



Report



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Iran Heritage Foundation is the leading supporter of Iranian heritage and culture in the UK. With a mandate to promote and preserve the language, history and culture of Iran and the Persians, IHF engages with academic, institutional and cultural communities in Britain and abroad.

The organisation partners with museums, universities, and artistic and scholarly institutions through the appointment of curators, the provision of grants, fellowships, and scholarships, and the organisation of exhibitions and lectures, and convening of conferences. IHF supports publications on subjects relating to Iran, funds the teaching of the Persian language and history at primary and university levels, and holds a wide range of public, community and social events. The scope of IHF's remit covers Ancient Persia, medieval, modern and contemporary Iran.

Established in 1995, Iran Heritage Foundation is an independent, non-political, UK Registered Charity.

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MANAGEMENT AND ORGANISATION

Management and organisation

Board of Trustees in 2019

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 Elahe Kashanchi
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 Monir Sattaripour
 Neda Toofanian

The CEO was supported by

Dr Nahid Assemi
 Sam Baring
 Leonard Gethin
 Astrid Johansen
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Management and Organisation

IHF's mission, vision, budgets and programme scope are set and approved by the Board of Trustees, which met four times in 2019.

A number of specialist committees support IHF, including the Academic Grants Committee, the Contemporary Arts Grants Committee and the Norouz Committee which organises IHF's annual fundraising dinner in London on the occasion of the Iranian New Year.

Sources of Funding

Important sources of funding for IHF include contributions from the Board of Trustees, the annual Norouz fundraising gala, the Chairmen's Dinner, and contributions from individual donors and corporate and institutional sponsors.

How You Can Help

Every donation, large or small, helps to make a real difference in achieving the Foundation's objectives. We welcome your support, and urge you to become a Friend of IHF.

Additional information including how to become a Friend and updated news on IHF programmes and events may be found at www.iranheritage.org and at www.facebook.com/iran.heritage.foundation. All those subscribed to the IHF mailing list will receive regular newsflashes and other information.



CEO REVIEW

CEO Review

I am pleased to be able to report that despite the challenging political climate in 2019, IHF was able to enjoy another very successful year. We have continued with our regular monthly programme, we are involved with a forthcoming major exhibition, we have finalised the incorporation of the Persian Language Foundation in to the IHF, we have managed to maintain three institutional partnerships, we have maintained momentum on the Tappeh Sialk project, we have embarked on a publication programme and as usual we have disbursed grants for academic research and work with the contemporary arts.

I reported last year that discussions were well advanced with the Persian Language Foundation to take over its operation, and the Foundation and its website (Persian Language Online) are now officially under the auspices of IHF. I regard the incorporation of the PLOL as one of the best things that has happened during my tenure as CEO of IHF. Study of Persian language and literature are one of the core objectives of IHF, and it makes eminently good sense that the PLOL website should come under the umbrella of IHF. We will now do our best to expand the website, increase its remit, and make sure that it is a worldwide resource for all those wanting to study Persian at whatever level.

During the past year IHF has been much involved in doing research and making preparations for the exhibition *Epic Iran* which is due to open at the Victoria and Albert Museum in October 2020. IHF is organising this exhibition jointly with the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Sarikhani Art Foundation. This exhibition should be a wonderful opportunity to demonstrate to the world the remarkable highlights of Iranian art during a 5000-year period. It will be the first exhibition to cover the whole period of Iranian art in the UK since the great exhibition at the Royal Academy in 1931, and it goes without saying that it comes at an opportune moment.

As supporters of IHF will know, we held two very successful international conferences about the site of Tappeh Sialk near Kashan in March 2017 and July 2018. This is the most important pre-Achaemenid archaeological site in Iran, if not in the Middle East, and IHF is privileged to have been at the forefront of an international initiative to make the site better known and lobby for its registration as a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Selected papers from these two conferences have now been published in a volume entitled *Tappeh Sialk: the Glory of Ancient*

Iran. In a new departure for our organisation, this book has been self-published by IHF, with help from Elizabeth Bouchier who has also taken on responsibility for the distribution. It is gratifying to record that already there has been a strong demand for the book from libraries and booksellers, and it has been possible to distribute a number of complimentary copies to scholars interested in Sialk and to colleagues in Iran. In November a third Sialk conference was held in Paris at the Louvre, co-organised by IHF with the Musée du Louvre and the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle, and presentations were made by scholars from France, Germany and Iran. It is planned that there should be a further Sialk conference in Berlin in 2020.

Monthly events at Asia House included talks about Rumi manuscripts and the John Rylands Library in Manchester, a subject close to the heart of our trustee Amin Amiri; the ever fascinating story of Persepolis, surely the most impressive site in the whole of the ancient world; and learning the Persian language, a lecture which provided an opportunity to celebrate the fact that the PLOL website was now under the wing of the IHF. A talk about women in Achaemenid Persia demonstrated that although women were only very rarely depicted in the art of the time, textual



evidence indicated that their lot was certainly no worse than women in other parts of the Ancient Near East, and that in Persia they sometimes achieved power and influence. Sarah Pira, the new IHF curator of Islamic art at the Victoria and Albert Museum, spoke about André Godard, the subject of her current PhD dissertation. He was an architect who became Iran's first director of antiquities, and although his design of the new national museum with an entrance in the form of a Sasanian *iwān* has been much praised, he has also been much criticised for allowing the continuation of dealer excavations. Our last event of the year marked the 200th anniversary of Goethe's publication of his *West-östlicher Diwan*, and we had readings from the poetry of Goethe and Hafez together with delightful music provided by singer Eloise Irving, accompanied by Roderick Morris on the violin. The event proved to be very popular, and has inspired us to think about organising similar functions in the future.

We have also focused on contemporary programmes. We were pleased to be able to organise two events in association with the Courtauld Institute of Art that were held at the Courtauld's temporary premises in Vernon Square. Both were on the object of 'contemporary Iranian practices and aesthetics' and involved Sussan Babaie in conversation with an artist, firstly Reza Aramesh and secondly Sussan Deyhim. Thanks are due to Sussan and to Vali Mahlouji for arranging these interesting interviews which introduced new audiences to IHF.

IHF also had the privilege of sponsoring another event in which Sussan Babaie was involved, a symposium at the Royal Academy of Arts to mark the publication of a book by her and Roxane Zand on *Geometry and Art in the Modern Middle East*. In the course of a Saturday morning there were presentations by three artists and one architect discussing the use and application of geometry in their work.

An innovation in 2019 was a Chairmen's Dinner at the Dorchester Hotel hosted by Ali Rashidian and Alireza Rastegar. Best thanks are due to Mahnaz Kamel for organising this dinner. We spent a very enjoyable evening being entertained by the comedian Omid Djalili but there was a more serious purpose behind the evening, namely to raise money for an IHF endowment. It is now recognised that to ensure it can deliver its present mission in the future, IHF must have an endowment. At this critical juncture in world history, it is more important than ever that in the years to come IHF will be in a position to protect and promote Iranian cultural heritage for the benefit of future generations. We can only make sure that this will happen, and that IHF will be sustainable, by creating an endowment now. I urge everybody who can to contribute to our

endowment appeal, and to remember IHF when making bequests.

There are a few staff matters to report. Following the departure of Massoumeh Parker at the end of 2018, Sam Baring filled the role of administrator until the end of July 2019. He was then succeeded by Leonard Gethin from August 2019 onwards. Leonard is working half-time as the IHF administrator and half-time as the Persian Language Online coordinator. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Sam for his efforts while he was with us, and to welcome Leonard. Lastly, warmest congratulations are due to Nahid Assemi, who has been an integral part of the IHF team for over 20 years, for successfully completing her PhD thesis entitled *Of Piety, Lamentation and Tears: Takkiyya Muavin al-Mulk in Kermanshah and the Building of a Nation*. It is to be hoped that this thesis will soon be published to draw attention to a very remarkable and much under-valued building in Kermanshah.

Finally I would like to pay a special tribute to Vahid Alaghband, the Chairman of IHF for many years, who stepped down from the Board during the year. He has been a stalwart of IHF since its inception and the success of IHF during the last 20 years is largely due to his energy, wisdom and vision. He will be sorely missed.

