



ASSOCIATION FOR IRANIAN STUDIES

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<http://associationforiranianstudies.org>

AIS Newsletter | Volume 40, Number 2 | October 2019

PRESIDENT'S ADDRESS

In many ways, things are as they have always been at this point in a presidential term. The preliminary program for AIS 2020 should be available later this fall, after a very robust adjudication process overseen by our Program and Conference Chair, Miguel Angel Andres Toledo. AIS finances are in good shape, despite two (unsuccessful) “phishing” attacks and ongoing challenges with banking (more on that, later). The journal is doing very well under the leadership of our editor Ali Gheissari. At the time of writing, preparations are underway for the next elections for AIS Council and President-Elect. Same old, same old - with a sprinkle of progress. But, as my term approaches the halfway mark, there are unsettling signs: ongoing challenges that threaten the work we do as academics.

Part I. *Jarideh-ye Ālam*

By far the most unsettling reality is the continuing arrests of Iranian academics and other Iran specialists visiting Iran. With each new incident, I am confronted with familiar opposing arguments. I am counseled to issue a statement and raise the profile of the case in question. I am also counseled that AIS must remain non-political (for lack of a better term). The fear is that any public reaction to an arrest of an academic in Iran will not only complicate efforts to release the scholar in question but also jeopardize the “neutral zone” that we imagine we are creating so that Iran-based scholars can participate in AIS conferences. But the fundamental truth is more arresting and humbling: AIS is powerless to liberate or protect its members, or anyone else.



Colegio Arzobispal Fonseca,
one of the venues of AIS 2020

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ABOUT/OFFICERS/2018](http://associationforiranianstudies.org/about/officers/2018)

PRESIDENT’S ADDRESS **CONT’D**

Despair over what we cannot do should not keep us from what we can do. And I have something in mind. It will be insufficient, but I have come to believe it is necessary. We can create and maintain a memorial exhibit dedicated to those scholars who have had to pay a higher price than the rest of us for the privilege of studying and teaching about Iran. It is not that their work is better because they have suffered, or, that their work should be appreciated uncritically. But their professional contributions should be highlighted and exhibited in perpetuity by AIS. The exhibit will be updated, hopefully with happy news of their release. But it will never be taken down. My preliminary thoughts are that the exhibit will be digital (with mixed media), historical (i.e. not just focused on the present state of affairs) and evolve towards a continual collective effort to value individuals in our field. I look forward to working with AIS Council to develop the idea of this exhibit, and, I welcome feedback from members about this idea.

Again, even if this exhibit idea comes together, it will not be enough. There are a number of ways in which AIS might develop a sustainable and consistent response to these outrages. After the first of the year, I will launch a survey of members to see what ideas enjoy support among you. And we’ll go from there, steadily and relentlessly, toward something we can be proud of.

Part II. *Digar Chi?*

The banking situation is not much improved from my last newsletter column. On the one hand, we are grateful for the services of the Royal Bank of Canada. This has allowed to take in revenue from publishers, members, some donors and, in most cases, process payments to vendors and other service providers. But, on occasion, payments to vendors and individuals in the United States get delayed. We decided to apply for a general Office of Foreign Asset Control license to assure all financial service providers and partners that AIS, as a not-for-profit registered in the State of New York, is, of course, in compliance with all sanctions regulations regarding Iran and operates fully within the exemptions provided for in those same regulations. We decided that this preliminary step would make it easier to apply for an account with a US bank. So, with some guidance from OFAC itself, we filed an application on August 20th 2019. Unfortunately, OFAC offers no timeline for a decision on our application. So, our application is “pending.”

We will continue to check in with OFAC about our application and we will press on to find a US banking option as soon as possible. This is not just a challenge for the AIS in the US. Other non-profits that do academic or cultural programming around Iranian Studies face challenges in other countries (such as the UK), further straining the effort of scholars around the world to communicate and collaborate.

The other challenge has to do with the continuing effects of the “Muslim Ban”. Moving the AIS 2020 conference to a non-US location may prove helpful to some. But, for Iranian students with student visas, there is a risk. If they leave the US for any reason, even to attend a conference in their field, they risk losing their student visa and interrupting their studies at US institutions indefinitely as their attempts to secure waivers from the Muslim Ban go into the same “pending” limbo as AIS’ OFAC License application. Our solution for those who cannot risk travel to the AIS 2020 conference is the “digital poster.” The deadline for “poster exhibits only” proposals for AIS 2020 is December 1st 2019. That is also the deadline for those who have had their papers accepted for AIS 2020, and also wish to participate in the poster exhibit. Poster exhibit participants can elect to create a digital poster - a short MP4 of a presentation that will play in a loop with other digital posters on monitor in the poster exhibit space.

Members should know that AIS leadership is actively seeking ways to press on with the AIS mission despite the myriad challenges our field faces. While I am impatient with the state of progress in certain areas, I am more encouraged than ever about the prospects for our field. And our new policies on institutional memberships and diversity/inclusion (see below) reflect the forward-looking ethos of our association as a whole. The excellent scholarship you are publishing in the journal, the fascinating panels you are developing for AIS 2020 in Salamanca, the amazing colleagues who are stepping up to serve on AIS Council and AIS Executive Committee – all combine to give me more than hope. They give me confidence. Thank you.

Camron Michael Amin
The University of Michigan-Dearborn

AIS at MESA

Please mark your calendars! The AIS Members General Meeting will take place on Thursday, November 14, 3-4:30PM, in Room 4-Oakley.

All members are encouraged to attend.

NEW AIS INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIPS

Dear AIS Members and Colleagues,

I am pleased to formally announce our new Institutional Memberships. AIS Institutional memberships dues are now aligned better with other membership categories in that dues (\$700) are paid every two years and are better aligned with the AIS mission, especially in supporting our conferences. Institutional Memberships now come with the following benefits:

- 10 Complimentary Conference Registrations (for members whose individual AIS dues are up-to-date at time of conference registration)
- Listing on the website as current institutional members
- Listing in AIS conference program and conference website as conference sponsors
- Discounts on ads placed in Conference Program, Newsletter and Journal.

We did a soft launch of these memberships in June, mainly so we could test out the “complimentary conference registration” feature on the website. It is fair to say that the feature works but will benefit from some refinements and simplification in the future.

Why did the AIS Council authorize changes to the Institutional Membership benefits and dues? When I came into office, I realized that we had only four institutional members. Also, I was advised by the journal’s publishers that institutional discounts were not permitted in our contract. In any case, it was clear to us that no institution was opting for membership simply to get access to the journal. We decided that if institutions could return the benefits to their students and faculty through complimentary AIS conference registrations for individual members, that would serve both our mission and their institutional interest of promoting research. I’m pleased to report that our soft launch of institutional memberships has doubled institutional membership! Granted, we went from four institutional members to eight, but hey, Persepolis wasn’t built in a day, folks.

Please encourage your campus leadership - especially if your campus has a Middle East Studies or Iranian Studies program - to invest in an AIS Institutional Membership today. The poster exhibition only proposal deadline will be open soon (if you missed the paper proposal deadline) and we will need chairs and discussants for many panels. So, if you are an AIS individual member, you or one of your colleagues or students could still take advantage of the complimentary registration feature for AIS 2020.

Note: If you have registered for AIS 2020, thank you. Unfortunately, we cannot grant complimentary registrations retroactively (in part because it’s a pain, but mostly because we’ve already put that money to good use supporting the AIS mission).

Here is the link to establish an institutional membership (or renew your individual membership) today: <https://associationforiranianstudies.org/membership>.

Thank you for your continued support of the Association for Iranian Studies. We are looking forward to seeing all of you in Salamanca next year.

Camron Michael Amin

NEW AIS POLICY ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY

On May 29, in response to a petition from members, the AIS Council unanimously adopted the following policy:

“Diversity and inclusiveness are among core AIS values. Diversity encourages innovation and creativity, and strengthens the community by harnessing a variety of skills, perspectives, talents, and resources to meet new challenges. We are committed to eliminating barriers to full participation in all AIS events based on sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, religion, race, ethnicity, and ability.”

This has implications for the entirety of the AIS mission and I look forward to working with AIS Council, Executive Officers and members to implement this policy thoughtfully and constructively. At this juncture, let me inform you of our preliminary efforts to implement this policy in our planning for the 2020 Conference.

Even before this policy was adopted, Program and Conference Chair Miguel Angel Andreas Toledo, took care to ensure gender balance in the composition of the Program Committee, as well as balance between US and Non-US representation. As always, papers delivered in Persian are welcome, as are co-authored and co-presented papers. Furthermore, as announced previously, we are introducing poster exhibit opportunities at this conference. This is to encourage more dialogue among participants who attend. As an alternative to traditional posters, participants can display “digital posters” (short MP4 video presentations that will play in a loop in the poster exhibition space). It is hoped that this digital poster option will provide a meaningful access to those who face insurmountable obstacles to physically attending the AIS Conference.

NEW AIS POLICY ON DIVERSITY AND INCLUSIVITY CONT'D

We are also going to take the following additional measures in organizing the 2020 conference:

1) Individually submitted papers (which, historically make up half of all paper proposals) will be grouped into panels by the Program Chair with diversity and inclusivity in mind (alongside the traditional concerns of thematic focus for each panel). The Program Chair has always done this task with individual submissions. We'll just be taking advantage of this part of the regular process to optimize the principles of diversity and inclusivity. One important way all members can help is to make themselves available to serve as chairs or discussants for panels and even poster exhibit sessions. A call for chairs and discussants will go out once the preliminary program is published.

2) Pre-organized panels and roundtables that demonstrate inclusivity in their organization will receive priority for inclusion in the program. All papers and panels are given a blind review. Once that process is complete, however, the Program Chair and I will assess the pre-organized panels with inclusivity in mind. If necessary, we will work with panel organizers to make changes if they struggled to achieve a diverse roster of panel participants in their first attempt.

Panel-organizers, who are the unsung heroes of every conference, are encouraged to reach out to the Program Chair in advance of submitting their panel proposals if they have questions. We are happy to help expand professional networks! One rule of thumb: if everyone on your pre organized panel is of the same background, training, and professional experience as you, you might need to be more inclusive.

These implementation efforts apply to 2020. Going forward, we will build diversity and inclusivity into the very planning process of 2022, starting with the Call for "Letters of Interest" for institutions seeking to host the next AIS conference. This is not the only inclusivity initiative we plan to take for 2020. I hope to share an announcement about that soon.

Camron Michael Amin

MEMBER NEWS

Sivan Balslev's book *Iranian Masculinities: Gender and Sexuality in Late Qajar and Early Pahlavi Iran* has been published by Cambridge University Press, 2019.

Mehrzad Boroujerdi, former AIS president (then ISIS), has been appointed Director of the **School of Public and International Affairs** at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University (Virginia Tech).

Elham Gheytnchi has published the article "The Iranian Revolution Still Haunts its Jewish Survivors" on **Forward Website** (May 8, 2018).

Nile Green's new book *The Persianate World: Frontiers of a Eurasian Lingua Franca* has been published by University of California Press, 2019. The e-book is available **for free** via UC Press. An interview about the book and the Persianate world more generally has been published on Jadaliyya.

