 27, 2022, the family, friends and colleagues of Professor Shaul Shaked commemorate the first anniversary of his passing. He left us unexpectedly, after a short but grave illness that took a rapid course. Almost to the last, Shaul was vigorous and optimistic, working on deciphering a tangled poem in Early Judeo-Persian, taking his routine several-hours walks, advising his students and colleagues. Aged eighty-eight at the time of his demise, he has left a profound imprint on various branches of Iranian, Jewish, and Judeo-Iranian scholarship; had illness not snatched him away, the scholarly community could yet have gained much from the insights of his sharp, original and discerning mind. Professor Shaked's departure in a sense marks the end of an era: he was the last of the first generation of Israeli Iranists - among them Amnon Netzer, Sarah (Sorour) Soroudi and Michael Zand - who put Israel on the international map of Iranian Studies.

Shaul Shaked was born in the Hungarian town of Debrecen in 1933. When he was one-year old, his family moved to Palestine and settled in Haifa. It was there, at the Hebrew Reali School, that Shaul made his first acquaintance with the world of Oriental Studies, under the guidance of Meir Jacob Kister, who was to become a distinguished Arabist. Under Kister's influence, Shaked chose to continue his studies at the Department of Arabic Language and Literature and at the Department of Semitic Linguistics at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. In 1959 he received a joint M.A. degree in Arabic Language and Literature and Comparative Religion. In the course of his studies at the Hebrew University, Shaul benefitted from being a student of the "founding fathers" of Arabic Language and Literature, Middle Eastern Studies, Linguistics and Comparative Religion in Israel, among whom, besides Kister, were David Baneth, Shlomo Dov Goitein, Jacob Polotsky, and David Flusser. To deepen his knowledge of Iranian languages and Zoroastrianism, Shaul Shaked headed to SOAS, London, where in 1964 he completed his doctoral dissertation on Sasanian wisdom literature under the supervision of Walter Bruno Henning and Mary Boyce. Returning to Jerusalem in 1965, he, together with the late Prof. Amnon Netzer, founded the Department of Iranian Studies, the first of its kind in Israel, where he taught until his retirement in 2001.

Shaul Shaked possessed the rare gift of moving freely among various branches of scholarship, defying any attempt at categorizing his work within any particular compartment. He was a linguist who contributed significantly to the study of Middle Persian and Early Judeo-Persian, but at the same time he was a scholar of Zoroastrianism and comparative religion: his interpretation of Zoroastrianism in the Sasanian period

and his research on the contacts between Judaism and Zoroastrianism in pre-Islamic Iran are ground-breaking. He was an expert on Jewish magic, always with an eye on intercultural ties between Jews and their neighbors and emphasizing the folk nature and cultural syncretism reflected in Jewish magic texts produced in Islamic lands. But at the same time, he was also a cultural historian who traced the transmission of Zoroastrian notions and concepts into the early Islamic realm. Firmly anchored in rigorous philological training, Shaul Shaked traversed languages, religions, geographical areas and historical periods. His major contributions to the abovementioned and other fields are well mapped out in three surveys of his scholarly oeuvre published in a collection of Studies in *Honor of Shaul Shaked* (Jerusalem: The Israel Academy of Sciences and Humanities, 2019), timed for his 80th birthday: Michael Shenkar appraises Shaked's study of Zoroastrianism; Ofir Haim considers his contribution to the study of the Judeo-Persian language, while Yuval Harari discusses his research on Jewish magic. The formidable range of Shaked's scholarly output is reflected in a list of his principal publications found in the same collection; some 220 items should be now complemented by at least a dozen more that appeared in print between 2019 and 2021.

However, it is not the quantity or the sheer range of Shaul's work, but its stellar quality that impresses the most. Everything he wrote was thought-provoking, clearly formulated, innovative, often pathbreaking, but also exceptionally thorough and balanced, some would say, cautious. His conclusions were always grounded in the careful philological analysis of texts, but at the same time informed by his unbelievably precise grasp of broader cultural contexts. His methodological approach was to some extent akin to the Zoroastrian concept of *paymān*, "the right measure" – threading the middle ground, lending his ear to the sometimes barely distinct whisper of texts, shunning the loud and unprovable. His treatment of such essential questions in Zoroastrian studies as the dating of Zoroaster's life and the nature of the Avesta and the Gathas, as well as his critical stand on the categorization of Zoroastrianism as either "dualism" or "monotheism," provide good examples of his methodological pursuits.

Professor Shaked's research garnered him broad recognition in Israel and world-wide, including Iran, where, to Shaul's great surprise, three of his books were translated into Persian: *From Zoroastrian Iran to Islam* (Aldershot: Variorum, 1995) as, از ایران زردشتی تا اسلام: مطالعاتی در باره تاریخ دین و تماسهای میان فرهنگی, ترجمه مرتضی ثاقب فر (تهران: ققنوس, ۲۰۰۳/۱۳۸۱) as تحول ثنویت: تنوع آرای دینی در عصر ساسانی, ترجمه سید احمد رضا قایم مقامی (تهران: نشر ماهی, ۲۰۰۹/۱۳۸۷) and *Wisdom of the Sasanian Sages: An Edition, with Translation and Notes, of Denkard, Book Six* (Boulder, CO: Westview Press, 1979) as دینکرد ششم, حکمت فرزندان ساسانی. this last one, though, without acknowledging Shaked's authorship.

OBITUARY CONT'D

Among many honors bestowed upon Professor Shaked, I will name but a few. In 1986 Professor Shaked was elected a member of the Israel Academy of Sciences. In 2000, he was awarded the Israel Prize in Linguistics. He was the recipient of the 2014 AIS Lifetime Achievement Award for a scholar residing outside Iran. Between 2001 and 2004 Professor Shaked acted as President of Union Académique Internationale and remained its honorary president until his death. Since 1995 and till his demise he was also an honorary member of University College, London. He was instrumental in the activities of the Societas Iranologica Europæa (SIE) and the Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum (C.I.I.). For decades and in various capacities he was involved in the research activities of the Ben-Zvi Institute for the Study of Jewish Communities in the East, Jerusalem. In 1979, while serving as Head of the Institute he established Pe'amim, the most important scholarly journal in Hebrew devoted to Jewish communities in the East.

Among Professor Shaked's research projects two loom large: One is the Middle Persian Dictionary Project, which is intended to provide digitalized editions of a bulk of Pahlavi texts, thus greatly facilitating (re)search of the extant corpus of Zoroastrian literature. It will hopefully be brought to fruition by an international group of scholars who picked up the project not long before Shaul Shaked's death (see <https://www.mpcorpus.org/>). The other is the foundation of the Irano-Judaica Society in the early 1980s, which is devoted to the study of Jewish contacts with Persian culture throughout the ages. The activities of this Society included international workshops and the publication of a series of edited volumes ensuing from them (some together with Prof. Amnon Netzer). The last, Seventh Irano-Judaica Conference, was held in 2010 in Jerusalem in memory of the late Prof. Netzer and resulted in the voluminous collection of articles edited by Geoffrey Herman and me (Jerusalem: The Ben-Zvi Institute, 2019). With Shaul's passing, we are determined to maintain the tradition of such conferences: Dr. Ofir Haim and myself are now organizing Irano-Judaica VIII, which will be held in June 19-22, 2023, also in Jerusalem, thus commemorating Professor Shaul Shaked's life and work. It will bring together both experienced, well-established scholars and young researchers from all over the world, highlighting the importance of continuity and remaining a unique platform for those interested in studying the Judeo-Persian language and culture, from the pre-Islamic period to the twenty-first century.

Professor Shaked's standing as a world-renowned scholar invested with influence and regalia never affected his modest and gentle character. Back in 1991, as a newcomer to Israel and a fresh undergraduate, unfamiliar with the Hebrew language and in total awe of the venerable professor, I was genuinely surprised when Shaul reached out to me, suggesting that he could deliver a small parcel to my twin sister in Leningrad when he

was headed there. Focusing on classical Persian literature, I didn't study under Shaul, and our real acquaintance happened ten years later. At that time, while working on my PhD, I was asked to join him in editing the Hebrew translation of Firdausi's Shāh-nāma, executed by the late Eliezer Kagan. We used to meet once a week in his cozy study full of orderly bookshelves, packed with printed and manuscript treasures in different languages, arranged according to subjects. We used to work late into the winter evenings when the darkness grew thicker, counting the correct number of syllables in the Hebrew text, trying to find the best possible Hebrew equivalent to replace certain imprecisions of translation, mildly arguing ... I saw how respectfully, delicately, he treated Kagan's text trying to limit our interference to a necessary minimum; I learnt to appreciate his subtle sense of humor, bordering on sound irony, to sense his tacit approval and sprout confidence. He became a dear and esteemed colleague and, I dare say, friend.

