



ASSOCIATION FOR IRANIAN STUDIES

انجمن ایران پژوهی

<http://associationforiranianstudies.org>

AIS Newsletter | Volume 38, Number 1 | May 2017

EDITOR'S NOTE

Dear Readers,

The year began with terrible news for all those whose jobs, interests and connections to loved ones requires crossing the US borders. The AIS issued a statement in response to President Trump's executive decree, which you will find in the following pages. What you also will find is a report on a recent conference held in Kolkata on Mirza Ghalib (1797-1869), a research report on the female religious authorities (*bibi otuns*) of Tajikistan, a report by the editor of *Iranian Studies* on its recently published 50th anniversary issue, and, as usual, exciting member news, news about library acquisitions and recent activities in Persian studies programs, as well as calls for submissions and applications. The Association will soon announce plans for its 2018 conference, which due to looming travel restrictions is being relocated to Canada. For updates, please check the Association's website from time to time.

For now, let me wish all readers an animating and revitalizing summer with hopes for a more peaceful future,

Mirjam Künkler, the University of Göttingen

NOTE OF THE PRESIDENT

It is my distinct pleasure to serve as the new President of the Association for Iranian Studies during its fiftieth anniversary. The mission during my tenure is to open the association to those who work in newly emerging fields, as well as bringing scholars from Iran and Europe into the fold of the association and promoting gender equality to the association. This means working with such institutions as the *Societas Iranologica Europea* and its president, Professor Pierfrancesco Callieri of the University of Bologna at Ravenna, and the Great Encyclopaedia of Islam. With these new partners, we can forge new ties and organize conferences and publications, and invite more female scholars to serve on the selection, administrative and decision-making body. Furthermore, cooperation with other institutions and organizations for the study of Iran and the Persianate world in a comparative context can only enhance our position and standing as an organization.

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PRESIDENT’S NOTE CONT’D

In terms of publication, the journal of the association (*Iranian Studies*), has just published its fiftieth volume, doing so in a timely manner and putting out an impressive series of articles, thanks to Professor Ali Gheissari and his editorial team. I believe the next step for the Association of Iranian Studies is to consider publishing the proceedings of the papers presented at our bi-annual conferences. The proceedings would be published in two volumes, where the Ancient & Medieval Iranian papers will make up the first volume, followed by the Modern Iran papers as a second volume. This will need willing editors, the proper logistics and a proper peer-review team, but it is something that would also enrich our standing as an academic association.

This brings us to the issue of the location of our next conference in June 2018. The Association initially announced its intention to hold the next conference at the University of California, Irvine. Due to the recent changes in the US government and the issue of a travel ban, and also the delays in the issue of visas to Iranian nationals, we are exploring the possibility of holding the conference in Canada. We have reports of even European scholars who have traveled to Iran for research have difficulties to obtain visas to come to the US. Moving the conference to Canada will allow Iranian nationals, but also scholars from several other countries who have similar problems, to be able to travel and participate. We shall announce the location of the conference at the end of May 2017, and hope that we could accommodate the largest number of participants possible.

Lastly, I would like to emphasize that I firmly believe that an academic institution which deals with the Iranian world must be in contact with Iran, Afghanistan and Tajikistan, among other countries. We are a non-political and non-religious association and we must be mindful of scholars in Iran and beyond who would like to be part of our organization, but are apprehensive about our stance on issues. While we hold such values of scholarly freedom and the rights of all the members of our association to adhere to them, we must be sensitive to our colleagues in the region and try to accommodate their realities and academic careers as well. This view would only foster better relations and open up a dialogue and cooperation between us that is certainly beneficial to all.

Touraj Daryaei, President of the Association for Iranian Studies

MEMBER NEWS

- Janet Afary** has published *Charand o Parand: Revolutionary Satire from Iran, 1907-1909* (co-edited and translated with John R. Perry), Yale University Press, 2016. She has also published the articles “The Rhetoric and Performance of the Trickster Nasreddin” (co-authored with Kamran Afary) in *Iran Namag* 2:1 (Spring 2017); “Love in the Middle East: The Contradictions of Romance in the Facebook World” (co-authored with Roger Friedland, Paolo Gardinali, and Cambria Naslund) in *Critical Research on Religion*, Vol 4, Issue 3, 2016; and “Digital Romance: The Sources of Facebook Love in the Muslim World” (co-authored with Ramina Sotoudeh and Roger Friedland), in *Media, Culture and Society*, Vol 39, Issue 3, 2017.
- Gay Breyley’s** book *Iranian Music and Popular Entertainment: From Motrebi to Losangelesi and Beyond*, co-authored with Sasan Fatemi, London and New York: Routledge 2016 has been awarded the 2016 Open Prize by the International Association for the Study of Popular Music – Australia / New Zealand. Breyley has also published ‘*Between the Cracks: Street Music in Iran*’, *Journal of Musicological Research* 35:3, 72-81, and ‘From the “Sultan” to the “Persian Side”: Jazz in Iran and Iranian jazz since the 1920s’ in Bruce Johnson, ed, *Jazz and Totalitarianism*, London and New York: Routledge, 2016, 297-324.
- Elton L. Daniel** has been appointed Interim Director of the Center for Iranian Studies at Columbia University and as Editor-in-Chief of the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* (as of 15 January 2017).
- Touraj Daryaei & Khodadad Rezakhani**, *From Oxus to Euphrates: A History of Late Antique Iran*, Jordan Center for Persian Studies, 2017.
- Michelle Langford** has published the article ‘Sohrab Shahid Saless: An Iranian Filmmaker in Berlin’, in *Screening the Past*, Vol. 41, December 2016.
- Behnaz Mirzai’s** documentary films “Afro-Iranian Lives” and “The African-Baluchi Trance Dance” have been reviewed by Mary Elaine Hegland, Professor of Anthropology at Santa Clara University, in *Iranian Studies*, Vol. 50, Issue 1, 2017, 169-172.
- Mahnaz Moazami** has edited and published *Zoroastrianism: A Collection of Articles from the Encyclopaedia Iranica*, 2 vols., New York: Bibliotheca Persica Press, 2016.