Dr John Curtis, OBE, FBA, FSA
Chief Executive Officer



FINANCIAL REVIEW

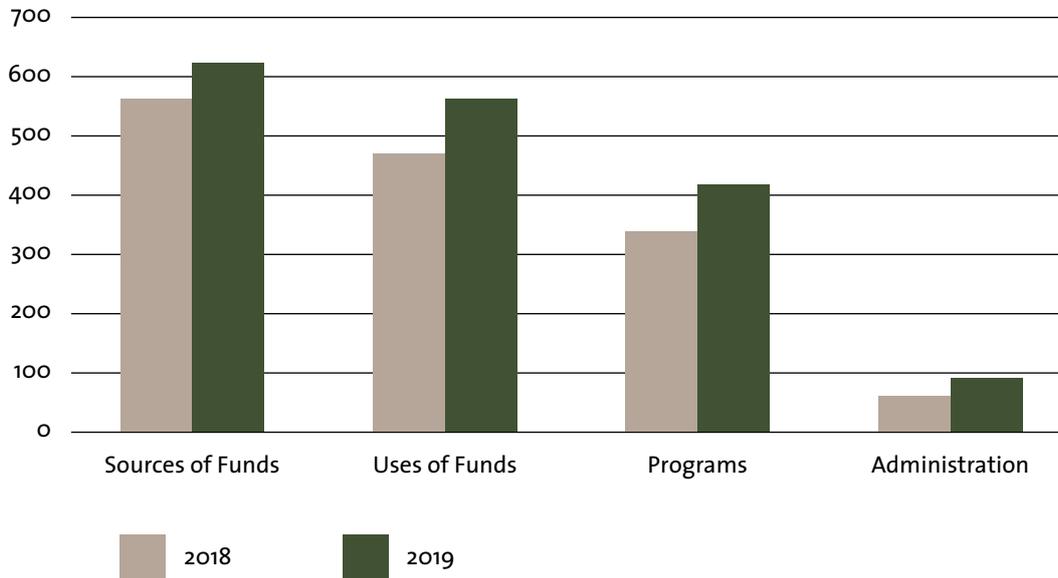
Financial Review

IHF funds were raised primarily from Trustee Board pledges, annual Norouz Gala profits, Gift Aid, individuals and organisations interested in supporting the culture and heritage of Iran.

The funds were used for the Foundation's activities, including conferences, exhibitions, sponsorships, academic and contemporary grants, monthly events, organising major events as well as administrative expenses, keeping in line with the core objectives of the foundation.

In 2019 total Sources of Funds were £625,000 and total Uses of Funds were £575,000.

No financial support was received from government organisations within or outside the United Kingdom.



In 2019 the IHF was delighted to incorporate the long running programme of Persian Language Online, which has been providing online language learning tools for Persian, as well as interactive apps for younger children, for several years. The main website, www.persianlanguageonline.com features a wealth of resources from animations, step by step guides to writing the letters of the Persian alphabet, recordings and transcripts of practice conversations, and texts on a wide variety of subjects which offer the learner not just a carefully considered progression in reading Persian, but insights into aspects of Iranian culture and beyond. The website is suitable to all those with an interest in learning Persian, young or old, from those of Iranian heritage who are looking for a way to brush up their reading, to those meeting the Persian language for the first time.

For the very young ones, the friendly cat Gorbek is ready to take them through three apps designed to help with those earliest stages of language learning. *Gorbek at the sea*, *Gorbek in the city* and *Gorbek on the farm*, available both on the Apple App Store and Google Play, take little ones through fun environments, with plenty of music and colour to encourage them to learn their first Persian words.

In the short time these resources have been under the auspices of IHF, the foundation has worked to update the technology behind the website and these apps to ensure they can continue to be available into the future, with many exciting developments in the pipeline.

Persian
LANGUAGE ONLINE



TAPPEH SIALK: A KEY SITE FOR THE ARCHAEOLOGY OF IRAN

Conference Organised by IHF

25th November - Louvre Museum, Paris

Following the two very successful conferences about Tappeh Sialk held at Asia House in London on 31 March 2017 and 2-3 July 2018 respectively, a follow-up conference was held in the splendid auditorium in the Louvre on Monday 25th November 2020. The conference was organised by the Musée du Louvre in collaboration with the Muséum National d'Histoire Naturelle (MNHN) with the support of the Iran Heritage Foundation.

In the morning, after introductory remarks by Marielle Pic (Louvre), John Curtis (IHF) and Alireza Rastegar (IHF co-Chairman), François Bridey and Julien Cuny (Louvre) spoke about the excavations of Roman Ghirshman and the Sialk collections in the Louvre; Jebrael Nokandeh (National Museum of Iran) described the results of the Iranian missions at Sialk; Céline Bon (MNHN) spoke about the anthropological collections from Sialk kept at the Musée de l'Homme; and Hossein Azizi Kharanaghi (NMI) talked about the Sialk collection preserved in the National Museum of Iran. After the lunch break, Barbara Helwing (Vorderasiatisches Museum, Berlin) lectured on Tappeh Sialk in the proto-Elamite period, Hamid Fahimi (independent scholar) spoke about the Iron Age levels at Sialk, Marjan Mashkour (CNRS) and Margareta Tengburg (MNHN) discussed the faunal and floral remains recovered in both the ancient and recent excavations at Sialk, and Mohsen Javeri (Kashan University) spoke about the protection and conservation of the Sialk site. The day closed with a panel discussion on the future of Tappeh Sialk chaired by John Curtis and involving Jebrael Nokandeh, Hossein



Tappeh Sialk

Azizi Kharanaghi, Yousef Hassanzadeh (NMI), Mohsen Javeri, Marielle Pic, Julien Cuny, Barbara Helwing and Marjan Mashkour. The main recommendations were that there should be a comprehensive joined-up database of objects from Sialk; there should be future excavation work at Sialk; the site boundaries should be established in preparation for its becoming a World Heritage Site; there should be a special Sialk exhibition, hopefully in the Louvre; and there should be another Sialk conference, preferably in Berlin.

In the evening there was a dinner in Le Café Marly in the Louvre hosted by the Iran Heritage Foundation.

On the following day (26th November), a selective group of conference participants visited the Musée de l'Homme and had the privilege of being shown by Céline Bon the skeletal material from Sialk. Following this, there was a brief visit to the Ancient Iran galleries in the Louvre, normally closed to the public on Tuesdays.

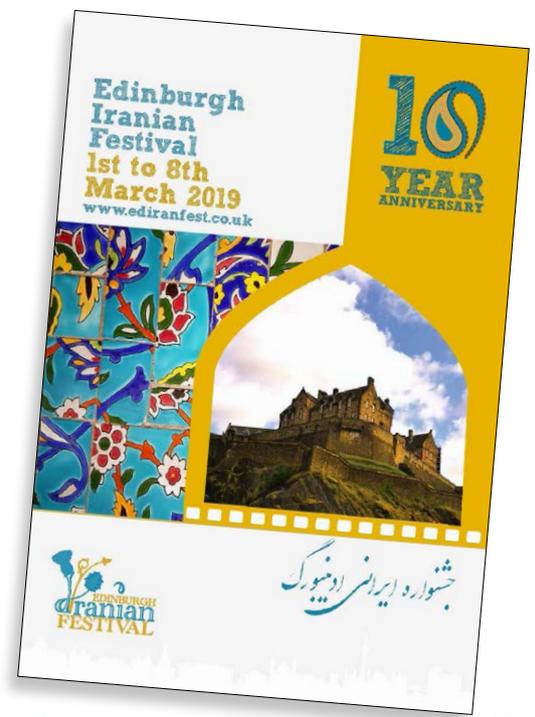
Selected papers delivered at the first two Sialk conferences have now been published by the Iran Heritage Foundation (see p. 25) and copies were available at the conference in Paris.

Participants in the Tappeh Sialk conference at the Louvre.

Back row from left: Barbara Helwing, François Bridey, John Curtis, Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis, Julien Cuny, Jebrael Nokandeh, Mohsen Javeri, Marielle Pic, Astrid Johansen.

Front row from left: Yousef Hassanzadeh, Hossein Azizi Kharanaghi





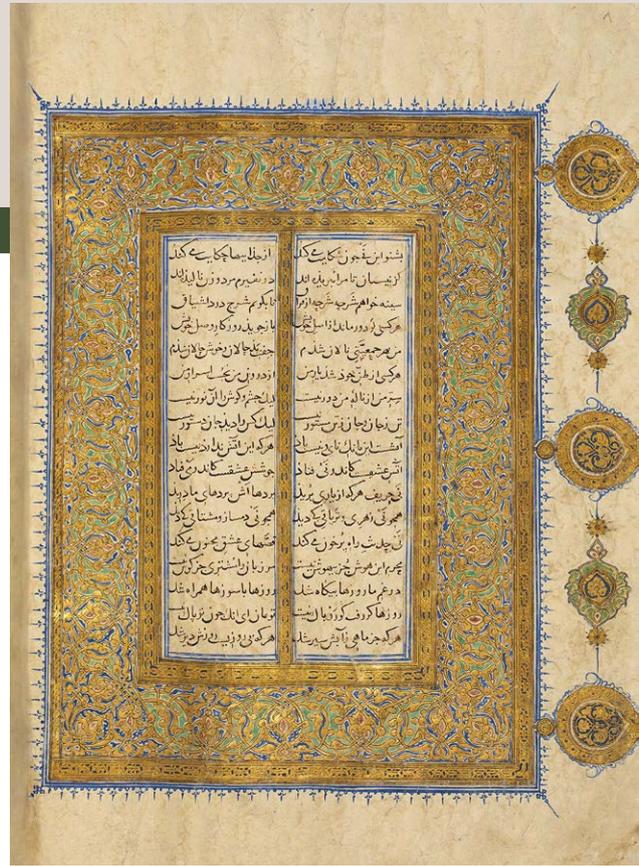
RUMI MANUSCRIPTS AND THE JOHN RYLANDS LIBRARY

**Lecture by Professor Alan Williams - Asia House
23rd January 2019**

The John Rylands Library was founded by Enriqueta Rylands in memory of her late husband, the 19th century industrialist, and opened its doors to the public on 1 January 1900. Its Persian collection ranks amongst the best in the UK, containing almost a thousand manuscripts dating from as early as the 13th century. The majority of these were purchased from the 5th Earl Spencer at the beginning of the 20th century, and it is worthy of note that poetry is particularly well represented.