Right before his illness broke out, Shaul phoned me to discuss some difficult lines in an eleventh-century poem in early Judeo-Persian on which he was working. The poem came from the by now famous "Afghan Genizah," a treasure trove that was discovered by mere chance in the caves near Bamiyan. Shaul was the first to locate and identify the scattered documents in the hands of art dealers as one corpus. He invested great efforts to facilitate the purchase of some 220 manuscript items in Judeo-Persian and Persian by the National Library of Israel in 2013 and 2016, and himself became a leading authority in their research. By heart-breaking coincidence, the poem was a dirge mourning the death of one Yishāq b. Yūsuf, who might have been a learned dignitary in the Jewish community of the Bamiyan area. The poet laments the passing of Yishāq b. Yūsuf exclaiming: "Where did this treasure house of wisdom, this mine of knowledge go?" "We see no more this man of wisdom, this unsurpassed teacher..."; "Oh, alas! Such a blessed old man is buried underneath the earth..."; "His library laments his soul...". These lines are filled with a feeling of personal loss now.



Professor Shaked's passing has created a deep void, but his legacy inspires and will continue inspiring those who will follow in his footsteps. Shaul Shaked was a man of many talents, a brilliant scholar and a real intellectual, a noble and generous soul. He is and will be greatly missed by his family, friends and colleagues around the world.

*Julia Rubanovich
The Hebrew University of Jerusalem*

OBITUARY CONT'D

In Memory of Professor Franklin Lewis (1961-2022)

It is with profound sadness that we announce the death of our colleague and friend, Franklin D. Lewis, who passed away after a long illness on September 19, 2022. Frank began his study of Persian and Persian literature at the University of California at Berkeley (B.A., 1983) before joining the Ph.D. program at the University of Chicago. He completed his dissertation, "Reading, Writing, and Recitation: Sanā'i and the Origins of the Persian Ghazal" in 1995, still one of the most widely cited dissertations in Persian literary studies. After serving two years as a lecturer in Persian at Chicago, Frank joined the faculty of Emory University in 1997 before returning to his alma mater in 2005. He taught courses spanning the entire history of Persian literature and served as the chair of the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilizations at the University of Chicago from 2015-18 and 2019-22.



Frank was a prolific and dedicated scholar. His landmark book, *Rumi: Past and Present, East and West. The Life and Teachings of Jalāl al-Din Rumi* (2008), reassesses all previous research on the life of Persian's foremost Sufi poet and skillfully navigates the complex history of the poet's later reception around the world. The book will serve as a touchstone for any future research on Rumi and has been translated into Persian, Arabic, Turkish, and Danish. Frank's work, however, went beyond the mystical poets, and his many journal articles and contributions to collected volumes (in both English and Persian) offer insights into other major figures of the classical tradition, such as Ferdowsi, Sa'di, and Hāfez. Frank was also a skilled translator of both classical poetry and modern poetry and fiction. Particularly noteworthy are his remarkable translations of selected ghazals by Rumi (*Swallowing the Sun*, 2008)

and Zoya Pirzad's novel *Things We Left Unsaid* (2012). Whether as a scholar or translator, Frank's work stands out for its philological exactitude, sensitivity to nuance, clarity of thought, and critical insight.

Frank's dedication to Persian studies is evident not only in his publications, but in his untiring service to the field. In addition to his long service as departmental chair, Frank served as the president of the American Institute of Iranian Studies for fourteen years (2002-12, 2016-20), where he worked diligently to preserve and expand Iranian studies in the United States in wake of the 1979 Iranian Revolution. He founded and managed the list server Adabiyat, which has provided an international forum for scholars of Middle Eastern literatures for more than two decades. He has edited several collections of scholarly articles, translations, and special journal issues, most recently an issue of *Iranian Studies* devoted to the Shāhnāme as World Literature (2015). Perhaps his greatest contribution to the future of Persian literary studies has been his mentorship during his time at Chicago of a new generation of scholars. The students he nurtured with firm kindness will keep his legacy alive for decades to come.

Frank was a gentleman in every sense of the word. Unfailingly polite, he spoke with quiet, measured deliberation, yet his keen wit and ready smile quickly dispelled any suspicion of aloofness. He wore his learning lightly and radiated good will to all. We have lost not only a talented scholar but a humane and gentle soul. Our sincere condolences go out to his family and to his many friends and colleagues. Frank, you will be missed, brother.

Paul Losensky (PhD UChicago [NELC], 1993), Professor of Comparative Literature, Central Eurasian Studies, Hamilton Lugar School, Indiana University

Brill's Middle East and Islamic Studies Book Archive, 2000-2006

is the electronic version of the book publication program of Brill in the field of Middle East and Islamic Studies from 2000-2006, which contains many publications by renowned authors.

For a full overview, see their dedicated [web page](#).

RESEARCH REPORT

Alexander the Great in Firdawsi's *Book of Kings*

The legendary life of Alexander the Great is the subject of the British Library's new exhibition *Alexander the Great: The Making of a Myth* which opened on Friday 21 October. A visual feast of stories spanning more than 2000 years, it centres on the Alexander Romance originally composed in Greek around the third century AD and shares narratives from East and West side by side in more than twenty languages. One of the most richly illustrated sources is the Persian *Shahnamah* (Book of Kings) completed by the poet Firdawsi in 1010 AD. There are no less than fourteen copies of this national epic in the exhibition ranging from the beginning of the fourteenth to the mid-nineteenth centuries. A selection of these is shown below. While the details sometimes differ from the *Alexander Romance*, the *Shahnamah* tells the same stories in a common context.

The history of Alexander in the *Shahnamah* begins with a peace treaty between King Darab of Persia and Filqus (Philip) of Greece in which Filqus' daughter Nahid is married to the Persian king. Though she outshone all others in her beauty, she proved to suffer from bad breath and the marriage broke down irretrievably. Nahid was sent home to her father, rejected, but unknowingly pregnant with Alexander (Iskandar or Sikandar in Persian) who was subsequently brought up as Philip's son and heir. Meanwhile King Darab took another wife who gave birth to Dara (Darius) who would succeed his father before being ultimately defeated in battle by his half-brother Alexander.



The death of Dara, one of the most frequently illustrated subjects in the *Shahnamah*, in a hand-coloured lithograph edition published in Bombay in 1849. British Library, 14807.h.4

Three decisive battles took place in the last of which, at Gaugamela in northern Iraq in 331 BC, the Persian army was irrevocably defeated. Dara escaped but was mortally wounded by two of his own men. Iskandar, who had wanted Dara alive, was dismayed when he found him. Cradling Dara's head on his knees, he promised to fulfil Dara's dying wishes: to look after his family, to marry his daughter Roshanak (Roxana) and to safeguard the Zoroastrian religion.

Indeed Iskandar married Roshanak with much pomp and ceremony and then moved on to India where he conquered King Kayd of Hind by peaceful means. As part of their agreement he received four gifts: King Kayd's daughter in marriage, his all-knowing seer to advise him, his physician who could cure any disease and his never-emptying goblet.



Iskandar marries the daughter of King Kayd of Hind (India). Sultanate India, 1438. British Library, Or.1403, f. 318r

The battle between Iskandar and Fur. Artist: Kamal, Mughal India, about 1616. British Library, Add MS 5600, f. 361v



Moving on, Iskandar challenged another Indian ruler, King Fur (Porus). On this occasion a fierce battle took place. Iskandar had been forewarned about Fur's invincible army of elephants and to counter them, recruited more than 1200 blacksmiths who forged 1000 iron horses and riders on wheels. These were filled with oil and set alight at the head of the advancing army. The whole army was put to rout leaving Iskandar to kill Fur in single combat.

RESEARCH REPORT CONT'D

From India Iskandar travelled in search of riches and new experiences. He went to Mecca, Egypt and Andalus — in this context most likely a city in western Asia representing ‘the West’— where he encountered Queen Qaydafah (Candace in the Greek Alexander Romance). Iskandar approached her court disguised as a messenger, but she already had a portrait of him and so immediately recognised him. His deception exposed, Iskandar feared for his life, but instead was admonished and sent safely on his way. A similarly peaceful encounter took place with the Amazons, the virgin warriors of Harum, located in the Caucasus.

Travelling further Iskandar encountered the philosophical Brahmins, people with heads on their chests and without bones, dragons and all manner of mythical creatures. He fought battles in China and against the Russians, and constructed a wall to contain the barbarous peoples of Gog and Magog.

Increasingly, however, Iskandar became pre-occupied with his own mortality. Would he ever see his native land again, when would he die? Seeking, but never finding, the waters of everlasting life he met the angel of death Israfil who told him his time would come. Then at the edge of the world he came to the talking tree which had two trunks, one male and one female. At midday the male trunk spoke, foretelling the end of his fourteen-year rule, and at nightfall its female counterpart announced: ‘Death will come soon.’