Michelle Langford has published *Allegory in Iranian Cinema: The Aesthetics of Poetry and Resistance* with Bloomsbury, 2019.

Rudi Matthee has published "Confessions of an Armenian Convert: The I'tirafnama of Abkar ('Ali Akbar) Armani," in Hani Khafipour, ed., *Empires of the Near East and India: Source Studies of the Safavid, Ottoman, and Mughal Literate Communities* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019), pp. 11-31. He also wrote the introduction to a new edition of Giovanni-Tommaso Minadoi, *The War between the Turks and the Persians* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2019; originally translated and published in 1595), discussing the author's life and times, pp. vii-xiv.

Menahem Merhavy's book *National Symbols in Modern Iran* is forthcoming with Syracuse University Press in fall 2019.

Sheida Mohamadi was a Scholar and a Poet in Residence at the University of California Irvine earlier this year, where she lectured on Persian poetry, prose, history, folklore, structure and on linguistic roots and pursued research on *The Idea of Homeland in Modern Persian Poetry*.



MEMBER NEWS CONT'D

Vera Moreen has published the following articles: “Reflections on Judaeo-Persian Manuscript of Rumi’s *Masnavi*,” as well as “Shahin’s Interpretation of *Shira* and *Ha’azinu*,” both in: Julia Rubanovich and Geoffrey Herman (eds), *Irano-Judaica VII: Studies Relating to Jewish Contacts with Persian Culture Throughout the Ages*. Jerusalem: Ben Zvi Institute, 2019, pp. 579-595 and 637-656 respectively; “The Messianic Rhetoric of Siman Tov Melammed,” in: Shmuel Glick (ed.), *Mehevah le-Menahem: Studies in Honor of Menahem H. Schmelzer*. Jerusalem: JTS-Schocken Institute for Jewish Research, 2019, pp. 133-144; and “Preliminary List of Judeo-Persian Manuscripts at the Institute of Oriental Manuscripts of the Russian Academy of Sciences and at the National Library of Russia, St. Petersburg, Russia,” in: Aaron Koller and Daniel Tsadik (eds.), *Iran, Israel, and the Jews: Symbiosis and Conflict from the Achaemenids to the Islamic Republic*, Eugene, OR: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2019, pp. 140-167.

Atefeh Seyed Mousavi has published the book *Narrative Illustration on Qajar Tilework in Shiraz* with the Verlag für Orientkunde, 2018.

Pranav Prakash, Presidential Fellow at the Graduate College, University of Iowa, received a **Newberry Library Fellowship** for research at the École Nationale des Chartes, Paris, and a Junior Fellowship (2019–21) of the Andrew W. Mellon Society of Fellows in Critical Bibliography, Rare Book School, University of Virginia.

FROM THE EDITOR OF IRANIAN STUDIES

2019 has been the fifty-second year anniversary of Iranian Studies. As of this year the print edition of the journal will appear as three double issues annually. It is most gratifying to see that thus far the new format has been very well received and welcomed by readers. The new format offers a better balance between diverse range of material from articles and book reviews to memorial notes and occasional reports on primary sources and archival research material. Change in the format of the print edition, however, will not impact the ongoing and regular publication of the journal’s online edition.

The journal has also significantly increased the word limit for all submissions and, furthermore, has adopted a more reader friendly format of using footnotes instead of endnotes. Both of these measures have also been welcomed by the journal’s readership and prospective authors.

Since my last Editorial Note in the Spring 2019 issue of this *Newsletter*, there have been new and welcomed additions to the journal’s core editorial team: Anousha

Sedighi (Portland State University, OR) as the inaugural Associate Editor in Persian Linguistics and H. Lyman Stebbins (La Salle University, PA) as new Associate Editor for History; also Laetitia Nanquette (University of New South Wales, Sydney, Australia) and Marta Simidchieva (York University, Canada) both as new Book Review Editors in the general field of Cultural Studies.

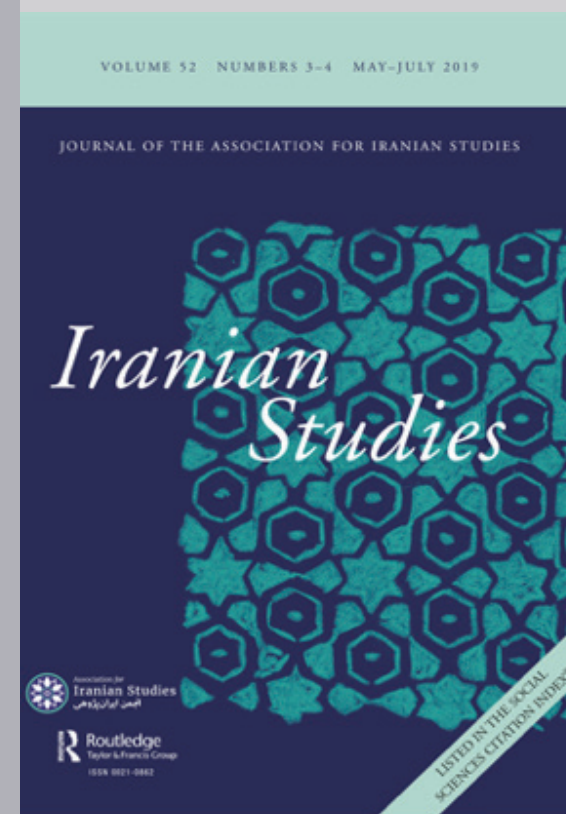
In addition to its regular articles and book reviews, and in line with its past tradition, from time to time the journal also continues to allocate thematic sections. In the current volume (vol. 52, 2019) two such special sections have been allocated in nos. 3-4 and 5-6, respectively: “Commercial, Confessional, and Military Encounters in Ottoman-Iranian Borderlands in the Early Modern Period” (Guest Editor Fariba Zarinebaf, University of California, Riverside), and “Sa’di at Large” (Guest Editor Julia Caterina Hartley, University of Warwick, UK). Further projections for 2020 issues are also well underway with thematic focus on “Medicine and Public Health in Modern Iran,” and on “Endangered Iranian Languages.”

According to the latest data provided by its publishers (Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group), this year the journal has received its highest Impact Factor to date and, with international distribution and recognition, it currently stands as the leading academic periodical in the field. I should reiterate what I had stated in my earlier notes that we owe this achievement to the journal’s successive editorial teams for their commitment and dedicated hard work, and to a promising pool of scholars worldwide whose contributions have expanded the field of Iranian Studies in depth and scope.

In 2015 I accepted the journal’s editorship for one initial term. It is deeply gratifying to have received so many expressions of collegiality and support during my period of editorship. I look forward to facilitating the editorial transition in 2020 and to maintain the journal’s commitment to high scholarship in the months ahead.

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AIS JOURNAL EDITOR SEARCH

The Association for Iranian Studies (AIS) is looking for a new Editor-in-Chief for its flagship journal *Iranian Studies: Journal of the Association for Iranian Studies*. This interdisciplinary journal is dedicated to the study of the histories, cultures, religions, literatures, economies, social relations, and politics of Iran from the pre-Islamic period to the present. As the official publication of the Association for Iranian Studies, it has served as the leading forum for the exchange of ideas and promotion of discipline-based and interdisciplinary research in all fields of Iranian studies since 1967.

The new Editor-in-Chief should meet the following criteria:

- A scholar of Iranian Studies with a proven track record of scholarship who has a strong international perspective and reputation. The disciplinary field and period of scholarly concentration of the Editor-in-Chief is open.
- Prior experience of journal editing and comfort with online submission systems.
- Possess long-term vision for further improving the quality of Iranian Studies as the flagship journal in the field.
- Ability to effectively work and communicate with the Associate Editors, Editorial Board, Advisory Council, and the AIS Council.
- Ability to optimize the current annual operating budget of approximately US \$ 20,000/year to publish and steadily improve upon the journal, maintaining the highest standards of scholarly excellence while operationalizing AIS's new policy on diversity and inclusion.

We encourage self-nominations and recommendations for this position. The Editor-in-Chief will be offered a fixed term of five years (renewable for no more than one term subject to approval by AIS Council). In addition to an operating budget, the Editor-in-Chief will be accorded a modest, non-negotiable honorarium per established AIS policy. The Editor-in-Chief will also be a member of the Executive Committee of the society and a non-voting *ex officio* member of the Council as long as they hold the position.

Deadline is **December 1, 2019**. Nominees will please provide their CV and a cover letter explaining their vision for the journal, as well as the resources their home institution can provide to support their efforts for augmenting the operating budget. Please send application materials to Camron Michael Amin (AIS President), at camamin@umich.edu. Informal queries prior to applying are both welcome and encouraged. Candidates should be available for a short interview (via teleconference or web conference) with the search committee in early 2020 and prepared to work with the outgoing editor on a transition process no later than June 1st, 2020.

The final decision for appointment will be made by the President with the consent of Council.

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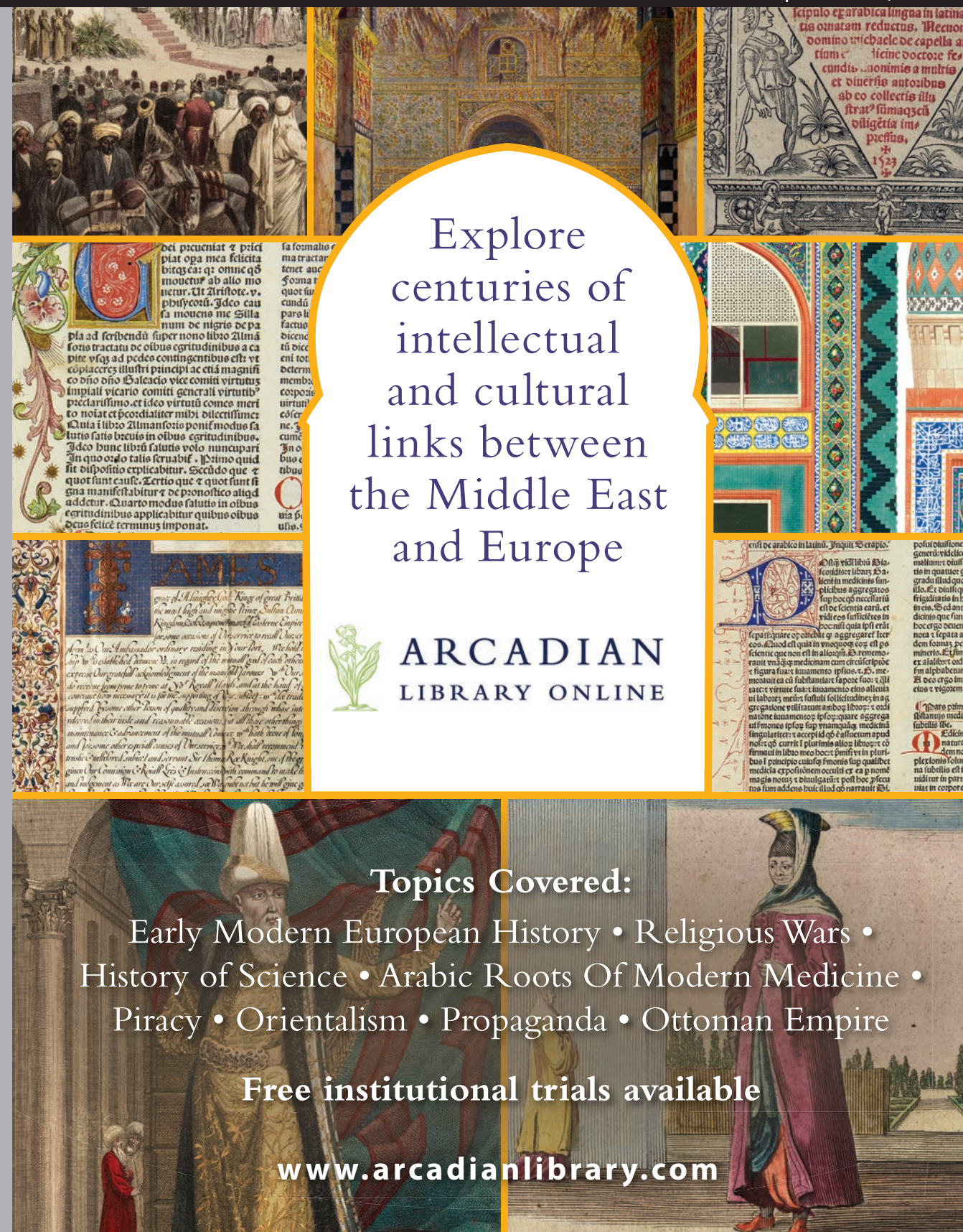
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PROGRAM NEWS