MEMBER NEWS CONT'D

Alka Patel & Touraj Daryaee, *India and Iran in the Longue Duree*, Jordan Center for Persian Studies, 2017.

Christine van Ruymbeke has published the monograph *Kashefi's Anvar-e Sohayli. Rewriting Kalila wa-Dimna in Timurid Herat*, Brill, 2016.

Eskandar Sadeghi-Boroujerdi was awarded a three-year postdoctoral fellowship by the British Academy and has been based at the Department of History at the University of Manchester since October 2016. His current project examines the mechanisms and channels of mass political participation post-1953 and how they were organised and co-opted by the Pahlavi state.

Jen Semken has published 'Politiques des musiques populaires en Iran au XX^e siècle' in Elsa Grassy and Jedediah Sklower, eds., *Politiques des musiques populaires au XX^e siècle*, Guichen: Éd. Mélanie Seteun, 2016, 121-138.

On February 14, 2017 the Italian Ministry of Culture awarded Professor **Anna Vanzan** a **lifetime achievement award** for her translation activity and for promoting Persian culture in Italy.

Sarah Walker's article "'Under the Bruised Sky': Music and Mourning in Postrevolutionary Iran' has been published in Jane Whitfield Davidson and Sandra Garrido, eds., *Music and Mourning*, London: Ashgate, 69-82.

Ehsan Yarshater was honored at a special seminar on Iranian Studies held on Columbia University on 6 May 2016, marking the publication of Mandana Zandian's *Ehsan Yarshater in Conversation with Mandana Zandian* and celebrating his prolific and multifaceted contributions to the study and appreciation of Iran and the Persian cultural heritage.



Anna Vanzan receives lifetime achievement award by Italian government at the Biblioteca Angelica in Roma.

EDITORIAL NOTE FROM THE IRANIAN STUDIES JOURNAL

In the spring 2017 issue of this *Newsletter* I took the opportunity to reiterate our general editorial consensus to invite scholars engaged in different aspects of Iranian studies to send us book reviews.

Here I would like to broaden our invitation and encourage scholars to actively participate in reading and evaluating the latest research and contributions to the field before they reach a wider audience. Although the editorial office in general, and our book review editors in particular, actively follow the most recent publications in the general field of Iranian studies, I would like to take this opportunity to invite our readers to let us know of recent scholarly publications in English, Persian, or other languages on every aspect of Iranian studies. Our invitation of course includes all our readership, including academics, and research students.

Also, similar to the established practice of other scholarly periodicals, we would like to hear from scholars, AIS members and non-members alike, in their respective fields of expertise who would be willing to accept our invitation to write book reviews. Please write to us and let us know of your research interest and fields of expertise.

Likewise, publishers are also invited to send their recent lists relating to Iranian studies to the editorial office for further distribution among our book review editors or, as shown on our website, they can contact appropriate book review editors directly with regard to specific titles within their areas of specialization. Book reviews of recent scholarly publications will directly impact and contribute to further promotion and distribution of new titles.

All communications to the editorial office can be made through direct editorial contact or via the journal's website:

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FORMER AIS PRESIDENT HAS BEEN AWARDED AN AMERICAN COUNCIL ON EDUCATION FELLOWSHIP

Mehrzaad Boroujerdi, former president of AIS, a professor and chair of political science at the Maxwell School and a Provost Faculty Fellow for internationalization, has been named an American Council on Education (ACE) Fellow for the 2017-18 academic year.

Established in 1965, the ACE Fellows Program is designed to strengthen colleges and universities by identifying and preparing faculty and staff for senior positions in higher education administration. Boroujerdi, who was nominated by Provost Michele Wheatly, was one of 46 Fellows to be selected for the 2017-18 cohort through an intensive nomination and application process.

“To be selected as an ACE Fellow is a significant achievement, and Mehrzaad is more than deserving of this distinction,” Wheatly says. “It is a reflection not only of his talent as a teacher and scholar but also of his tremendous promise as a higher education leader. The ACE Fellows program historically has served as a leadership pipeline for higher education institutions, and I am delighted the selection committee recognized this potential in Mehrzaad.”

Nearly 1,900 higher education leaders have participated in the ACE Fellows Program over the past five decades, with more than 80 percent of Fellows having gone on to serve as senior leaders of colleges and universities.

In 2014 Boroujerdi was named by the Maxwell School as an O’Hanley Faculty Scholar, and in 2015 he was appointed Provost Faculty Fellow for Internationalization. He currently serves as co-chair of the University’s Internationalization Council, formed last fall on a recommendation of the University’s Academic Strategic Plan. He also served as the founding director of the University’s Middle Eastern Studies Program.