Now at the end of his journey, Iskandar returned to Babylon where he was greeted with more omens of death: a stillborn child with a lion’s head, a human chest and shoulders, and a cow’s tail and hooves.

His fate sealed, Iskandar fell ill that very day. He ordered that he should be carried outside and in full view of his soldiers he advised them to live humbly and follow his example. As depicted below, a physician takes his pulse while another is making notes. In the background courtiers and soldiers wipe away their tears.



Iskandar's peaceful visit to the woman-only city of Harum. Iran, 1536. British Library Add MS 15531, f. 345r



Iskandar kills a dragon by feeding it cow-hides stuffed with poison and oil. Isfahan, 1614. British Library, Add MS 16761, f. 190v



Iskandar and the talking tree. Shiraz, c. 1420-25. The Bodleian Libraries, University of Oxford MS Ouseley, Add. 176, f. 311v



Iskandar sees an omen of his imminent death in Babylon. Iran, c. 1300. Chester Beatty, Dublin, Per 104.49.

The moment of Iskandar's death.
Qazvin, 1585-6.
British Library, Add. MS 27302, f. 414r



Alexander the Great: The Making of a Myth runs until 19 February 2023. It is accompanied by a book of the same title. Edited by Richard Stoneman, it includes nine essays by leading scholars together with images and descriptions of the exhibition items. Tickets are on sale and may be booked on our [Events page](#), and more information can be found on our dedicated [exhibition website](#).

The British Library is indebted to the Kusuma Trust, the Patricia G. and Jonathan S. England – British Library Innovation Fund and Ubisoft for their support towards the exhibition, as well as other trusts and private donors.

Ursula Sims-Williams, Lead Curator Persian, British Library

Further Reading

Firdawsi, Shahnamah, trans. Dick Davis, *Shahnameh: The Persian Book of Kings*, rev. edn. New York: Penguin, 2016.

— *The Shāhnāma of Firdausī*, trans. Arthur George and Edmond Warner, vol 6. London: Routledge, 1912.

Manteghi, Haila, *Alexander the Great in the Persian Tradition: History, Myth and Legend in Medieval Iran*. London and New York: I. B. Tauris, 2018.

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DOCUMENTARY FILM

Derbent: What Persia Left Behind

Directed by Pejman Akbarzadeh
30 Min. | English

The Citadel, Ancient City and Fortress Buildings of Derbent / Darband were part of the northern lines of the Sasanian Persian Empire, which extended east and west of the Caspian Sea. Following the Russian-Persian Wars and the Treaty of Gulistan (1813), Darband became part of Russia.

Registered as a UNESCO World Heritage Site, the 6th-century Darband fortification complex is considered the largest defensive structure of Sasanian Persia in the Caucasus. It is now located in the Republic of Dagestan, the southernmost tip of Russia. This film illuminates the historical significance of the fortification system, which was originally built to guard the northern frontier of the Persian Empire.

“**Derbent: What Persia Left Behind**” also explores the unique architecture of the massive fortress, and how it has been preserved for some fifteen centuries by Persian, Arab, Turkish and Russian rulers. Built strategically in the narrowest area between the Caucasus Mountains and the Caspian Sea, the fortification includes the northernmost Middle Persian (Pahlavi) inscriptions in the world, which are in danger of destruction. The 42-km defense wall of the complex that extended toward the Black Sea had already been destroyed in the Soviet era.

Funded by the **Persian Heritage Foundation** in the United States and the **Soudavar Memorial Foundation** in Switzerland, the documentary, features commentary from four internationally recognised scholars: Murtazali Gadjiev (Head of the Archaeology Department of the Dagestan Science Academy), Dietrich Huff (German Archaeological



DOCUMENTARY FILM CONT'D

Institute), Parvaneh Pourshariati (New York City College of Technology), and Matthew Canepa (University of California, Irvine).

SCREENING

- **30 August 2023** | European Conference of Iranian Studies (ECIS 10), Leiden University
- **1 June 2023** | The Ninth Biennial Convention of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies (ASPS), Yerevan
- **12 September 2022**, 19:00 | German Orientalists conference (Deutscher Orientalistentag / DOT), FU Berlin ([More info.](#)) + Q&A
- **1 September 2022**, 9:30 (World Premiere) | Biennial Conference of the “Association for Iranian Studies”, University of Salamanca. The screening will be followed by a Q&A session with director [Pejman Akbarzadeh](#). ([More info.](#))
- *For more information, please contact [info \(at\) persiandutch.com](mailto:info(at)persiandutch.com)*



Fortress of Derbent

NEW EDITIONS

Rare piano work by composer Mohammad Taghi Massoudieh published

The Persian Dutch Network has made available a previously unpublished piano work by Mohammad Taghi Massoudieh, one of the iconic composers and ethnomusicologists of 20th-century Iran. Massoudieh wrote “Persian Folk Song” for solo piano in 1996.

This piece initially comes across as an early post-romantic composition, however, the use of dissonant chords and large leaps on the instrument, coupled with rhythmic and textural changes, emphasizes its modernist character.

The opening theme vaguely resembles a Persian folk song, but its initial harmonisation blurs this connection. The appearance of this folk tune is much more explicit by the end of the piece. Persian melodic motifs are inserted into the composition and are juxtaposed with exaggerated occidental harmonic passages, almost as if the composer is intending to portray a clash between the Persian and Western modes of musical expression.

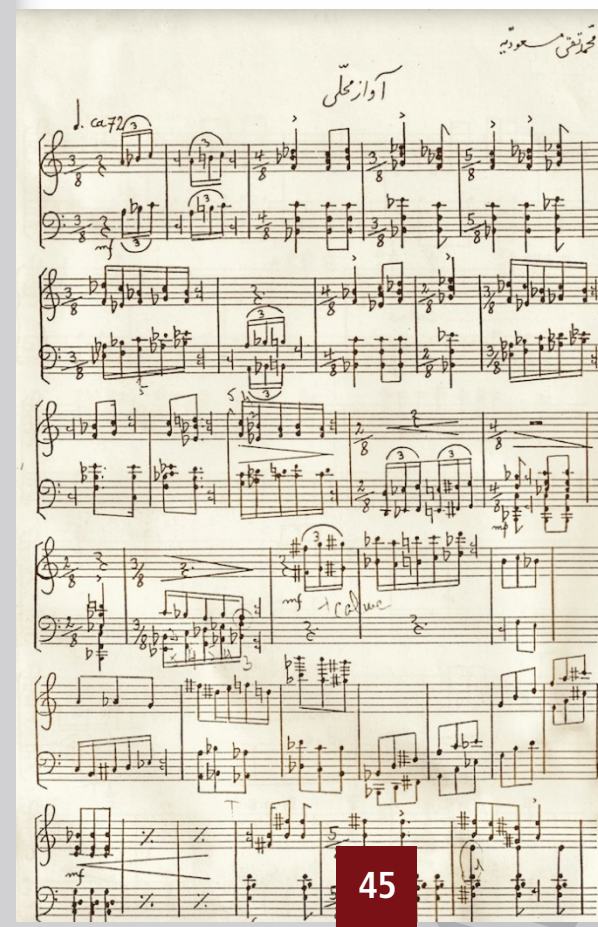
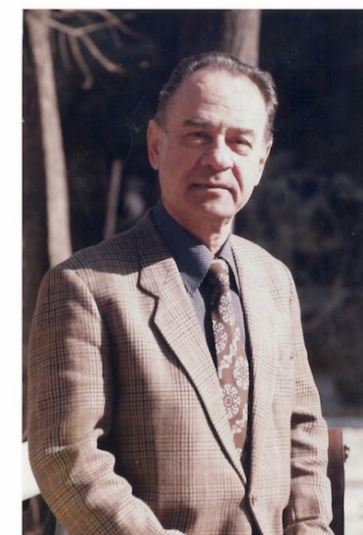
“Persian Folk Song” was premiered by Elisabeth Klein in March 1997 during the festival “Journée de la Musique Persane”, organised by Iradj Sahbai, in Strasbourg, France.

Mohammad-Taghi Massoudieh (1927-1999) studied violin at the Tehran Conservatory, composition at École Normale de Musique de Paris as well as Musikhochschule Leipzig, and musicology at the University of Cologne. His PhD dissertation, “Awaz- e-Šure” (1968), is one of the primary German sources for Persian music studies. In 1969, Massoudieh joined the University of Tehran’s Music Department where he remained until the end of his life. In addition to teaching and ethnomusicological research, he also composed a number of pieces, performed by various ensembles, including the Nürnberger Symphoniker, the NIRT Chamber Orchestra, the Tehran Symphony, and the Plovdiv Philharmonic.

