EDITOR’S NOTE

Dear Readers,
I hope the sprouting blossoms and arrival of spring colours have lifted many a spirit. Hafez reflected on spring’s re-awakening of the senses in the “Dance of Life”, in words that shall be reproduced below.

The following pages feature the first address by our new president, Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet and a report by Nasr Imieh, the new editor-in-chief of our flagship journal Iranian Studies. They also include a report by the relatively new mentorship committee about its admirable wealth of activities.

Several scholars report on their ongoing research or recently published monographs, and we learn of the Persian perspective on the origins of the Alexander myth. Alireza Akbari offers a portrait of the writer Jaffar Modarres Sadeghi as a literary critic and Raika Khorshidian presents a curator’s lens on how art has framed and accompanied political developments in Iran in recent months.

As ever, AIS members should feel warmly invited to get in touch to feature their research and new publications in upcoming issues. The newsletter, like the organization as such, lives off the community that sustains it.

Best wishes, Mirjam Künkler

From “Dance of Life”

The gentle breeze will blow a new Vitality to the barren earth. The old will become young. Persian Lilacs will offer the white lily Their fragrant red cup. The narcissus eye will glimpse the anemone.

Because of the tyranny of separation endured. The nightingale shall speed Into the rose garden bursting with song. If I’ve left the mosque for the tavern, Don’t complain; the ceremonies stretch on far too long And time is short.

Hafez

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PRESIDENT’S NOTE

Dear AIS colleagues,

The arrival of spring brings healing and hope. Since last fall, our community has experienced tremendous turmoil and emotional distress as extraordinary uprisings against the morality police and political repression swept over Iran, following the murder of Kurdish-Iranian woman Jhina Mahsa Amini. This revolutionary movement, “Women. Life. Freedom,” has reverberated well beyond Iran’s borders, garnering worldwide attention. We have watched and reflected on the importance of these gripping and often troubling events, wondering how best to contribute to these developments. Whatever the legacies of this remarkable movement, our scholarly engagement with such fundamental themes of humanity remains critical. The uprising’s global call for gender equity and human rights resonates piercingly still, demanding the involvement of our committed scholars who work in different academic disciplines, from anthropology to media studies, history to gender studies. The diversity of our voices and interpretations will bring deep and necessary insight to these social crises. Our measured and trained scholarly approach to such volatile subjects can proffer a constructive model for fruitful dialogue on deeply charged topics.

As we welcome the arrival of spring, we look forward to enhancing our programs and introducing new projects to enable these rich and valued scholarly conversations. In this spirit, I am delighted to announce the launch of new AIS committees and initiatives for the upcoming year. These include:

- **AIS Inaugural Online Symposium** to be held in mid to late October 2023. The call for papers (CfP) will be released by 25 April 2023. This committee will be headed by Professor Khodadad Rezakhani (Universiteit Leiden) and will include AIS council members, Niki Akhavan (Catholic University) and Professor Amir Moosavi (Rutgers – Newark), among others. We view this online program as an opportunity to provide continuity to the scholarly conversations that have grown out of our established, highly successful, and restorative in-person biennial conferences. This program also aims to include colleagues who are otherwise unable to attend the AIS biennial in-person conferences due to unique life or family circumstances.

- **Scholar Snapshots** – In an effort to highlight the excellent and important research undertaken by scholars in our community, we have launched a new initiative called, “Scholar Snapshots.” Working with our two outstanding student representatives on the AIS Council, Ms. Layah Ziaii-Bigdeli and Ms. Sara Mashayekh, we will identify and share with our community the work of our thoughtful and inspiring scholars. Nominations and self-nominations are warmly welcomed and can be shared with us.

- **Regional Iranian Studies Groups** – To showcase and encourage the geographical diversity of Iranian Studies outside its traditional spots, we hope to create regional groups that will highlight the development of the field in lesser-known communities.

- **Honorary Fellows Committee** – AIS Council has voted to create an Honorary Fellows Committee to nominate distinguished scholars in the field for their years of service and in recognition of their ground-breaking contributions. This committee will be headed by former AIS president, Professor Houchang Chehabi (Boston University), and will include current AIS Council members, Professor Assef Ashraf (Cambridge University) and Professor Nasrin Rahimieh (University of California, Irvine), editor of the Iranian Studies journal.

Finally, we are thrilled to announce that the ILEX Foundation, a steadfast supporter of AIS programs, has generously agreed to match AIS funds for support of graduate student mentorship and research endeavors. More information will be forthcoming from the AIS Mentorship Committee in the months ahead about these opportunities.

Thank you all for your engagement and support. Please keep your eyes peeled for additional information about these exciting AIS programs.

With warm wishes,

Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet, Ph.D.
Walter H. Annenberg Professor of History
University of Pennsylvania
AIS President, 2022-2024
president@associationforiranianstudies.org
JOURNAL NEWS

LETTER FROM THE NEW EDITOR

I began my work as Editor-in-Chief of Iranian Studies in January 2023, working with Dr. Sussan Siavoshi, whose guidance and support have been invaluable to me during the transition. The capable team of Associate Editors and Book Review Editors she put together have been equally supportive and generous. I would like to thank them and Dr. Aria Fani, the Deputy Editor, whose experience and insights I value enormously.

The two issues of Iranian Studies published in 2023 represent the transition from Dr. Siavoshi's editorship to me. The first is an exciting special issue co-edited by Dr. Afshin Marashi and Dr. Dinyar Patel on Parsis and Iranians in the Modern World. The second issue of 2023 includes a roundtable, “Writing Capitalism into Iran,” inaugurating the initiative launched by Dr. Siavoshi to increase representation from the social sciences. I look forward to continuing this practice which will allow us to build on the journal’s coverage in social sciences as well as emerging or underrepresented disciplines.

I invite members of the Association for Iranian Studies to submit their own work to the journal and to encourage others to consider publishing in Iranian Studies.

Nasrin Rahimieh
Editor-in-Chief, Iranian Studies
Howard Baskerville Professor of Humanities
University of California, Irvine

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Special Issue: Parsis and Iranians in the Modern Period

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AIS-CAF STATEMENTS

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

- Statement Regarding the Poisoning of Girls’ Schools and Threats to Women University Students, April 24, 2023
- Letter Regarding Dr. Maziar Behrooz, at San Francisco State University, April 17, 2023
- Letter Regarding Dr. Erika López Prater, Adjunct Professor at Hamline University, January 16, 2023
- Letter Protesting the Recent Sentence and Imprisonment of Professor Saeed Madani, January 3, 2023
- Statement regarding the continuing crackdown on university students, faculty, and campuses in Iran, January 3, 2023
REPORT FROM THE MENTORSHIP COMMITTEE

The mentorship committee launched several programs last year, and they were celebrated during the Salamanca biennial conference. We gave the inaugural senior mentorship award to Professor Houchang Chehabi, our competition of “Conference Paper to Article” yielded two articles, by Amanda Leong and Isabelle Headrick respectively that are now in the process of publication in *Iranian Studies* (thanks inter alia to Professor Azfar Moin (UT Austin) for shepherding one of the articles in the process), and we held a productive session at the Salamanca Conference about academic publishing that was well attended and generated many important conversations during the panel and afterwards [see the report in the Nov 2022 newsletter].

During the conference we realized that especially in the post-pandemic world, graduate students are denied many professional opportunities. Budget cuts and generally limited resources have reduced the ability of our students to attend prestigious workshops, pursue research travels, and to develop professional skills and networking.

Thanks to our association's healthy financial situation, and with the active support of President Kashani-Sabet, Treasurer Gustafson, and the AIS council, we announced the creation of another research/travel award to be given twice (with Fall and Spring deadlines), to up to six students, culminating in 6,000 USD annually. The first cycle of students applied in early 2023 and were given the award shortly after. As part of the award's stipulations, they will share their experiences from the fieldwork or the research they conducted with the help of the grant. The first cohort of recipients is Delaram Hosseinioun, Ehsan Kashfi, and Ruzbeh Vistasp Hodiwala. I want to encourage graduate students to visit our page on the AIS website to learn about these opportunities and more.

The mentorship committee hopes to finish creating the databases for the personal mentorship program, in which scholars of all ranks and in any stage of their career can volunteer to mentor or to seek mentorship, relating to job market, publishing, career development, and more. Lastly, we are working on a proposal for a book workshop program, to provide assistance to early career members in organizing manuscript workshops with senior scholars of Iranian Studies and adjacent fields.

I want to thank the committee members for their tireless work, as well as the AIS Council for supporting the mission of mentorship and helping us to accomplish our plans.

Lior B. Sternfeld, Chair

MEMBER NEWS


- **Mohsen Ashitiany** has published the edited volume *Persian Narrative Poetry in the Classical Era, 800-1500: Romantic and Didactic Genres* (Vol. III of A History of Persian Literature, Founding Editor Ehsan Yarshater), (Bloomsbury, 2023).

- **Dariush Borbor** has received the 2023 Alumni Award by the University of Liverpool. Borbor has received numerous other awards and distinctions, most recently a Knighthood of the Order of Arts and Letters, France, 2020. Congratulations on these outstanding recognitions!

- **Carlo G. Cereti**, formerly Professor of Philology, Religions and History of Iran at the Sapienza-University Rome, has been appointed as the holder of the new endowed chair in Zoroastrianism at UC Irvine.

MEMBER NEWS CONT’D

Willem Floor and Daryush Majlesi have published the following two translations into Persian: Baramadan-e Nader Shah, translation of manuscript: VOC 2584, Beschrijvinge Wegens d’Opkomst des Persischen Opwerpeling Welie Mahomed off Sjah Nadir, (Tehran: Bonyad-e Mahmud Afshar, 1402); and Ravabet-e Sharekat-e Sharqi-ye Holandi ba Iran, translation of manuscript: Hooge Regeering no., Dithard van Rheeden, Radicale Beschrijving etc., (Bonyad-e Mahmud Afshar, 1402).