New “MA Iranian Studies” at Freie Universität Berlin

The Institute of Iranian Studies at Freie Universität Berlin would like to call your attention to the new “MA Iranian Studies” Programme that will start in the autumn of 2019/20 (“Wintersemester”). This two year (four semesters), full-time study programme is convened in English, leading to an internationally recognised Master of Arts in Iranian Studies.

The aim of the “MA Iranian Studies” is to familiarise students with various aspects of Iranian languages, cultures, history and religions from *antiquity through to the late antique era*. Students will acquire a working knowledge in Old and Middle Iranian languages such as Avestan, Old Persian and Middle Persian. The teaching staff at the Institute of Iranian Studies specialise in the languages and cultures of pre-Islamic Iran and focus on primary sources as much as possible.

Applicants who have not obtained their university degree at an educational establishment in which English is the language of instruction must prove that they have knowledge of English at C1 level of the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) or equivalent.

An exemplary study plan is available [here](#). For more information, please contact the [Office](#) of the Institute of Iranian Studies, or visit the [website](#).

Iranian Studies Vol. 52, Numbers 3-4, 2019 have been published:
<http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/cist20/current>.

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

LIBRARY NEWS

Islamic Painted Page Database

The University of Hamburg’s Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures and Islamic Painted Page are pleased to announce the launch of a new version of the Islamic Painted Page website, www.islamicpaintedpage.com.

The website exists to help users locate reproductions, commentaries and online images for tens of thousands of Persian, Ottoman, Arab, Mughal, Sultanate and other paintings, bindings, illuminations, and decorated Qur’an pages up to c.1900 CE. It is also a signposting site, providing item-specific onward links and references to authoritative online and print publications.

As well as some refinements to the site, we are proud to report the database is now expanded to 42,000 references, of which 21,000 now include images.

Very grateful acknowledgement is made to the Smithsonian Freer Sackler Galleries; The Boston Museum of Fine Arts; Harvard Art Museums; Copenhagen David Collection; the Geneva Musée d’Art et d’Histoire, and Chester Beatty Library, for permission to include images from their collections on this latest version of the database. Together with previous permissions and Creative Commons policies, this enables the database to display images for items from twenty of the world’s most important collections so far.

As a result, the database now covers works from over 270 collections worldwide, with image facilities and direct collection weblinks for 50% of the content. Everything is fully searchable by picture description as well as by place, date, accession number and other metadata, and supportive item-specific links are also provided to VIAF, WORLDCAT and FIHRIST.

The Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures aims to enable the continued development of the Islamic Painted Page database, and the site is now hosted and supported by the University of Hamburg, although the database ownership and maintenance remain unchanged.

We hope that users will find the site increasingly useful, and warmly welcome feedback and any suggestions for future developments.

Stephen Serpell
 Islamic Painted Page & Research Associate
 Centre for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC), University of Hamburg
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Roshan Institute for Persian Studies at the University of Maryland Receives \$800,000 Grant for Digitizing Persian and Arabic Texts

In June 2019 *The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation* generously awarded the Roshan Institute for Persian Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park (UMD) a \$800,000 grant for the Open Islamicate Texts Initiative's Arabic-script Optical Character Recognition Project (OpenITI AOCF).

The project is led by *Matthew Thomas Miller* (Roshan Institute for Persian Studies at UMD), *Maxim Romanov* (University of Vienna), *Sarah Bowen Savant* (Aga Khan University), *David Smith* (Northeastern University), and *Raffaele Viglianti* (Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities at UMD). SHARIASource, a project of the *Program in Islamic Law (PIL) at Harvard Law School*, provided significant support for the initial technical infrastructure upon which this project will build (i.e., *CorpusBuilder 1.0*), and will also play a leading role in the technical development portion of OpenITI AOCF.

OpenITI AOCF will catalyze the digitization of the Persian and Arabic written traditions by addressing the central technical and organizational impediments stymying the development of improved OCR for Arabic-script languages. Through a unique interdisciplinary collaboration between humanities scholars, computer scientists, developers, library scientists, and digital humanists, OpenITI AOCF will forge *CorpusBuilder 1.0* — an OCR pipeline and post-correction interface — into a user-friendly digital text production pipeline with a wide range of new OCR enhancements and expanded text export functionality. The project will also include a series of workshops, a full corpus development pilot, and a Persian and Arabic typeface inventory, all of which will inform the development of the technical components in important ways. For more information on OpenITI AOCF, please see: <https://www.openiti.org/> or <https://medium.com/@openiti/openiti-aocf-9802865a6586>

Mejlis Institute Persian Language and Cinema Winter Program Yerevan, Armenia, January 2 - 17, 2020

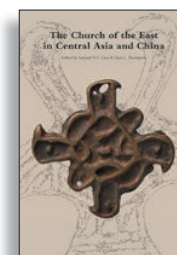
Mejlis Institute is pleased to announce the opening of applications for the intensive winter program that will take place between January 2 and 17, 2020. The objective of the program is to give students an opportunity to improve their reading, speaking and oral comprehension skills in Persian while studying works of Persian literature/historiography and becoming better acquainted with Iranian cinematic tradition. The language class will convene six days per week for four hours each day, amounting to 56 hours of group instruction. In addition to attending regular classes, students interested in doing in-depth reading of particular sources will be given an opportunity to receive additional guidance on individual basis. The cinema component of the course will consist of afternoon film screenings preceded by introductory lectures and followed by curated discussions.

Application deadline: November 20, 2019

Program fee 500 USD, financial aid options available.

For more information please visit <https://mejlisinstitute.org/>

NEW from BREPOLS PUBLISHERS



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S. N.C. Lieu, G. Thompson (eds)

A collection of papers on the history of Christianity along the Silk Road and in pre-modern China, pushing back the frontier of knowledge in a fast-developing new area of research.

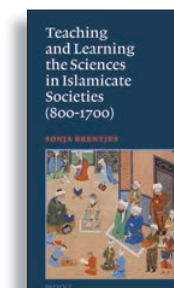
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S. Brentjes

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FROM LITURGY TO PHARMACOLOGY

Christian Sogdian texts from the Turfan Collection

N. Sims-Williams (ed.)

A variety of texts ranging from liturgy to pharmacology via hagiography, calendars and ascetical works by Isaac of Nineveh.

Series: Berliner Turfantexte, vol. 45
€ 65 / \$ 85 – ISBN 978-2-503-58419-5

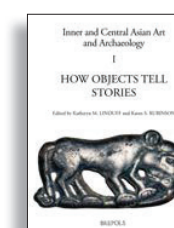
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Essays in Honor of Emma C. Bunker

K. M. Linduff, K. S. Robinson (eds)

The volume challenges the more circumscribed views of Eurasia primarily as a place of transmission or as a crossroads or highway along which ideas were carried; Eurasia was also a space of re-invention, experimentation, re-interpretation, and re-purposing.

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OLD UYGHUR DOCUMENTS CONCERNING THE POSTAL SYSTEM OF THE MONGOL EMPIRE

M. Vér (ed.)

This is the first collected edition of the Old Uyghur fragments related with the postal system in the Mongolian period.

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€ 55 / \$ 72 – ISBN 978-2-503-58417-1

CONSTRUCTING A WORLDVIEW

Al-Barq's Role in the Making of Early Shi'ī Faith

R. Vilozny

Based on the earliest Shi'ī sources extant, this book seeks to portray the worldview of the Shi'a prior to the crystallization of their beliefs and doctrines.

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DISSERTATION NEWS

Reimagining Sufi Poetics in South Asia: The Literary Writings of Ḥasan Sijzī Dihlavī (1253-c.1337)

Pranav Prakash, doctoral candidate at the Department of Religious Studies at the University of Iowa, and Junior Fellow of the Andrew W. Mellon Society of Fellows at the University of Virginia, is about to defend his doctoral dissertation on the literary oeuvre of Ḥasan Sijzī Dihlavī (1253-c.1337).

My dissertation constitutes a substantial study of the literary oeuvre and sufi poetics of Ḥasan Sijzī Dihlavī (1253-c.1337). It is the first ever exposition of how Ḥasan reimagined the scope, content and norms of Persian literary genres by engaging critically and creatively with the literary cultures, performative traditions, mystical thought and vernacular audiences of early modern India. This dissertation is based on my discovery of some two hundred new manuscripts – as opposed to twenty previously known ones – in different parts of India, Iran, Tajikistan, Afghanistan, Europe and the US. Additionally, I have conducted ethno-historiographic documentation of his living legacy in north India, Rajasthan and the Deccan region. Apart from shedding new light on his biography, sufi poetics and cultural reception, these ethnographic and archival data allow my dissertation to address some of the cardinal issues in South Asian historiography and literary history.

Contemporary historiography is fundamentally concerned about the nature and limits of the intercultural interactions among Muslims and other religious communities in early modern India and their formative role in the making of modern South Asia. To that end, most historical narratives of the longue durée of intercultural transactions in the Indian subcontinent rely heavily on courtly documents and elite artifacts in their attempt to elucidate the “conquest” of one regional or religious community by a dominant “other” and/or to delineate the alleged “encounter” among competing intellectual traditions and philosophical schools. These polarized narratives undervalue the ethos and subjectivity of the vast majority of the Indian populace who did not necessarily view themselves as agents of political domination, cultural conquest, religious confrontation and/or elite contestation. Against this backdrop, the literary writings of Ḥasan illuminate the communal ethos of people of diverse cultural, social and religious backgrounds in early modern India. As a poet, he frequently participated in cultural gatherings, literary circles, religious festivals and social events. Apropos to his close association with both royal courts and sufi khānqāhs, he was able to transform courtly literary genres and adapt them to religious, mystical, ethical and even secular themes relevant to a larger and more diverse audience in India and abroad. As attested by the reception history of his literary works and manuscripts, his literary oeuvre became immensely popular among Indians and left a deep impact on

the literary traditions and sufi discourses of the wider Persian world.