In the present volume, an engraved version of the score is followed by the composer’s original manuscript. The publication is funded by the Kooch Foundation in London. For more information please contact: [info \(at\) persiandutch.com](mailto:info(at)persiandutch.com). The book is also available on [AMAZON](#).

Mohammad-Taghi Massoudieh

Persian Folk Song



NEW EDITIONS CONT'D

Nasrin Askari has published a critical edition of the *Mūnis-nāma* compiled by Abū Bakr b. Khusrau al-Ustād and dedicated to the Eldigüzid atabeg of Azerbaijan Nuşrat al-Dīn Abū Bakr (r. 1191–1210), (Tehran: Bunyād-i Mauqūfat-i Duktur Maḥmūd Afshār). The *Mūnis-nāma* blurs the lines traditionally drawn between Persian “folk” and “elite” literature, thus providing a source for studying the two realms as parts of a larger whole. Discussing the supremacy of poetry over prose in his detailed introduction, the compiler explicitly mentions the female members of the royal court as the book’s targeted audience. Among the important features of the *Mūnis-nāma* are:

1. The earliest known Persian version of a collection of tales, generically known as *Jāmi‘ al-ḥikāyāt*, previously known representatives of which were written down in the 17th-19th centuries. The tales correspond to the Ottoman Turkish tales in *Faraj ba‘d al-shidda*, dating from the 14th-15th centuries, a French adaptation of some of which was produced in the early 18th century as *Les mille et un jours*.
2. Numerous passages in Persian that closely correspond to passages in *Jāwīdān Khirad* of Miskawayh (Muskuya). Although the compiler mentions the title of the *Kitāb-i Jāwīdān Khirad*, he presumably had access to a version different from Muskuya’s *Jāwīdān Khirad*.
3. Aḥmad Ghazzālī’s *Risālat al-ṭayr*, copies of which are rare.

More information about the *Mūnis-nāma* can be accessed [here](#).

Persian Diplomatic Documents from the Times of Shah Safi I from the Collection of the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts (ed. by Artyom Andreev, Dina Kopaneva, Sergei Kostikov, Yekaterina Pischnnikova, Maryam Rezvan, Timur Slesarev, Vladimir Shorokhov, Olga Yastrebova). St. Petersburg: Nauka, 2021. - 303 p.



The present edition is a collection of diplomatic documents of Iranian origin dating back to the reign of Shah Safi I (1629-1642) held at the Russian State Archive of Ancient Acts, Collection No 77 “Relations between Russia and Persia”. The published documents can be conditionally divided into two groups. The first group includes documents on behalf of Shah Safi, letters credentials (*nāma*) to the king and his entourage, and *firmāns* to magistrates of Russian cities bordering Persia or close to the Safavid state. The second group includes documents concerning the interaction of ambassadors, messengers, and shah’s merchants with Russian authorities and their environment. These are petitions (*‘arzādašt*) and registers (*tafşil*). The first reflect in general the difficulties faced by the subjects of the Shah. The latter show various lists of the Shah’s merchandise, the size of the missions and the number of gifts imported from Persia. This edition also includes petitions from Iranian diplomatic agents, originally written in Russian according to a form common to the Tsardom of Russia. The published texts are of considerable interest as primary sources on the history of Russian-Iranian relations in the 30s of the 17th century and as typical examples of Safavid diplomatic clerical vocabulary.

RESEARCH REPORT

Alternative Research Tactics

Pamela Karimi reflects on her research for *Alternative Iran: Contemporary Art and Critical Spatial Practice* (Stanford University Press, 2022)

Drawing on spatial and temporal turns that have animated Iranian art scenes since the 1980s, my recently published book *Alternative Iran: Contemporary Art and Critical Spatial Practice* illuminates the economic, political, and intellectual forces that have driven Iran’s creative class toward increasingly original forms of unconventional artmaking not meant for museums or performance halls. These artworks appear instead in private homes, non-commercial galleries, showrooms with “trusted” audiences, dilapidated structures, buildings under construction, leftover urban spaces, and remote natural sites. Flouting the conventions of the art market and negotiating the regime’s ideological protocols, these loosely covert activities offer an enthralling inquiry into what is commonly referred to as critical spatial practice. Throwing into sharp relief Iran’s extraordinary art scenes, I disclose anomalous instances when the state and other powerful agents appropriate the same spatial techniques of loose coyness to bring aspects of the alternative into the limelight, either to better regulate the creative community or to challenge the system from within. In conducting the research for this book, I used several methods. The early stage of this research was carried out inside Iran. Going to places and talking directly to the agents of the alternative art scenes was for me a kind of “sensuous scholarship,” to use anthropologist Paul Stoller’s term in a book of the same title published in 1997.

RESEARCH REPORT CONT'D

Seeking to describe a place so that its presence can be felt, I rested my hand on the dilapidated staircase of an abandoned building, then climbed those stairs into a lingering smell of newsprint and ink that wafted from the walls, which were covered with thousands of newspapers; I experienced the refreshing coolness of tucked-away basement galleries in the scorching summer heat; I squeezed into a tiny exhibition space, part of an audience that awkwardly arranged itself around cheaply made metal buckets filled with hay against the backdrop of a larger- than- life donkey.

A large part of the material in this book was, however, derived from personal interviews with more than a hundred experts. While not all of the interviews are directly addressed in these pages, in their entirety they shaped my thinking and arguments. Over the course of six years, I tracked down most of the interviewees via Persian or English publications, through word of mouth, or on social media. In a few instances, I withheld names to protect the identities of political activists. Most artists, however, were eager to share their ideas and experiences and gave their consent to be cited properly. Additionally, these experts offered all kinds of textual, audio, and visual materials, from professional recordings to their own snapshots and videos of people interacting with art— the kind of wealth of information that cannot be absorbed by one person on a single visit. Through my interviews with curators, gallerists, artists, and even viewers, I was then able to build up a picture of the intricacy of each encounter. The complex narratives and varied viewpoints enriched my writing, allowing me to describe the experience of art, even though I have not encountered most of the artworks firsthand. Having talked informally with almost every artist, architect,



Farideh Shahsavarani, *I Wrote, You Read*. 2006. Former headquarters of the Ettela'at Newspaper in Tehran. Courtesy of Farideh Shahsavarani.

musician, curator, and theater expert featured here, I was able to develop an informed sense of their influences and sources of inspiration. Then I compared them against the reviews of their works published in various platforms. In tracing the sources of influence, including philosophical approaches and theoretical frameworks, I tried to do justice to the goals of the artist rather than providing a distanced art-historical reading. By and large I remained faithful to the artists' stories. In a few cases, if it seemed appropriate, I took the liberty of adding my own interpretations of particular scenarios. Some of the artists agreed with my "guesses," others remained indifferent; rarely did they reject them outright.

My research was also frequently informed by social media feeds, in audio, visual, and textual forms. Many details were discovered in the unpredictable give-and-take of Telegram, WhatsApp, Skype, Instagram, and, more recently, Clubhouse posts and conversations. At times, my research progressed in a straightforward manner. At other times, it evolved more haphazardly and intuitively, the subversive weight of a given art project becoming clearer when I encountered interpretations of it on social media. Then, the seeming aimlessness and generally circular nature of my attempts to understand my subjects opened the door to a process of improvisation. The social media and communication platforms that proliferated since the start of this research in 2015 necessitated ever greater inventions. Like jazz improvisation, my improvised research involved back and forth responses and discoveries. Such engagements and observations fed into the structure of this book. With few exceptions, I avoided organizing its various parts according to the conventional historic junctures in the political development of the Islamic Republic. Likewise, I did not rely on categorization based on artistic medium; for example, the seemingly unrelated fields of theatrical performances and design strategies are analyzed in the same thematic section. Throughout I favored a more robust focus on common critical spatial practices and subtle interventionist tactics utilized by the artists, regardless of their areas of specialty.



Left:
Amir Mobed,
Disformission. 2018.
Mohsen Gallery's patio space, Tehran.
Photograph by Siamak Ebrahimi.



Right:
Noir Theater Group, *Horses at the Window*,
directed by Hadi Kamali-Moghaddam
and Mina Bozorgmehr. 2013.
On the premises of the Azadi
Complex, Tehran.
Photograph by Siamak Mohebalian.

RESEARCH REPORT CONT'D

While the necessarily limited scope of the book meant that many artists were left out, I hope that Iranian art historians will expand on the contents of this book. Much of the work presented here is desperately awaiting documentation, presentation, and theorization. In addition to exploring art, this study also offers an argument for the creation of spaces and practices that produce novel ways of seeing the world and new modes of thinking. The alternative spaces and informal collective environments discussed in this book are vital not only for producing innovative art but also for challenging the ideological and economic system of the Islamic Republic of Iran. My hope is that readers will take from this book an appreciation for all the creative agents who are perpetually transforming Iran's culture from "below" and against all odds

Iranian Literature after the Revolution

Laetitia Nanquette reflects on her research for *Iranian Literature After the Islamic Revolution. Production and Circulation in Iran and the World* (Edinburgh University Press, 2021).