Carlo Gastone has published (in Italian) Persian Arabesques - Memorie politiche di Ivan Jakovlevich Korostovetz (Pathos Edizioni 2021), the unedited memoirs of Ivan Jakovlevich Korostovets (1862-1933) who was the Russian Imperial Plenipotentiary Minister in Tehran 1913-1915.

Ali Gheissari (University of San Diego), has published “Unequal Treaties and the Question of Sovereignty in Qajar and early Pahlavi Iran,” Ann Lambton Memorial Lecture, Durham Middle East Papers No. 106, Institute for Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies, Durham University, 2023; and “TEHRĀNI, ḤĀJJ MĪRZA MOḤAMMAD,” sugar merchant and bookseller, compiler of Fawākeh al-Bāsāṭīn (Fruits of Gardens), a philosophical, ethical, and literary miscellany notebook composed in Arabic and Persian (completed ca. late 1914), Encyclopaedia Iranica Online, 2022. He also delivered “Iranian Constitutional Revolution of 1906 in Historical Perspective,” Keynote Address at the Iranian Constitutional Revolution Conference, Jordan Center for Persian Studies and Culture, University of California, Irvine (May 14, 2022); and presented a paper on “Iranian Intellectuals and the Idea of Progress,” at the Iranian Institute of Philosophy, Program in Science Studies and Western Philosophy, webinar (September 12, 2022).

Delaram Housenioun has received a travel grant by the CAA-Getty International Program to present a paper on the artist Samira Abbassy (featured in the November 2022 AIS newsletter) at the 2023 CAA Conference in New York.

Alexander Jabbari has been appointed as Assistant Professor in the Department of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Minnesota. His book The Making of Persianate Modernity: Language and Literary History between Iran and India was published in March 2023 by Cambridge University Press. (See also the corresponding publication report on pages 51-54 of this newsletter).
Mina Ramin Sabet (currently Tehran University) has been hired as an instructor in Persian by The Farzaneh Family Center for Iranian and Persian Gulf Studies at the University of Oklahoma.

Amir Sayadabdi has published the chapter “Food Rituals and Reimagining [an Idealized] Home in Diaspora: Iranians of Aotearoa/New Zealand” in Food in Memory and Imagination: Space, Place and Taste, edited by Beth Forrest and Greg de St Maurice (Bloomsbury 2022).

Anousha Sedighi has published the edited volume Iranian and Minority Languages at Home and in Diaspora (De Gruyter, 2023).

M. Rahim Shayegan (Pourdavoud Center, UCLA) was elected to the Österreichische Akademie der Wissenschaften (ÖAW) and now serves as a Corresponding Member of the Division of Humanities and the Social Sciences. He also delivered the lectures for the 10èmes Conférences d’Études iraniennes Ehsan et Latifeh Yarshater at the Collège de France in November 2022. Congratulations on these wonderful distinctions!


MEMBER NEWS CONT’D

Raika Korshidian is convening an international workshop titled “Collective Traumas and Future Fantasies: The Power of (Visual) Art for Social and Political Transition in Iran” to be held at the Institute of Art History, University of Bonn in November 2023.

Rudi Matthee has published the book Angels at the Wine-Shop’s Door: A History of Alcohol in the Muslim Middle East (Hurst, UK and Oxford University Press, USA, 2022). Further, nine of his articles on socio-economic issues have been published in translation: Halqāha-ye gomshoda. Bargha-i az tarikh-e eqtesadi va ejtema‘i-ye Iran-e ‘asre Safavi (Majmu‘a-ye maqalat, trans. Somiya Khanipur (Tehran: Nash-e Tarikh-e Iran, 1401).

Kayhan Nejad (Ph.D. History, Yale, and currently Visiting Fellow at the Nizami Ganjavi Centre of the Faculty of Asian & Middle Eastern Studies, Oxford) has been appointed Assistant Professor in International and Area Studies at the University of Oklahoma. He will be joining the Farzaneh Family Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies and the Boren College of International Studies in the fall of 2023.

Austin O’Malley has published the book The Poetics of Spiritual Instruction: Farid al-Din Attar and Persian Sufi Didacticism (Edinburgh University Press, 2022).

AIS INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERS

https://associationforiranianstudies.org/membership/ais-institutional-members

The AIS would like to thank its institutional members:

- University of Michigan-Dearborn Middle East Studies
- Univ. of Southern California (USC) Department of Middle East Studies
- Division of Eastern Mediterranean Languages, Georgetown University
- Center for Iranian Diaspora Studies, San Francisco State University
- Farzaneh Family Center for Iranian and Persian Gulf Studies, University of Oklahoma
- Crown Center for Middle East Studies, Brandeis University
- The Pennsylvania State University
- Center for Middle East Studies, Brown University
- Middle East Center, University of Pennsylvania
- Sharmin and Bijn Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Iran and Persin Gulf Studies, Princeton University
- University of Arizona Center for Middle Eastern Studies
- UT Austin Center for Middle Eastern Studies
- U.S. Embassy, London
- Bloomsbury Publishing
- Foundation for Iranian Studies
- Iranian and Persian Gulf Studies, Oklahoma State University
- School of Advanced International Studies, Johns Hopkins University
- Iranian Studies Initiative-New York University
- North Carolina Consortium for Middle East Studies

If you would like to become an AIS institutional member please sign up here.

ENCYCLOPÆDIA IRANICA

Fascicle 3 of Volume XVII Published

The most recent fascicle of the print version of the Encyclopaedia Iranica was published in January 2023 and is printed in color. This installment, Fascicle 3 of Volume XVII, of the EIr continues the development of letter "K" topics and covers titles starting with King of the Benighted and proceeds to Kokand Khanate. It also includes a series on "Kingship," the concept and institution in the Iranian world.

For ordering information, please contact Brill Publishers.
This dissertation discusses Zoroastrian philosophy in the early Islamic period, and it’s the first study entirely dedicated to the Zoroastrian metaphysical system with a description of its definitions, distinctions, and argument patterns. It's the first study entirely dedicated to the Zoroastrian metaphysical system with a description of its definitions, distinctions, and argument patterns. Its focus is the group I've called the Dēnkard School, since they revolve around the Zoroastrian text called the Dēnkard. The Dēnkard School is important for a variety of reasons, such as being the earliest robust philosophical system preserved in the Persian language – existing centuries before the Dānesh-nāma of Ibn Sīnā (d. 1037). They're analyzed in two ways: historically and philosophically.

The historical origins of the Dēnkard School are obscure, but the extant texts are from the 8th to 10th centuries of the Common Era, or the early Abbāsid period. These texts clearly show three generations of thinkers, but they also hint at more. The earliest clear figure is Ādurfarrōbay (d. early 9th), who is credited with restoring the Dēnkard and defending the religion publicly. The second is Mardānfarrox (mid-9th), who wrote the most sophisticated public presentation of the school; his analysis is so perspicacious that it's the key to the entire system. The third figure is Ādur ī Emādān (d. early 10th), who finalized the Dēnkard as we have it today; Ādur ī Emādān’s own thought is hidden behind the hundreds of anonymous chapters in this edition. After him, the school mysteriously disappeared, but its thought may be related to subsequent thinkers, such as Bahmanyār (d. 1067) and Suhrawardī (d. 1191).

The philosophy of the Dēnkard School is more explicit than its historical context, and it's articulated in two ways: the first is public texts written for those outside the school, and the second is technical texts written for those inside it. Both types of text show significant differences in style – from the simplified public presentation to the arcane technical articulation – but they seem to support the same metaphysical thesis: bifoundationalism, or the claim that all reality arises from two independent and irreconcilable sources. This doctrine is likely a refined presentation of the Avestan worldview the school inherited, and the Dēnkard School defended it in a variety of coordinated ways. Mardānfarrox argues for it by proving the existence of a creator, and from premises contained in that first wing he argues for the necessity of a separate divine being external to the creator. The master argument in the technical texts is what I've called ‘Mutual Exclusion,’ or the fact that two things cannot collocate simultaneously. One example of it is the direct presencing to the mind of something, and then that first thing’s being excluded by a subsequent thing. They argue that the ultimate origin of Mutual Exclusion is the collision of the two original sources that are

Light and Dark.

Mehrdad Babadi has defended the following dissertation in the Department of Anthropology at Boston University:

Marriage Postponed: The Transformation of Intimacy in Contemporary Iran.

The institution of marriage has historically functioned as the foundation of both the Iranian family and society. This study examines the significant changes that have occurred during the rule of the Islamic Republic that have delayed marriage formation. Based on ethnographic fieldwork conducted in Iran between 2017 and 2020 and in-depth interviews with more than one hundred university-educated young Iranians, this dissertation explores new patterns of youth intimacy, the evolution of young people’s perspectives on premarital relationships, and explores the reasons behind the widespread delay in marriage.

Since the 1979 Revolution that led to the fall of the Shah’s modernizing regime, Iranian society has experienced many changes in the realm of marriage and premarital intimacies despite the Islamic Republic’s imposition of conservative religious values designed to reinforce traditional marriage practices. These have included a decline in marriage rates and an increased rate of divorce, as well a rise in the ages of first marriages accompanied by alternative lifestyles that reject marriage as an institution. While economic difficulties, increases at the level of education, and the existence of discriminatory family laws in Iran have often been cited as reasons for these changes, this dissertation argues that it is a dialectical interaction among sociocultural, psychological, moral, and legal factors that better explains this change.