During the placement period, Fellows observe and work with the president and other senior officers at their host institution, attend decision-making meetings, and focus on issues of interest. They also conduct projects of particular concern to their home institution and seek to implement their findings upon their return to their university at the end of the fellowship placement.

AIS STATEMENT REGARDING PRESIDENT TRUMP’S EXECUTIVE ORDER

The Association for Iranian Studies (former International Society for Iranian Studies), expresses its deep concern regarding President Trump’s executive order imposing draconian restrictions on the entry to the United States of nationals from seven countries, including Iran. This executive order sends a chilling message to Iranians, Iranian-Americans, and to all academics engaged in the study of Iran. It hinders the academic activities of the AIS. The feasibility of holding our 2018 international conference at Irvine, California, has to be reviewed in the light of the current situation.

As an international academic organization devoted to the study of Iranian history, culture, politics, economics, and society, the Association for Iranian Studies (A.I.S.) is committed to the free exchange of ideas, the principle of academic freedom, and open dialogue relating to teaching, learning, and research in the field of Iranian Studies. Since its founding in 1967 the Association has steadfastly defended these principles and made significant contributions towards the humanistic understanding of Iranian civilization.

This executive order challenges those principles, and undermines the ability of students and scholars in our field to travel freely to Iran to attend academic conferences or to carry out their own research. Since the declaration of the executive order, confirmed reports have identified Iranian and Iranian-American students, academics, and others (including those holding student visas, green cards, and dual nationals) who have been detained, harassed, and prevented from returning to the United States after trips to Iran for personal or research reasons. Such incidents can only tarnish the reputation of the United States as a most hospitable haven for dispassionate and pioneering scholarship.

Sincerely,

Dr. Touraj Daryaei

President of the Association for Iranian Studies

Iranian Studies Vol. 50, issue 1, January 2017 has been published: <http://www.tandfonline.com/toc/cist20/current>. AIS members are able to access the current as well as all back issues of the journal by logging into their membership account and visiting Publications/Journal/Journal Archives.

RESEARCH REPORT

The social role of female religious authorities in the Ferghana Valley (Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan)

The *bibi otuns/otyncha* of Central Asia are female teachers of Islam who endow daily practices and traditions with spiritual guidance. They typically lead a range of local religious rituals, some of which are exclusive to women: practices of storytelling, reciting poems (*ghazals*) and religious counselling. Some female religious figures teach religion and traditions informally in their communities, while others run their own classes in *madrasas* or public teaching circles.¹

This study focuses on the interactions of the *bibi otuns* with their communities and followers: how they shape female religious circles and how they deal with male-dominated religious networks. The study also examines the relationship between female religious leaders and state organs, expressed by strategies of negotiations of their religious roles with various institutions and organisations.

Data for this study was collected in field research conducted for a period of three months in 2014 (Tajikistan), and three months in 2015 (Kyrgyzstan), with female religious figures belonging to Uzbek, Tajik and Kyrgyz groups living in the Ferghana Valley in Tajikistan and Kyrgyzstan. Additional information was gathered in the southern part of Tajikistan (Khatlon region) and Bishkek, Kyrgyzstan.²

A resurgence of religious life in post-Soviet Central Asia has prompted recent governments to increasingly regulate and control expressions of religious authority. Growing transnational mobility in the Muslim world has in turn intensified attempts by political and religious leaders to purify Islam of its perceived innovations and superstitions. These developments affect the position of the *bibi otuns/otyncha*. Their status has been challenged by new leaders who have brought a new understanding of the religious creed. Some *bibi otuns/otyncha* accept elements of the newly introduced interpretations to enrich their teaching, and to transform rituals and celebrations. Others reject them, or at least avoid open confrontation on theological and ritual matters with representatives of the new religious trends, attempting to preserve their status-quo within their circle of influence.

Beside these social challenges, the *bibi otuns* of Tajikistan, like other religious leaders in the country, are under constant pressure by the government. There is only one madrasa in the country today, as all others have been forced to close. Any other form of Islamic education, which traditionally was conducted in the houses of religious teachers, has been banned, so most religious teaching takes place behind closed doors and often in clandestine settings. During my fieldwork in 2014 I met a few female religious leaders who taught Islam informally for a narrow circle of women, but due to the restrictions it is generally difficult to assess the nature, scope and

current state of Islamic education in Tajikistan. To control female religious leaders specifically, formal associations, such as the *Shuroi Bibi Otunho*, have been established by the government. The *bibi otuns* react with a variety of strategies, including peaceful resistance, passive acceptance, or cooperation with the state to cope with the situation. At the time of my research, a number of female religious leaders were engaged in the work of the Islamic Renaissance Party of Tajikistan (IRPT) until the group's dissolution in August 2015. In this way, female religious authority was reshaped, and women became more visible in public space. Other female leaders cooperated with NGOs, and a few were members of mahalla's committees; yet others refrained from any political activity.

Bibi otuns have a long history of serving the Tajik and Uzbek communities. Among the Kyrgyz people, by contrast, the *bibi otuns* are not known as a social institution and it is instead so-called "new teachers of Islam" who populate the field of Islamic education. In contrast to Tajikistan, the religious situation in Kyrgyzstan is more in flux and more open. The field of religious education is diverse and teaching takes place in formal, semi-formal and informal settings. Female religious professionals operate in all of these and spread diverse interpretations of Islam. Both state organs and NGOs cooperate with religious leaders. A case in point is the NGO *Mutakalim* which created a network for female religious leaders in different parts of Kyrgyzstan to develop strategies of passing on religious knowledge to the next generation of women. A branch of Mutakalim is also located in southern Kyrgyzstan, where it works with female religious professionals of Uzbek and Kyrgyz origin. Despite ethnic differences within these religious networks, they interpenetrate each other, significantly influencing religious development in the south of the country. By all accounts, the phenomenon of female Islamic authority appears to be growing in the region, despite social and political resistance.