The research is about the Iranian literary field after the revolution of 1979. It studies how literature, mostly prose, has functioned and circulated in the past 40 years, both within Iran and in the countries of the Iranian diaspora. The first part of the book is on Iran and studies the forms, structures and functions of Iranian literature within Iranian society. The second part is about the global diaspora, focusing on North America, Western Europe and Australia, where the author lived in the past 13 years, which facilitated fieldwork. The author has benefited during her fieldwork from the generosity of many literary practitioners, who have shared their knowledge and insights about the complexity and sophistication of the Iranian literary field both in Iran and in the diaspora.

The book studies Iranian literature after the Revolution comparatively. The comparison is on two levels: it is about the relationship of the literary field with other fields, the political, social, and economic; and it analyses Iranian literature as a global phenomenon, with comparisons between countries where Iranian literature has an important place. It is important to look at Iran and the diaspora synchronously, because they are often research fields that are separate. There has been a lot of interesting work done on Iranian-American literature, for example, so the monograph uses some of this scholarship and expands it to look at several countries, and study issues of global circulation. The scope is large, thus poetry, which has different dynamics, is only discussed in a couple of chapters.

The methodology of the book is mixed. The source material consists of interviews and fieldwork undertaken in Iran and in the diaspora since 2005; digital humanities

methods; distant reading, as well as occasional close readings. Pierre Bourdieu's theory of the literary field is the general framework, adapted to the Iranian context. Iran is considered in this book not only as a nation state, a geographical space, but also as an identity and an 'imagined community': this is why it also studies works written by Iranians outside of Iran in other languages than Persian, in French and English. Literatures from Iranians across the world produce small clusters of Iran outside its borders, either in Persian or in the local languages.

This research describes the Iranian literary field in all its complexity and variations, to narrate several aspects of the story of contemporary literature: both what happens within Iran and in the diaspora; the independent field, the underground field, as well as the governmental one, which is often neglected in English-speaking scholarship; both canonical literature, as well as popular and children's literatures; and also the local, the national and the global levels, and all the informal connections in between. For this reason, the book constantly reflects on the question of center, and tries to decenter, and then recenter Iran. It is important that all these voices and strands are taken into account to show the richness and complexity of the literature(s) of Iran today. Classical Persian literature is widely considered to be rich and multi-layered, and has a long tradition of scholarship devoted to it, but it is less the case of contemporary Iranian literary field. The book hopes to demonstrate its richness, its paradoxes, its negotiations and its evolutions.

Why is it important to study contemporary Iranian literature for Iranian Studies scholars? Culture in general, and literature specifically, have been central to the foundation of the Islamic Republic of Iran and they have remained so since. Culture is essential to the ways it defines itself and to the defence of its ideas. The reader can think about the cultural production of the 'Sacred Defense' for example. Or of the fact that Iran is ninth on the list of countries that publish most in the world. Or that there are many institutions devoted to cultural production. Cultural production is not an afterthought, it is at the center of power. Culture is also understood by the Islamic republic regime as an instrument of 'soft power'. This is why everyone working on contemporary Iran should be aware of its cultural production as well as the discourses around it.

In this talk, the author discusses her book and academic trajectory in Persian with the Australian SBS Radio: <https://www.sbs.com.au/language/persian/fa/podcast-episode/laetitia-nanquette-iranian-literature-after-the-islamic-revolution/s7s1h37ay>

INTERVIEW

Compulsive Navigation Disorder: Delaram Houseinioun interviewed the artist Samira Abbassy

Samira Abbassy is an Arab Iranian artist. She was born in Ahvaz in 1965 and grew up in London where her parents moved in 1967. Her art has been celebrated in various galleries and museums around the world, including the British Museum and the Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York. Since 1998, she has been based in New York City.

Samira Abbassy merges mythological narratives with the contemporary style of painting to deal with themes such as the sense of belonging, homeland and the subconsciousness of the woman. Looking for the universality of the feminine voice, Abbassy deconstructs archetypes to confront and exceed the restrictions imposed on women, aside from spatial borders and timelines.

For Abbassy, pursuing arts started around the age of 12. She was fascinated by drawing eyes, then drawing faces around the eyes, then bodies connecting to the faces. Abbassy's grotesque style lures the viewer to a new dimension of surreal art: whether it is the butterfly wings of her women, or the decapitated head of individuals as decorative belts, Chinese clouds or the Indian hand of Cali, Dante's purgatory flames inside the woman's Qajar style skirts, or the golden armor of Fath'Ali Shah worn by a woman: each captures our gaze and makes us wonder about the woman and her reality.

Abbassy's parents immigrated to the United Kingdom when Samira was nearly two years old. She received her higher education in painting, first at the Birmingham Polytechnic and later at Canterbury College of Art. Inspired by Indian and Chinese mythology, Dante's Inferno and Qajar history, Abbassy's figures encompass multidimensional characteristics through which she challenges the singularity of western views towards selfhood and womanhood. Each of her women carries a unique story, resonating with archetypes as well as some personal tokens. About her historical inclinations, Abbassy remarks:



Samira Abbassy

Ode to All my Mothers
Oil on Gesso Panel
34 x 60 in – 2012



INTERVIEW CONT'D

"I have been looking at the Qajar period for thirty years ... what is interesting to me is how one generation tried to translate the whole culture into the language of the other culture, the western one. It's like a metaphor for me because I came from the Middle East. I was trained in the West; for me, it was like a bridge going backwards, but also trying to save or build a bridge in modern and contemporary art between the Qajar period and contemporary Iran. After the Qajar period, there was a huge influence by the West, while modern and contemporary Iran lost its language. I am trying to reinvent what would have happened had there not been this break."

In the painting *Ode To All My Mothers*, the figure is dressed in a precious, golden Qajar suit. The golden robe resembles mediaeval armor, but its transparent layers also reflect the Qajar tradition of having different layers suitable for the internal and external spaces of the house allocated to women.

Abbassy explains: "The title of the work would tell us that this is genealogical, and you can trace the notion of one's ancestors and predecessors through it. This woman is holding a boy and a girl. I, myself, have a twin boy and girl; we can say this painting is an autobiographical portrait. At the same time, the woman has a tattoo over her chin, as my maternal grandmother did, to whom I dedicated most of my works. This could also be her portrait, holding my mother and my mother holding me, something like a family tree." Following Abbassy, here the Self is empowered by her ancestors and is the guardian for her descendants.

The selection of colors reveals another layer of meaning, as the composition remains grave and tense. As the body of the woman is covered with red miniature patterns, the twisted ivy across her torso evoke complexities, whether representing internal organs, her veins, or a poisonous element, like the ivy. Notably, the shapes in the background resemble pomegranates or feminine egg cells, resonating with the concept of reproduction. Regarding using the color gold, Abbassy adds, "The color gold comes from the idea of mediaeval icons, for example, the gold and ultramarine in portraits of the Virgin Mary. Gold is the most expensive color, not just to highlight the value of the woman, but the value of the human being and the soul that shines within it. It is both a metaphor and a process: getting the light to come through the surface also works as a metaphor for the emanation through the halo of a greater Self, the soul, the enlightenment, while the reds and warm colors represent flesh and fire.

As Abbassy highlights, the process of making art for her is about reaching inside. It is about showing the process of internalisation like a diagram. One of the characteristics of Abbassy's art is her usage of space, as she explains, "I feel that the Renaissance ruined painting because perspective is about realism and not about psychological space." Abbassy's approach and the notion of the psychological space manifest themselves in her usage of the canvas as a mirror. "The painting surface is the place where I meet and work through confrontations with myself. Like the surface of a mirror, it shows me to myself." Thus, the artwork acts as a double mirror both unveiling the inner self of the artist and revealing a new aspect and image to the viewers. "The icons exist to heal and to affect you, I hope that they heal and encourage you, and they would bring you back to the truth of yourself, that's what they're for. You could say that it is beauty that heals."

Coming from a multicultural background, Abbassy remarks, "I questioned many aspects of my dueling cultures as I try to integrate, belong, and bridge gaps. So, I became a fictional historian, reinterpreting stories about a homeland that I barely knew." As a result, Abbassy's women each encompass distinct aspects of her cultural background. By maneuvering topics such as women's agency over their bodies through a historical lens and along with mythological themes, Abbassy confronts the regression of women's status and sense of stagnation and traces these topics through time. Abbassy's figures are a testament to the woman's transition, while by merging the events of her life, Abbassy also renders more individualistic aspects to each work. In some works, Abbassy's woman stands as the face of a generation who is seeking to re-bond to its heritage and identity while other works speak of universal motives such as the depiction of Eve.