Interviews revealed that conflicting attitudes of idealism, cynicism, and moral ambivalence play a significant role in marriage postponement. This was most apparent in the young peoples’ dissatisfaction with khāstegāri, a traditional method of marital partner-evaluation by a young person’s family, which was rejected because it conflicted with a more personal and intimate model of partner selection. That model, however, suffered from excessive idealism that set the standards for a suitable partner so high they could not be easily met. Classical Persian poetry, with its ideals of unconsummated love, reinforced such romantic idealism. In response, a growing number of educated middle-class young Iranians chose to enter into intimate relationships outside of marriage facilitated by the emergence of new social spaces that allowed these new intimacies to flourish in spite of government attempts to discourage them. The research concluded that as a result of marriage postponement and the rise of premarital and non-marriage practices and lifestyles such as dating and cohabitation, intimacy has been transformed in contemporary Iran and as a result, significant changes are recognizable in gender relations and family structure. Young women and men demand a more egalitarian relationship, mutual emotional support and intellectual compatibility, a satisfying sex life, and someone with whom they can share their interests.
PROGRAM NEWS

UCI establishes Ph.D. specialization in Persian/Iranian studies

UCI School of the Humanities has established a new interdisciplinary graduate specialization in Persian/Iranian Studies. The first of its kind in the UC system, graduate students can now earn a Ph.D. in the humanities program of their choice while simultaneously gaining training in Persian/Iranian studies through the specialization.

The new specialization joins UCI’s existing graduate program in Ancient Iran and the Premodern Persianate World, which focuses exclusively on premodern Iran and is a complement to the specialization, while UCI’s Samuel Jordan Center for Persian Studies and Culture provides a space for interdisciplinary conversations, programming and engagement.

“UCI is one of the world’s leading centers for advanced research and graduate work in Persian/Iranian studies, housing six endowed chairs in several disciplines under the umbrella of Persian studies—more than any institution in the world. In addition, doctoral study in Persian/Iranian studies at UCI benefits from an endowed doctoral fellowship program. In 2021, the Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute, a donor-advised fund of Silicon Valley Community Foundation, awarded the School of the Humanities a $1.565 million grant to establish an endowed support for doctoral fellowships in Persian/Iranian studies, reserved exclusively for students who pursue the program.”

UCI is one of the world’s leading centers for advanced research and graduate work in Persian/Iranian studies, housing six endowed chairs in several disciplines under the umbrella of Persian studies—more than any institution in the world.

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a general “field” of reduplication. The book is not limited to a single field, but rather for
several largely separate ones, such as linguistic relations, the theory of reduplication and
etymology. Several other related or unrelated languages such as Icelandic, Japanese,
Egyptian Hieroglyphics, Hittite, etc. have been included for comparative purposes.

The preliminary findings of this study indicate that reduplication in the
languages under study, and in nearly all other languages, deal mostly with the
fundamental, primary human requirements. Another strong proof of the “universality”
of reduplicates are that they closely follow the same and similar formation, development
and rule in most related and unrelated languages. In consequence of the universality
of reduplication and its near identical development in all related or unrelated
languages, it even legitimizes the creation of a grammar of reduplication in the future.

A few of the essential features of this book include: a complete revision and updating
of the semantics; a particular attention to the cognitive aspects; and, many etymologies
that cannot be found elsewhere.

## NEW Aquisitions

Penn State University Libraries
are pleased to announce the purchase of a near complete
collection of the Iranian Jewish publication **Ofegh Bina**:
https://catalog.libraries.psu.edu/
catalog/29252896.

Librarian Eric Charles Novotny
would be happy to assist with any inquiries.
Digitizing the Taza Akhbar, an Illustrated History of the Kings of Kabul

Among the collections held in Amherst College’s Frost Library is a rare illustrated manuscript of a Persian-language history of the kings of Kabul bearing the title Taza Akhbar (Fresh News). Yael Rice, Associate Professor of the History of Art & Asian Languages and Civilizations at Amherst, has received a grant by the Persian Heritage Foundation to digitize and analyze it. Here she provides an overview of the work.

The Origins and Significance of the Taza Akhbar

Completed on 1 Safar 1233 Hijri/10 December 1817 by an anonymous munshi writing at the behest of “Murray Sahib Bahadur” in the city of Ludhiana (Punjab, India), the manuscript is the only known copy of this text. Given its subject matter and date, this “Murray Sahib Bahadur” can be plausibly identified with William Murray (1791–1831), the English East India Company’s Superintendent of Sikh and Hill Affairs and scholar of the history of the Punjab and its frontiers in the times of the Sikh ruler Ranjit Singh (1780–1839). Murray was known for his reconnaissance reports on northwestern India, which drew heavily upon information collected by a band of Indian writers and munshis, resulting most notably in Origin of the Sikh Power in the Punjab, and Political Life of Muha-Raja Runjeet Singh, commissioned by Governor-General of India William Bentinck in 1830 and published posthumously in 1834. A scholar of the history of the Sikhs based in Ludhiana, a city on the Northwest Frontier founded by the Afghan Lodi Dynasty, Murray’s interests naturally extended to the nascent kingdom of Afghanistan on the northwestern frontier of India.

Containing over four hundred folios, the Taza Akhbar chronicles the kings of Kabul and the Afghan Durrani Empire from the aftermath of Nadir Shah Afshar’s Indo-Persian empire and the founding reign of Ahmad Shah Durrani (r. 1747–1772) to its waning years on the eve of entanglement with the British East India Company in the First Anglo-Afghan War (1839–1842). Following the style of Persian dynastic chronicles (tārīkh), the work features elements of the genres of the biographical dictionary (tazkira) and geography (jughrafiya). But in addition to these enduring Persianate forms, the manuscript also bears the signs and literary forms of the vibrant late Mughal-early colonial context in which it was produced, including an unusual emphasis on the urban topography of Afghanistan and the ethnography of its “peoples.” In this way, Taza Akhbar is a striking example of an imperial-style chronicle written under the auspices of the Company and tinged by Orientalist knowledge.

Equally remarkable are the many figural studies that appear throughout the manuscript. These include portraits of Nadir Shah Afshar (fig. 1) and Ahmad Shah Durrani (r. 1747–72), founder of the Durrani Empire, as well as unusual depictions of different ethnic types, men and women alike. The latter are distinctive because of the great specificity with which the painter—or painters—portrayed the subjects’ costume and accoutrements; accompanying textual annotations offer further informative glosses on the figures’ garb.

But what is perhaps most exceptional about the manuscript is its numerous illustrations of built environments across Afghanistan and neighboring Pakistan, from the Buddhas of Bamiyan to the city of Ghazni (fig. 2). Highly detailed representations of Kabul and its environs, Herat, Kandahar, Khyber Pass, Attok, Lahore, and Peshawar also appear. The cityscapes are unique because they combine multiple points of perspective and modes of representation to describe in complex visual terms the major urban centers in and contiguous with the Durrani Empire. Close examination of these city views reveals the high degree of insider knowledge that the book’s makers brought to this project. They not only portrayed the cities’ physical environments—their mountains, walls, gates, canals, monuments, courts, bazaars, neighborhoods, and people—in painstaking detail, they also provided extensive textual annotations that guide the viewer step-by-step through these inhabited spaces. It is precisely this kind and degree of documentation—amounting, in effect, to an intelligence report—that someone like Murray would have eagerly sought.

Figure 1: Portrait of Nadir Shah Afshar (r. 1736–47), from the Taza Akhbar, an illustrated history of the Kings of Kabul dated 1817 A.D. (William Pitt and Sarah Archer Amherst Family Collection, Series 3, Item 1, Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College)
Current and Future Plans

With the generous support of a Persian Heritage Foundation Academic Institution Grant, we are now in the process of digitizing the Taza Akhbar manuscript to make it widely available through the Amherst College Digital Collections (ACDC), an Islandora-based digital asset management system that we use to provide free public access to unique materials ranging from the manuscripts of Emily Dickinson to our small collection of fifteenth-century codex manuscripts. This project required special expertise. Michael Kelly, Amherst College’s Head of the Archives & Special Collections, and the Frost Library digital imaging team had earlier determined that the binding on the manuscript was too tight to capture satisfactory digital images. For these reasons, the Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC) in Andover, MA, has had to disbind the manuscript, then photograph the unbound pages, and finally rebind the manuscript in an historically appropriate new binding. Once we have received the digital images from NEDCC, the Digital Programs staff in Frost Library will ingest those files into ACDC where they will be publicly accessible and freely downloadable to anyone with an internet connection. Nearly 200 years after this item came into the possession of William Pitt Amherst, Amherst College will be able to provide free worldwide access to a unique and vital piece of history, which bears salient connections with Afghanistan’s present.

In addition, Yael Rice is collaborating with Arash Khazeni, Professor of History at Pomona College, on an edited version of the Taza Akhbar text for the Brill Sources in Persianate History Series. In addition to the edited text, the publication will also feature essays by specialists of the region that will further help to contextualize this important manuscript within the larger histories of the Persianate world, South Asia, and European expansionism. There are intentions, as well, to organize an interdisciplinary symposium at Amherst College coincident with the volume’s publication to deepen study of and access to this rare artifact.