Results from this research project have so far been published as "Transforming the Social Role of Female Religious Professionals in Tajikistan" in Asian Studies Review, Volume 40, 4, 2016, 510-526 (*Special issue: Studying Female Islamic Authority: From Top-Down to Bottom-Up Modes of Certification*) and shall more fully appear in a monograph to be published in 2018.

Anna Cieřlewska

Institute of Oriental Studies of the Jagiellonian University,
a research unit of Iranian Studies

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A REPORT ON A RECENT CONFERENCE

Mirza Ghalib (1797-1869): A Pillar of Indo-Persian Culture

On 4-5 January 2017, the Institute of Indo-Persian Studies (IIPS), New Delhi, in collaboration with the Asiatic Society, Kolkata, organized an international conference on Mirza Ghalib as a pillar of Indo-Persian culture, marking the 220th anniversary of the poet's birth. Mirza Ghalib (1797-1869), a prominent poet of British India, is widely known for his Persian Kulliyat, as well as his elegant verses in Urdu.

Although Ghalib's chief fame rests on his volume of 235 Urdu ghazals and speaking letters, his Persian poetry, diary and letters outnumber his Urdu literary output. It is the literary craftsmanship in his Persian writings which connects India with the Persian speaking societies. By convening an international and interdisciplinary conference on Mirza Ghalib, IIPS endeavored to further disseminate Ghalib's Persian works in the region and abroad.

The inaugural session of the conference began with the recitation of verses from the Geetanjali of Rabindranath Tagore. Professor Syed Akhtar Husain, President of the Institute of Indo-Persian Studies, introduced the theme of the conference and stressed the importance of the Persian works of Mirza Ghalib, which create a bridge between India and the Persianate world. Prof. Ahmed Karimi Hakkak of Maryland University delivered the keynote address, outlining how the poetry of Ghalib was a significant addition to the rich corpus of Indo-Persian poetry. Among the audience were Dr. Satyabrata Chakraborty, General Secretary and Prof. Isha Mahammad, President of the Asiatic Society.

Thirty papers on various aspects of the life and work of Ghalib were presented in five academic sessions across the following two days. Scholars from the USA, Canada, Iran, Bangladesh and several parts of India participated in the symposium. Papers presented Ghalib as a man who cared for humanity, cutting across narrow barriers of caste, creed and colour. He has carved a niche for Urdu and Indo-Persian literature in world literature.

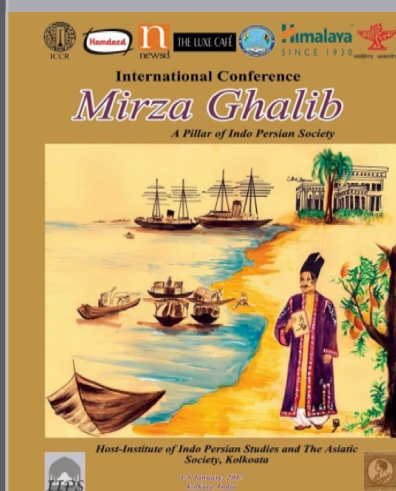
The Honorable Governor of West Bengal, Mr. Keshari Nath Tripathi, invited the delegates of the conference to the Governor House, Kolkata. President of IIPS, Professor Syed Akhtar Husain has proposed to him to assist IIPS to setup Ghalib Academy in the city of Kolkata to preserve the Indo-Persian heritage and legacy of the poet.

Nadeem Akhtar

Research Scholar

Centre for Persian and Central Asian Studies

Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi



Poster of the Conference designed by Ms. Miad Rashedifar, Tehran Peace Museum, Tehran, Iran



Inaugural Session of the Conference



Professor Syed Akhtar Husain, President of IIPS, addressing the delegates



Professor Ahmad Karimi Hakkak of Maryland University interacting with media



Dr. Pardis Minuchehr and Dr. S. Taqi Abedi in an academic session.



Delegates of the conference visiting the Governor of West Bengal

PRIZE NEWS

The Foundation for Iranian Studies is pleased to announce that it chosen Salimeh Maghsoudlou's dissertation "La pensée de 'Ayn al-Quḍāt al-Hamadānī (m. 525/1132), entre avicennisme et héritage ḡazālīen" submitted to religious studies section of the Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, CNRS, as the recipient of the Foundation's annual Ph.D. dissertation award on a topic of Iranian Studies for the academic year 2015-2016.

In making its decision, the committee, following the criteria established by the Foundation's Board of Directors, noted that Salimeh Maghsoudlou has made an "exceptional contribution to the field of Iranian and Islamic Studies" by, among other achievements, "stating clearly the study's problematic... constructing an adequate and efficient theoretical framework...developing and using successfully a rigorous methodology to bring together a significant array of primary and secondary sources in several languages, including several hitherto unknown or unpublished sources, to support an innovative approach to a critical study of one of the most thought provoking but relatively understudied 12th century Iranian Islamic theoreticians ... Critically analyzing the Avicennian and Ghazalian influence on 'Ain al-Quḍāt's thinking ... demonstrating a profound command of the theoretical foundations of a triad of philosophical, theological, and mystical concepts essential to the evolution of 'Ain al-Quḍāt's comprehensive vision... meticulously structuring and successfully analyzing, and adapting the components of the triad to explicate patterns of composition and intersection of concepts of God, Cosmos, and Man in 'Ain al-Quḍāt's exposition of Islamic theology... clear and judicious use of language and analysis ... excellent organization of the work."