How does she deal with descriptions of her art as being "exotic"? "As a British or an Arab artist, I leave that to the person who exoticized me, but I think the subject of my work is not exotic, it relates to very visceral real human emotions. ... I happen to be a woman. Inside my female body there is a universal soul that I am trying to get to. It is not feminist and this idea of womanhood — presenting the feminine only — for me is a shortcoming, I want to represent everybody." By depicting the archetypes in the situational settings, and merging them with modern elements, Abbassy questions how women's identity has been framed in time. As she believes "They are ambiguous archetypes based on myself or imagined ancestors which carry the psychological properties. They are the vehicles of the narrative."

INTERVIEW CONT'D

Abbassy's women are all depicted in the same age range and carry similar characteristics, which also match an autobiographical concept. The figures always reflect the women in their prime — none of the main subjects are adolescents or middle-aged. They are mostly pale, and their gaze seems rather soulless, yet the fire is depicted through their hearts or minds, illustrating their psychological state and the degree of the complexities faced by they face. "My art is deeply personal and autobiographical and comes out of my psyche, my reality and also it comes out of what I chose to look at in art history. Because it's so personal and psychological, there is a universality in it at the same time. For example, Frida Kahlo's suffering is universal, people could relate to it. It is the same with my women. They invite you to cope and be compassionate. The word compassion is to be inside somebody else's suffering, to feel your own and therefore to feel forgiven or be relieved of it. For me, painting is about inviting the viewer into that situation.

Inspired by Jungian psychoanalysis and the fragmented identity of the self, Abbassy also tries to capture the internalization and externalization of power and emotions. In the painting *As She Swallows Their Fate*, the title indicates the woman has already succumbed to her fate, but the designation 'their fate' instead of 'her fate' also highlights the collective aspect of this confinement. The figure's inward approach to her suppressed emotions points to Abbassy's observation that "women turn violence inwardly and men make war", while the act of swallowing fate, also resembles the term swallowing your fears which highlights the gravity of the woman's dilemma.



As She Swallows Their Fate
Oil on Gesso Panel
24 x 18 in

Abbassy remarks, "Maybe the images are disturbing to the viewer because they are psychologically candid and reveal to the viewer more than they'd like to see. The visceral is taken literally rather than metaphorically". Nonetheless, Abbassy also gives the viewer the chance to adjust and digest the chain of symbolism and trace them within their daily lives. In the painting "Beset on all Sides", the decapitated heads need not be seen as such only, "but externalised multiple aspects of the Self. They can also be read as ancestral helpers surrounding and protecting the figure."



Beset on All side
Oil on Gesso Panel
14 x 11 in

Abbassy's collections maneuver around universal themes that women around the world can relate to. Yet Persian viewers, knowing the cultural context and background, can grasp a larger meta-narrative. "My work allows me to stretch back into history and forward through the imagination, it allows me the limitless space that my soul requires to make sense of it all." For Abbassy, understanding culture and one's surroundings starts by knowing one's own voice and view of matters in relation: "I comprehended myself and the world around me through the work of art. Even a month away from working on art would be a long period for me, as if I cannot grasp and digest matters. To me, art renders meaning to everything and aids me to understand matters. It's like a periscope whose head is in the future."

About her artistic trajectory and the inspiration, Abbassy adds, "It is like gardening, I don't know it, I don't make it, I make it grow by showing up every day and painting it and then I go away and think about it. It is a gift that comes through me that I nurtured and looked after and it looked after me in return, and this is why when I speak about it, I am amazed. Some of the ways to talk about it seem tangential. Sometimes I am

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absorbing it, seeing it. Great works of art, when you look at them, make you think: how do they do this to me? There is a mysterious transfer going on between a piece of art and you that you can't even speak about, it's a mystery."

Regarding her experience of diaspora and immigration, Abbassy notes, "I am still dealing with the traumas of immigration, the kind of domestic situation that arose from that, for my parents as well. So, I express this: we can either rage against the machine and throw rocks, or we can find our peace. It's an evolving love affair. Diaspora is a rich matter which I have experienced twice, there is a question of home and this is why these figures have to contain home, as home doesn't exist otherwise. I am trying to narrate and depict all this in my works and it is as though there is not enough room in a single work, that is why I have to make so many, as there is so much to explain."



Compulsive Navigation Disorder
Oil on Gesso Panel
60 x 34 in
The Burger Collection



Carrying Herself as a Corpse (Red)
Oil on Gesso Panel
12 x 12 in

As for selecting the captions for her paintings, Abbassy explains, "the titles emerge when I am making them, sometimes very clearly, or other times the painting or drawing is part of a series. They occur as a conversation within the series, as they all refer to each other. Titles are very important to me, and more so recently. With the rise in importance of Instagram, they became more expendable, as people put hashtags on things. Titles have become a form of short poetry for me that permit me to pull out other associations. Those lead to new titles for the next pieces and help me develop ideas before they are made. Words are very important. To choose 'untitled' to me seems almost like an avoidance; it is very frustrating like that."

The sense of othering and having an inner conflict with oneself frames another aspect of Abbassy's works. Duality is shown by the divergence of the feminine body or the other that grows out of the woman. In some cases, the woman is carrying the other like a corpse, while there is also the trace of dried blood, that makes the viewer wonder if it's the Self who won this battle or the Other that dominated the Self, as they are linked together with braided hair, like an umbilical cord. Heritage and roots play an essential role in interpreting this sense of duality.

Many of Abbassy's figures have their hair braided, while the hair is depicted through their transparent bodies, as their spine or around their neck, as if suffocating them. In some works, the woman is pulling the braided hair out of her mouth, as if liberating her voice. In others, the hair is in the shape of eternity or in the shape of the double helix of DNA. "The braids are the vehicles of the narrative. They can also be said to represent the divine feminine aspect, or even more esoterically; they are souls in the physical realm." Thus, through the braided hair, the artist narrates a distinct aspect of the divine feminine, empowered or entangled, the loop and infinity of the braided hair bonds the women to the present time as well as the past.



Bound By Her Fate
Oil on Gesso Panel
24 x 18 in

Abbassy explains, “the braid is also an indication of time since it takes time to grow long. It also stands as history that trips you up and strangles you which creates dilemmas, yet it is up to you as an individual to act upon them. The Jungian concept of self-development also resonates with this as you spend your whole life untangling this cord, almost like trying to solve the riddle of who you are, which matches what Jung calls the process of individuation, as you are becoming yourself. The braided form also relates to the snake in Kundalini iconography. It’s about swallowing yourself.

The spine is the structure that bears the body’s essential nerve and energy systems. In some of these works, I am expressing absolute horror and also the need to name something which remains almost impossible.” About her maternal grandmother, Abbassy remembers, “the first time I saw under her hijab and there were these braids that were so involved that they twisted into little buns on the sides and just went on and on and on. They were orange from henna. For me, that’s a very powerful memory. That was her most intimate part and she showed it to me.”

About the meaning of braided hair for the artist, Abbassy talks about her memory of Iran, of home and her first encounter with her grandmother, when she was about 12 years old. “My female cousins and I bathed my paternal grandmother and combed out her braids. She had tattoos all the way down her chin to her belly button. The intimacy of seeing the markings of a body has stayed in the back of my mind. Even though many women of her generation and background were not educated, they had sturdy knowledge that was transmitted in a mysterious way and that is what I am trying to show in my works.... Also consider that before we are born our maternal grandmother carries the eggs which contain the same DNA as us.”

In her sculptures, on the other hand, the dominant theme and characteristic is the sense of fragmentation and the feeling of being torn apart. The female body is dismantled



Shrine of Shrines to the King of Kings
Wooden Cabinet with Multimedia contents
when opened: 36 x 35 x 8 in

INTERVIEW CONT'D

and dissected, with the woman's entity being analyzed in the most meticulous yet fierce way; the emphasis rests on the core elements, like teeth or bare bones. Abbassy explains, "I create my sculptures mostly out of recyclable materials. My main focus in sculpture is on the human body and how it could be projected, they partially reflect and are inspired by these concepts. For example, the reliquary, containing remains of saints' bodies which are kept in churches, such as Saint Peter's finger in Vatican City, reflects this idea. For me, this is sculpture, it's not a grand monument. The human body is revealed in fragments, in a glass jar containing human-like remains. The vessel's transparency permits us to see inside the body. Through these works, I feel I am analyzing myself from an anthropological perspective and these sculptures are my family shrines."

Throughout her work, Abbassy depicts the transition of the self and the importance of understanding one's own voice through history and cultures beyond borders. Her paintings exceed the temporal and spatial frames. Her work invites the viewer to a new realm and to trace the entwined roots that bond us all together.

Abbassy's works can be viewed online at <http://www.samiraabbassy.com>.