Most historical sources acknowledge that Ḥasan and his dear friend Amīr Khusrau (d. 1325) played a foundational role in the spread of sufi poetry and Persian genres in early modern South Asia. Whereas numerous studies have explored Khusrau’s poetry, a comprehensive exposition of Ḥasan’s literary writings and sufi poetics is still unavailable. In the absence of a detailed study of his poetry, most scholarly depictions of the literary and religious history of early modern India, particularly of the Ghaznavid era (c. 960-1190) and Delhi Sultanate (1206-1526), cast Ḥasan merely in a supporting role to his illustrious contemporaries – sometimes as a minor accomplice to Khusrau; sometimes as an aspiring pupil of the sufi saint Shaykh Niẓāmuddīn ‘Awliyā’ (d. 1325); or, sometimes as a lesser stylist inspired by Sa’dī (d. c. 1291). Although Khusrau affirmed that the “divine secrets” of his poetry emanated “the fragrance of Ḥasan” and successive generations of poets – for instance, Ḥāfiẓ of Shīrāz (d. 1389/90), Khvājū Kirmānī (d. c. 1349), Kamāl Khujandī (d. 1400), Zayn al-Dīn Vāṣifī (d. c. 1551-56), Ṣamīrī of Iṣfahan (d. 1565/1566) and ‘Abd al Raḥmān Mushfiqī (d. 1588) – admired his poetry, contemporary scholarship remains mostly oblivious of his literary craft, creative innovation and poetic vision. My dissertation amends this academic oversight by offering a critical appraisal of his literary works and their reception history.

Literary historians grapple with the issue of how Persian literary genres – originally conceived in Iranian and Central Asian cultural milieux – were made amenable to the diverse literary tastes, cultural values, and religious worldviews of Indian audience. Ḥasan inaugurated and pioneered a tradition of literary experimentation and innovation that led to the popularization of Persian genres in South Asia. His ‘Ishq-nāma (The Book of Love) is the first Persian maṣnavī to recount a Rājasthānī folktale and adapt Indic metaphors. Likewise, he reimagined the stylistic and semantic textures of several Persian genres, particularly ghazal, qāṣida, rubā‘ī, tarjībānd, tarkībānd, qīṭa‘ and malfūẓ, for both local and global audiences.

My unraveling of the creative imagination and sufi worldview of Ḥasan is ultimately channelled toward exploring how and why his poetics resonated in a wide variety of historical, cultural, religious and political settings. Literary critics (e.g., Wai Chee Dimock 1997), anthropologists (e.g., Unni Wikan 1992 and 2012) and sociologists (e.g., Vincent Miller 2015) have offered critical reflections on the notion of “resonance,” particularly on its relevance for affirming the primacy of auditory experiences over literate practices, emotions over rational faculties, democratic values over elite judgments, and a sense of belongingness in human interactions and cultural history. Resonance thus foregrounds and elaborates the dynamic of social connection and intimacy in a pluralistic cultural milieu. It is therefore a primary mode of historical reception and transmission which, in turn, are the raison d’être of literary history. This ebb and flow in the history of cultural recognition, literary appreciation and religious canonization characterizes much of the life and works of Ḥasan. Whereas the echo

DISSERTATION NEWS CONT'D

of his poetics was heard loud and clear in certain regional genres (e.g., Avadhī sufi premākhyāns and Hindūstānī ghazals) and manuscript traditions (e.g., Persian bayāz and Rājasthānī guṭkhā), its resonance was considerably subdued in modern print culture, orientalist discourses and nationalist historiography. While the decline of Persian in South Asia adversely affected the reception of his Fārsī songs, his poetics held their sway among sufi saints and Muslim intellectuals. Moreover, his tomb in Khuldabad emerged as an active site of pilgrimage and worship, often attracting visitors suffering from speech disorders and learning disabilities. They all believe that Ḥasan's "sweet speech" cures the illness of ineloquence. The resonance of his sufi poetics thus affirms its relevance for the literary and religious history of South Asia.

■ The Formation of *Adabiyat* as an Academic Discipline in Iran and Afghanistan (1895-1945)

Aria Fani filed his dissertation at UC Berkeley titled «*Becoming Literature: The Formation of Adabiyat as an Academic Discipline in Iran and Afghanistan (1895-1945)*.» As of September 2019, he is an assistant professor in Persian and Iranian Studies in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Civilization at the University of Washington, Seattle.

This dissertation examines the historical process by which a new discourse of literature, called *adabiyāt* in Persian, was made institutionally thinkable, culturally authoritative, and socially prevalent in twentieth-century Iran and Afghanistan. It identifies early twentieth-century anjomans, or literary associations, as the main site for the production and proliferation of this new mode of literary knowledge. By focusing on literary associations, I challenge the misconception that charting a national domain for Persian literature—a distinctly transregional literary tradition—was limited to Iran or that it exclusively involved contact with European literary cultures. The programmatic nature and intellectual context in which literary associations operated illustrate that Iran and Afghanistan were fully conversant with each other as much as they were with global interlocutors.

Often used as a shorthand for strictly local, I argue that the term "national" in this period means intensely and programmatically global. In analyzing the work of two generations of Iranian and Afghan intellectuals, this dissertation demonstrates the ways in which they brought their countries into closer alignment with an emerging world in which literature functioned as an essential identitarian discourse. They did so not by working within ready-made models borrowed wholesale from Europe, but by critically working at the intersection of their classical literary heritage and the discursive demands of nationalism.

Chapter one examines the inauguration of *adabiyāt*, as a bounded conceptual category operative within institutions of literature. It unpacks the process of its formation as a new discourse of literature in three distinct episodes in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries: 1) the polemical writings of reform-minded Iranian intellectuals living in the Caucasus 2) newspapers printed in Tehran and Kabul 3) literary textbooks developed for modern educational institutions in Iran and Afghanistan. These cases demonstrate that before *adabiyāt* accrued its modern sense as literature, the term designated an *adab*-derived discipline, associated with a literary form of self-conduct and etiquette in the premodern context.

The conceptual realignment taking place in the late nineteenth century constituted the paradigm within which literary associations proliferated in the twentieth century. Chapter one also shows how a careful reassessment of the blurred semantic relationship between *adab* and *adabiyāt* is equally vital for understanding the ways in which Persian-language intellectuals understood and implemented the European conception of literature within their national contexts.

Chapter two focuses on the life and afterlife of the Dāneshkadeh Literary Association (1916-1919) in Mashhad and Tehran. It demonstrates the consequential nature of the organizations, despite the fact that they did not last into later periods. Dāneshkadeh consisted of a highly influential group of Iranian intellectuals that, under the leadership of Iran's poet laureate Mohammad Taqi Bahār (d. 1951), pioneered new ways of writing about Persian literary history, translation, and literary criticism through articles in the association's eponymous journal. Following the dissolution of the group in 1919, many of these members played an integral role in the establishment of new institutions of literature that emerged in the 1930s and 1940s such as the Academy of Persian Language and Literature, the Society for National Monuments, and the University of Tehran's Faculty of Letters. As Iran's first significant literary association, Dāneshkadeh's organizational structure and its ideas about literature and nation were instrumental in creating the need and context for the rise of Iran's first faculty of letters, founded in 1935.

Chapter three examines the history and intellectual output of the Kabul Literary Association (1930-1940). As Afghanistan's first formal literary association, it brought together a diverse group of poets, translators, historiographers, diplomats and artists who collectively worked to create a new discourse of literature. Through its ties with the Afghan state, the association intensified literary connections with other countries, particularly Iran and India. It also published a high-quality journal called *Kabul* and an eponymous yearbook. In such venues, contributing writers and members delineated a new cultural and literary historiography of Afghanistan, making their country visible in an emerging configuration of nation-states each in possession of their unique (often singular) literary tradition. The Kabul Literary Association may have been formally dissolved in 1940, but it made thinkable a social paradigm within which

DISSERTATION NEWS CONT'D

other institutions of literature were created in the 1940s: the Afghanistan Historical Society, the Faculty of Letters at the University of Kabul, and the Encyclopedia Association. By emphasizing discursive continuity, this chapter shifts our attention away from the life of particular associations and toward associational culture more broadly.

Chapter four investigates Iran-Afghanistan literary relations in the 1930s and 40s. It analyzes a series of correspondence between the Kabul Literary Association and the Iranian journal *Āyandeh* and examines poems exchanged between Iranian and Afghan literati in the 1930s and 40s. It challenges the problematic idea that Persian literature in the twentieth century developed in national milieus that were sealed off from one another, with each country scrambling to emulate the European model for literary institutionalization. While fully cognizant of the European sphere of influence, the intercultural exchanges that occurred between Iran and Afghanistan represent a crucial and productive site for understanding how a new mode of literary knowledge was inaugurated in the twentieth century. Comparing how Iran and Afghanistan sought to nationalize their literary heritage allows us to see that the twentieth century intensified cultural contact and literary exchange between Persian-speaking societies, as opposed to severing their pre-existing connections.

In conclusion, this dissertation argues that to better understand the discursive continuity and rupture associated with the formation of *adabiyāt* as a new mode of literary knowledge, we must critically investigate the making of institutions of literature—literary and historical associations, language academies, faculties of letters, and other entities that preside over our understanding of what constitutes literature and ascribe to them a certain cultural authority and social import. As a case study, I argue that early twentieth-century Iran and Afghanistan is a particularly productive site for rethinking the nature, formation and operation of literary institutions and remapping their connection to discourses of literature and nation.

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RESEARCH REPORT

The Enchanted Salute You: Persian Sacred Music and a Meditation on Vocalist Sahar Mohammadi

*Erik Nakjavani, Professor Emeritus of Humanities
University of Pittsburgh*

Lovers, union is here,
the meeting we have wanted,
the fire, the joy.

Let sadness and any fear of death
leave the room.

The sun's glory comes back.
Wind shakes our bells.

We are counters in your hand
passing easily though.

Music begins.
Your silence,
Deepen[s] that.

Were you to put words with this
we could not survive the song

*Rumi: Bridge to the Soul: Journeys into the
Music and Silence of the Heart (51)*

In the second decade of the 21st century, existential anxieties about the vagaries of the future of human existence surge up and overwhelm our everyday consciousness. Preoccupation with damage to the very essence of our humanity and the quality of our being now joins our melancholy reflections on being (*baqā*) and nonbeing (*fanā*) in the human condition, so prevalent in Persian traditional metaphysics. Consciously or unconsciously, this anxiety pervades the lives of those who think about such matters. So, one is more prone to consider the human condition more thoughtfully. As an antidote to this feeling of dread, I have developed a penchant for listening to the world's sacred music. In my mind, however, I differentiate between the world's sacred music and the large corpus of the well-developed and lasting traditional spiritual and religious music to which I also often listen.