The Taza Akhbar at Amherst College

The manuscript’s association with William Murray helps to explain, in part, how William Pitt Amherst, Governor-General of Bengal from 1823–8, came into possession of it. Amherst and Murray almost certainly met in 1827, when the latter summered in the northwestern hills in Shimla, and it might have been on that occasion that the Superintendent of Sikh and Hill Affairs presented the manuscript to the Governor-General. Amherst brought the work back to England and it appears to have remained among his family’s papers until shortly after the death of the 5th, and final, Earl Amherst. Although the Amherst line had no connection to Amherst College at its founding, Jeffery John Archer Amherst, 5th Earl Amherst formed a long friendship with alumnus Jack W. C. Hagstrom MD (Class of 1955). When the last Earl Amherst died in 1993, Hagstrom was one of the executors of his estate and donated an extensive collection of books and Amherst family papers to the Amherst College Archives. These collections are now described in two separate finding aids on the Archives’ public website:

- William Pitt and Sarah Archer Amherst Family Collection, 1808-1830
- The Jeffery Amherst Collection, 1757-1874

Portions of the Jeffery Amherst Collection have already been digitized and made freely available online: https://acdc.amherst.edu/browse/partOf/Jeffery-Amherst-Collection

Figure 2. Depiction of Ghazni (left) and a windmill (right), from the Taza Akhbar, an illustrated history of the Kings of Kabul dated 1817 A.D. (William Pitt and Sarah Archer Amherst Family Collection, Series 3, Item 1, Archives and Special Collections, Amherst College)
Iranian stories about Alexander were influenced by the *Alexander Romance*, as well as a number of Pahlavi, Syriac and Arabic sources. In Firdawsi's epic history, the *Shāhnāmah* ('Book of Kings'), and many other Iranian sources such as the twelfth-century *Dārābnāmah* ('Story of Darab') by Abu Tahir Muhammad Tarsusi, Alexander's mother is the princess Nahid, daughter of Filqus (Philip), the king of Rum (Rome), who is married to Darab, king of Iran. According to the *Shāhnāmah*, Filqus gathered an army to attack Iran. The war lasted three days, and Filqus was defeated. Filqus sent a messenger with gifts to Darab to make peace and Darab, informed by his courtiers that Filqus had a beautiful daughter, requested her in marriage. All went well until one night, Darab smelt an unpleasant odour from Nahid's mouth. Although physicians cured it, Darab rejected her and sent her back to Rum. Unknown to him, she was pregnant. Since Filqus did not want anyone to know his daughter's story or that she was pregnant by Darab, when the baby was born, Filqus adopted him as his own son. Nahid called the baby Iskandar. When Iskandar subsequently conquered Darab's son and successor, Dara (Darius III), it was his half-brother he defeated and being half Persian himself, he became the legitimate heir to the throne.

Stories about Alexander the Great's descent from gods and heroes - the most famous of which being his mother Olympia's relationship with Amon/Zeus - were disseminated as he travelled across the world. By promoting such mythical connections, Alexander and his successors gained political legitimacy. Greco-Roman gods and heroes were assimilated into the myths of newly conquered lands and so mitigated Alexander's position as an outsider/foreigner allowing him to be accepted and understood by the indigenous people. This narrative strategy was further enhanced by the Greek *Alexander Romance* which first emerged towards the end of the third century AD and was subsequently translated into Syriac, Hebrew, Persian and Arabic.

With thanks to my colleagues, Ursula Sims-Williams, William Monk and Pardad Chamsaz for their comments on an earlier draft of this text.
A point of interest is Nahid’s name. Rather than being a Persianised Greek form, such as Filqus for Philip, her name is the Persian form of Avestan (Old Iranian) Anahita (‘immaculate’), the ancient Iranian goddess of water to whom a special Zoroastrian hymn is dedicated. Ferdowsi completed the Shāhnāmah in 1020 but drew on many pre-Islamic sources, including oral narratives and the now lost Sasanian Khudāynāmah. The name Nahid therefore has special Zoroastrian connotations, though it is strange that if her name refers to the immaculate Anahita, why did she become ‘maculate’ and suffer from bad odour in this narration? A possible solution is that the Sasanian Khudāynāmah described her negatively simply through her association with Alexander/Iskandar whom they regarded as gizistag/gujastag (‘accursed’), because as a grown man he reputedly burned their scriptures and destroyed their temples, and that her name was disassociated from its original meaning. In their view, Nahid was merely the daughter of the Roman Emperor and the mother of the accursed Alexander.

Also noteworthy is Nahid and Filqus’ association with the city ʻAmuriyah, identified with Armorium, a city in Phrygia in Asia Minor founded during Seleucid rule. It was ʻAmuriyah rather than Macedonia that was Filqus’ base and from which Iskandar summoned his mother before his marriage with Dara’s daughter Roshanak (Roxana). Situated on the edge of the Sasanian Empire, it was a centre of mixed Hellenistic and Iranian cultures.

Alexander/Iskandar was the last of the Kayanid dynasty, tracing his ancestry directly back to the legendary hero Islandyar and king Kai Kavus. With such a genealogy, his story inevitably includes elements of ancient Iranian mythology, but that is another story!

The Darabnamah was on display until 19 February 2023 in the British Library exhibition Alexander the Great: The Making of a Myth. Visit this dedicated website to find out more.

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

Further Reading


This text was reproduced from the British Library’s Asian and African Studies Blog with the kind permission of the author.
EXHIBITION

The British Museum will feature the exhibition **Luxury and power: Persia to Greece** from 4 May 2023 - 13 Aug 2023.

When Greek soldiers captured the royal command tent of the Persian king during the Greco-Persian Wars (499–449 BC), they were confronted suddenly and spectacularly by luxury on an unimaginable scale. To many ancient Greek writers, the victories of the small Greek forces against the mighty Persians were a triumph of discipline and restraint over an empire weakened by decadence and excess.

Drawing on dazzling objects from Afghanistan to Greece, this exhibition moves beyond the ancient Greek spin to explore a more complex story about luxury as a political tool in the Middle East and southeast Europe from 550–30 BC. It explores how the royal Achaemenid court of Persia used precious objects as markers of authority, defining a style of luxury that resonated across the empire from Egypt to India. It considers how eastern luxuries were received in early democratic Athens, self-styled as Persia’s arch-enemy, and how they were adapted in innovative ways to make them socially and politically acceptable. Finally, it explores how Alexander the Great swept aside the Persian empire to usher in a new Hellenistic age in which eastern and western styles of luxury were fused as part of an increasingly interconnected world.

Featuring star loans as well as objects from the British Museum collection, the exhibition brings together exquisitely crafted objects in gold, silver and glass, including the extraordinary Panagyurishte Treasure from Bulgaria. Whether coveted as objects of prestige or disparaged as signs of decadence, the beauty of these Persian, Greek and Hellenistic luxuries shaped the political landscape of Europe and Asia in the first millennium BC – and their legacy persists in our attitudes to luxury today.

LETTER OF CONCERN

**Lichens severely damage Persepolis**

Iran is considered one of the most important ancient empires and civilizations, going back to 2500 BC, and it holds many ancient artefacts. One of the most important is the Persepolis complex (N29 56 3.984 E52 53 25.008) in Fars province (established in 518 BC), which stems from the Achaemenid dynasty. Preservation of Persepolis is vital regarding various cultural, economic, social, and educational benefits. Amidst all the concerns about the damage to Persepolis, the biological deterioration caused by the growth of lichens is one of the most consequential. Up to now, 40 important ancient stone inscriptions have been threatened by destruction due to the growth of lichens. Due to the proximity of Persepolis to the Shiraz Petrochemical Industrial Complex, the pollutants released from this factory, besides causing acid rain, are a rich source of nutrition for the growth of lichens. According to experts, the direct fiscal damage caused is estimated to be at least 600,000 USD annually. Without drastic intervention, the ancient stone inscriptions and other stone artefacts will be devastated within 60 years, which would be an immense tragedy for the world community. Other main factors that facilitate the growth of lichens include fine dust.

All photographs documenting the destruction by lichens were taken by the authors on 11.11.2022.
humidity caused by rain, human factors such as the excessive use of chemical fertilizers in the eastern and western sides of Persepolis, and the increase in carbon levels in the atmosphere. Various compounds have been identified that are secreted during the growth of lichens, which are often acidic and cause the dissolution of the bedrock. Unfortunately, the lichen removal process is still in the study stage in Iran. Some of the research activities that exist have been stopped due to a lack of funds and of a specialized laboratory for lichenology. The most effective means against lichens are microwave thermal, biological, and thermal shocks. Persepolis is a world treasure. Due to Iran’s lack of sufficient attention paid to the growth of lichens in Persepolis, action by the world community is urgently needed to prevent further destruction.

References


FILM

Alborz: We Climb Mountains
A film by documentary film maker Maryam Sepehri

Alborz High school was initially an American Presbyterian missionary institution in Tehran that began as a grade school in 1873, in 1924 it became a junior college and in 1928 an accredited liberal arts college.

After many upheavals and the forced departure of its founder, Dr. Samuel Martin Jordan in 1940, it was transformed into the Alborz High School for boys, under the watchful eyes of Dr. Mohammad-Ali Mojtabeh, the famed Iranian educator. The school sent its bright graduates to top universities in Iran and around the world; some institutions even waived the entrance exams to admit them. Alborz graduates are now important businessmen, distinguished physicians, scientists and academics in the best academic centers in Iran and abroad, among them the acclaimed architect Hossein Amanat, the famous physicist Firouz Partovi, and eminent mathematicians Cumrun Vafa and Mehdi Zarghamee.

Dr. Mojtabeh was not only a successful leader of this school from 1942 to the 1979 Revolution, but a significant initiator of modern education in Iran. He turned Alborz into the highest-ranking school for boys and later helped founding the renowned Technical University of Aryamehr (later Sharif) University of Technology, which took in Alborz graduates and top students from other schools.

Alborz: We Climb Mountains (2023, 84 mins.), tells the story of the school during many tumultuous years in Iran’s modern history, from the perspectives of its graduates, teachers, and even Dr. Mojtabeh’s own voice from archival recordings; it tells it with humor, fondness, and nostalgia for a bygone era. It exemplifies what has been lost in the years since the 1979 Revolution and why today so many among the bright and promising young Iranians sound critical of current policies and administrative mishandling of one of their country’s once top educational institutions.
Jaafar Modarres Sadeghi is mostly known for his works of fiction. With the publication of Gavkhouni and Kasra Trilogy in the 1980s, he established himself as an influential voice in contemporary Iranian literature, but his writings are not limited to fiction. He is also an insightful literary critic whose writing is marked by sharp-tongued witty remarks. His nonfiction works are thought-provoking examples of impressionistic criticism and evocative of Perpetual Orgy (1975) by Mario Vargas Llosa and Axel’s Castle (1931) by Edmund Wilson. In these works, Llosa and Wilson go beyond traditional criticism in both form and content and present a “critical narrative” of the life and works of their favorite writers by playing with, and at times blurring the boundaries between, fiction and non-fiction. Modarres Sadeghi’s works as a literary critic share the same playfulness and offer a perceptive literary analysis.