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Intimate Void, Oil on Gesso Panel, 24 x 18 in

WORKSHOP REPORT

New Horizons in Kizilbash/Alevi-Bektashi History

A three-day workshop on the History of Kizilbash/Alevi communities and the kindred Bektashi Order, entitled "New Horizons in Kizilbash/Alevi-Bektashi History," was held on April 29 - May 1, 2022, at the College of William and Mary in Virginia, USA. It was envisioned as a follow up to a conference that took place in 2011 at Boğaziçi University in Istanbul, Turkey, entitled "Alevi-Bektashi Communities in the Ottoman Geography: Historiography, Sources and Paradigms." In 2011, dozens of senior and junior academics, several from the US, convened in person in Istanbul. The recent workshop, on the other hand, was held in hybrid format due to the pandemic, with several scholars from the US, Turkey, Europe and Canada joining in remotely. The keynote speech and concluding remarks at the workshop were delivered by Professor Ahmet Karamustafa from the University of Maryland and Professor Cemal Kafadar from Harvard University, respectively.

Alevi-Bektashi Studies is a rapidly growing field of academic study. Its growth parallels the increasing visibility of Alevi-Bektashi communities in the public arena in Turkey and in the diaspora in Europe since the 1990s, during what came to be known as the Alevi Cultural Revival. The field attracts scholars from a variety of disciplines, including anthropology, cultural studies, ethnomusicology, religious studies, sociology, political science, as well as history. Unlike scholars in other fields, however, historians researching the Kizilbash/Alevi-Bektashi communities face extra challenges in the form of scarcity of written sources and deeply entrenched, questionable approaches in the relevant traditions of scholarship that marginalize and exoticize these communities.

In mainstream Ottoman and Safavid historiographies, the Kizilbash, who are the forefathers of modern-day Alevis, have typically been discussed as tangential to two historical problems that are deemed to be more primary, namely the formation of so-called heterodox Islam in medieval Anatolia and the Ottoman-Safavid rivalry during the sixteenth century. With few exceptions, the conventional historical literature has relied on outdated paradigms based on survival theories that were developed in the early twentieth century and not adequately questioned since. Scholars, furthermore, have tended to reproduce the top-down perspective of state-centric or normative sources that are strongly biased against the communities in question. Even though the 1990s saw new efforts to approach the history of the Kizilbash/Alevi-Bektashi communities, dispersed over a wide area spanning Anatolia and neighboring regions, for its intrinsic worth and with a perspective from within, the field at large has a difficulty transcending conventional paradigms. Many scholars, thus, tend to reproduce such problematic dichotomies as "high Islam/folk Islam" and "orthodoxy/heterodoxy" that have informed the old paradigms, sometimes further sharpening their opposition or

WORKSHOP REPORT CONT'D

simply inverting them.

This workshop that was a sequel to the 2011 conference is part of a sustained effort towards re-thinking the history of the Kizilbash/Alevi-Bektashi communities as an integral part of late-medieval and early modern Islamic history, with new questions and methods, and in the light of newly discovered sources, such as documents and manuscripts in private collections.

The workshop consisted of six panels. On the first day, it opened with two special panels. The first was on the *Velayetname*, the sacred biography of Hacı Bektaş Veli, who is revered as a saint by Bektashis and Alevi alike. This central text of the Alevi-Bektashi tradition was subjected to scrutiny in terms of the diffusion of its many copies in prose and verse form, authorship, utility as a historical source, and its intertextuality with other contemporary or near-contemporary hagiographic narratives by the participants of the panel, including Mark Soileau, Cemal Kafadar, Ahmet Karamustafa, Sibel Kocaer, and Ayfer Karakaya-Stump.

The second special panel was entitled “Framing Kizilbash/Alevi History,” and it brought together papers by Yuri Stoyanos, Vernon Schubel, Emin Lelić and Cevat Dargın that explored alternative framings of the field as part of Islamic, Turkish, Kurdish or local Balkan history.

Three panels took place on the second day. One of these brought together junior scholars who have been doing new and creative research in the Ottoman archives, searching for the Kizilbash in places other than the chronicles and the *mühimme defters* (registers that contain copies of sultanic orders to the provinces) which have been commonly used in the conventional historiography to study the 16th Century persecution of the Kizilbash by the Ottoman state. Of the five panelists, Ümit Katırcı and Murat Alandağlı shared their studies in Ottoman cadastral surveys (*tahrir defters*) and registers of pious foundations (*hurufat defters*), respectively, as previously untapped sources for Kizilbash history. The same panel included Hüseyin Ongan Aslan, who did a presentation on a rare-found account in the Ottoman archives of a

heresy trial of an individual accused of being Kizilbash, and Hasan Hüseyin Güneş, who undertook a study of a collection of written anti-Kizilbash polemics by the Ottoman Sunni ulema. Selim Güngörürler, on the other hand, provided a picture of the Anatolian Kizilbash after the mid 17th Century, a period of Kizilbash history that is much less known. The second panel included a set of presentations by Ali Anğay, Saim Savaş, Zeynep Oktay Uslu, Yeliz Teber, Peyman Eshaghi and Gülay Yılmaz pertaining to the late medieval Sufi background of Alevi-Bektashi history. The six presentations variously focused on the place of the Vefa’i, Yesevi, Bektashi Sufi Orders and the dervish group known as the Abdals of Rum in the making of the Kizilbash/Alevi milieu in Anatolia, drawing on original research into archival, narrative and literary sources. The third panel of day two was entitled “Teaching, Ritual, Symbolism” which was dedicated to papers dealing with Alevi-Bektashi religious teachings and ritual practices past and present. Three of the four papers by Alex Kreger, Angela Andersen and Irene Markoff were based on in-field research, while the fourth, by Özkan Karabulut, utilized the *Buyruk* manuscripts that contain religious treatises and poetry to track the development of Alevi ritual practices.

While the emphasis of the workshop during the first two days was on the Kizilbash/Alevi-Bektashi communities in Ottoman Anatolia, the first panel on the last day turned to the Kizilbash in Iran. Four of the five papers dealt with relations between the shahs and the various components of the Kizilbash milieu or the Safavids and the Kizilbash military elite of Iran. Another by Ferenc Csirkes moved forward in time, exploring Kizilbash literature in Late Safavid and Afsharid periods. The final panel of the workshop composed of panelists Şükrü Ilıcak, Bedriye Poyraz and Ceren Lord focused on the more recent history of Alevi-Bektashi communities in Turkey. Among the topics treated were the abolishment of the Bektashi Order in the early 19th Century; the forced resettlements of Kizilbash/Alevi following the Dersim Alevi massacre in 1938; and the fashioning of the modern Alevi movement in Turkey and Europe.

A collected volume including select papers from the workshop is currently under preparation by the organizers, Ayfer Karakaya-Stump from William and Mary, and Cemal Kafadar from Harvard University.

Ayfer Karakaya-Stump, Associate Professor of History, College of William & Mary

ASPS EARLY CAREER PRIZE

The Association for the Study of Persianate Societies announces the inauguration of a biennial Early Career Prize in order to encourage and reward scholarship about the broader Persianate world by ASPS members who are still in the early stages of their careers. Interested applicants are invited to submit original and unpublished work to the *Journal of Persianate Studies* by 31 January, 2023.

Based on creativity of topic and source materials, originality of analysis, and overall scholastic contributions, an ASPS prize committee will select a winner, who will be announced at the upcoming ASPS conference. The winner will receive a cash prize of \$250 and the paper will be published in the *Journal of Persianate Studies* after any revision that may be required by the editorial office. Runners-up may also be considered for publication.

The *Journal of Persianate Studies* is a peer-reviewed publication of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies. The journal publishes articles on the culture and civilization of the geographical area where Persian has historically been the dominant language or a major cultural force, encompassing Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan, as well as the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, and parts of the former Ottoman Empire.

Eligibility: non-tenured scholars who, at time of submission, are members of ASPS and have already received their doctorate within the last seven years.

Application procedure: Paper submissions must fall within the purview of JPS and must be original and previously unpublished; they must also follow all regular JPS style and citation guidelines, found online at: https://brill.com/fileasset/downloads_products/Author_Instructions/JPS.pdf. Prize applicants should submit their papers online through Editorial Manager (<https://www.editorialmanager.com/JPSBRILL>), selecting 'Early Career Prize' as the article type. By submitting a paper, applicants acknowledge intent to participate in the ASPS Early Career Prize and waive the right to withdraw their paper from publication, if selected.

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

Problems of the Indo-Iranian World: Readings in Memory of Sergei Vsevolodovich Kullanda (1954-2020)

The International Russian-Iranian Centre and the International Research Centre for South Asian Studies of the Russian State University for Humanities will convene a conference on "Problems of the Indo-Iranian World", dedicated to the memory of the Russian Indologist and Iranist Sergei Vsevolodovich Kullanda (1954-2020). The conference shall be held on 17 March 2023 at the Russian State University for Humanities (RSUH), Moscow, and will be held in presence or in a hybrid format. It is organized by Pavel Basharin, International Russian-Iranian Centre (RSUH), and Alexander Stolyarov, International Research Centre for South Asian Studies (RSUH).