The Committee also cited Fatemeh Shams-Esmaeili's dissertation "Official Voices of a Revolution: A Social History of Islamic Republic's Poetry," submitted to the Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford, Jonathan Brack's dissertation "Mediating Sacred Kingship: Conversion and Sovereignty in Mongol Iran," submitted to the Department of History, University of Michigan, and Cameron Lindley Cross's dissertation "The Poetics of Romantic Love in Vis O Râmin," submitted to the Faculty of the Division of the Humanities, University of Chicago with honorable mention for superior scholarship, originality, clarity, and significant contribution to Iranian Studies. Gholam Reza Afkhami, Chair, Ph.D. Dissertation Awards Committee

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GRADUATE STUDENT PAPER AWARD

The Middle East Studies Association (MESA) has awarded Paola Cossermelli Messina (of the New School for Social Research) the Graduate Student Paper Award for her paper titled "*Reclaiming the Stage: Oral Histories of Iranian Women Musicians.*" As an original and significant work of scholarship, Paola Cossermelli Messina's paper stood out against a strong field of competitors in terms of its compelling thesis, ample evidence, and remarkably clear and organized writing. Cossermelli Messina argues that Iranian women musicians are engaged in a perpetual conflict with attempts to define them externally, both by a restrictive government and the Western gaze, and that they have identified their music-making as a source of resistance in that context. She arrives at her conclusions through extensive research, documenting the accounts of Iranian women musicians, and thereby illustrating their attempts to navigate the post-1979 Iranian political, social, and cultural spheres through elements of their personal lives and creative pursuits. It is an excellent example of how to blend theory with original field work, and Cossermelli Messina is to be commended for her contribution.

THE 2016 HOUSHANG POURSHARIATI IRANIAN STUDIES BOOK AWARD

MESA is pleased to award the 2016 Houshang Pourshariati Iranian Studies Book Award to Zuzanna Olszewska, author of *The Pearl of Dari: Poetry and Personhood Among Young Afghans in Iran*, published in 2015 by Indiana University Press. Based on long-term ethnographic fieldwork and life history interviews among Afghan-Iranian communities in Mashhad, *The Pearl of Dari* details how the tradition of Persian poetry provides a cultural space in which Afghans wrestled with tensions of communal distinction, individual self-expression, class divisions, cross-border migration, and social assimilation in Iran. Olszewska's monograph breaks major ground in multiple arenas of Iranian studies. To name just a few; the book provides new insights into state-society relations before and after the 1979 Iranian revolution, the history of literary production, the lifeworlds of cultural institutions, the development of Iranian identities, changes in gender dynamics, the social trajectories of minority communities, and the shifting boundaries of inclusion and exclusion in the contemporary Islamic Republic. Where previous ethnographies tended to focus narrowly on upper-middle classes in urban Iran with an unquestioning and universalizing lens, Olszewska looks to the margins and the periphery to better understand both the center and the whole of the country. Infused with anthropological imagination, written in clear prose, and crackling with the poetic voices of her interlocutors, *The Pearl of Dari* will bring new readers into Iranian Studies while expanding the purview of the field itself.

The first honorable mention goes to Richard Payne, author of *A State of Mixture: Christians, Zoroastrians, and Iranian Political Culture in Late Antiquity*, published in 2015 by University of California Press. Through detailed parsing of archaeological, sillographic, and textual material from Syriac and Middle Persian sources, Payne provides a novel account of the incorporation of Christian elites into the political networks of the Sassanian empire. In doing so, Payne overturns previous assessments that represented hagiographies of Christian saints and martyrs in Iran at face value. By analyzing religious texts in the context of their corresponding social institutions, such as annual shrine commemorations or court deliberations, Payne shows how, by the reign of Khosrow the second, the Iranian state amalgamated Christian elites and religious institutions with an imperial ambition to “incorporate the Christian Roman Empire into an enlarged Eranshahr.” Correspondingly, he argues, the political culture of the Zoroastrian nobility facilitated the development of “shared social and political imaginaries” which facilitated the assimilation of Syrian Christian legal traditions and communal self-understandings into a late Sassanian imperial order. In effect, Payne argues, Eastern Syrian Christians were “as much the heirs of Iran as were their Zoroastrian peers.” As a result, the committee determined that Payne’s monograph substantially contributes to our understanding of the Iranian imperial zone in late antiquity, informing and inspiring work for the next generation of historians.

The second honorable mention goes to Farzin Vejdani, author of *Making History in Iran: Education, Nationalism, and Print Culture*, published in 2015 by Stanford University Press. As implied by the double sense of the book’s title, Vejdani examines the actors and institutions which took part in the development of Iranian historiography during the transformation from an empire towards a nation-state. Pushing against previous scholarship which identified the driving force of nationalism as either externally sparked through Western emulation or internally coerced through top-down state compulsion, Vejdani expands the set of individuals which shaped and participated in Iranian history-making from the late Qajar period through the constitutional and early Pahlavi eras. Through a sweeping look at previously unused sources, including works by court amateurs, private educators, women writers, and provincial elites, Vejdani highlights the distinctive processes of history-making in Iran as compared to more widely studied examples from colonial India or Kemalist Turkey. The study grounds the formation of Iranian nationalism within trans-national social and intellectual currents as well as new print technologies and pedagogical practices. The committee determined that Vejdani’s work, by greatly enriching the field of social history of modern Iran, will serve as a model for future scholarship inside and outside the field of Iranian Studies.