On 23rd January, Alan Williams, Professor of Iranian Studies and Comparative Religion at The University of Manchester, delivered a lecture on the Persian collection housed at the John Rylands Library. He presented some highlights of the collection, including illuminated manuscripts of Masnavi-e Molana, Divan-e Shams Tabrizi, Shahnama and Kalilah wa Dimnah. He then rigorously detailed the provenance of these manuscripts and led the audience in recitations from the texts.

Based on several anecdotes and photographs from a recent trip to Konya, Williams was also able to derive some interesting comparisons between manuscript conservation in Turkey and the UK, the challenges of manuscript preservation, and the precarious conditions threatening some of the world's most precious Persian manuscripts.

*Rumi's Masnavi*

This sombre conclusion was tempered however by the exciting news that IHF Trustee Amin Amiri will give the John Rylands Library £100,000 over the course of the next three years in order to catalogue and investigate its Persian collection.

IN AND OUT OF THE IMAGINATION: LOCATING THE WOMEN OF ACHAEMENID PERSIA

**Lecture by Professor Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones
Asia House
27th February 2019**

Women in Achaemenid art can seem an invisible presence. One can look in vain for a female image at Persepolis, save for a lone lioness. In an engaging lecture Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones, Professor in Ancient History at Cardiff University, posed the question of where one must turn to trace the female, and other non-male presences in Achaemenid visual culture, and what can be made from the little we find.

In answering this question Prof. Llewellyn-Jones treated us to a tour across the spectrum of material evidence, from cylinder seals, textiles and jewellery, to the fortification texts of Persepolis. Prof. Llewellyn Jones pieced together a richer picture of women's presence and role in Achaemenid society than an initial impression might give, presenting us with powerful and wealthy figures in their own right.

He also emphasised the gender ambiguity of much Achaemenid visual culture, the idea of the eunuch and a third sex. Such questions, he suggests, more confidently trodden in the history of other regions, are far from fully considered in Persian studies. At the same time he drew on the work of contemporary and popular Iranian artists such as Hojat Shakiba, who, while demonstrating that the Achaemenid visual world is very much alive in the imagination of Iranians today, also stand as warnings of the impositions and misreadings we can often make on the past, especially with regards to women.



MAKING "CANDY-SWEET PERSIAN" AVAILABLE THROUGH PERSIAN LANGUAGE ONLINE

Lecture by Narguess Farzad - Asia House 27th March 2019

In 2012 Dr Ali Sattaripour, troubled by the lack of Persian language-learning resources available to his grandchildren, decided to set up a foundation to help people learn Persian. The Foundation thrived under his leadership producing language-learning apps and resources for adults and children, including the website Persian Language Online. These are free-to-use and suitable for beginners, as well as for those at the elementary and intermediate levels. However, with Dr Sattaripour's sad passing in 2016, a decision was made to gift PLF's assets to IHF. These exciting resources will be administered by the IHF in the years to come.

In March, Narguess Farzad, Senior Fellow in Persian at SOAS, University of London, delivered a gripping lecture on the history of the Persian language and the future of Persian Language Online, the UK's foremost Persian language-learning website. In describing both its own history and the history of those who have tried to learn and teach it, Ms Farzad covered the rich

web of influences, and vast spread of Persian language and culture that form a history often forgotten today. Through the years, Persian has influenced the languages and cultures of the Arab world, Anatolia, Central Asia and the Indian sub-continent, and in turn drawn influences from these neighbours. She argued that all parties were the stronger for these exchanges, setting a precedent to promote and preserve this sweet and elegant language beyond Iran's borders. Furthermore, in the legacy of Dr Sattaripour, we hope that the continued provision of these resources can aid those in the Iranian diaspora who might otherwise be unable, to gain access to their linguistic and literary heritage.

You can visit the Persian Language Online website at www.persianlanguageonline.org and the Gorbah apps for children can be found in both the Apple and Android App Stores.



THE RISE AND FALL OF PERSEPOLIS: A WONDER OF THE ANCIENT WORLD

Lecture by Dr Shahrokh Razmjou - Asia House 23rd July 2019

In July, IHF welcomed Dr Shahrokh Razmjou to speak on the history of Persepolis, the dynastic centre of the Archaemenid Persian kings and described by the Greek historian Diodorus, who is one of the earliest sources for the history of Persepolis, as 'the richest city under the sun'.

Dr Razmjou, a world expert on the site, detailed its history from these earliest mentions: the intention to build at that location expressed by Cyrus the Great, the construction of the terrace and palaces by Darius, its destruction by Alexander, and then its long history, its influence

on generations of Iranian leaders, and ultimately the important, though often ethically dubious, work done by archaeologists such as Herzfeld and Schmidt in the 20th century. We also heard fascinating details about the scale of this site, its technological advances, a plumbing system still impressive by today's standards and even the burial of four 'time capsules', with tablets displaying messages for those future generations who might find them. Persepolis is a monument that not only provides a window into its own history, but holds something of the story of all those who have encountered it over the last 2500 years, with much more to be discovered, and the prospect of further excavations to come, led by Dr Razmjou himself.



*Persepolis relief of Xerxes
with restored colours*

Entrance to Persepolis

ANDRÉ GODARD AND THE IRANIAN ARCHAEOLOGICAL SERVICE (1928-1960)

Talk by Sarah Piram - Asia House 11th September 2019

On Wednesday 11th September we were treated to a talk by Sarah Piram, the Iran Heritage Foundation Curator for the Iranian collections at the Victoria and Albert Museum.

She took us on a tour of the eclectic life and projects of the French Architect André Godard who, despite courting controversy, has left an undeniable legacy that persists into contemporary Iranian society. Godard offers a lens through which to explore the broad and complex interactions of colonialism, archaeology and nationalism in the early 20th century, both in the Middle East and in Europe. Godard's life is a complex story, the details of which are often unknown by many today, who might be surprised to learn, for example, that such significant monuments as the tomb of Hafez were in fact rebuilt by a French architect.

He also designed the National Museum in Tehran, based on the Sasanian *ivan*, and part of Tehran University.



André Godard (1881-1965)

GOETHE & HAFEZ: AN EVENING OF POETRY AND MUSIC

Featuring Professor Dan Wilson and Narguess Farzad - Asia House 9th December 2019

Approaching the longest night of a year that also happens to mark two hundred years since the publication of Goethe's *East-Western Diwan*, we looked to Iranian tradition (Yalda), fighting the dark with an evening of poetry and music.

Invited to lead the proceedings were Dan Wilson, Professor Emeritus of German at Royal Holloway, University of London, and Narguess Farzad Senior Fellow of Persian at SOAS, University of London, with soprano Eloise Irving and violinist Roderick Morris providing the music for the evening.

Between readings in immaculate German, Prof. Wilson told the unusual story of how a man in Weimar, who happens to be Germany's national poet, came to believe in a special affinity with a native of Shiraz some 400 years his senior, culminating in the publication of his *East-Western Diwan*, a collection of loose translations and poems inspired by Hafez. We were treated to

many examples of the convoluted and colourful dialogues this work produced: Kourosh Safavi's translations of Goethe's Hafez inspired poetry back into Persian; coded collage poems written between Goethe and his wife using page and line numbers from Hafez's poetry; and Roderick and Eloise's performances of classical Lieder by the likes of Schubert and Strauss, themselves inspired by Goethe's work. All this was held together by Ms Farzad's wonderful readings of the great man Hafez himself, and a little of IHF's own bespoke *ajil*.