The problem field of the conference is the origin of the Indo-Iranian and more broadly the Aryan community through the prism of material culture and linguistics, and also cultural contacts of Indians and Iranians up to the 19th century. The topics close to the research of Sergei Vsevolodovich are welcome (reconstruction of the language picture of the world, language contacts, etymological reconstruction).

The conference aims to bring together scholars of Indian and Iranian studies, in order to highlight the problem from several angles. It is planned to involve historians, archaeologists, philologists, linguists, culturologists, and religious scholars in the conference.

Please send a title and an abstract of **ca. 100 words** until **10 February 2023** to Pavel Basharin [here](#).

CALLS FOR PAPERS

Proposal for Special Issue of *Critical Comparative Studies*, (Edinburgh University Press): Iranian Comparative Literature: Between Chaos and Discipline

This special issue is building on two panels organized in the XXIII Congress of International Comparative Literature Association in Tbilisi, Georgia, in July 2022. The issue seeks two aims: a historical and a methodological one.

First, to study the development of Comparative Literature in institutional settings during the past two decades in order to critically review the current state of the discipline as it is practiced in Persian and other Iranian languages, in Iran and diasporic locations. Second, to investigate the impact of comparative methodologies that have contributed to the formation of modern literary studies – in particular Orientalism and Eurocentric knowledge – and to examine the effects of this (comparative) literary studies as a “local” form of knowledge in Iranian academia.

Historically, the study of modern foreign literatures was part of the curriculum at the first modern Iranian university (i.e. University of Tehran) in the 1920s, but a department of Comparative Literature proper did not – and does not – exist in Iranian academia. During the past two decades, the discipline has been developed as a subfield under the department of national literature, i.e. Persian Language and Literature. It is probably in response to this change that there has been a sharp increase in the number of books on Comparative Literature translated into Persian, as well as in the number of academic journals published in Persian with “comparative” as part of their titles. Outside Iran, the majority of students and scholars who contribute to the field have conventionally been located in Area Studies departments, engaging, and oftentimes extending, the legacies of Orientalism.

On the methodological side, this issue seeks to discuss the disciplinary adjustments needed for the practice of Comparative Literature – or rather comparative literary studies – in the Iranian context. The structures of knowledge formulated during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries were based on two fundamental postulates: the centrality of capitalism and secularism as the defining essence of modern culture; the history of European cultural development as the norm against which other cultural histories would be assessed. In this structure, Area Studies was created in Europe for introducing non-European literatures – placed outside capitalism – to European readers.

As a result, the study of modern Iranian literatures in Iran, positioned on the margins of capitalism, via Eurocentric knowledge would encounter deep epistemological and, subsequently, methodological problems: Orientalism places –

via clichéd images constructed through romanticist interests – the “golden age” of literary creativity in the past, consistently positioning modern Persian as an outsider to modern literary studies; energized by romantic nationalism, it has failed to consider and incorporate the diversity of Iranian literatures beyond Persian in the body of literary knowledge; it assesses a culture that has developed in the periphery of capitalism with the norms suitable to evaluating European literature and, therefore, cannot account for formal innovations and developments, if form is understood as the literary effect of negotiations between multiple cultural forces. In short, it is not clear what methodologies would be suitable to the study of Iranian literary traditions in a comparative setting.

As a result of these concerns, in order to integrate Persian in comparative literary practices, a number of changes are needed to formulate the critical position(s) and priorities of the discipline. First, disentangling the history of Iranian cultural development from the global history of colonialism, particularly European modern history. The normative assumptions of the discipline must be dealt with as fluid frames that essentially fall short of describing the peripherality and diversity of the Iranian condition. This critical perspective must extend to a critical review of Area Studies and the Orientalist knowledge it produces. Second, the problem of a temporal lag in a context that has been on the margins of the modern world, hence a latecomer to both capitalism and disciplinary knowledge, must be tackled, too; this temporal lag is most evident in the way Comparative Literature subfields have been formed, and journals founded, without having developed a linguistic pedagogical program or a clear research method.

Approaching Comparative Literature as a transdisciplinary field, with a Eurocentric and colonial history, this special issue takes into account contemporary questions and lived experiences that engage and promote the causes of comparative literary studies within and beyond Persian – as Iran’s lingua franca. Given the modern history of the nation, and the academic system, can Comparative Literature be practiced at all as a discipline in the Iranian context? What new theoretical interventions are essential to render the discipline not only productive but also critically relevant? This special issue invites researchers to share their thoughts and research on the state of the discipline. Topics of interest are – but not essentially limited to – the following:

- The history of modern (foreign) literary studies at Iranian universities
- The legacies and limits of Area studies and Orientalist knowledge
- “Internal colonialism” and non-Persian Iranian languages and literary traditions
- Being/becoming World Literature: peripherality and universality
- Formulating the condition: Is combined and uneven development sufficient?
- The “literary” and comparatism: discipline building and curriculum development
- Conceptualizations of translation, imitation, and adaptation in a romanticist culture
- Disciplinarity and the question of visual cultures, digital literatures and future research.

CALLS FOR PAPERS CONT'D

Please send a 300-word abstract to both Omid Azadibougar omid.azadi@hunnu.edu.cn and Laetitia Nanquette l.nanquette@unsw.edu.au by 31 January 2023.

Timeline:

- Abstract submission deadline: 31 January 2023
- Notification of acceptance: 28 February 2023
- Paper submission deadline: 31 December 2023
- Paper acceptance notification: 30 June 2024
- Publication: December 2024

CALL FOR TRANSLATION

MELC Launches Mo Habib Translation Prize in Persian Literature 23.

The Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures is thrilled to launch the Mo Habib Translation Prize in Persian Literature. This prize has been established in partnership with the [Mo Habib Memorial Foundation](#) and [Deep Vellum Press](#) to enable the publication and dissemination of Persian literary works that stand on their own in engaging English translation. It seeks to expand the readership of Persian literature in English, beyond academic audiences.

We anticipate that there will be multiple cycles. For its inaugural cycle, we welcome submissions in modern Persian fiction (novel and short story collection) from Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Iran, and their diaspora. The winning translation will receive a prize of \$10,000 (\$2,000 once the award is announced in July 2023, and \$8,000 once the work is turned in by the deadline May 2024). This prize comes with a commitment by [Deep Vellum](#) to publish the translated work. Please [submit](#) the following materials in a single PDF file by March 1, 2023:



- A one-page cover letter that describes the work to be translated, and speaks to its larger import
- An up-to-date CV (no more than 3 pages)
- A bilingual sample of the proposed translation (no more than 20 pages, double spaced, in both languages - meaning 20 pages in Persian and 20 pages in English)
- Proof of copyrights (if applicable)

The Mo Habib Memorial Foundation celebrates the life and legacy of Mohammad Habib by supporting education, culture, and the arts in the Pacific Northwest and beyond. Born in Tehran in 1952, he moved to the U.S. in 1970 to attend college, eventually obtaining his BS and MS in Engineering and Construction Management from the University of Washington. For forty years, he worked as a project manager and structural engineer. Mohammad is survived by his wife, Superior Court Judge Susan Amini, and his son, Cyrus Habib, who served as the state's 16th Lieutenant Governor prior to leaving public life to become a Jesuit.

Founded in 2013 in Dallas, Texas, Deep Vellum's mission is to bring the world into conversation through literature. In its first five years, Deep Vellum published 90 works in translation by international writers ([see here](#)) and hosted dozens of literary events for Dallas residents.

FAQ

1. Do I need to obtain a legal license for a book published in Iran?

Iran has not signed the 1886 Berne Copyright Convention that protects literary and artistic works by providing creators with the means to control how their works are used, by whom, and on what terms. And because there is no copyright treaty between Iran and the US (see, for example, the United States copyright law, [17 U.S.C. § 104](#)), works by Iranian authors first published in Iran fall immediately into the public domain in the United States. Although not legally obligatory, it would be more ethical to obtain permission from the author. Unlike Iran, however, Afghanistan and Tajikistan are both signatories of the Copyright Convention, so unless the source text is in the public domain, a copyright permission would need to be obtained.

2. I already have a contract with a different publisher, could I still apply?

No. The winning translation is to be published by *Deep Vellum*, so you may not have entered into a contract with a different publisher.

3. My project will not be complete by May 2024, may I still apply?

We warmly encourage you to apply for a future cycle. Our projected timeline for this cycle is submission of the final manuscript by no later than May 2024. All inquiries should be directed to Aria Fani (ariafani@uw.edu)