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LIBRARY NEWS

The website *Art and Material Culture of Iranian Shiism* showcases contributions that were made to a conference held on the same topic at St. Antony's College, University of Oxford, July 7th-8th, 2006. The conference was organized by Prof. J. W. Allan and Dr. Pedram Khosronejad (now Associate Director for Iranian and Persian Gulf Studies, School of International Studies/School of Media & Strategic Communications, Oklahoma State University, U.S.A.) and received financial support from the Iran Heritage Foundation (U.K.), the Middle East Centre (St. Antony's College, University of Oxford), Maison Francaise d'Oxford, and the Institute of Ismaili Studies (U.K.).

The Iranian and Persian Gulf Studies (IPGS), Oklahoma State University is delighted to announce receipt of a very generous donation from Dr. Ali Fazel (CEO Accurate Environmental, Stillwater) in support of the creation of a new "Visual Archive, Media Collection and Digital Resources" repository for the Iranian and Persian Gulf Studies (IPGS) program. The Dr. Ali Fazel "Visual Archive, Media Collection and Digital Resources" will contain tangible and intangible materials and resources regarding contemporary Iran which will help OSU faculty members, researchers and students to develop their studies and research regarding Iranian and Persian Gulf Studies.

PROGRAM NEWS



The University of Oklahoma names Farzaneh Hall and unveils Omar Khayyám Sculpture

The University of Oklahoma has received a \$4 million gift for the College of International Studies, and the establishment of a new center for Iranian and Persian Gulf Studies.

This major gift is from The Farzaneh Family Foundation, brothers and OU alums Jalal Farzaneh and Mohammad Farzaneh, founders of the Oklahoma-based company Home Creations.

"The University of Oklahoma is deeply grateful to the Farzaneh family for this generous gift which places OU at the forefront in Iranian and Middle Eastern Studies," said OU President David L. Boren. "It is believed to be the largest gift in the university's history from those who came to OU as international students. The Farzaneh's are active leaders in our OU family."

In appreciation of this gift, Boren said he will recommend to the OU Board of Regents that they recognize the donors by naming the hall and the center, where the college is housed, in honor of the Farzaneh Family.

The brothers came to Oklahoma from Iran in 1978 to study at OU, with both earning bachelor's and master's degrees in architecture. Together they have been generous donors not only to OU, but to Iranian Studies across the state of Oklahoma.

The Center for Iranian and Persian Gulf Studies will provide opportunities for students to develop a better cultural understanding, appreciation and awareness of the United States, Iran and the Middle East. The center also will include an academic major in Iranian and Persian Gulf Studies, establishing OU as one of the premiere academic institutions for Iranian and Persian Gulf Studies within the United States. The gift will help fund scholarships for Iranian students and for students studying Persian language; three endowed professorships; an endowed lectureship; and a prize for Iranian Literature. The gift also will establish a Persian artwork fund and an endowed Persian book collection.

The Farzaneh family has been a generous donor to OU with gifts valuing more than \$8 million. Previous gifts have provided resources to establish a reception suite for the offices of Education Abroad and International Student Services. This suite provides an inviting space to help OU students, both domestic and international, feel at home. The family previously endowed the Farzaneh Family Chair in Iranian Studies. In addition they also contributed \$1 million to establish an endowed fund for the Farzaneh Family Professor in Iranian Studies, as well as the Farzaneh Family Language Instructor for Persian Language.

At the announcement, Boren also unveiled one of OU's newest pieces of artwork, "Omar Khayyám," inspired by the Persian polymath, mathematician, astronomer, philosopher and poet of the Islamic Golden Age. Khayyám was born in 1048 AD in Nishapur, in northeastern Iran. Scholars believe he wrote about 1,000 four-line verses of poetry known as rubaiyat, which have been translated into dozens of languages. Khayyám died in 1131 A.D. and is buried in the Khayyám Garden in Nishapur.

The sculpture stands more than seven feet tall and its stone originates from the city of Azna located in the province of Lorestan, Iran. Khayyám is holding a globe signifying his contributions to astronomy, as well as the numbers representing his developments in binomial theorems and Algebra. The book located at the bottom of the sculpture is a representation of Khayyám's famed poetry.

The sculpture was made possible by internationally noted sculptor, Professor Hossein Fakhimi. He earned a Ph.D. from Madrid Fine Arts (Completextia University) and is a founder of the Iranian Organization of Scientific and Industrial Research. Fakhimi conducted two years of study prior to carving "Omar Khayyám," because he wanted to capture the varying aspects of Khayyám's character.

PROGRAM NEWS

UCLA has established the Pourdavoud Center for the Study of the Iranian World, the first center in the Western Hemisphere that aims to advance the knowledge of ancient Iranian languages, history and religions.

The Pourdavoud Center was named for the late Professor Ebrahim Pourdavoud, a pioneering scholar of ancient Persia, and was made possible by a gift from his granddaughter, Dr. Anahita Naficy Lovelace, and her husband, James B. Lovelace.