Modarres Sadeghi has published three works of nonfiction on Iranian contemporary writers: Sadegh Hedayat, the Short Story Writer (2001), Three Masters (2021) and his recent book titled Malakout and Cheshmahayesh, Bozorg Alavi and Bahram Sadeghi: review of all Stories (2022). Sadegh Hedayat, the Short Story Writer is a selection of Hedayat’s short stories with a long and detailed critical introduction by Modarres Sadeghi. In Three Masters, Modarres Sadeghi explores the fictional worlds of Shamim Bahar, Ebrahim Golestan and Ghasem Hasheminejad, the three writers who have significantly inspired him. Finally, in Malakout and Cheshmahayesh, Modarres Sadeghi reviews the literary career of Bozorg Alavi and Bahram Sadeghi. He published Three Masters 20 years after Sadegh Hedayat, the Short Story Writer, but his new book on the works of Bozorg Alavi and Bahram Sadeghi was published only one year after Three Masters. This shorter interval might indicate that at this point in his career he is more inclined towards writing literary criticism.

Modarres Sadeghi’s career as a literary critic did not start 20 years ago with the publication of Sadegh Hedayat, the Short Story Writer, however. In fact, he started writing literary reviews long before writing novels and short stories. His first reviews were published in the 1970s, in newspapers and journals, such as Ayandegan, Rastakhiz-e Javan and Ketabnema-e Iran. After the 1979 Revolution, he focused on writing fiction and published numerous novels and short story collections. But in 1991, he started the project of editing classical texts of Persian literature and chose the title “Rereading the Texts” for this series. The first book in this series was The Translation of Tafsir al-Tabari, for which he wrote a critical introduction. This introduction and the ones he wrote for other volumes of this series opened a new chapter in his career as a critic.

Almost a decade after The Translation of Tafsir al-Tabari was published, Modarres Sadeghi wrote his book on Sadegh Hedayat and it seems that his last two non-fiction books, Three Masters and Malakout and Chashmhayash, are products of a long journey in literary criticism. Modarres Sadeghi himself perfectly summarizes this journey in an interview published in Andishe-ye Pouya Journal: “[…] I started this with the ‘Rereading of the Texts’ series. I began from the 4th century AH and went further until I reached the beginning of the 7th century AH. Then I took a shortcut to the 20th century and the modern era by editing The Adventures of Hajji Baba of Ispahan. It was a commitment and mission that I set upon myself. I wanted to see where I stood in this world and what I was doing and I still do. I neither wanted to make a cultural contribution nor do I have any claims. My main motivation was a personal attachment to language and to story writing.”

When reviewing the works of Modarres Sadeghi in literary criticism, an important question to address is what drives him to choose these authors and what makes his perspective unique. In Sadegh Hedayat, the Short Story Writer, he aims to draw attention to Hedayat as a short story writer beyond the celebrated novelist of The Blind Owl. Hedayat published more than 40 short stories, and his major literary achievements were the result of his dedication to this literary form and should be found among these stories (Modarres Sadeghi, 2001, 12).

In Three Masters, Modarres Sadeghi acknowledges the influence of three important contemporary Iranian writers, Ebrahim Golestan, Ghasem Hasheminejad and Shamim Bahar on his own journey as a writer. However, his respect for these “masters” does not prevent him from criticizing them. He doesn’t conceal his sarcastic tone when addressing the moral messages in certain works of Golestan or the exaggerated effort Bahar puts in his prose to achieve a natural conversational tone. He even picks on Hasheminejad’s obsessive habits in writing and at times mocks them. And finally, in his most recent work on Bahram Sadeghi and Bozorg Alavi, he portrays both Alavi and Sadeghi as talented but wasted writers. He comments: “Bozorg Alavi and Bahram Sadeghi were both storytellers. But none of them got the chance to thrive to the fullest. The era they lived in pushed Alavi towards politics and Sadeghi towards certain intellectual gangs […] Both of them let go of the goals they had once aimed to achieve, gave up and accepted defeat.” (Modarres Sadeghi, 2022, 7)
Modarres Sadeghi has an eye for the narrative structure. He admires Bozorg Alavi for putting aside third person omniscient narration in favor of an inside narrator/character who is present through the course of the plot but with a certain level of emotional detachment: “This narrator is not personally involved in the events. We see this in ‘The Victim’ and Scrap-papers from Prison. He is merely an observer and tries to present a distanced account of the events.” (Modarres Sadeghi, 2022, 40) In his introduction to Three Masters, Modarres Sadeghi analyzes the narrative strategies employed by Golestan, Hasheminejad and Bahar and categorizes their writings into three groups of story, tale and fable. He specifically criticizes Bahram Sadeghi for exploiting narrative strategies that are not fitting with the plot and characters of his stories.

Intertextual influences and reception of a work are two other defining factors in Modarres Sadeghi’s analysis. He points to the significant influence of American writers on Ebrahim Golestan’s career, the influence of Hedayat and Russian novelists on Bozorg Alavi, and the impact of crime fiction on Ghased Hasheminejad and Bahram Sadeghi. He also believes the reception of a literary work is an indispensable variable in shaping a writer’s career. He uses “reception” in two senses: The importance an author gives to the readers’ response and what this response entails. As for the first one, he blames Hedayat for being absolutely indifferent towards his readers and criticizes Alavi for his obsession over readers’ reception: “[Alavi] confesses that he wrote The Fifty-three People to fulfill the desires of his readers.” (Modarres Sadeghi, 2022, 60). And as for the second sense of the word, Modarres Sadeghi explores the cold reception of Bahram Sadeghi’s early realistic stories which led him to give up realism and gradually crawl towards a writerly death.

As an impressionistic critic, Modarres Sadeghi has his own likes and dislikes. He is usually critical of writers who are bound to political ideologies and those who write to merely satisfy the expectations of their readers without offering any personal touch. He also looks down on writers who impose a dark and illusional atmosphere on their narratives when it is absolutely uncalled for. Neither does he appreciate the writers who try to directly communicate a certain message to the readers. What he does regard highly, however, is ignoring the trends imposed by literary and intellectual circles and writing something personal in the most natural form possible. He praises authors who use every-day language skillfully, those who stay away from artificial styles and can masterfully control language to present a smooth narration. These likes and dislikes determine the success or failure of a literary work in Modarres Sadeghi’s eyes. In Three Masters, for instance, he concludes that Ebrahim Golestan...
It was at the end of the summer of 2021 when I came to Germany for a research project titled: “From National Art to Transnational Art: Displacement, Identity and Sense of Belonging in Contemporary Iranian Art.” The questions that shaped this project were the result of my lived experience in Iran, where I witnessed the migration of most of my friends, the destruction of historical heritage, the polluting of nature, the looting of my homeland’s resources, and daily life in Tehran that was becoming increasingly difficult and precarious. They brought me to the question of how visual art has documented what has happened to Iranians’ identity and sense of belonging over the last five decades. At that time, when I was working in galleries in Tehran and teaching in some universities there, I was looking for these questions in the art scene: how has contemporary Iranian art represented the spread of the sense of precariousness, alienation, estrangement, and non-belonging among Iranians, especially among intellectuals and artists, in recent decades? What regrets have given rise to the nostalgic memories that materialized in contemporary Iranian art? How have the collective traumas of Iranians been reflected in visual art? Do Iranians still have a common dream? What are their nightmares? What are the common visions of Iran’s utopian or dystopian future that contemporary art shows?

When I was packing my bags in Tehran to move to Germany in August 2021, the disaster in Afghanistan unfolded in less than a few days, close to me. The world watched in shock as people clung to the tires of planes leaving Kabul. Most fell to their deaths, while others fell into the depths of Taliban hell. I can’t forget the image of the parents who passed their babies across the Kabul airport fence to foreign troops. Those standing on the edge of the fence were on the edge of the only exit from the hell that was closing in on them. They pleaded for the escape of their future generation. I told myself that if we, the people of this region, were young and talented, we might be lucky enough to be chosen to escape our homeland. It seems that this is the ultimate fortune that our ancestral homeland, our place of origin, has given us.

The rest of the world will tell us that this is your problem. You have to deal with it on your own. The story of Afghanistan terrified the people of the world in August 2021, the disaster in Afghanistan unfolded in less than a few days, close to me. The world watched in shock as people clung to the tires of planes leaving Kabul. Most fell to their deaths, while others fell into the depths of Taliban hell. I can’t forget the image of the parents who passed their babies across the Kabul airport fence to foreign troops. Those standing on the edge of the fence were on the edge of the only exit from the hell that was closing in on them. They pleaded for the escape of their future generation. I told myself that if we, the people of this region, were young and talented, we might be lucky enough to be chosen to escape our homeland. It seems that this is the ultimate fortune that our ancestral homeland, our place of origin, has given us.
inflation, terror, widespread arrests, forced confessions, executions, new restrictions and pervasive despair have always followed every protest in Iran. However, something has changed in the meantime. Something has blossomed. It was the hope and imagination of a future without the Islamic Republic. The Iranian people have realized that if they remained united and do not fear, the world will listen to them. In what way did Iranian voices finally reach across the globe and spread beyond Iran's borders?

From my point of view, at least one of them is and will be artistic creativity: The artistic creativity of the women who set up a feeder pillar box in the crowded Enqelab Avenue as their performance stage; The women tied their scarves to sticks and waved them in the avenue: a performance that might cost them their lives.

There was artistic creativity on display among those who cut their hair for the first time for mourning, based on the ancient ritual; the performance which was also extended to European parliaments. Artistic creativity is one of the few tools of the Iranian people in the fight against the repressive system that has suppressed bodies and thoughts for four decades and deprived Iranians of the right to interact with each other freely, deterring them from participating in building their dreams in their homeland freely, blocking all the ways of multicultural communication and intercultural interaction, and has turned Iran into a prison.