RESEARCH REPORT CONT'D

Moreover, in the sacred musical domain, I am particularly inclined toward listening to the contemporary Persian mystical or Sufi music. Clusters of musicians, male and female composers, instrumentalists, and vocalists have been making significant and exceptionally signifying contributions to this numinous music genre. They often bring to it a wealth of musical, philosophical, metaphysical, and aesthetic dimensions. I would define sacred music as transcendent compositions, making manifest an inexhaustible creative vista of aural and reflective interpretations. I do so, because such music aspires to a realm of creative consciousness that is conscious of its own images as objects offered by the realm of imagination and creativity. As such, it shapes up as a limitless space of aural freedom of lived experience. On the plane of imagination, this type of experience puts one on *tariqa* (Sufi path) to *haqiqa* (ultimate truth), which leads to an ecstatic experience of the universal oneness of all things.

Consequently, for those for whom such experiences possess a particular hyper-reality of their own sacred music, it promotes mindfulness and therefore glimpses of the mystical. Such glimpses carry intimations of the possibilities of boundless blissful states of being alive and being receptive to the world in an original way. This mystical worldview proposes its own complex ontology and vast metaphysics as theosophy (consciousness of Theos, “God” and *sophos* “knowledge”). To put it somewhat differently, listening to such music requires an acutely inspired, meditative aural *disponibilité* (availability), as the French language refers to it. Above all, such music attempts to initiate the aural lived experience of union with all that exists as engaging in the sublime as state of grace.

Thus, the aural lived experiences have much in common with the ethos of Western Gnosticism and esotericism. I find a resurgence of interest in such music among some of the highly talented and accomplished contemporary Persian musicians; it is cheering and reassuring. Female and male instrumentalists, vocalists, composers, and lyricists are contributing to what I am wont to call a “regressive-progressive” school of Persian sacred music. They harvest what they consider the best of the past and cultivate it as musical harvest of the present. They do so because of plasticity and malleability of the structures of traditional Persian Music.

To sum up, by theorizing and practicing a deft regressive-progressive dialectical approach to contemporary folkloric and sacred music some of today’s Persian musicians have made considerable contributions to their Persian musical culture as a whole. In my view, they have not only enriched their own national music, but they have also contributed to the concept a transcendental vision of music in general. This creative activity approximates an inexhaustible interpretive approach; or to put it more theoretically, it helps to provide an open-ended extensive hermeneutics of Persian music.

The Contemporary Persian Sacred Music

Musician, play this moment’s music as grace...

The Soul of Rumi: *A New Collection of Ecstatic Poems*, trans. Colman Barks (212)

If there were nothing new, then there could be nothing that is old.

Meister Eckhart, *Selected Writings* (94)

As I see it, the Persian regressive-progressive musicians have been successful moving backward in order to better move forward by recapturing what they consider re-appropriating lasting creative elements of traditional music such as, say, melody, rhythm, tone, color, monophonic and homophonic texture. They incorporate them into their own creations by rearranging and re-orchestrating them anew for musical ensembles. It is proving to be a steady and refreshing endeavor, in spite of the complex and difficult circumstances encountered by doing so. The contemporary musician can do so, because the ancient foundational structures of Persian music remain amenable to creative alterations without violating their basal integrity. Persian music is indeed ancient.

As Nahid Siamdoust reminds us, “There is material evidence that music has been played in Iran for over five thousand years. The Greek historians Herodotus and Xenophon wrote about both religious and military uses of music of the Achaemenid Empire and Ferdowsi’s *Shâhnâmeh* (Book of Kings) is replete with references to the musical preferences of Iranian kings” (*Sound Track of the Iranian Revolution*, 20). Hence, the basal elements of Persian music have astutely remained open-ended. At its best, contemporary regressive-progressive music recreates a scintillating and mystical modal psalmody. Theosophical and incantatory, the finite and the ordinary and the extraordinary, the mundane and the divine all surface from the depth of the coming together of Persian classical music and poetry. This combination owes its ability to the malleability of the traditional modal music (*dastgâh*). That modal foundation is the basal element of the possibilities of imaginative and innovative contributions to Persian contemporary regressive-progressive culture of music. As Siamdoust points out:

This tradition is regarded as a quintessential Persian heritage. In this musical system, there are twelve principal modal categories, which are divided into seven *dastgâhs* (loosely “modes” and five *âvâzes* (loosely “lesser modes”), not to be confused with “âvâz” in its definition as free-metered vocals within Persian classical music ... The *dastgâhs* are more complete than musical modes and contain a greater number of *gushehs* (melodic units). (Soundtrack of the Revolution, 20)

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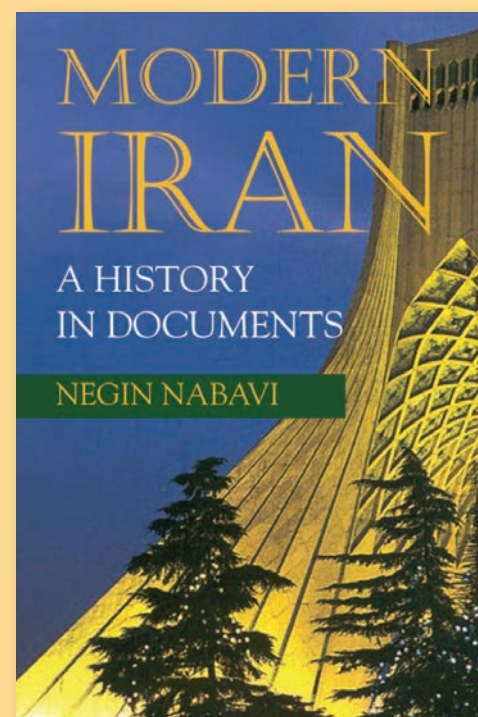
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Negin Nabavi, associate professor at Montclair State University, is the author of *Intellectuals and the State in Iran: Politics, Discourse, and the Dilemma of Authenticity* and *Iran: From Theocracy to the Green Movement*.

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RESEARCH REPORT CONT'D

I find traditional Persian music to be structured intricately and well, yet a certain built-in suppleness and plasticity in it offers freedom for progressive developmental as creative endeavors. Exigent but imaginative, its regressive-progressive potential yields mellifluous melodies that are soulful and felicitous to the ear. Therefore, Persian traditional music requires from musicians not only mastery of their art, but also originality and imagination from vocalists and instrumentalists.

In contemporary Persian sacred regressive-progressive music with its serious implications, it also demands sensitivity to classical Persian poetry as lyrics. Full of mystical yearnings to evoke the ecstasy of an unmediated communion with the holy, it engages in a direct and unmediated dialogue with the divine. In its truest manifestation in music, it intimates conversation between vocalist(s), instrumentalist(s), and listener(s) in order to bring about a cosmic union. That is no mean achievement. At the same time, what ensues is the revelation and appreciation of infinite realms of silence that precedes all aural and visual dialogues imaginable. Here, at their most consummate form, these imaginative musical visionary dialogues in contemporary sacred music exemplify a visionary mode of salvation. Persian music often allies itself with the best of classical poetry of such significant poets, such as mystic Jalāl ad-Din Rumi 1207 – 1273), poet of love Shams-ud-Din Muhammad Hâfez-e Shiraz (1325/26 – 1389/90), and poet and prose master Sa'di Shirâzi (1195 – 1226).

Through human intervention, the synthesis of scriptural musical notation and the poetic texts magically turns into the oral rendition of poetry in music in songs. With instrumental music often accompanying it, it enters into unlimited interpretive dialogues with the listener. This synesthesia enables the listener to surpass the boundaries of everyday cognitive consciousness proffered by the senses and their coextensive perceptions. A magical psycho-musical realm of consciousness becomes then manifest. A sort of hyperrealism transforms the natural into supernatural visions. An otherworldly state, well appreciated by whirling dervishes, comes into play, which is a prerequisite for authentic mystical enlightenment in Persian music.

RESEARCH REPORT CONT'D

Vocal Artist Sahar Mohammadi

Let music loosen our deafness to spirit. Play and let play.
Coleman Barks, Rumi: *New collection of Ecstatic Poems* (214)
Do you know what music is saying?
Come follow me and you will find the way.
Rumi: *Hidden Music*, translators Maryam Mafi and Azima Melita Kolin (182)

I consider it opportune to see a notable upsurge in Iranian folk songs and sacred (Sufi) music in an array of inventive and captivating modalities by female vocalists. Intensely fervent and musically exceptional, Persian female vocalists and instrumentalists have arrived again and are receiving well-deserved prominence. I have listened with keen desire to capture layers of unvoiced significations often to the available recordings of some of them provided by Amazon in two CDs. *Singing in Shadow: Anthology of Female Classical Voices in Iran Today* and *Ahvaz in Shadow (âvâz dar Sâye)* are fortunately available. They include such vocalists as Solmaz Badri Zohreh Jooya, Hoorvash Khalili, Sahar Mohammadi, Mahdieh Mohammadkhani, Sepideh Raïssâdât, Mash and Marjan Vahdat, just to mention a few among a long roster of gifted vocalists. These vocalists are engaged in opening up a clearing for musical creativity of considerable regressive-progressive refinement and elegance.

With the encouragement of well-respected composers, instrumentalists, bandleaders, such as *Ostâd* (maestro) Majid Derakhshâni and others, female vocalists and instrumentalist have made scintillating music. This contemporary music abounds in both ethos and pathos. Such music bridges the right hemisphere of the brain, the domain of instinctive intuition and creative activity, and the left hemisphere given to conscious rationality, logical, conceptual, and conceptual endeavors. In listening to contemporary Persian music, particularly with an emphasis on the sacred, the combination of the two hemispheres of the brain requires aural contemplative attentiveness. One can characterize the activities of female vocal artists and instrumentalists as an exultant dialectical union of old and new in Persian musical values. They establish norms that set up a genuine renaissance in contemporary Persian sacred (Sufi) music. Hence, the accomplishments of these musicians are both real and deeply rooted in the culture of Persian music.

In the brilliant constellation of contemporary female vocalists, I find Sahar Mohammadi's lyrically mellifluous vocalization to be poignantly heartfelt. As a vocal artist, she adds a considerable measure of subjective enthusiasm and gives free

play to vocalizing objective notes that pass from musical signs to pluri-signification of a high order of elegance. Her vocal imagination is wont to turn toward refined improvisation or *tahrir* (*rubato*). The listener needs to respond to this improvised finesse with thoughtfulness and attention. For Mohammadi couches her musical messages thoughtfully. They are at once as sentient and affective as they are musically well wrought. Replete with sincere mystical yearnings, her voice bursts upon our consciousness and calls for a break with our daily lifeworld experiences.

As a result, her voice evokes a shared emotional comprehension between the vocalist and her listener(s). Her voice fleetingly breaks upon the necessities of the Heideggerian "world-at-hand" and seeks to reach the plane of an exigent vocal beauty, with many emotional underpinnings. A welcome sublimity, it breaks into our habitual world as a surprise that makes us reflect, as all surprising phenomena do. In the midst of pressing existential problems of human condition, her voice comes to the listener(s) as a moment of conciliation and reconciliation. Even when her voice carries an allusion of the melancholy of anguish in our lifeworld, it remains moving as it addresses that indefinable part of us we refer to as our soul. At its melodious best, I believe her voice partakes of the magic of musical alchemy. For it transmutes the lead of everyday concerns into the gold of her unique vocal art. Her voice makes manifest our concealed desire to encounter the inaudible and the unseen from which the aural and visual arts come forth as discoveries in the domain of the "as-yet-unknown."