“My grandfather devoted a lifetime to the study of the history, languages, religions and culture of ancient Iran. I am so grateful that Jim and I have the good fortune to be able to honor and extend the impact of his important contributions,” Lovelace said.

The mission of the Pourdavoud Center is to engage in transformative research on all aspects of Iranian antiquity, including its reception in the medieval and modern periods, by expanding on the traditional domains of Old Iranian studies and promoting cross-cultural and interdisciplinary scholarship. The center will complement UCLA’s well-established doctoral program in Iranian Studies – founded more than half a century ago in 1963 – which attracts 1,000 students from all over campus to its courses each year.

“At UCLA, we recognize that the study of ancient cultures is more important today than ever,” said David Schaberg, dean of humanities in the UCLA College. “It reveals the rich tapestry of human history and identity, and allows us to understand and uphold the highest values our forebears espoused.”

Schaberg said he was confident that the Pourdavoud Center would inspire lively intellectual and cross-cultural discussions among students and scholars throughout campus, as well as members of the Los Angeles community.

“UCLA’s location in the principal metropolitan center for the Iranian-American community is ideal for the Pourdavoud Center,” he said.

The Pourdavoud Center will host lectures, seminars, workshops and conferences. It will also provide grants to established and emerging visiting scholars to generate and disseminate innovative scholarship on ancient Iran.

UCLA’s Iranian Studies program, led by Professor M. Rahim Shayegan, is home to the largest and most comprehensive doctoral program of its kind in the Americas and is the only one to cover the entire spectrum of Iranian Studies across disciplines, linguistic boundaries and periods. Its distinctive strengths are Old and Middle Iranian philology, ancient Iranian history and religions, archaeology, and the study of classical Persian literature.

“We are very grateful to the Lovelaces for providing us crucial resources to revive the study of Iranian antiquity,” said Shayegan, holder of the Jahangir and Eleanor Amuzegar Chair of Iranian Studies. “A research institute of this magnitude can have a transformative impact on the fortunes of the whole discipline, decisively reversing its decline and reinforcing its foundation.”

Shayegan, who will guide the Pourdavoud Center as it launches its inaugural year, said that the center would launch in the spring with a two-day international workshop focused on strategies to strengthen the field of ancient Iranian studies and to bolster institutional links among other centers of excellence.

Ebrahim Pourdavoud (1885-1968) was a dedicated scholar who pioneered the first Persian translation of the Avesta, the holy book of the ancient Zoroastrian religion. Over a span of 67 years, he conducted extensive research on ancient history and ancient Iranian languages, and trained many scholars and Iranists.

According to Shayegan, Pourdavoud profoundly affected Iranian society by resurrecting and identifying ancient Persia as a positive force for societal progress in contemporary Iran. “The late Professor Pourdavoud greatly admired the ability of ancient Iranian universal empires to embrace diverse ethnicities, religions and languages, while allowing their individuality to thrive within a cohesive state structure,” Shayegan said. “This innate tolerance was, and still is, of great appeal, and a research center named after Pourdavoud ought to pay heed to this spirit of openness to the world.”

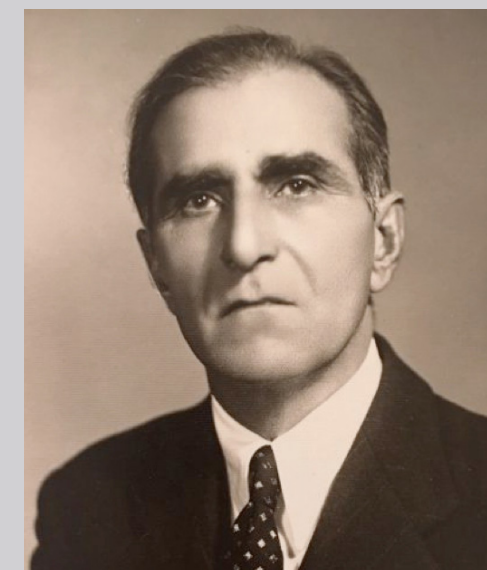
Lovelace, who spent the first 18 years of her life in Tehran, has fond memories of childhood visits to her grandparents’ home.

“Our grandfather would typically receive us in his study, where he spent most of his time,” she recalled. “He was surrounded by his beloved books on ancient Iran, in different languages, alongside encyclopedias, reference books, dictionaries and books on a variety of related subjects. Though a formal man, he was very warm and lighthearted at the same time. He had a wonderful sense of humor and always looked for ways to engage us, his grandchildren, during these visits.”

“I am grateful to my grandfather and my parents for giving me such wonderful early exposure to the ethos of ancient Iran. I have found this immeasurably helpful both in my personal as well as my professional life,” she said.

Lovelace is a clinical psychologist practicing in Los Angeles. She holds a bachelor of arts in psychology from Princeton University and a Ph.D. in clinical psychology from The University of Texas at Austin. A native Californian and graduate of Swarthmore College, James Lovelace is an equity portfolio manager at Capital Group, a global financial services company based in Los Angeles.

To learn more, please visit the Pourdavoud Center’s [web site](#).



Ebrahim Pourdavoud

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

Roshangar: Roshan Undergraduate Persian Studies Journal was founded in the fall of 2015 by undergraduates at the University of Maryland, College Park. It is now a biannual academic publication featuring undergraduate research on topics related to the field of Persian Studies.