Today's conflict in Iran is between beauty and ugliness. Today, the people of Iran go unarmed to war with hallucinated soldiers who kill children, the crystallization of the Islamic Republic has continued its strategy. Repression, unbridled
of beauty and hope, and blind the eyes of young people. The protestors fight armed-to-the-teeth shooters with the means of dancing, kissing, flying hair in the wind, holding up pictures of symbols of happiness. The dancing and happiness of Mahsa Amini, Keduana Lajei, Kian Pourfalah, Mehran Samak, the dancing of Mehrshad Shahidi with pizza dough, the singing of Nika Shakrani (the girl who dreamed of becoming a singer), the singing of Hamidreza Rouhi while riding a motorcycle, the dancing of the father of Farzin Maroufi with his son's birthday cake in the cemetery), all say that “we” dance in joy and sorrow in front of “you” who are spreading misery and sadness. Iranians stare the Islamic Republic in the eye with Kurdish, Bakhtiari, Baluchi, Lori, Gilaki dance and say “look at us, we who are colorful and united, are against you, who are dark and who spread darkness.”

Today, Iranians stand with joy in front of a government that has been sowing sadness for four decades. Before his execution, Majidreza Rahnavard bequeathed that his death ritual only “play happy pieces of music”. Young people who are blinded by metal pellets and rubber bullets smile at the camera. The diverse people of Iran fight with color against the government that spends heaps of money to darken the cities and hang black flags, a government that spends money to make its people sadder.

Today, the most frightening enemies for the Islamic Republic are artists, someone such as Toomaj Salehi, a rapper who in the song “Soorakh Moosh (Mouse Hole)” warned artists and celebrities that if they do not declare their political position clearly, people will not forgive them on the day of victory, and they should search for ways to escape. Nowadays, a significant number of Iranian heroes who fight inside and outside Iran’s borders are actors, musicians, directors, singers and writers. The Islamic Republic fears art students more than any others. It is no accident that in this system, all theater students at the University of Arts are suddenly deprived of their education. Throughout the past forty years, artists have lightened the candle of life in this Republic of Anti-Art, Anti-Life and Anti-Happiness, and today they checkmate it with their weapon, which is art, and their power, which is their connectedness to the people.

Today’s conflict in Iran is like a burst of color on a black background. It is incredible and magnificent, like the sudden growth of lilies on a stinking swamp. Recently, a group of artists named “The Last Torch” of Afghan women sang a song from behind their azure burquas, with their pleasant voices, in support of Iranian women, called “Your war is beautiful, it is beautiful with feminine voices”. The last torches in Iran or Afghanistan are lit at the cost of the lives of those who raised them. Being an artist in Iran or Afghanistan is not like a job: it often brings no income, and
at the same time, it comes with a lot of risks. It has been more than ten months since the galleries stopped their normal activities in Iran, the theaters and concert halls are closed, and artists are leaving the Broadcasting Corporation of the Islamic Republic. As we sit here right now, many Iranian artists are being tortured and imprisoned, and many others are worried about when they will be arrested. It is unbelievable that they still create art in this deadly anxiety!

I am sure that each one of these torchbearers had opportunities to come from that land to a place where they could create art in safety and earn money from it. But I think they had hope. Because of hope, they stayed. The hope that echoes now in Iran's streets: “I fight, I die, I take back Iran and rebuild it”. The region has woken up and is armed with art, beauty, and smiles against oppressive ugliness. Now the question is, how can we reflect the light of their torches so that the world becomes brighter step by step?

Roshi Rouzbehani: In honor of Homa Darabi, the child psychiatrist, academic, and political activist for her political self-immolation in protest to the compulsory hijab in 1994.

Roshi Rouzbehani: Women, believing in hijab or not, are standing together against the compulsory hijab.


Amir Samavat: For Freedom, 2022. Mixed media on flexible cement, 100 x 100 cm
The book focuses on the age of empire, steam and print, when the infrastructures of European empires laid the basis for an unprecedented degree of inter-Asian interactions that found expression in a new Asian public sphere that printed books, journals, and newspapers from Istanbul to Yokohama—and with the Persian-medium presses of Iran, Afghanistan, and India in the middle. But of course, Persian was only one of scores of different Asian languages (and, moreover, scripts) that found expression in print in the period between around 1820 and 1940 on which I focused. So, this in turn raised the question of translation which the “Persian Ricci” had first prompted: at a time before there existed any dictionary of Chinese to Farsi, or Japanese to Farsi (and vice-versa), how did Persian-users gain understanding of China, and Japan? Or indeed of other regions of Asia, such as Burma and Sri Lanka, with which Iran was coming into commercial contact? Moreover, building on my struggles to understand how equivalents for Ricci’s Latin terms had been found in Farsi, I asked how complex concepts related to unknown religious systems (such as Confucianism, Taoism, and Buddhism) found expression in Farsi.

In the wake of the Japanese defeat of Russia in 1905, intellectuals from Iran no less than India and Afghanistan looked to Japan as a model for achieving military and industrial modernization without adopting Western culture. Probing the secrets of Japan’s success, they wrote poems, travelogues, and histories of Japan in Persian. Yet despite the new communications infrastructures that enabled Iranians to visit Japan and for the *Mikado-nama* to be printed in Calcutta, there remained formidable barriers to Iranian attempts to understand the country— not least the Japanese language and script. Nonetheless, by the late 1930s, Persian translations from the classical Japanese poems of the *Man’yoshu* were being published in both Afghan and Iranian literary journals.

After looking at these many Iranian and Afghan accounts of China, Japan, and Buddhist Burma, I decided to widen my lens by placing them in relation to Urdu, Arabic, and Turkish printed works on those regions from the same period. The patterns that emerged were substantially the same: a small number of direct accounts (often travelogues) alongside a larger number of texts that were translated from European languages (though more often English, French, Russian or German than Ricci’s early modern Latin). In some cases, these European source texts were respectfully reliable, but in others they ranged from the eccentric (such as the bibliomaniac schoolmaster who authored the original of the *Kitab-e Jam-e Jam* translated by the Qajar prince Farhad Mirza) to the outright forged (such as the Russian forger of an account of the post-crucifixion life of Jesus in India that he supposedly found in a Tibetan monastery).

Vicarious as they often were, these early Middle Eastern and Indian (or West and South Asian) accounts of the histories and cultures of China, Japan, and Burma (or East and Southeast Asia) were nonetheless fascinating. For these works not only opened windows onto the great challenges of inter-cultural understanding across a continent divided by so many languages, writing systems and cultures. They also shed light onto the strategies by which Iranian, Afghan, Indian and late Ottoman authors used to gain understanding of other regions of Asia by turning the informational
In my recent book *The Making of Persianate Modernity: Language and Literary History between Iran and India* (Cambridge University Press, 2023), I set out to accomplish several things. I wanted to write a connected history of Iran and India during the period of modernization, from roughly the middle of the nineteenth century to the middle of the twentieth, using both Persian and Urdu sources. And I wanted to do so with a unique archive—literary histories, which emerged as a new genre of writing in this period—together with more traditional archival sources like unpublished letters and diaries, as well as *tazkirahs*, the premodern biographical anthologies that were important sources for the new literary histories.

Yet no concept was more influential than that of Asia itself, whose journey from ancient Greek via nineteenth century European atlases to Persian, Arabic and Urdu no less than Chinese and Japanese I also trace in the book. In this way, it was not only the particular languages and cultures of distant regions of Asia that were discovered by Iranians from the mid-nineteenth century, it was also the notion that Iran was part of a larger continental space called *Asiya*. And as we all know, not all Iranians were happy with that notion (nor for that matter the modernizing Japanese intellectuals of the nineteenth century, who declared in response that they were declaring their historical independence from the continent). In this way, I also came to examine not only the particulars of specific books about different regions Asia that were written in the Middle East and India, but also the contrasting aggregate responses to the imported idea of belonging to a larger continent composed of so many different societies and cultures. Part of the story, then, was also how Pan-Asianism was developed or rejected by the different thinkers who responded to the explosion of information about the continent that found its way into the new public sphere in Persian and other languages.

The players in this story of gradually-increasing intercultural understanding are many and varied. Some of the most surprising are the Bahá’í missionaries who were active in Burma and Japan no less than India, and the Chinese Hui Muslims who learned Urdu and Arabic to such a degree that they wrote books in those languages about their homelands (including the first direct Arabic translation of Confucius). *How Asia Found Herself* tells the story of such many such forgotten intercultural interpreters, along with the many Persian texts that were produced as part of this larger process by which people from different corners of the Asian continent struggled to make sense of each other’s cultures.

From the translation of Matteo Ricci’s work of ‘Christianate Confucianism’ to the Bahá’í encounter with Buddhism in Burma, and the rise of a Persianate Japanophilia, the Iranian discovery of Asia followed a vacillating course marked by false trails and positive breakthroughs, remarkable discoveries no less than interpretive misadventures. I hope colleagues will enjoy reading about these developments as much as I have enjoyed recovering them.
I was inspired by a generation of pioneering scholarship on Indo-Iranian connections, especially in the modern period. Innovative, ground-breaking studies had challenged Iranian nationalism by showing how much modern Iranian thought had developed in India, outside the borders of the Iranian nation-state. In studying Persian intellectuals in India and their connections with Parsis (Indian Zoroastrians), scholars demonstrated how Iranian nationalism was not a native, organic development rooted in Iranian soil—as the nationalists themselves would have it—but rather the product of Indo-Iranian exchange. Yet even as this scholarship successfully contested the myths of Iranian nationalism, it nevertheless reproduced a nationalist paradigm by using Persian-language sources and by focusing on Iranian exiles and the Parsi community that traces its genealogy back to Iran. What about Indian Muslims? Did they also play a role in modern Iranian thought and literature? This was one of the questions I set out to answer in my book.