Born in Tehran (1988), she studied string instruments *târ*, *setâr*, and received vocal instructions so effectively as to appropriate later the structures of traditional Persian music in her powerful mezzo-soprano voice. Mohammadi ably reinterprets Persian traditional music with fidelity and distinction. She makes evident a mastery of the art of Persian musical ornamentation. Her exceptional ability to participate totally in imaginatively reinterpreted vocal performances is estimable. She offers pure moments of aesthetic and transcendent elation as she integrates unadulterated Persian music and the poetry of some of the greatest classical Persian poets, albeit in her own new style. Listening to Mohammadi's voice often accompanies moments of rare purity and elation promising a stylish and discerning Persian musical culture.

My introduction to Mohammadi's inspired and inspiring vocal art came when by chance I listened to her rendition of the composer and instrumentalist Kaykhosrow Pournazeri's composition "*Masan Salâmat Mikonand*" (The Enchanted Salute You). Among the many masterly and admirable recordings by the Pournazeri Ensemble and ostâd Mohammad Reza Shajarian and vocalist Davoud Azad, Mohammadi's version holds its own solid proper place as a visionary musical. Her rhapsodic voice invigorates this luminous song. Above all, her vocal authenticity, care, and concern affect the listener's sensibilities and appreciation. Her intensity and vibrancy comes through genuinely. These vocal qualities echo in many registers and make the song stylistically intricate. As a vocalist, she brings to Rumi's poetry the sublimity it so merits -- beauty of all things observed in the light of encounters considered deific.

RESEARCH REPORT CONT'D

The song begins with two short but decisive strokes of the tambourine (*dâryerh zangi*). Mohammadi's voice follows and takes control as a maximally passionate secret holder and secret-sharer. A pattern of repetitions, musical patterns and poetic words creates a mood full of mystical intimations and ecstatic moments. Mohammadi's expert vocal introduction of musical phrases in a poetic conversation with an enlightened human being gives this version of the song a life of its own. Repetitions of variations of tempo, glissando, and vibrato up and down a series of notes, slides (glissando) in performance of *âvâzes* and recurrences of variations of pitch all make for an unforgettable aural experience.

My meditation on Mohammadi as a vocalist serves as an introduction to longer essays or a book to treat her adroit performances of *âvâzes*, which show her knowledge of melismatic Persian music. Then there are her plaintive songs about the givens of the human condition, love, separation, loneliness, and alienation in such dark songs as "*Sarâyeh Bi Kassi*," (House of Loneliness), "*Goftam Gham-e Tou Dâram*" (I Said You Grieve Me), "*Dard-e Dour*" (Separation Pain), and the operatic pieces like "*Sa'di Opera*", all of which generally share melancholy themes with Portuguese Saudade. Finally, there are also the outstanding videos Mohammadi did with Mâhbânôo Ensemble under the direction of Ostâd Derakhshâni such as "*Mârâ Bas*" (it is enough for us), *Jâneh Ashegh*, (Lover's life), and *Golrokh* (Flower-Face). Such a treatise will be welcome.

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Mikiya Koyagi, U Texas Austin: *Technology and Manhood in Early Pahlavi Iran*

Mehdi Faraji, NYU: *A Double Masculinity: The Art of Living Hegemonic and Mundane Masculinity in Post-Revolutionary Iran*

Babak Tabarraee, U Texas Austin: *Hāmūn and the Iranian Psyche: Failed Masculinity and Intellectual Fandom*

Ashkon Molaei, UC Santa Barbara: *Women's Representation and Gender Discourse under an Islamist State: The Case of Iran and State-Sanctioned Video-Sharing Site, Aparat*

Thursday, 5:30-7:30PM

New Perspectives on Qajar Iran

Chair: **Mira Xenia Schwerda**, Harvard

Kimya Oskay, Freie Universität Berlin: *The Visual Tactics of Iran from 1870 to 1896: Employment of Photographs by the Qajar Palace*

Navid Zarrinnal, Columbia: *Reading the Roshdiyeh Diaries: An Iranian Educator in the Ottoman World*

Chelsi Mueller, Tel Aviv: *Surveilling the Arabian Frontier in Late Qajar and Early Pahlavi Iran*

Serpil Atamaz, CSU Sacramento: *From the Forefront to the Sidelines: Female Revolutionaries in Ottoman Turkey and Qajar Iran*

Friday, 8:00-10:00AM

Infrastructure and Power: Oil, Water, Energy

Shima Houshyar, CUNY Graduate Center: *Iran's Past Energy Futures: Infrastructure, Temporality, and National Modernity in Southwest Iran*

Natasha Pesaran, Columbia: *The Iraq-Mediterranean Oil Pipelines and the Post-war Petroleum Order: Transit Agreement Negotiations in Lebanon and Syria in the 1950s*

Katayoun Shafiee, U Warwick: *Governing Democratic Futures: Risky Measures of Economic Science along an Iranian Waterway*

Noura Wahby, U Cambridge: *Governing Cairo's Fragmented Waterscape: Technopolitics and Informality*

Owain Lawson, Columbia U: *Power Failures: Narrating the Litani Disaster, 1958-1962*

AIS AND IRANIAN STUDIES AT MESA CONT'D

Friday, 8:00-10:00AM

The Politics and Poetics of Language in the Persianate World

Marijana Misevic, Harvard: *Cosmopolitan and Vernacular in a Quadrilingual Ottoman Poem from Bosnia*

Ferenc Csirkés, Sabanci U: *Cross-Linguistic Poetic Play in a Time of Tumult: The Divan of Masih of Tabriz from Late and Post-Safavid Iran*

Alexander Jabbari, U Oklahoma: *The Erotics of Language in 20th Century Iranian Poetry*

Metin Yuksel, Hacettepe U: *Reading Cegerxwîn's Poetry: Awakening, Solidarity and Autobiography*

Friday, 10:15AM-12:15PM

(Alternative) Arts as (Alternative) Politics: Iranian Aesthetic Dissidence from the Revolution to the Present

Chair: **Kaveh Ehsani**, DePaul U

Discussant: **Pamela Karimi**, U Mass

Norma Claire Moruzzi, U Illinois Chicago—*Breaking Down Walls: Iranian Art Installations, Condemned Buildings, and Utopian Possibilities*

Mahrou Zhaf, Boston Grad School of Psychoanalysis: *Alternative Masculinities in Iranian Cinema: Mehrjui's Men*

Leili Adibfar, U Illinois Chicago: *Ali Shariati: Islam, Modernity, and the Complicated Aesthetic of the Iranian Revolution*

Friday, 12:30-2:30PM

The Social Life of Texts and Textual Practices in Modern and Contemporary Iran

Discussant: **Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi**, U Toronto

Neda Bolourchi, Rutgers U: *Riots and Revolution: The Forgotten Mottos and Impact of Shuresh*

Seema Golestaneh, Cornell U: *Hafez in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction: Poetic Verse and Material Objects in Iran*

Hosna Sheikholeslami, Denison U: "Books are Objects and Ideas": Examining the Material Infrastructures of Translation in Contemporary Iran

Sheida Dayani, Havard: *Iranian Improvisatory Theatre and the Anachronistic Notion of Censorship*

Friday, 2:45-4:45PM

Female Religiosity and Sainthood in Early Modern Iran and Central Asia

Devin A. DeWeese, Indiana U: *On His Mother's Side: Tracing Sanctity and Initiation through Female Ancestors in 18th- and 19th-Century Central Asia*

Michael Krautkraemer, Indiana U: *Cloistered by the Graves of Her Forefathers: The Genealogy and Hagiography of a Female Saint of Yarkand*

Aziza Shanazarova, Indiana Bloomington: *A Female Saint in Muslim Polemics: Aga-yi Buzurg and the Rhetoric of Female Religiosity*

Ahoo Najafian, Carleton Col: *Soul of the World: Ghazals of Jahan Malik Khatun*

Friday 5:00-7:00PM

Debating the Nation: Transformative Politics and Discursive Trends in Pahlavi Iran

Andrew Akhlaghi, U Texas Austin: *The Tehran Bread of 1942: A Reexamination of the Crowd*

David Rahimi, U Texas Austin: *Fashioning Intimate Consumers: Iran and the US Point IV Program in the 1950s*

Kelly Houck, U Texas Austin: *Educating the Masses: Domestic and International Efforts at Educating Rural Iran, 1960-1979*

Bryan Sitzes, U Texas Austin: *Hunters, Technocrats, and Academics: The Challenges and Solutions of Pre-revolution Iranian Environmentalists*

Saturday 8:30-10.30AM

Gender, Labor, and Political Activism in Iran and Turkey

Yesim Arat, Boğaziçi U: *Feminist Movement and the Women of the Gezi Park*

Amirhossein Teimouri, U Illinois Urbana Champaign: *Cultural Roots of Conservative Mobilization in Iran's State Politics (1994-2000)*

Zehra Betul Atasoy, Rutgers: *Gendered Expressions of Labor: The Case of Sümerbank Textile Factory, Istanbul*

Samaneh Oladi, Virginia Commonwealth: *The Contested Debate over Equal Compensation: Between Tradition and Modernity*

Canan Aslan Akman, Middle East Tech U: *Ambivalences and Paradoxes of Right-Wing Populism for Women's Citizenship: The Case of Turkey*

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AIS AND IRANIAN STUDIES AT MESA CONT'D

Saturday 11:00AM-1:00PM

The Dialogic Persianate: Historical Models of Literary Production and Cultural Exchange (1700-1950)

Chair: **Aria Fani**, UC Berkeley

Discussant: **Domenico Ingenito**, UCLA

C. Ryan Perkins, Stanford: *The Vernacular Strikes Back: Pashto and Tales from the Other Side*

Nathan Tabor, Western Michigan U: *The Necklace of the Pleiades: Uncharted Rekhtah and Persian Literary History in a 1780s Tazkirah*

Aria Fani, UC Berkeley: *Eqterah and the Proliferation of Adabiyat as a New Discourse of Literature in Iran and Afghanistan (1916-1949)*

Mana Kia, Columbia U: *The Imprint of History: Sociality and Commemoration between Empires*

Saturday 11:00AM-1:00PM

Securing Insecurity: Transnational Disciplinary Regimes and Middle Eastern Diasporas

Elif Sari, Cornell U: *Not So 'Golden' Anymore: Iranian LGBTI Refugees in Turkey*

Jean Beaman, UC Santa Barbara: *Diaspora, Difference, and France's Maghrebin Second-Generation*

Amy Malek, Col of Charleston: *Im/Mobility, In/Security, and Non/Belonging: Paradoxes of Iranian Dual Citizenship*

Joshua Donovan, Columbia U: *Disciplining Diasporas, Surveilling Subjects: The French Mandate and the Syro-Lebanese Mahjar*