Soprano Eloise Irving and violinist Roderick Morris

CHAIRMEN'S DINNER

The Dorchester Hotel
18th October 2019

A combined thank you and fundraising dinner was held at the Dorchester Hotel on 18th October 2019 organised by Mrs Mahnaz Kamel and hosted by the joint Chairmen of IHF, Ali Rashidian and Alireza Rastegar. Between courses of delicious food in the Orchid Room, guests were entertained and guided through the evening by the renowned comedian Omid Djalili. In between jokes in which he teasingly referred to those aspects of Iranian culture that bound together so many of the people in the room, Djalili also found time to

speaking about the importance to him personally as a British-Iranian of the work of organisations such as IHF. This led to many amusing anecdotes about his early life growing up amongst the Iranian communities of West London, told with obvious delight at being able to share these jokes and stories with others of Iranian origin, while in other contexts they would have had less resonance. He also stressed the importance of valuing and preserving Iranian heritage for generations to come. His palpable charm was reflected in the pledge auction, in which a number of people present made contributions towards establishing an endowment for IHF to ensure that its work could be carried on in the future.



Trustee Amin Amiri with Mrs Mahnaz Kamel



Co-Chairman Alireza Rastegar



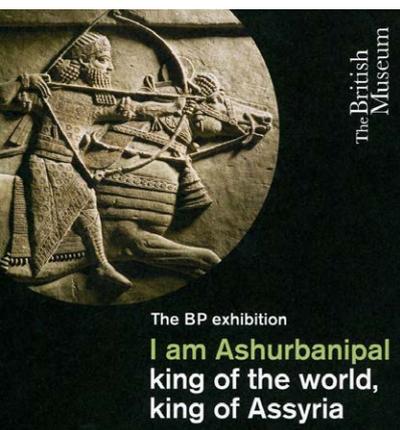
Comedian Omid Djalili

FRIENDS OF IHF ANNUAL RECEPTION

The British Academy
26th September 2019
Friends & Patrons only

At the start of the year, a group of Friends of IHF attended an early morning viewing of the *I am Ashurbanipal* exhibition at the British Museum, before it opened to the public. As our CEO Dr John Curtis, who was formerly Keeper of the Middle East Department at the BM, was in attendance he was able to share some of his expert knowledge on the subject, as well as give some insider's insight to a number of pieces that were on display.

The Friends of IHF annual reception took place in the Lee Library at the British Academy on Pall Mall. Guests enjoyed drinks and canapés and were welcomed by Dr Curtis, who highlighted the exciting arrangements for 2020's *Epic Iran* exhibition, which is being co-organised by the IHF, the Victoria and Albert Museum and the Sarikhani Foundation. The evening was a wonderful opportunity for IHF's members and supporters to come together, with several making the journey from outside London just to be there.



Friends of IHF at the British Academy



The British Academy

NOROUZ GALA

Events Organised by IHF


Grosvenor House Hotel
16th March 2019

The ancient festival of Norouz marks the day of the vernal equinox and the beginning of the Persian New Year. A time of gifts, hyacinths and happiness, the festival allows Iranians to reconnect with their distant past—a thread of continuity in increasingly uncertain times. Each year, far from the hum of shoppers and peddlers on the busy streets of Tehran, IHF organises a Norouz gala at the Grosvenor House Hotel in London's Park Lane. By holding this important event, IHF is keeping an age-old tradition alive, and providing parents with a special opportunity to share Persian culture with their children.

As is customary, our guests, dressed in their bright and beautiful finery, were greeted by the rhythmic thud of the daf, a wealth of familiar faces and an elegant haft-sin display. After mingling on the balcony, guests descended to the main floor and found their seats. During the

delicious three-course dinner that followed, the audience heard from Ali Rashidian, Co-Chairman of IHF, and Neil MacGregor, former Director of the British Museum, both of whom spoke passionately on the subject of Norouz and the uplifting programmes currently administered by IHF.

These eloquent speeches were followed by a live auction of contemporary Iranian art and sculpture, featuring pieces by the likes of Parviz Tanavoli, Samira Alikhanzadeh and Koroosh Shishegaran, and a brief interval for *chai* and *shirini*.

As the evening wore on, the star attraction of this year's Gala, Andy Madadian, took to the stage. The Iranian-Armenian singer, who had travelled all the way from Los Angeles, played an outstanding two-hour marathon of his greatest hits. All present flocked to the dancefloor to pay homage to this prodigious talent, who last performed in the United Kingdom more than twenty years ago.



A huge thank you must go to the IHF Norouz Committee, led by the indomitable Noushin Danechi, who delivered an extraordinary evening with exceptional flair and panache.

The Gala was organised by the Norouz Committee and was supported by:
Dr Zaynab Abbaspour, Ms Sara Alemi, Mr & Mrs Amin Amiri, Mr Farad Azima, Dr Youssef Badiei, Mr Boris Becker, Mrs Farideh Daneshvar, Mrs Beata Dxiewi, Mr & Mrs Manfred Ferber, Mr Saeid Ghafari, Mr Frank Gosch, Dr Alexander Jalali, Mr Ahmad Lari, Mr & Mrs Justin Lee, Mr Ali Malek, Mr & Mrs Mehdi Metghalchi, Miss Azadeh Moshiri, Mr & Mrs Mansour Namaki, Mrs Monika Perlman, Mr & Mrs Ali Rashidian, Mr Alireza Rastegar, Mrs Mahnaz Kamel, Mrs Minoo Sabet, Mrs Monir Sattaripour.

Guest speaker Neil MacGregor

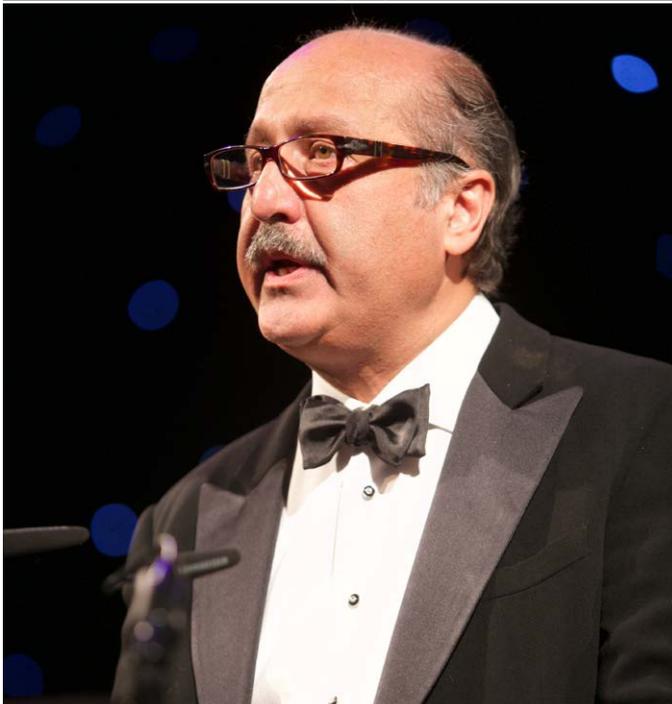


NOROUZ GALA (CONTINUED)

Events Organised by IHF



Auctioneer Edward Rising



Co-Chairman Ali Rashidian



Singer Andy Madadian



Guests at the Norouz Gala Dinner



Norouz Committee Chairwoman Noushin Danechi

NOROUZ GALA (CONTINUED)

Events Organised by IHF



Guests at the Norouz Gala Dinner



Guests at the Norouz Gala Dinner



Guests at the Norouz Gala Dinner

CONTEMPORARY IRANIAN PRACTICES AND AESTHETICS: ARTIST REZA ARAMESH IN CONVERSATION WITH DR SUSSAN BABAIE

**The Courtauld Institute of Art
22nd May 2019**

Organised in association with the Courtauld Institute of Art, in association with independent curator Vali Mahlouji.

Organised to coincide with Reza Aramesh's first solo museum exhibition in the United States at the Asia Society, the inaugural event in the series was very well received with 156 people registering online, and 98 attendees on the night. The event was free to attend and the event page on The Courtauld's website had 202 views, with 169 unique views.

Reza Aramesh was born in Iran and has been living in London since his teenage years. He holds a Masters in Fine Arts from Goldsmiths University, London (1997). Working in photography, sculpture, video and performance, Aramesh's profound understanding of the history of art, film and literature is ever present in his artwork. As a response to war reportage images from sources such as newspapers, online articles and social media, Aramesh de-contextualises scenes of historical and contemporary moments, exploring the narrative between the representation of subjected body, mythologising history as well as beauty in iconography. Reza Aramesh has exhibited in both solo and group



*Artist Reza Aramesh
in conversation with
Dr Sussan Babaie*

exhibitions, most recently at Met Breuer in New York (2018), SCAD Museum in Georgia Atlanta (2018), Akademie der Kunst Berlin (2016), the 2015 Venice Biennale, Art Basel Parcours 2017, Frieze Sculpture Park 2015 and 2017, and at Maxxi Museum in Rome (2016). He has orchestrated a number of performances and exhibitions in such spaces as at Barbican Centre, Tate Britain and ICA, London. His works have entered public and private collections worldwide including in Argentina, Germany, Lithuania, Poland, USA, France and Lebanon. The talk was filmed, however, at the request of Aramesh's studio we are not able to share the recording on social media.