The answer turned out to be a resounding yes. What I found seemed to challenge not only this Iranian nationalist paradigm, but also the assumptions of Persianate Studies. Persianate Studies is the field concerned with the broader Persianate world, the cosmopolis of societies (from the Balkans to China) historically linked together by their use of Persian as a language of learning and power. Until recently, the field had devoted most of its attention to medieval and early modern history, guided by the prevailing belief that the Persianate framework was undone by the conditions of modernity and nationalism and had lost its relevance by the turn of the twentieth century, if not sooner.

But Indian Muslims continued to engage with the Persianate literary tradition long after the supposed death of Persian in the subcontinent. And Iranians, as I discovered, were learning from intellectual and literary developments taking place in Urdu. I found that the genre of literary history was produced in large part through exchange between Iranians and Indians writing in both languages. In producing these histories, which were key texts for narrating new national and communal identities, Indians and Iranians shared dense networks of citation and engagement, reading and responding to one another. Intellectuals in both countries sought to rework the earlier tazkirah tradition—biographical anthologies of poetry—to produce the modern genre of literary history. In recognizing this mutual exchange, I pushed back against a simplistic model of “influence”: the often taken for granted idea of a kind of hierarchy wherein Persian influences Urdu, but Urdu doesn’t influence Persian. What I found was a much more dialogic form of scholarship that unfolded across Persian and Urdu (as well as English and other European languages).

As Iranians and Indians modernized their shared Persianate heritage and produced the genre of literary history, they developed a shared set of modern conventions. Premodern Persian ghazal poetry often celebrated the love of male youths in frank, unabashed language, and tazkirahs were similarly open in their discussions of poets’ homoerotic exploits. But modern literary historians maintained a bashful silence about sexuality, and broached the subject only reluctantly and with reproach. Scholars of Persian literature now recognize the conventionality of depictions of homoerotic love in the Persian ghazal; I show how the sexual puritanism of modern prose is similarly conventional. The influential Indian Muslim thinker Shibli Nuʿmani (1857-1914), for example, led a personal life more colorful than reflected in his prudish account of Persian poetry. The same was true of the famed British scholar E.G. Browne (1862-1926), whose Literary History of Persia was utterly silent on (homo)erotic matters. I drew on Browne’s unpublished diaries to reveal how the prim conventions of literary history did not necessarily stem from personal conviction or experience.

Not every aspect of this modernizing project was uniform between Iran and India. Despite their shared sources and conventions, Iranians and Indians developed radically different national narratives, especially in their conceptions of the Persian and Urdu languages and their respective genealogies. Iranians’ national narrative was inflected by a new philological model of language, emphasizing continuity over various stages (‘Old,’ ‘Middle,’ and ‘New’ Persian), uninterrupted by the advent of Islam. They claimed the Persian language and literature as their national heritage. While the Persianate heritage was an important component of South Asian Muslims’ identity as well, they accepted the Iranian nationalist claim to Persian. In contrast to the Iranians’ narrative of continuity before and after Islam, many South Asian Muslims emphasized rupture with pre-Islamic India, taking the arrival of Islam in the subcontinent as the starting point of their identity. For them, the admixture of Persian and Arabic script and vocabulary were crucial components of Urdu’s character as a language. I discussed these narratives in greater detail in a recent essay for Aeon magazine.

As a consequence of their different linguistic narratives, reformers and modernizers in Iran experimented with language in significantly different ways than their counterparts in India (and, later, Pakistan) did from the end of the nineteenth century until the middle of the twentieth. In Iran, there was an explosion of proposals for reforming the Perso-Arabic script, with more than 50 new scripts designed from the end of the nineteenth century to 1950. There were very few such proposals for Urdu—mostly romanization schemes which failed to gain traction. Because the Perso-Arabic script (in the nastāʿ liq calligraphic hand) was so central to Urdu’s identity as a language, Urdu-speakers had little interest in changing the script. On the other hand, Iranians’ embrace of a linguistic identity that spanned multiple scripts (viewing Old, Middle, and New Persian, in their multiple respective scripts, as part of the same trajectory) made it possible to conceive of the Persian language separately from its current Arabic-based script, resulting in a plethora of new script proposals.
This was also a factor that helped Iranians to adopt print in movable type, possible only with the naskh typeface, whereas Urdu-speakers were attached to nastaʿliq and thus never really embraced movable type technology. Instead, Urdu texts continued to be printed with lithography—which allowed the reproduction of handwritten nastaʿliq—all the way up until the 1980s when digital nastaʿliq fonts were developed for computers. As print (whether in naskh-based movable type in Persian, or lithographed nastaʿliq for Urdu) replaced manuscripts, orthography was standardized and European-style punctuation replaced ad hoc systems of punctuating text that had prevailed in the manuscript tradition.

Comparing modern Persian and Urdu helps us understand how the form each language took was not natural and inevitable, but historically contingent. Divergences, whether in narratives of national and linguistic history or approaches to script and typography, reveal alternative, unrealized possibilities. But even these divergences are part of a connected history, a story of interaction and cooperation between Iranians and South Asians, writing in Persian as well as in Urdu. Together, they reworked the Persianate textual tradition, producing a Persianate modernity which drew on Indo-Iranian connections even as it sought to make those connections invisible, hiding them behind the veneer of national culture. Persianate modernity, then, is the form the Persianate takes after the rise of nationalism. It is the connected framework left over from the bygone cosmopolis that enabled intellectuals from Iran and India to learn from each other in their modernizing projects, and to rework the literary texts of the earlier tradition into national heritage.

I hope this book will open up new avenues for future scholarship by extending the Persianate framework into the modern era, and by introducing new sources, archives, and arguments to the fields of Iranian Studies, South Asian Studies, and Persianate Studies.

**Education and the Cultural Cold War in the Middle East:**

The Franklin Book Programs in Iran

Mahdi Ganjavi, Northwestern University

About fifteen years ago, during a train trip from Kerman to Tehran, I first heard about the Franklin Book Programs (FBP) from a university librarian who was close to Homayoun Sanʿatizadeh, the first manager of the Tehran Branch of FBP. At the time, the story of the Tehran Branch, arguably the most influential publishing house in Iran’s modern publishing history, was still very much hidden, partially due to political pressure which still affects the fate of the Pahlavi era publishing houses up to this day. It was during those mesmerizing conversations on the train that I came to understand that many of the books that I had read were reprints of translations sponsored by the Tehran Branch during the 1950s and 1960s.
The FBP, a private, not-for-profit organization founded in 1952 during the Cold War, initially intended to promote U.S. liberal bourgeois values and create markets for U.S. books in "Third World" countries, the FBP evolved into an international educational development program. It published university and school textbooks, developed printing, publishing, and bookselling institutions, and trained local teachers as textbook writers. Additionally, the FBP sponsored the publication of reading materials for children, teens, youth, teachers, and parents. It became one of the most significant international educational organizations of the Cold War era.

My book explores the FBP’s twenty-five-year operation, from 1952 to 1977, and its context within various U.S. international educational initiatives and policies developed during the 1950s to the 1970s. I investigate the role that educational and technical assistance programs played in the U.S. policy of containment after the end of World War II. This investigation extends to cover three decades of the Cold War era, facilitated and sponsored by the pro-U.S. regime of Pahlavi in Iran. Although the FBP had certain humanitarian motives, its knowledge dissemination and production were inevitably influenced by the imperative of imperialistic domination.

The Origins of the Tobacco Protest in Qajar Iran
Ranin Kazemi, San Diego State University

Ranin Kazemi, Associate Professor of History at San Diego State University, has received a 12-month award from the National Endowment for the Humanities for his research project on the origins of the Tobacco Protest in Qajar Iran. Kazemi is devoting his time this academic year to the completion of a monograph on this topic. The Tobacco Protest unfolded over the course of some fifteen months in 1891-92 and marked a pivotal shift in the history of Iran and the Middle East. People of diverse social backgrounds built lasting national (and transnational) alliances for the first time in order to contest the policies of the Persian government and the British Empire. This realignment of different social groups remained central to many future protests and revolutions in Iran. The Tobacco Protest in fact marked the beginnings of a period of social upheavals that culminated in the Constitutional Revolution of Iran in 1905-11. It led, in other words, to people demanding and securing a constitution, a parliament, and a universal male suffrage for the first time. Kazemi's work deals specifically with the Tobacco Protest and its poorly understood causes and context.

He argues that numerous factors came together to bring about a favorable atmosphere in the second half of the 19th century when all the groundwork for the Tobacco Protest was laid. He contends that global capitalism and international politics transformed Iran's economy and society over the course of the 19th century.
The process was uneven and generated wealth and privilege among some, and poverty and anger among many others. Facing existential threats from abroad in the age of European imperialism, the Persian government made repeated attempts at creating an integrated national economy and undertaking reform and modernization. But the government’s centralizing policies became increasingly unpopular. Meanwhile different classes of people developed forms of expressing dissent publicly. These decades-long grassroots agitations eventually climaxed in a national protest movement in 1891-92. In the Tobacco Protest, different classes of Iranians resisted the establishment of a British-owned tobacco monopoly in the country. They also attacked more broadly the autocratic tendencies of the Persian state and the interventionist policies of European empires. Kazemi’s work demonstrates that popular frustration that surfaced in the early 1890s had numerous material, social, cultural, and political reasons. He argues that decades of opposition to government policies and Western imperialism laid the social and cultural foundation for the first insurrectionary movement in Iran. He contends that the agitations before and during the Tobacco Protest displayed the earliest instances of such phenomena as nationalism, political Islam, popular opposition to foreign policies of Western powers, and social and political processes of democratization which influenced and defined Iran and the Middle East in the 20th and 21st centuries.