Saturday 3:00-5:00PM

Epidemics, Public Health Regimes, and Social Histories in the Broader Middle East in the Long Nineteenth Century

Chair: **Ali Gheissari**, U San Diego

Andrew Robarts, Rhode Island School of Design: *Quarantines, Public Health, and State-Society Relations in the Ottoman-Russian Black Sea Region, Late 18th-Early 19th Centuries*

Amir A. Afkhami, George Washington U: *Cholera and Revolution in Qajar Iran*

Burcak Ozludil, New Jersey Inst of Technology: *When the Asylum Catches Cholera: Istanbul, 1893*

Ranin Kazemi, San Diego State U: *Epidemics and Protests in Qajar Iran: The Case of the Public Health Crisis and Social Agitations in 1890-92*

Saturday 11:00AM-1:00PM

Transitional Spaces and Liminal Figures: Performing Iranian Modernities

Golbarg Rekabtalaei, Seton Hall U: *Cosmopolitan Tehran and the Shaping of the Urban "Modern Woman," 1920s-1950s*

Ida Meftahi, U Maryland: *(Geo)Political Tumults and Leisurely Spaces in Lalehzar-Tehran, 1900-1926*

Leila Pourtavaf, NYU: *Labor, Intimacy and Power: The Servant Class of Gulistan Harem in Late Qajar Iran*

Saturday 5:30-7:30PM

Iranian Intellectual and Political Biographies: Lives on the Left

Chair: **Afshin Matin-Asgari**, CSU Los Angeles

Discussant: **Negin Nabavi**, Montclair State U

Afshin Matin-Asgari, SCU Los Angeles: *Fatemeh Sayyah: Iran's Forgotten Scholar and Women's Rights Advocate*

Maziar Behrooz, San Francisco State U: *Hamid Ashraf: Iran's Leading Tactician of Guerrilla Warfare*

Younes Jalali, Independent Scholar: *Taghi Erani (1902-1940) - Pioneering Exponent of Existential Modernization in Iran*

Ali Banuazizi, Boston College: *Shahrokh Meskoob and His Vision beyond Ideological Boundaries*

Sunday 8:30-10:30AM

Labor, Class, and Gender in Iran

Chair: **John Ghazvinian**, UPenn

Vahid Vahdat, Texas A&M U: *An Erotics of Exchange: Civic Sites for (Gendered) Public Mourning in Yazd, Iran*

Zep Kalb, UCLA: *Has Iran Become a More Meritocratic Society? New Findings on the Effect of the 1979 Revolution on Intergenerational Class Mobility*

Peyman Jafari: *"In the Name of the God of the Oppressed": Labor and Political Contestation in Iran, 1979-1989*

Maral Karimi, U Toronto: *Birth of a Political Alternative: The Case of Haft Tapeh Sugarcane Factory Workers' Strikes in Iran*

M. Stella Morgana, Leiden U: *Appropriating Workers' Grievances through Populist Narratives in Iran: Shifting Discursive Strategies from Khomeini to Ahmadinejad (1979-2009)*

AIS AND IRANIAN STUDIES AT MESA CONT'D

Sunday 11:00AM-1:00PM

Women as Patrons and Producers of the Islamic Sciences

Chair and Discussant: **Behnam Sadeghi**, Oxford U

Discussant: **Roy Mottahedeh**, Harvard U

Yasmin Amin, Exeter U: *Umm Salamah: A Female Authority Legitimizing the Authorities*

Yusuf Unal, Emory U: *Princesses, Patronage and the Production of Knowledge in Safavid Iran*

Edith Szanto, UAlabama: *The 'Alimat of Sayyida Zaynab. Female Religious Authority in a Syrian Seminary*

Mirjam Künkler, NIAS: *Women Islamic Scholars and Jurists in Shi'i Lands*

Sunday 11:00AM-1:00PM

The Qajar Empire

Chair: **Ali Gheissari**, U San Diego

Discussant: **Mimi Hanaoka**, U Richmond

Arash Khazeni, Pomona Col: *The Fortressed City: Space and Sovereignty in the Durrani Kingdom of Afghanistan, Circa 1817*

Farzin Vejdani, Ryerson U: *Seeking Refuge in Qum, 'The Abode of Faith': Between Qajar Imperial Law and Shari'ah*

Assef Ashraf, U Cambridge: *Loyalty, Leadership, and the Formation of Qajar Iran*

Sunday 1:30-3:00PM

Middle Eastern Communities in the US: National and Islamic Identities

Abdulkader Sinno, Indiana U: *Muslim, Christian Arab and Chaldean Paths to Political Integration: Representation, Participation and Activism in Metro Detroit*

Sean Widlake, Independent Scholar: *Iranian Counterpublics: Social Media, Diaspora, and Changing Culture*

Afsane Rezaei, Ohio State U: *Framing and Affect in Faith-Based Gatherings of Iranian Women in Southern California*

Ehsan Estiri, Ohio State U: *Talking to America: How Iranian Public Events in Los Angeles Respond to American Political and Media Discourses*

Lydia Yousief, U Chicago: *Mapping Community and Its Implications*

Sunday 1:30-3:00PM

Colonial Politics, Practices, and Perspectives

Heidi Walcher, Uni of Munich (LMU): *About Prostitution and Syphilis in 19th Century Iran: Inquiring into J. E. Polak's Report of 1861*

Arman Azimi, Graduate enter CUNY: *Refining Iran: Education, Health, Leisure, and the Civilizing Mission of the Anglo-Iranian Oil Company in Iran, 1907-1951*

Youssef Yacoubi, Seton Hall U: *Mapping New Directions in Middle Eastern Studies: Democratizing Post-colonial Theory*

Maysam Taher, NYU: *Carceral Thresholds: Confinement and Deportation in the Afterlives of Colonialism*



GHOLAM

GHOLAM is the story of an Iranian cab driver in London caught between two worlds. The haunting, critically acclaimed, debut feature from British-Iranian artist and film-maker Mitra Tabrizian, the film is an arresting portrait of displaced struggles that moves almost inexorably from observational drama to eerie quasi-thriller. Shahab Hosseini, who proved magnetic in Asghar Farhadi's 2017 Oscar-winner *The Salesman*, delivers a mesmerising performance as Tabrizian's elliptical, diasporic drama unfolds mysteriously around him. www.gholamfilm.com

Following a successful theatrical UK release, GHOLAM is now available on iTunes (<https://apple.co/2KiGxoP>) and Amazon Prime (<https://amzn.to/2M6aWvI>) in the US & Canada. We are keen to try and reach the widest possible audience and would appreciate it if you could share information with the Iran Studies community.

GHOLAM will also be screened at the Smithsonian Museum on 31 January 2020, alongside photographic work by Tabrizian in the current exhibition "My Iran, Six Women Photographers" at the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery.

<https://wapo.st/2N3Qooc>

CONFERENCE REPORT

A Gathering Like No Other—Forty Years & More: International Conference on Iranian Diaspora Studies at San Francisco State University (March 28-3, 2019)

Persis Karim, Neda Nobari Chair & Director, Center for Iranian Diaspora Studies

Despite the challenges of doing research on Iran today, many scholars of Iranian Studies are welcoming new opportunities for studying Iranian culture, history, and politics that exist beyond the singular boundaries of Iran itself. The emergence of a new generation of scholars and researchers who have been part of an emerging field within the larger field of Iranian Studies, identified as “Iranian Diaspora Studies,” now constitutes a critical mass of scholarship and research that focuses on Iranian migration and movement, as a result of the 1979 Revolution, but also includes earlier trends as well. This sub-field of Iranian Diaspora Studies has grown considerably in the past two decades as avenues for research and funding have become complicated by the policies and relations between the US and as well as Europe. This shift has, in some ways, also been a natural outcome of forty years of large-scale Iranian migration to other parts of the globe. The growth of this exciting field was supported with the establishment of the Center for Iranian Diaspora Studies at San Francisco State University in 2016 with an endowment by SFSU alumna, Neda Nobari, who saw the need to recognize this field and give it an institutional home. As communities of Iranian immigrants and their second-generation children have come of age, and as new generations of graduate students have wanted to connect to their Iranian story and heritage through research, opportunities for the study of the Iranian diaspora have indeed expanded. Nowhere was this more evident than at the “Forty Years & More: International Conference of Iranian Diaspora Studies” hosted by the Center for Iranian Diaspora Studies at San Francisco State on March 28-30, 2019.

Implicit in the study of a transnational Iranian diaspora is the emergence of new sets of questions and critiques, as well as the exposure of omissions in Iranian Studies. What is most exciting is the ways that this new scholarship puts into conversation studies of diasporic, immigrant, and transnational experience, and the inflection of a diverse disciplinary approach to the study of the Iranian diaspora. This conference, hosted by the newly established Center for Iranian Diaspora Studies at San Francisco State University, was pleased to welcome scholars, artists, and filmmakers from seven countries and over 45 universities for rich conversations and an unprecedented exchange between scholars of this emerging field. The Center was delighted to host two days of panels organized around a variety of topics and disciplines including women and gender, race and racialization of Iranian diaspora subjects, film and media, literature and performance, music and visual arts in the diaspora, as well as two panels on new research on Iranian diaspora communities

in places as diverse as Korea, France, Sweden, and Germany. In addition to hosting over eighty scholars who spoke at the conference, we had the great pleasure of having three wonderful keynote addresses by Dr. Amy Malek (College of Charleston) “Mobile Subjects, Multiple Fields: Iranian Diaspora Studies as Transnational Inquiry”; Dr. Neda Maghbouleh (University of Toronto) “Forty Years and More at the Limits of Whiteness,”; and, Dr. Beeta Baghoolizadeh (Bucknell College), “Locating Ajamistan: Moving Across Borders in the Digital Humanities.” Other scholars whose work is equally innovative and engaging added immensely to this conference and came from as far away as Qatar, Germany, France, Japan, and the United Kingdom.

The Center also made several awards at the conference, including awards for research and creative projects on Iranian Diaspora Studies in both the undergraduate and graduate categories. Awards went to Paniz Moayeri for her Master’s project in architecture, for her photographs of Iranian queer refugees in Toronto, titled, “You Passport Doesn’t Work Here,”; Ida Yalzadeh, a Ph.D. candidate at Brown University received the prize for her research project, “Aftershocks: A New Politics of Capitalist Multiculturalism.” Andrew Sandock, an undergraduate student at McGill University, received a prize for his research paper, “Conjuring Home(land)—Exploring Diasporic Ways of Performing and Remembering in Los Angeles,” and Esther Ellia, an undergraduate student in art at California College of the Arts received a prize for her essay, “As(Syrian): The Loss of Country.” A lifetime achievement award was also given to Dr. Hamid Naficy in absentia for his pioneering work on Iranian diasporic media and accented cinema; and, it was notable how many younger scholars cited the work of Dr. Naficy in their own research.