SUSSAN DEYHIM: PERFORMANCE AND PRACTICE

**Sussan Deyhim in conversation with Dr Sussan
Babaie - The Courtauld Institute of Art
5th November 2019**

Organised in association with the Courtauld Institute of Art, in association with independent curator Vali Mahlouji.

In a packed lecture theatre at the Courtauld's temporary home at Vernon Square, Sussan Deyhim treated us to a retrospective of her work, presenting the audience with pieces from her illustrious and prolific career, and discussing her approach and philosophy of creative practice with Courtauld Reader in Arts of Iran and Islam Sussan Babaie and independent curator Vali Mahlouji. All present were moved by the powerful and varied art they saw, spanning from her early projects such as Azaks Attra in New York to her most recent work, drawing

on the poetry of Forough Farrokhzad, all while traversing multiple disciplines, in a confluence of music, dance, theatre and performance art. The accompanying discussion shed much light on the artist's philosophy and approach and at the drinks reception afterwards there was an opportunity for guests to mingle with the speakers and ask questions of Deyhim in person.



Artist Sussan Deyhim

PERSIAN CALLIGRAPHY, NASTA'LIQ SCRIPT

Organised in association with the Centre for Iranian Studies at SOAS

In October the Iran Heritage Foundation was delighted to partner with the Centre for Iranian Studies at SOAS to offer an eight-week course in Persian *Nasta'liq* calligraphy, led by Keramat Fathinia, a Persian calligrapher born in Iran who has been teaching calligraphy for over 17 years.



Keramat Fathinia
with Persian
calligraphy students

He received a distinguished certificate in both *Nasta'liq* and *Shekasteh Nasta'liq* styles from the Iranian Calligraphers Association (ICA) in Iran, and has had several exhibitions, workshops, and demonstrations in both Iran and London, including at SOAS, Cambridge University, BIPS (British Institute of Persian Studies), and the Courtauld Gallery.

The course saw students from a wide variety of backgrounds united, and, it must be said, at times frustrated, by the search for aesthetic perfection. Keramat guided all from a first introduction to the tools of the trade, how to dye paper and cut a reed pen, to the golden angles and proportions that give *Nasta'liq* script its effortless beauty, and the effort required to attain them. Each week the students present their week's practice to the teacher who closely marks the inconsistencies, where a tail has been pulled long, or the apex of a curve has gone awry. Then a new sentence is written by the master's hand, week by week demonstrating new letters, with careful exposition detailing the interrelations within the structure of each form (all proportions are derived from a single dot as drawn by the pen in hand). Finally the alphabet is covered and the students can request their own favourite lines of poetry with which to hone their eye.

We are pleased to say that the course has been such a success that it has continued into a second term of 10-weeks, with many returning students.

Course Organised by IHF



Dr Elizabeth Pendleton

An IHF Fellowship shared with the British Institute of Persian Studies (BIPS) enabled Elizabeth Pendleton to continue working part-time on the International Parthian Coin Project at the British Museum. This international research project, which is jointly directed by Dr Michael Alram (Vienna) and Dr Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis (London), has as its aim research on and the publication of Parthian coins of c. 248 BC – AD 224 in the coin cabinets of the British Museum, National Museum of Iran, Berlin, Paris, Vienna and the American Numismatic Society in New York.

Elizabeth has been working with the British Museum team for many years. Prior to the Parthian Coin Project she was a member of the Sasanian Coin Project, which resulted in two volumes of Sasanian coins in the National Museum of Iran, which were published in 2010 and 2012.

In the last year the British Museum team prepared the publication of Volume 2 in the *Sylloge Nummorum Parthicorum* (SNP) series, and at the same time began preparations for the next SNP volume on Mithradates III – Pacorus I (c. 53–38 BC). In the case of SNP 2, they studied some 7,000 coins of the Parthian king Mithradates II and used the information gained through detailed study of the coinage for a better understanding of Iranian culture and history in the second century BC. This is an important phase in the expansion and consolidation of the Parthian state into Mesopotamia (modern Iraq) and the beginning of political and territorial rivalry with Rome, in particular over the kingdom of Armenia.

They were able to establish a typology and chronology for the reign of Mithradates (Mehrdad) II, whose fairly long reign of almost 30 years is clearly marked by an attempt to move away from a Hellenised world introduced by Alexander and his successors in the former Persian empire, and to create an Iranised kingship based on pre-Hellenistic traditions of the Achaemenid Persians. For example, Mithradates II re-introduced the ancient title ‘King of kings’, which was used by the ancient Persian kings, and he appeared with the Iranian regalia of a tall hat, jacket and trousers.

Elizabeth’s work on Volume 4 of the SNP focuses on the coinage of a period in Iranian history, which marks the beginning of serious conflict with Rome, the other super power of the ancient world. Here, the team are dealing with some 10,000 coins which will help them to readdress important issues, such as the various mint centres, the distribution of coinage, and an examination of the coin iconography. As with Volume 2, they are entering all their findings into a bespoke database designed and run by a colleague in the US. It is planned to get the next volume, SNP 4, ready in 2023. All proceedings will be published by the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna.



Silver coin of Parthian king Orode II (57-38 BC)
© Trustees of the British Museum

Sarah Piram

Throughout 2019, the V&A welcomed researchers on Iranian art, with tours, study sessions and other events. In March, Norouz was celebrated at the V&A with a musical and dance performance from Iran and Central Asia. For the first time, this event was a dialogue between different cultures celebrating Norouz.

The museum has also been preparing *Epic Iran*, a major exhibition on Iranian art planned for October 2020. Co-curated by the V&A and IHF, this exhibition will shed light on 5,000 years of Iranian art and culture. Since Sarah Piram joined the V&A in 2018 as the IHF curator, she has been involved in various projects, including

the exhibition. At the V&A, Sarah organised an audit of Iranian textiles to improve their catalogue and provide greater visibility for the public. New Iranian acquisitions were also made, with contemporary Iranian ceramics made by Abbas Akbari, as well as prints made by Tarlan Rafiee which are on display until April 2020 in the V&A 'Cars' exhibition. In 2019, Sarah also gave various talks based on her PhD thesis about André Godard to IHF in London and also in Paris at the Louvre Museum and at the Sorbonne University. Sarah expresses gratitude to the late Jon Thompson with whom she started her research on carpets. She will continue to study them to honour his memory, but also for a better understanding and catalogue of the V&A collections.



Dr Ilse Sturkenboom

In Spring Semester 2019, Ilse Sturkenboom continued to teach on all undergraduate and on postgraduate levels in the Art History programmes in St Andrews and contributed to teaching in the History module 'Introduction to Middle Eastern History'. With two modules that centred around Persian manuscripts and the supervision of Master and PhD dissertations involving manuscripts, this Semester may well be called a 'book Semester'. She changed the structure of the module 'Approaches to Persian Painting and the Arts of the Book', which she first taught in 2018, to allow for intense lecturing in the first half of the Semester. Well prepared, she visited the British Library with her students in the second half of the Semester – a trip that was thankfully funded by the Iran Heritage Foundation. Each student closely studied one Persian manuscript and composed a research essay and a blog post in the following weeks. While the class trip was certainly the highlight of this module, they also had a very good time meeting in small groups during the second half of the Semester and discussing approaches and research questions specific to the essays students were drafting. In the team-taught postgraduate module 'The Book as Object and Idea' they also worked with original manuscripts and books in St Andrews Special Collections and in the National Library of Scotland. This module offers excellent opportunities to gain more knowledge about Persianate manuscripts in St Andrews, such as a Safavid *Shahnama* with later Indian illustrations and an illustrated 'Book of Wonders'.

Spring Semester 2019 was also an intense 'Equality & Diversity Semester' for Ilse. In the role of the School of Art History's Equality & Diversity Officer, she directed a group of colleagues and students in their 10,000-word application for an Athena SWAN Bronze award. The School of Art History received the Athena Swan Gender Equality Bronze Award in Autumn 2019, allowing the current EDI Committee to implement the Athena Swan Action Plan and to work towards greater equality, diversity and inclusion in their School.

Thanks to a Leverhulme Research Fellowship, she has been able to conduct research as part of her project about Persian manuscripts written on 'Chinese paper' during the Autumn Semester 2019. This involved a lot of travelling to collections and universities in Iran, Turkey,

Kuwait, China, Taiwan and the US to analyse manuscripts, present her research and discuss co-operation with colleagues. These five months have been incredibly fruitful and gave her much greater insight into the production techniques and use of these long, tinted and gold-decorated papers in China as well as their use and impact in Iran. During this period, her teaching in St Andrews was replaced by Dr Bilal Badat, who amongst others lectured about Islamic art in the first year's module in Art History and offered an Honours module on Ottoman art.