The journal seeks to inspire original research as well as to promote a broader interest in Persian Studies and Culture within the academic community and the greater society. The first issue was released in Spring of 2016 and included submissions from the University of Maryland, University of Cracow, George Washington University, and New York University in Abu Dhabi. The essays were from such broad topics such as cinema, diplomacy, gender and more. *Roshangar's* second issue for Fall of 2016 was recently published, and included submissions from Shahid Beheshti University, University of Maryland, University of Pennsylvania, and McGill University. It featured essays from the topics of literature, poetry, healthcare, and theatre amongst others. The journal is currently accepting submissions for our third issue, to be published late Spring 2017. *Roshangar's* first and second issues are available for free download from the journal's website.

For further information and to submit papers, please contact Roshangar. UMD@gmail.com and visit <https://www.roshangarumd.com/>

In conjunction with the academic journal, the *Roshangar* website features film and book reviews, interviews with scholars and artists, highlights of local Persian events, blogs and more at <http://www.roshan garumd.com/>.

In addition, the journal's Facebook, Instagram and Twitter pages, using the handle RoshangarUMD, feature an array of photographs and information related to Persian Culture, History and Studies. These include images of Iranian art, artists, architecture, fashion and historical figures. The goal with the social media pages is to visually highlight all aspects of Iranian culture from the ancient to the modern from inside and outside of Iran. It is the editors' sincere wish that undergraduate students anywhere in the world who study and love Iranian and Persian culture and history can enjoy the journal's work, either as collaborators or contributors.

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

CALL FOR FILM SUBMISSIONS OPEN FOR THE 10TH ANNUAL IRANIAN FILM FESTIVAL - SAN FRANCISCO

September 23-24, 2017
 Submission Deadline: July 15, 2017
www.IranianFilmFestival.org

Discovering the Next Generation of Iranian Filmmakers©

San Francisco: The 10th Annual Iranian Film Festival - San Francisco, a showcase for independent feature and short films made by or about Iranians from around the world, is inviting the filmmakers from all over the world to submit their films to the next edition taking place in September 2017.

The films should be related to Iran and Iranians by any filmmaker, or by any Iranian filmmaker about any subject.

There is NO entry fee to submit films, or restriction in topic. The festival is open to all genres: fiction, short, documentary, music, animation....

For submission information, please visit www.IranianFilmFestival.org

Submission Deadline: July 15, 2017

Iranian Film Festival - San Francisco
 6 Beach Road, 544
 Tiburon, CA 94920 USA
info@IranianFilmFestival.org

CALL FOR SUBMISSIONS

The Foundation for Iranian Studies invites applications for its annual award of \$1000 for the best Ph.D. dissertation in a field of Iranian Studies. Students completing their dissertations between July 1, 2016 and June 30, 2017 are eligible to apply for the 2017 award.

Dissertations must be nominated by the author's advisor and be accompanied by the Dissertation Committee's letter of acceptance. Both documents may be emailed provided they contain appropriate official insignias and signatures.

Deadline for Submissions is August 15, 2017. Applicants for the 2017 award should submit a digital copy of the dissertation, either mailed on disc to Secretary, Foundation for Iranian Studies, Bethesda, MD 20814, USA or emailed to fis@fis-iran.org or gafkhami@fis-iran.org

For further information about the award, selection criteria, and previous winners consult the Foundation for Iranian Studies Website at www.fis-iran.org, Programs, Dissertation Awards. Inquiries should be emailed to fis@fis-iran.org.

CALL FOR APPLICATIONS

The **Roshan Graduate Interdisciplinary Program in Persian and Iranian Studies** is a newly established program at the University of Arizona. The Persian program will be admitting a very limited number of graduate students at the MA and Ph.D level for the 2017-2018 academic year. To apply and for more information about the program and availability of financial support, please see www.persian.arizona.edu.

For more information, please contact Mariam Hawatmeh at mariamh@email.arizona.edu.

JOBS

Assistant Professor of Persian Literature and Digital Humanities

University of Maryland
(Full-time, Tenure Track)

College of Arts & Humanities, School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures
The School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures (SLLC) and the Program in Persian Studies at the University of Maryland (UMD) invite applications from candidates at the Assistant Professor rank in the field of Persian Literature and Digital Humanities. Interest and experience in scholarship and teaching in the areas of Comparative Literature, Islamicate Sexualities, and Persian Digital Humanities are preferred. We strongly encourage applicants with expertise in instructional and digital technology and an interest in global Persian studies, especially as it relates to bringing the field of Persian Literature/Humanities into the digital age.

The successful candidate must show evidence of excellence in teaching, academic leadership, and an emerging publication record in the field. The candidate will also be expected to take a leading role in the development of interdisciplinary initiatives -- within SLLC, across UMD, and with global educational institutions such as universities with strong Persian studies programs and major libraries with substantial Persian manuscript and print collections. Candidates should show a strong commitment to teaching a diverse student population, particularly one that includes a percentage of heritage speakers of Persian. For best consideration, apply by May 1st. Requirements include: native or near-native command of Persian and English, and Ph.D. in hand by May 15, 2017.

For full consideration, please provide a letter of interest, a CV, a writing sample, two sample syllabi (one for an undergraduate course and one for a graduate course (Supplemental Document 1), sample teaching evaluations, if available (Supplemental Document 2), and the names and contact information for a minimum of three references. All applications must be uploaded to the University of Maryland web-based employment application system at <https://ejobs.umd.edu>.

Review of applications will begin May 1 and continue until the position is filled.

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