While the impetus for the conference was to recognize and support this emerging field and the scholars whose work opens a wider window onto the Iranian diaspora, for many, the most powerful aspect of the conference was the opportunity to exchange ideas and research about the Iranian diaspora for the first time. I overheard many younger scholars say something like, “I feel like I’ve found my home,” or “to be in a room of scholars whose work inspires and engages with my own is invaluable.” Some of the most positive comments on the conference evaluations identified the need for these conversations on a more regular basis, and also spoke to how exciting the presentations were because of how deeply interdisciplinary and transnational the field has become. In addition, the conference format, designed to be more interactive and conversational and less formal, (as opposed to the more traditional 20-minute reading papers approach), stimulated long-overdue discussion between established scholars, graduate students, artists, filmmakers, and activists who often exist in their distinct silos of work. For example, one of the most positively received panels was organized around social justice advocacy and solidarity with attorneys, activists, and policy analysts, who spoke to the unique challenges that Iranian Americans and other immigrants face in the aftermath of the Trump election. This panel also identified the growing parallels between Iranian immigrants and those of other communities as the US deals with a growing anti-immigrant sentiment and other ideologies like white supremacy.

CONFERENCE REPORT CONT'D

A further theme of this panel was the many challenges associated with the departure of the US from the Iran Nuclear Deal and the executive order that has been dubbed as the “Muslim Ban” which has hit Iranian Americans particularly hard. While these are not historically part of other conferences, the idea that we can engage in cross-conversation around the everyday experiences of Iranians and Iranian immigrants in nations around the world is imperative. Iranian Studies needs to encompass a greater scope of study, research, and engagement as we understand that the Iranian diaspora is not a singular or homogenous field of study.

In addition to the two-day conference at San Francisco State University, the Center sponsored and co-sponsored two art exhibits that took place before, during, and after the conference. The opening reception for the conference took place at the San Francisco Art Commission Gallery in downtown San Francisco (adjacent to City Hall), at the closing of “Part and Parcel” an exhibit by four Iranian diaspora artists from the Bay Area, Oregon, and Los Angeles. This exhibit, curated by Bay Area Iranian diaspora artist, Taraneh Hemami, featured videos, sculpture, and multi-media installations by Gelare Khoshgozaran, Sahar Khoury, Minoosh Zomordinia, and Tannaz Farsi. The themes of their work explored the physical and spiritual geography of diaspora. The conference opening reception on March 28th also featured readings by the artists as well as a reading by Monica Chinchilla, (assistant to Iranian-American San Francisco supervisor Asha Safai) of a proclamation by the City of San Francisco declaring the month of March 2019, “Iranian Diaspora Month.” The second exhibit, “Once at Present” which opened on the final night of the conference at the Minnesota Street Project Gallery in San Francisco was a major exhibition of Iranian diaspora visual artists from the Bay Area, co-curated by Bay Area artist Taraneh Hemami and San Francisco State’s own Kevin Chen. This art exhibit featured the work of visual artists from the Bay Area—some of whom were born in Iran, some of whom came as young children, some of whom were born in the US. This exhibition indeed spoke to the transnational and trans-generational nature of how visual arts has also become the locus for diverse Iranian diaspora experiences. The reception that opened the exhibit included a fashion show and dance performance by acclaimed artist and designer Hushidar Mortazaie, and his troupe of dancers. Additionally, singer and musician Mohsen Namjoo, himself a recent Iranian immigrant to the US, performed a riveting set at the reception that left many of us in awe at the end of a rich two days.

The conference generated important conversations and also showcased the many ways the Iranian diaspora is being studied, expressed, and represented both inside and outside academia today. While many expressed their hopes for a regular conference like this, the opportunity to engage at the Iranian Studies conference in 2020 was also positively supported and encouraged, thanks to AIS President, Camron Amin, who himself shared his work on Iranian oral histories in Michigan as

part of one of the conference panels. The Center’s longer-term vision, in addition to supporting and collaborating on Iranian diaspora projects, is also to help encourage a new generation of scholars. The Center’s current research emphasis is to engage in public history projects, including the making of a documentary film, titled, “We Are Here, We’ve Always Been Here,” (a history of Iranian immigration in the San Francisco Bay Area), a pilot archive project supported by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities, and planning for a traveling exhibition. The Center also intends to support emerging scholars, through collaborative projects and through the establishment of a graduate fellowship in 2020 (master’s degrees only) at San Francisco State University. By the end of 2020, we hope to host our first post-doctoral visiting assistant professor at the Center. In addition, the Center’s director is currently working on a proposal for an edited volume about the emergence of this field of Iranian Diaspora Studies. To learn more about the conference, and to see recorded videos of some of the conference panels on our YouTube channel, please go to our website: ids.sfsu.edu. You can also find a link to our blog “With a Trace” which features interviews and profiles of many of those who participated in the conference, as well as to links to our social media channels.

Conference “Revisiting Discourses of Love, Sex, and Desire in Modern Iran and Diaspora,” to be held at UNC-Chapel Hill, March 28, 2020

Dr. Claudia Yaghoobi, Roshan Institute Assistant Professor in Persian Studies at UNC-Chapel Hill is organizing a one-day symposium titled, “Revisiting Discourses of Love, Sex, and Desire in Modern Iran and Diaspora,” to be held at UNC-Chapel Hill on March 28, 2020. The symposium is an attempt to provide a safe space for public discussions of the nuances around discourses of love and desire in modern Iran, challenging and contributing to the dominant discourses on key topics. From their mundane to their sublime forms, love and desire have played a central role in various discourses in modern Iran. From romantic epics to ghazals, and from arranged marriages to white marriages, and from companionate love to contemporary cohabitations, desire is undoubtedly one of the most important theoretical topics for scholars. This symposium brings together a range of international scholars and activists from different disciplines focusing on modern Iran and diasporan Iranians to analyze the wide variety of ways in which love and desire have been represented, imagined, and discursively constructed. Participants address discourses of love and desire and revisit those discourses considering the implications that they have for larger theoretical debates. Selected papers of the symposium will be published in the book series titled, *Sex, Marriage and family in the Middle East*, edited by Janet Afary and Claudia Yaghoobi, published by Bloomsbury.

LANGUAGE PROGRAMS

2020 Critical Language Scholarship

We are pleased to announce that the application for the 2020 Critical Language Scholarship (CLS) Program is now open! We welcome your students to apply now to learn a critical foreign language next summer on a fully-funded study abroad program. The application is now live and available online at: <https://www.clscholarship.org/apply>. Applications are due Tuesday, November 19, 2019 by 8:00pm EST.

The CLS Program is an intensive overseas language and cultural immersion program for American students enrolled at U.S. colleges and universities. Students spend eight to ten weeks abroad studying one of 15 critical languages. The program includes intensive language instruction and structured cultural enrichment experiences designed to promote rapid language gains. Most languages offered by the CLS Program (9 of 15) do not require applicants to have any experience studying critical languages.

CLS, a program of the U.S. Department of State, is part of a wider government initiative to expand the number of Americans studying and mastering foreign languages that are critical to national security and economic prosperity. CLS plays an important role in preparing students for the 21st century's globalized workforce and increasing national competitiveness. The CLS Program offers instruction in the following languages: Arabic, Azerbaijani, Bangla, Chinese, Hindi, Indonesian, Japanese, Korean, Persian, Portuguese, Punjabi, Russian, Swahili, Turkish, and Urdu. Resources for advisors are available on our web site at: <https://clscholarship.org/advisors>

We will host a series of webinars to provide more information for students and advisors. Please see the links below to register for the webinar(s) of your choice. All webinars will also be recorded for those who are unable to attend. For questions, please contact us at: cls@americancouncils.org

ASPIRANTUM -School of languages and cultures

ASPIRANTUM -School of languages and cultures invites international participants to apply and take part in Armenian, Persian and Russian language winter schools from December 1 till December 21, 2019 in Yerevan, Armenia.

Persian language winter school: <https://aspirantum.com/topics/persian>

Russian language winter school: <https://aspirantum.com/topics/russian>

Armenian language winter school: <https://aspirantum.com/topics/armenian>

PERSONAL MEMORY

Revolutionary in the Path

By Franklin T. Burroughs, Ed.D.

The Islamic Revolution was only a few weeks old; Iranian students had not yet stormed the U.S. Embassy and taken the 52 American diplomats hostage. I had heard that revolutionaries were setting up checkpoints and sometimes hauling drivers and passengers off to the infamous Evin Prison, but I had not been detained either during the day or at night.

This particular evening, I had enjoyed two whiskeys with an Armenian friend and had decided to take the back road home to avoid any checkpoints. If one of the revolutionaries caught me out at night, particularly if he could smell alcohol on my breath, he might seize me on the spot and ship me off to prison. Being recognized as an American could make matters worse. The revolutionaries did not feel the United States understood them; they were certain they and the Americans held different values, motivations, perceptions or desires. They weren't interested in healthy relationships that might involve resolvable conflict, nor were they intent on handling conflict in a respectful and positive way. Their needs as they perceived them took precedence over the ideas of anyone else, and they stood ready to not just defend but also impose their values without recourse of any kind on their opponent.

I drove at a pace that would not draw attention to me, and as I drew near my home, I began to relax. The whiskeys had given me a little buzz but not enough for me to appear drunk. I had thoroughly enjoyed my friend's company and was preparing myself for a good night's sleep.

I approached the last curve on the back road before reaching home with confidence and relief, but as soon as I rounded the curve, I was shocked into sobriety and almost wet my pants on the spot. In the center of the road was a check point manned by a young bearded revolutionary proudly pointing a gun at my car.

I immediately acknowledged to myself that I could not hope to resolve any conflict that might result from an exchange of sarcastic remarks or attempts at reasoning. The young revolutionary would be in no mood to reason. He had the weapon and the upper hand. What could I do to avert prison or perhaps even death?

The young man approached the car and asked in Persian, "Where are you going?"

PERSONAL MEMORY CONT'D

"Home," I replied in my best non-academic Persian. "I have been visiting a friend and want to get home to the family as soon as possible."

"What is the password for tonight?" he asked. "I need to be certain that you know the password and are one of us before I can let you go on your way."

The young revolutionary approached the car and looked inside. He searched the interior of the car with his flashlight and then shined the light on me. My hands shook so badly I was afraid he would see my nervousness and ask why I was shaking. Whether he ever suspected I was an American I will never know. He looked straight at me while continuing to shine his flashlight in my face and said in a very quiet voice and again in Persian, "The password is Philistine. I would suggest you not forget the word again. Now be off with you, and good luck."

I slowly drove off but speeded up considerably as soon as I was out of his sight. I had to rush home and get to the bathroom before I messed up myself and my car. But controlling my feelings and my nervousness had helped me avoid a potential disaster for me as well as my family. If I had made even one small mistake in my interaction with the revolutionary, I would have been thrown into the infamous Evin Prison with only a limited possibility for discharge.

Book Talk and Signing by Dick Davis in DC

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Cooking Class

The Civic Kitchen

Tuesday, 12 November 2019, 6-10PM

FOR MORE INFO & TO REGISTER

2961 Mission Street

San Francisco, CA 94110

Slide-Talk and Book Signing

Stanford Festival of Iranian Arts

Thursday, 21 NOV 2019, 6:30-8PM

FOR MORE INFO

Geology Corner, Building 320, Room 105,
Stanford U.