In 2020, she aims to continue her research on 'Chinese paper' and publish articles about this topic. She hopes to convene a workshop on Persianate manuscripts in St Andrews' 'Oriental Collection' in order to bring together scholars and (former) students who have worked on these manuscripts and publicise their knowledge and research. Professor Andrew Peacock (School of History, St Andrews) and Ilse will convene the first workshop of the research network *Sufi manuscript cultures, 1200-1800* in St Andrews on 25 and 26 September 2020. This research network is funded by the Royal Society of Edinburgh and supported by international research institutions and will yield more workshops in the next years. She will furthermore work on an exhibition of Iranian art and continues her teaching and supervision of undergraduate and postgraduate students.



Dr Ilse Sturkenboom's students in the postgraduate module 'The Book as Object and Idea' with Dr Emily Savage

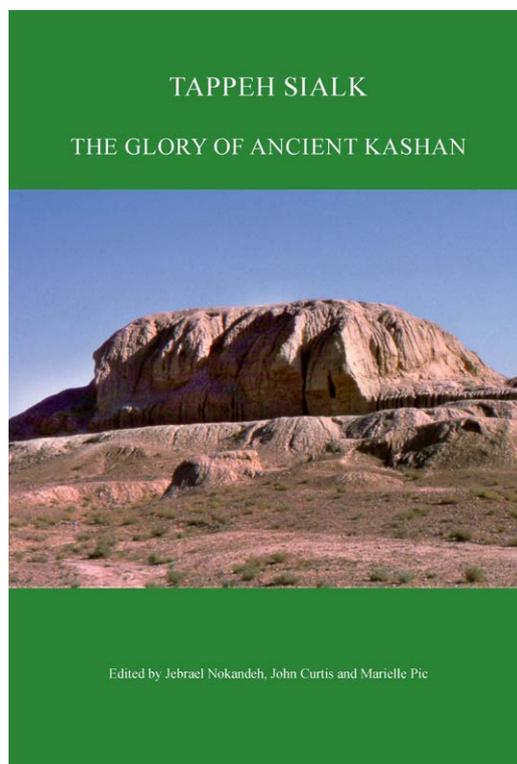
TAPPEH SIALK: THE GLORY OF ANCIENT KASHAN

Edited by Jebrael Nokandeh, John Curtis and Marielle Pic

This book presents a selection of the papers delivered at the two Tappeh Sialk conferences organised by IHF and held at Asia House in London on 31st March 2017 and 2nd-3rd July 2018.

Tappeh Sialk on the outskirts of modern Kashan is arguably the most important ancient site in Iran before the rise of the Persian Empire in 550 BC. Excavations here in the 1930s by a French team and by Iranian teams from 2000 onwards have cast light on the history of Iran from 6000 BC onwards, spanning the Neolithic, Chalcolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age periods. These results have been so significant that Tappeh Sialk has become a 'type-site' for Iranian archaeology and has provided a chronological framework against which other sites in Iran can be measured. In addition, the spectacular finds from two cemeteries at Sialk now grace museums in Tehran and Paris as well as in other parts of the world.

This book is published by the Iran Heritage Foundation (IHF Special Studies I). Copies are available from the distributor, contact@bourchier.org or +44 (0)1666 503242.

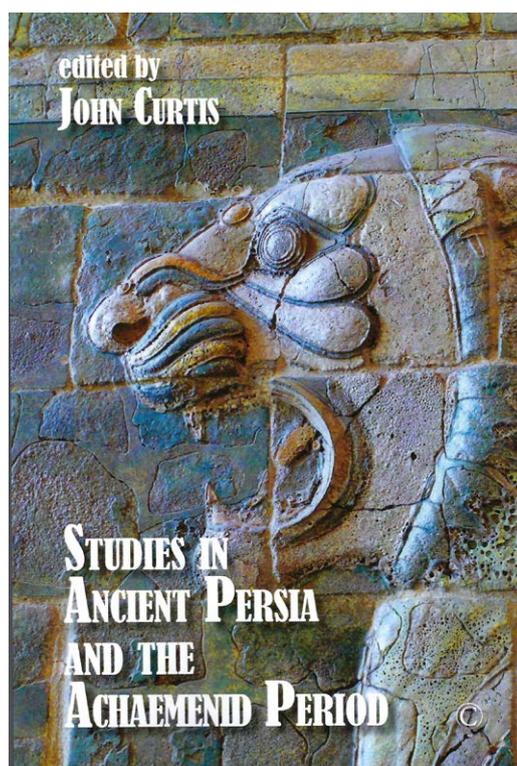


STUDIES IN ANCIENT PERSIA AND THE ACHAEMENID PERIOD

Edited by John Curtis

This book contains eight papers on various aspects of the Ancient Persian Empire as follows:- 'Five Unpublished Persepolis Relief Fragments in the Ashmolean Museum' by Paul Collins; 'Where Did the Persian Kings Live in Babylon?' by John Curtis; 'The Use of Seals in Babylonia under the Achaemenids' by Christopher Walker; 'An Iranian in the Court of King Nebuchadnezzar' by Alan Millard; 'Biblical Archaeology in the Persian Period' by Terence Mitchell; 'The Textual Connections between the Cyrus Cylinder and the Bible, with Particular Reference to Isaiah' by Shahrokh Razmjou; 'Interpreting Sasanian Beards: Significant Images in an Interconnected World' by Prudence Harper; 'Sasanian-Zoroastrian Intellectual Life in the Fifth and Sixth Centuries AD' by Mahnaz Moazami.

This book is published by James Clark & Co with a subvention from IHF. Copies are available from publishing@jamesclark.co.uk or +44 (0)1223-350865.



SYMPOSIA IRANICA

Fourth Biennial Conference on Iranian Studies - St Mary's College, St Andrews 12th-14th April 2019

Taking place at the University of St Andrews' third oldest College with 32 panels and 120 early career speakers hailing from 76 institutions of higher education in 24 countries, Symposia Iranica's Fourth Biennial Conference on Iranian Studies was the second largest event in the series.

Following 16 panels on topics ranging from a study of manuscripts to the multidisciplinary investigation of Pahlavi literature and a look at Iran during the British-Soviet occupation to an analysis of the status of cohabitation in Iranian law, the first day concluded with the Early Career Scholars' Q&A. The panellists were Professor Ali Ansari, Dr Sussan Babaie, Professor Robert Hillenbrand, and Dr Christine van Ruymbeke.

After nine and a half hours of conference, the day concluded with a dinner at local restaurant Vic St Andrews.

The second day of conference ended with a gala dinner for 120 in Lower College Hall, where £1,500 of best paper prizes were also awarded. It is gratifying that several new prizes were announced during the conference itself - Carole and Robert Hillenbrand have sponsored one; the Institute created one for modern literature; and Jane Lewisohn wished to establish a permanent prize in memory of Leonard Lewisohn, who participated in 2017.



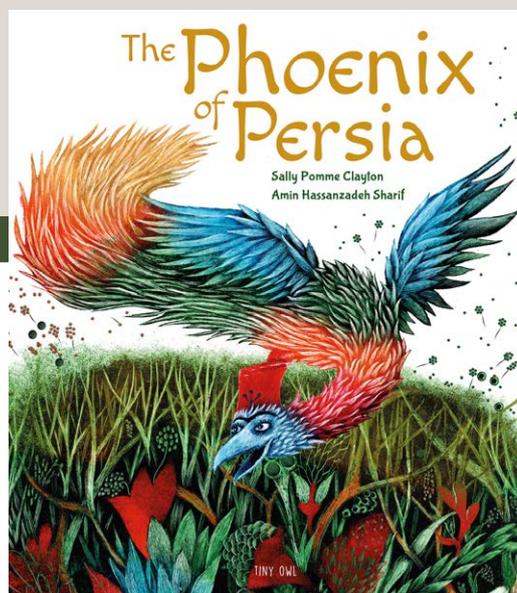
Conference photograph at University of St Andrews

THE PHOENIX OF PERSIA

Book launch and storytelling - The British Library 30th May 2019

In May, IHF supported the launch of a stunning new picture book by Sally Pomme Clayton entitled 'The Phoenix of Persia'. This book, colourfully illustrated by Amin Hassanzadeh Sharif, retells the story of Prince Zal and the Simorgh from Ferdowsi's Shahnameh.

In front of an excited audience at the British Library, Sally Pomme gave a spellbinding reading with the help of talented Iranian musicians Niloofar Habibian and Arash Moradi. Those present visibly enjoyed listening to this heart-warming story of family, forgiveness and love. The book recounts how Prince Zal is cruelly cast out into the wilderness by his father, King Sam, because he is born with white hair. The abandoned infant is swept up by a wise bird called the Simorgh and raised in its nest. Several years later the King is visited by a recurring nightmare that reminds him of his son's terrible fate. Experiencing crippling remorse he resolves



to go in search of his missing child. When he returns to the spot where he left his son, he discovers a powerfully-built and handsome young man. Zal forgives his father for leaving him in the wilderness, and the Simorgh, having offered Zal a handful of her magical feathers, advises him to return to the royal palace.