From the Oilfield to the Battlefield: Revolutionary Internationalism on the Imperial Borderlands
Kayhan A. Nejad, Oxford University

My monograph manuscript, From the Oilfield to the Battlefield: Revolutionary Internationalism on the Imperial Borderlands, examines a series of protest movements across Iran, the Russian Empire, and Ottoman Anatolia. Beginning with the Revolution of 1905, and concluding with the collapse of the Soviet Socialist Republic of Iran (SSRI, 1920-21), From the Oilfield to the Battlefield questions these and intervening uprisings as connected or even contingent developments. In so doing, it places northern Iran within the internationalist currents of socialism, oppositional nationalisms, and pan-Islamism—against each other. After probing the Jangalis’ attempted revival of a cross-ideological coalition in Gilan, it asks how the Soviet-backed Jangali-Communist SSRI government emerged from the Jangali movement in 1920, and how its construction alienated the same Constitutionalists who had sustained protest movements on the southern Caspian littoral for over a decade. In so doing, From the Oilfield to the Battlefield contends that the Soviet withdrawal from northern Iran (1921) marked only the culmination of the ongoing collapse of the Jangali-socialist-Ottoman alliance in the Iranian north.

From the Oilfield to the Battlefield makes two interventions in our understandings of Iranian and regional revolution. First, it challenges narratives that center state pursuits of realpolitik interests, and instead makes a case for the significance of revolutionary programs in shaping the political trajectories of Iran, the Caucasus, and Anatolia in the early twentieth century. Second, by centering the collapse of the revolutionary alternative, it affords a new theory for the rise of Reza Khan (1921-41), and for the renewal of Iranian monarchy until 1979.

historical debates on revolution and nationalism across three fields: Iranian, Russian, and Ottoman history.

In interrogating revolutionary networks beyond Iranian borders, From the Oilfield to the Battlefield demonstrates that foreign actors played critical roles in sustaining the early twentieth-century Iranian revolution, and imported their programmatic disputes into the Iranian north. From the Oilfield to the Battlefield begins in the Baku oil industry, reconstructing the politicization of migrant Iranian workers to probe labor mobilization and communal divides in a city marked by cycles of Armenian-Muslim violence from 1905 to 1920. It argues that, even in the face of ethnic massacres, opposition to monarchism and capitalism provided Iranian laborers and non-Iranian revolutionaries a strategic locus around which to mobilize. This multi-ethnic and cross-ideological labor mobilization peaked in 1908-09, when 1000 volunteers from the Caucasus joined the Iranian Constitutionalists to defend Tabriz from an attempted monarchical restoration.

In its final chapters, From the Oilfield to the Battlefield situates the northern Iranian revolutionary movements in the setting of the First World War, when great power politics pitted the Constitutionalists’ allies—socialists, national liberationists, and pan-Islamists—against each other. After probing the Jangalis’ attempted revival of a cross-ideological coalition in Gilan, it asks how the Soviet-backed Jangali-Communist SSRI government emerged from the Jangali movement in 1920, and how its construction alienated the same Constitutionalists who had sustained protest movements on the southern Caspian littoral for over a decade. In so doing, From the Oilfield to the Battlefield contends that the Soviet withdrawal from northern Iran (1921) marked only the culmination of the ongoing collapse of the Jangali-socialist-Ottoman alliance in the Iranian north.

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Eleven panels convened and generated rich questions and conversations. They addressed topics like transnational politics and history; race, class, and (un)belonging; diaspora literature, theater, performance, music, and film; diasporic archives and archival practices; critiques of reductionism and representation; challenges to diaspora demographic studies; the intersections of identity, food, and community; the circulations of Iranian migration and cultural production; oral histories and the importance of diasporic place and space; off-shore detention and resisting borders as state violence; and the study of diaspora religion, spirituality, and communitarian belonging. The array of topics examined in panels across the two days, as well as in films screened in a series running concurrent with panels, reflected not only a more diverse disciplinary approach to the field, but also a more international set of perspectives. In addition to strong showings from Iranian diaspora strongholds like Toronto and California, panelists hailed from Australia, Brazil, France, Germany, Hungary, Italy, the Netherlands, Spain, and the United Kingdom.

A highlight of the conference was no doubt the presence and participation of Dr. Hamid Naficy, Professor Emeritus of Northwestern University (Radio/Television/Film), whose contributions to the study of Iranian exilic and diasporic media and film have been fundamental to the evolution of Iranian Diaspora Studies. His many publications continue to be a wellspring of research and theory upon which many of us continue to draw. As Guest of Honor for a reception and screening at the UCLA Fowler Museum of the 2017 documentary, “Mouth Harp in Minor Key: Hamid Naficy in/on Exile,” by Maryam Sepehri, in a post-screening discussion Dr. Naficy shared reflections from the film, his work in film and media studies, and his life as a student and scholar. A UCLA and USC alum, many former colleagues and friends of Dr. Naficy were in attendance, as well as his dear wife Kelly, making for a rich and heartwarming evening in honor of an incredible scholar, mentor, and colleague.

Among the many features of the conference that were notable for us as co-organizers were the warm feeling of camaraderie after lockdowns due to COVID-19, but also the ways that the smaller, more focused agenda of the conference facilitated rich exchanges between those of us whose work often falls between or across singular disciplines. The conference offered a space of co-creation and collaboration, where a growing network of scholars are raising critical questions while moving with a shared ethos of reciprocity and generosity. We left invigorated and inspired, and, while there is much important work to do, this conference demonstrated that the field is bursting with talent, including promising junior scholars and graduate students who are eager to continue the work of those who have worked so hard to pioneer this field of study.
WORKSHOP ANNOUNCEMENT

Identity, Alterity, and the Imperial Impress in the Achaemenid World at UCLA

The Pourdavoud Center for the Study of the Iranian World convened an international workshop on *Identity, Alterity, and the Imperial Impress in the Achaemenid World*, on April 12–14, 2023 at UCLA. The symposium, which was the first in the newly established *Achaemenid Workshops (AchWorks)* series, included invited speakers whose research pertains to the history, structures, and impact of the Achaemenid empire. The overarching themes covered by the workshop were: current trends in Achaemenid scholarship; new horizons in art and archaeology; Achaemenid reception, and the notions of identity, alterity, and the imperial impress in Achaemenid Elam and Persis, Anatolia, the Caucasus, and Egypt. Professionally recorded videos of the talks are posted on the Pourdavoud Center’s Online Video Library.

FELLOWSHIP

Fellowship Prince Dr Sabbar Farman-Farmaian

With the generous support of Farman-Farmaian family, the IISH launches a new fellowship programme named the Prince Dr Sabbar Farman-Farmaian Fellowships for scholars who wish to use its collections for the study of social and economic history of 18-20 century of Iran, whether from a regional, national, or comparative and transnational perspective. Fellowships are awarded for six months (1 September 2023 – 29th February 2024). This is a call for applications for fellowships for the year 2023/2024. Deadline for applications is 15 May 2023.

Fellows receive a monthly stipend of € 1,500. The fellowship also includes an economy return flight to the Netherlands, visa support, as well as arrangements for accommodation. Cost of health insurance in Amsterdam will be reimbursed.

Minimum requirements/selection criteria:
- An MA degree or higher,
- An updated CV,
- A Research proposal in not more than 500 words.

The fellow’s research plan should fit the Institute’s focus on social history.

Fellows are expected:
- To write a report on their research activities at the end of the fellowship period,
- To be present at the institute customarily,
- To take part in the activities of the Institute’s Research Department,
- To interact with other fellows and the IISH’s research staff in the English language,
- To give at least one public lecture.

Selection will be made based on the quality and novelty of the proposed research project, its affinity to social history research conducted at the International Institute of Social History, and the applicant’s qualifications.

Outcome:
Fellows are expected to present the results of their work both orally to the other members of the Research Department, and in writing with a paper of min. 5000 and max. 8000 words (including notes). It is envisaged that the PDF version of the paper will be published as an occasional paper on the website of the IISH.

Applications:
Applications should be submitted before 15 May 2023 to jacqueline.rutte@bb.huc.knaw.nl. General information about the IISH can be obtained via http://socialhistory.org. More information about the fellowship can be obtained from Professor Touraj Atabaki, e-mail: tat@iisg.nl
MODERN IRAN
A HISTORY IN DOCUMENTS
Edited, translated, and introduced by Negin Nabavi

Covering the period from the early nineteenth century to the present day, Modern Iran: A History in Documents brings together primary sources in translation that shed light on the political, social, cultural, and intellectual history of modern Iran. This book comprises a wide variety of documents from newspapers, periodicals, diaries, memoirs, letters, speeches, and essays, all of which have been translated from the Persian for the first time. It captures the momentous changes that society has undergone, encompassing not only political events and developments, but also ideas, perceptions, and mindsets. In addition to well-known texts from diplomatic conventions, the book features passages by lesser-known men and women who describe the reception of and response to major developments across the social strata. The book is divided into ten chapters, with the final one bringing together documents that offer insights into recent events; these documents highlight contrasting viewpoints expressed in the Iranian press regarding the nuclear agreement reached in 2015 between Iran and six world powers.

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.

Part One – IRAN IN THE "LONG NINETEENTH CENTURY": 1785–1911
Chapter 1: Qajar Rule, Society, and the Great Powers
Chapter 2: Reforms, Economic Concessions, and Expressions of Dissent
Chapter 3: Constitution and Constitutionalism: Debates and Developments

Part Two – 1911–1978
Chapter 4: War, Coup D’Etat, Hopes, and disillusionment
Chapter 5: State-Building, the Politics of Modernization, and Its Discontents
Chapter 6: Intellectuals, Islam, and the Search for "Cultural Authenticity"

Chapter 7: The Months Leading to the 1979 Revolution

Part Four – IRAN TODAY: 1979 TO THE PRESENT
Chapter 8: Defining the Islamic Republic
Chapter 9: Voices of Reform and Societal Transformations
Chapter 10: The Tenth Presidential Election and Its Aftermath

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