IHF hopes that 'The Phoenix of Persia' will be enjoyed by both Iranian families and the wider public. The book is now available to purchase from Tiny Owl Publishing and comes with an original musical composition.

GEOMETRY AND ART IN THE MODERN MIDDLE EAST: CONNECTING CULTURES

Symposium - Royal Academy of Arts 28th September 2019

Sponsored by IHF in association with The Courtauld Institute of Art and Sothebys

In this conference, celebrated artists Conrad Shawcross RA, Timo Nasserri and Mehdi Moutashar, as well as architect Marilu Sicoli of Foster & Partners, were moderated by Dr Sussan Babaie, Reader in Islamic Art at the Courtauld, and co-author with Sothebys' Roxane Zand, of the book *Geometry and Art in the Modern Middle East*.

Art Jameel prize-winner, Mehdi Moutashar, opened the session by discussing the use of Islamic grids and precise measurements in classical Arabic calligraphy, and how this informs his three-dimensional, sculptural pieces. Marilu Sicoli discussed the use of geometry in her practice, with particular references to the British Museum, The National Gallery in DC and the astounding new 700,000 square meter Kuwait airport, alongside German-Iranian artist Timo Nasserri, who is inspired by constellations, the celestial infinite, and the magic realist novel *The Library of Babel*, which opened a whole new perspective.

British artist Conrad Shawcross described his preoccupation with the tetrahedron, which he calls his 'unit' or 'brick', and the notions of time, entropy and disappearance as they relate to his 'fracture' sculptures among other topics. Of particular relevance was the East-West dialogue and interconnection of ideas and patterns, but also the more philosophical and possibly spiritual and emotional potentials of geometry, as interpreted in art forms and architecture.

From Sothebys website (www.sothebys.com/en/articles/exploring-geometry-in-middle-eastern-art-and-architecture-at-the-royal-academy), with kind permission of Roxane Zand.



Geometry and Art in
the Modern Middle East:
Connecting Cultures

28 September 2019

REPRESENTATION OF THE BATTLE OF KARBALA AS MURAL DECORATIONS ON RELIGIOUS BUILDING IN IRAN

Massoumeh Assemi

The grant awarded to Massoumeh Assemi went towards the cost of her trips to Paris to visit the Bibliothèque National de Paris (BNP) and to Rome to visit the Vatican Library. Her recently completed doctoral dissertation was on the Tekkiye Mu'avin al-Mulk in Kermanshah, Iran, a structure commissioned by a prominent member of the Qajar elite and purpose-built in 1905 for the popular performance of *ta'ziye*, a native form of theatre dealing with the events of the Battle of Karbala in 870, during which Hosayn the third Imam of Shii creed was martyred. The enormous popularity of *ta'zieh* during the 19th century allowed for expansion of the performance throughout the year. To breathe life into the monotony of the performances in a bid to hold the attention of the spectators, new plays based on the ordeals of each protagonist of the event of Karbala were devised for stage performance, going as far as including Qur'anic episodes bearing on the event.

The above mentioned libraries hold extensive number of such plays, 33 at BNP and 1220 at the Vatican Library, collected by European visitors to Persia, later donated to the said libraries. Studying these manuscripts reveal the popular appropriations of the visual and performative potentialities of the story of Karbala during the period. The grant by Iran Heritage Foundation provided Massoumeh with the opportunity to study a number of these manuscripts, which was helpful in tying up a number of loose ends in her dissertation, preparing it for publication. The material collected during the first trip to BNP, furthermore, allowed her to present a paper at the MEME Festival at the University of Kent on 15th June 2019.

MATERIALS AND TECHNOLOGIES IN THE AGE OF TRANSITION: THE BYZANTINE, SASANIAN AND ISLAMIC NEAR EAST- SYMPOSIUM

Moujan Matin

This grant was given to Moujan Matin to organise a symposium at Wolfson College, University of Oxford on *Materials and Technologies in the Age of Transition: The Byzantine, Sasanian and Islamic East* on 10th-11th July 2019. The symposium included eighteen speakers and chair panels from the UK, France, Greece, Denmark, and Germany who specialise in different artistic media from the Middle East, East Mediterranean, and North Africa. This one-and-a-half day symposium was divided into six main sessions: *Day 1*: i) Glass, ii) Ceramics, iii) Metallurgy; iv) Mining and Stonework; *Day 2*: v) Textiles, and vi) Manuscripts, with each session focusing on the development of materials during the transition from late antiquity to Islam. Each session featured lectures by two invited speakers and a discussion panel facilitated by the panel chair. The symposium received excellent participation with approximately 70 attendees, 12 presentations and engaging and productive

discussions. The symposium was the first of its kind, bringing together experts from different disciplines of archaeology, archaeological sciences, and history to discuss the subject. The event provided a rare opportunity to address the development of materials and technologies from various perspectives considering the major effects of the Byzantine-Islamic transition and proposed various frameworks for collaboration across fields that rarely interact. The event was audio-recorded and all the recordings of presentations are available on the Khalili Research Centre website.

FIELDWORK ON PORTRAITS OF NĀDIR SHĀH

Janet O'Brien

The grant awarded to Janet O'Brien enabled her to travel to the United States in April 2019 for ten days to visit institutions in three cities on the East Coast: the Freer Sackler and the Library of Congress in Washington DC, the Museum of Fine Arts Boston and the Harvard Art Museums in Boston, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art and Public Library in New York. Her doctoral project "Vision of a World Conqueror: Nādir Shāh (r. 1736-47) and the Emerging Body in Persian Royal Portraiture" requires her to undertake field

trips to study artworks and archives. She was able to examine numerous Persian and Mughal portraits of Nādir Shāh, Sasanian silver-gilt plates, illustrations in the *Jāmi' al-Tawārīkh*, the *Ẓafarnāma*, and the *Shahnama*, portraits of Qajar royals on paper, oil canvas and lacquerwork, individual portraits by Safavid painters such as Rizā 'Abbāsī, textiles and weapons at the different institutions and discuss these with their respective curators. She hopes to put forward a new understanding of the shah's body and a new way of seeing and thinking about Persian royal portraits.

MUSHAIRA ACROSS THE PERSIANATE WORLD

Aeron O'Connor

The grant awarded to Aeron O'Connor gave her the possibility to conduct an in-depth research on *mushaira*, a topic that is under-researched in contemporary Central Asian studies, but that will contribute to the fields of anthropology, comparative literature and regional studies. She was able to travel across Tajikistan, explore the historical and contemporary practice of *mushaira* poetry competitions, collect people's accounts of *mushaira* competitions, and find audio-visual recordings of these poetry competitions from Soviet times. *Mushaira* is a centuries-old literary practice that has been an important link across territories that today speak different

languages and have different national and ethnic identities: this poetry competition highlights commonalities across these diverse places, such as shared literary aesthetics and literary tropes. The literary history of modern-day Tajikistan is very under-researched and this project helps link it to the literary history of the wider Persianate world, as well as identify unique, locally-specific developments in its recent and contemporary literary practices. In the future, she plans to highlight this literary connectivity between Central and South Asia, and how Soviet-era developments in Tajik literary life contributed to continued exchange and contact across the wider Persianate world.

CONNECTED COURTS: ART OF THE SOUTH ASIAN SULTANATES WORKSHOP - WOLFSON COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

Emily Shovelton

The grant was given to Emily Shovelton to organise a workshop on *Connected Courts: Art of the South Asian Sultanates* which took place in Oxford on 20-21 September 2019. The grant allowed her to fund the travel and accommodation for all the speakers, who travelled from France, Lebanon, UK and USA, and she was also able to invite a small number of guests. The symposium focused on the material culture of the South Asian sultanates, concentrating primarily on the arts of the book. To date there has been no other conference focused exclusively on this subject. Moreover, there have been a number of publications focused on the later Deccani sultanates, so another of the aims was to integrate studies on Deccani material with research on

material culture from sultanate states elsewhere in South Asia. Alongside the papers on arts of the book, the workshop was enlivened by scholars presenting research on architecture, literature and history which helped create a wider framework for an examination on the inter-relationships of the sultanates and how they were part of global networks. It is hoped that future collaborations might continue a cross-discipline analysis of the role of material culture in forging alliances and rivalries in the sultanate world. The workshop achieved the aim of bringing together scholars working in the same field that otherwise have limited possibilities to communicate or work together. There is currently a discussion with the Royal Asiatic Society on the production of a special issue dedicated to all the papers delivered at the workshop.

CRITICAL EDITION OF ALLAHYAR BILGRAMI'S GEOGRAPHICAL WORK

Farshad Sonboldel

An interesting but as not yet studied geographical work, is a copy preserved in the department of Special Collections of the University of St Andrews. The manuscript known by the name of its scribe Allahyar Bilgrami's (18th-19th century), is written in Persian and is the first to introduce the 'New World' to the Muslims. The significance of the manuscript lies in an epistle written by Captain Jonathan Scott's (1754-1829), as requested by the author (subsequently translated) describing characteristics of the countries and nations that he considers the 'New World', i.e. Europe and

Americas, which as yet had not formed part of the Islamic geographical works.

The aim of the project has been to study the work in detail, to edit and annotate the original text to facilitate further studies and to write an analytical introduction to the text clarifying its cultural and historical significance. The grant provided by Iran Heritage Foundation has so far allowed Farshad Sonboldel to annotate the original text of the manuscript, gathering sufficient material for writing the analytical introduction, part of which be presented in a workshop running by the Special Collections Division of the University of St Andrews in May 2020.

CATALOGUING AND CONSERVING THE JOHN RYLANDS COLLECTION OF PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS

John Rylands Library

This grant was given to John Rylands Library in Manchester towards the cost of employing a Research Associate for cataloguing the Persian collection. John 'Jake' Benson was appointed and will start on 20th January 2020. He is an extremely experienced and gifted scholar and researcher in Persian Studies. Jake completed his undergraduate degree in Persian Studies with minors in Middle East Studies and Art History at the University of Maryland. He was then appointed to help catalogue an extensive backlog of Persian-language acquisitions at the university which was the beginning of his training in this area. Jake's initial studies and training

enabled him to pursue further investigations on Persian manuscripts, among them a recently co-published essay on Deccani seal impressions co-authored with Dr Keelan Overton. He and Dr Overton both worked closely with Ursula Sims-Williams to identify and select the various impressions preserved in the British Library collections spanning the Bahmani, Nizam Shahi, 'Adil Shahi, and Qutb Shahi Sultanates. Jake has also studied historical Persian literature ranging from poetry to prose, as well as modern interpretive works by historians and literary critics. He has professional experience in Cairo working with the rich Islamic manuscript collections of the National Library of Egypt. He has completed a PhD in Persian Studies at the University of Leiden.

ST ANDREWS UNIVERSITY STUDENTS' BLOGS ON PERSIAN MANUSCRIPTS IN THE BRITISH LIBRARY, LONDON

Ilse Sturkenboom

This grant was given to Ilse Sturkenboom to organise a four day trip for twelve students to the British Library who were enrolled in the Module *Approaches to Persian Painting and the Arts of the Book*, which was on offer to St Andrews University students in Spring Semester 2019. The project *St Andrews students' blogs on illustrated Persian manuscripts in the British Library, London* was an integrated part of this module. The aims of this project have been to introduce students to the research of original Persian manuscripts in the British Library, to encourage them to actively engage with research questions and to support them in producing two original

pieces of writing about a single manuscript: a research essay and a blog post. The manuscripts studied by the students ranged in time from a 14th-century *Kalila wa Dimna* manuscript to an illustrated manuscript of the *Shahanshahnama* dated 1810. The students chose wide-ranging and original focusses in their essays and blog posts including text-image relations, colour symbolism, the role of illumination, the influence of Sufism on manuscript illustration, page layouts, representations of women, sex scenes, copying practices, provenance and the defacing of painted figures. The students thought of the field trip as a great experience and believe it has increased their ability to conduct research.

BEAUTY MASKS - AN ARTISTIC LOOK BASED ON THE PRACTICE OF PLASTIC SURGERY IN IRAN AND ITS EMOTIONAL TRAUMA

Shirin Fathi

The grant was given to Shirin Fathi to create a new body of work that focuses on the conception of beauty in relation to the practice of cosmetic surgery; it helped her build a series of silicon masks, an installation that consists of a pile of different body fragments and a series of sculptural collages. Cosmetic surgery is still paradoxical as it promotes control and enforces conformity at the same time. She believes it

is difficult to reconcile corporeal needs like “feeling desirable” or “special” with collective aspirations for an all-encompassing notion of beauty. In her new work, she will be navigating these contradictions. In December 2019, Khoj International Artist Association and the Goethe Institute in New Delhi invited her to present this research as part of a curatorial fellowship programme and she hopes to exhibit her work in London and Toronto in 2020.

EDINBURGH IRANIAN FESTIVAL

Sara Kheradmand

The grant awarded to Sara Kheradmand was used towards the costs of organising the Edinburgh Iranian Festival which was held 1st-8th March 2019 in Edinburgh, a biennial festival which aims to increase the understanding of Iranian culture, rich history, people and contemporary cultural life through art, music and food. The main objectives of the festival are to curate a non-political, non-religious biennial festival, showcasing the best of Iranian culture and history to Scottish residents and Iranian ex-pats alike, to provide a platform for new and upcoming artists and encourage interaction between British and Iranian artists, performers and historians, to increase understanding of, and discussion about, Iranian culture/heritage and the Iranian people, and to build new and strengthen existing relationships

between the Scottish and Iranian people.

The festival included musical performances by numerous groups and artists including a Persian Celtic fusion performance, talks and workshops on different topics including contemporary Iranian literature, Iranian textiles and jewellery and the Iranian bagpipe. The event also included a bazaar with Iranian crafts and a fashion show, an Iranian cookery demonstration, a book launch of Iranian contemporary short stories, and a photography exhibition.

‘Affairs of the heart between men and women in Iranian cinema’ which was curated by Fatemeh Motamed Arya, an icon of Iranian cinema with Dr Nacim Pak-Shiraz (University of Edinburgh) screened nine feature films and seven short films and was another highlight of the festival.

THE SPARK IS YOU

Parasol Unit

The grant given to Parasol Unit was used towards the costs of organising two exhibitions in London and Venice. Parasol unit foundation for contemporary art presented *Nine Iranian Artists in London: THE SPARK IS YOU* (22 May - 8 September), a group exhibition of works by contemporary Iranian artists, Morteza Ahmadvand, Nazgol Ansarinia, Ghazaleh Hedayat, Sahand Hesamiyan, Koushna Navabi, Navid Nuur, Sam Samiee, Hadi Tabatabai, and Hossein Valamanesh whose vision looks beyond the ordinary. The exhibition ran concurrently with *THE SPARK IS YOU: Parasol unit in Venice* (9 May - 23 November), which also presented the work of nine Iranian artists, some of whom already had pieces in the London presentation and which continued with the significant themes of exchange and

dialogue. The exhibitions coincided with the 200th anniversary of *West-östlicher Diwan (West-Eastern Diwan)*, 1819, a book of lyrical poems written by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe in homage to the fourteenth-century Persian poet Hafez and included paintings, sculptures, photographs, multimedia, installations and film, focusing primarily on early- and mid-career artists who live either in Iran or elsewhere in an adopted country. A sense of duality exists within their works, with concepts stemming from private and collective experiences manifested either figuratively or in the abstract. Living and working in disparate parts of the world, each of the artists responds uniquely to modern society, yet a common heritage of poetry, evident in their use of metaphor and parable, runs through all their works. The exhibitions were well received with good reviews and feature in art publications and major newspapers and magazines.

PUBLICATION OF PHOTOGRAPHIC BOOK 'OFF SCREEN'

Grants

Mitra Tabrizian

The grant was given to Mitra Tabrizian for the production of a new photographic book 'Off Screen' written by the grant recipient. The book addresses marginality, migration and the impact of the financial crisis, with essays by some of the most prominent writers on contemporary photography; Parveen Adams, David Bate, Oliver Richon, and a contribution from the Booker prize winner, Ben Okri.

The book starts with the latest project entitled 'Film Stills' (2018) which is inspired by the debut feature film 'Gholam' (also supported by IHF) and ends up with the actual stills from the film and hence indicating the relation between film and photography. The book contains all the works since 2012, and was published by Kerber Verlag in October 2019, one of the best-known publishers in contemporary art, photography and cultural history. With a vast distribution network and with more than 30 representations, their books are marketed in over 85 countries. 'Off Screen' was first launched in the Frankfurt book fair in October and then Paris Photo in November followed in London at the Coronate Theatre and the British Museum.

THE SOVEIDA HARP

Amir Sadeghi Konjani

The grant awarded to Amir Sadeghi Konjani enabled him to design and finish the Soveida harp and subsequently perform twice with the London Symphony Orchestra in May and November 2019. He had previously established a mechanism called 'Shadowing' where instruments are linked together using springs and therefore resonating in sympathy with one

another. He believed he could use the same mechanism within a single instrument so that different parts of its body would resonate with others. The Soveida harp was inspired by images of lilies, rib cages and an ancient Persian form of the harp called a Chang. The harp projects most of its notes through its wide tentacles, spatialising the field of sound so as to produce a kind of stereo. He describes his Soveida harp as a performing sculpture.

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