



Charles-Henri de Fouchécour, University of Paris III, Sorbonne Nouvelle  
Bert Fragner, Austrian Academy of Sciences  
Jo-Ann Gross, The College of New Jersey  
Edmund Herzig, Oxford University  
Manouchehr Kasheff, Columbia University (Associate Editor)  
Irina Koshoridze, National Museum of Georgia  
Robert McChesney, New York University  
Rudi Matthee, University of Delaware  
Charles P. Melville, Cambridge University  
Sheldon Pollock, Columbia University  
Hasan Rezai Baghbidi, University of Tehran  
Sunil Sharma, Boston University  
Ishtiyaq Ahmad Zilli, Aligarh Muslim University

This year, we have three positions open on the Board of Directors. You will find biographies of the candidates in the following pages. At the end of October you will receive an electronic ballot. Please return it within a week so that we can announce the results at the annual business meeting, which will be held at the MESA yearly meeting in Montreal on Saturday, November 17. Please come to the meeting with ideas and suggestions. It will be held at Palais des congrès, 512F. A reception will follow from 7:00-8:30 pm at the Hyatt Regency Hotel, Auteuil A.

At this year's MESA yearly meeting, ASPS is sponsoring a Thematic Conversation entitled, "Building Linkages between Civil Society and Constitutionalism in Iran," which will be continued next year. Mirjam Künkler is the organizer, Mehrzad Boroujerdi, the chair. You will find the details below under ASPS at MESA 2007.

The grant for our Travel Fellowship Program continues in its second year, and we have every hope of replenishing our Central Eurasia Research Fund (CERF), which is included in a larger pending grant proposal.

Saïd Amir Arjomand

### **Third ASPS Biennial Convention Tbilisi, Georgia 8-11 June 2007**

ASPS held a very successful Third Biennial Convention in Tbilisi, Georgia over three days from 8-11 June 2007. Scholars from 13 countries read their reports in various fields pertinent to the study of the Persianate world, which embraces a good part of West Asia, the Subcontinent, Central Asia, and of course the Caucasus.

As you know, we originally scheduled the third convention to be held in Lahore. Because of logistical problems, the convention was convened in Tbilisi instead.

Tbilisi is an historical, cultural, and stunning city. The Georgian scholars of Iranian Studies are active in such highly regarded scientific institutions as the Institute of Oriental Studies, the Georgian Academy of Sciences, the Tbilisi State University, as well as the city's richly decorated museums.

The role Georgians played in Persian history continued down to the Persian Constitutional Revolution period in the early twentieth century. This remarkable historical experience with the Georgians has left a significant impression on Persian geography, culture, and collective memory. There remain several Georgian-speaking villages in the mountainous district of Faridan, east of Isfahan. (We were grateful to have a scholar from this Perso-Georgian community participating in this convention.) The Safavid capital, Isfahan, boasts among her architectural monuments the celebrated one 33-span bridge built by, and named after, Allahverdi Khan, the Georgian marshal of Shah Abbas the Great. Several public places in Isfahan are named after the prominent Georgian leaders such as Emamqoli Khan, Davud Khan, and Rostam Khan, just to name a few.

Not only Isfahan, but also other parts of Persia have remnants of the Georgian presence in the country. For instance, Mazandaran is dotted with toponyms such as Gorgi-mahalla, Gorjikalā, and Gorgi-kheyl, which can be traced back to the Georgians who were forced to resettle onto the Caspian littoral by the Safavids. Reza Shah, the founder of the Pahlavi dynasty, was from a Georgian mother residing in one of these *gorji* villages. Moreover, Gorji is a common family name in Iran. On the whole, the Georgians and Georgia are considered anything but alien to the Iranian public, so much so that many people hold the wrong notion that *Gorjestan* is a Persian-speaking land.

Many aspects of this historical dialogue between the two nations were discussed in this Convention.

This civilizational background has compelled us to extend post-Convention ASPS activities into Georgia by means of a new branch office to be located in Tbilisi. The ideal base for the Branch Office is the Institute of Oriental Studies, which is the leading academic center of Iranian Studies in Georgia. The provisional board of ASPS, Georgia, inspires great confidence as well. It will consist of leading members of the local scholarly community, including Professors Jemshid Guinashvili, Grigol Beradze, and George Sanikidze. The inauguration ceremony was held on June 11 at the concluding event of the Convention.

ASPS conventions have continued to add an important dimension to the ASPS mission of providing a forum for scholarly exchange in all Persianate countries and among all scholars who are engaged in scholarship concerning Persianate societies. We add our experiences in Tbilisi to those of previous conventions held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan in September 2002, and in Yerevan, Armenia, in 2004. We are looking forward to a 2008 Fourth Biennial Convention in Lahore, Pakistan.

Habib Borjian  
Chair of Organizing Committee  
ASPS Third Biennial Convention

## Stony Brook Institute for Global Studies and Symposium on Iran

The Stony Brook Institute for Global Studies will be inaugurated this semester. Its two Directors are Wolf Schäfer and Saïd Amir Arjomand. Because the initial focus of the Institute will be Global Regions of the World, we shall begin with the Persianate world in a one-day symposium entitled, "Building Linkages Between Civil Society and Constitutional Democracy in Iran." The symposium will be held at Stony Brook Manhattan, 110 E. 28<sup>th</sup> Street (between Park Avenue South and Lexington Avenue) on Thursday, November 15, 2007 from 2:00-6:45 PM. The Panelists are Ardechir Amir-Arjomand, Shahid Beheshti University; Houchang Chehabi, Boston University; Kaveh Ehsani, University of Illinois at Chicago; Mirjam Künler, Princeton University; Ali Rezaei, University of Calgary; and Fatemeh Sadeghi, University of Tehran.

## Elections

ASPS would like to express deep thanks to its outgoing board members, Janet Afary, Colin Mitchell, and Jo-Ann Gross. Dr. Gross, as director of CERF, remains on the board as an *ex-officio* member.

Ballots for the election of three ASPS members to the board of directors will be sent out electronically at the end of October. **We ask all to submit votes within one week.** Last year we created a mailbox to which Maria Morisseau of the History Department of UMD, who assists in the production of the Newsletter, had sole access. We anticipate following the same system this year.

Below are the biographies of candidates who kindly agreed to serve if elected:

**Rula Jurdi Abisaab**, Associate Professor of Islamic History, Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University. She is also director of graduate studies at the Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University. Prof. Abisaab graduated from Yale University Department of History in 1998. In 2007 she received a Canada Social Science and Humanities Research Grant to study the *akhbari* movement both as a critical development in Shi'ite legal theory and jurisprudence and as an important feature of Safavid social history. She is currently co-authoring a book with Malek Abisaab on Hizbullah and the Shi'ites of modern Lebanon (Stanford University Press). Her first book was *Converting Persia: Religion and Power in the Safavid Empire, 1501-1736* (London: I. B. Tauris, 2004). Prof. Abisaab's dissertation received "Honorable Mention" for Best Dissertation of the Year from the Society for Iranian Studies (1998). She also received an "Outstanding Achievement Early Career Award" (2002). Among her articles are one currently in revision for the *British Journal of Middle Eastern Studies* on the Shi'ite *marja'iyah/marja'iyat* in the late 20th Century; "History and Self-Image: the 'Amili 'ulama in Syria and Iran (Fourteenth to Sixteenth Century)," and "The Cleric as 'Organic Intellectual': Revolutionary Shi'ism in the Lebanese

*Hawzas*," in *Distant Relations: Iran and Lebanon in the last 500 years*, ed. Houchang Chehabi (Oxford: Centre for Lebanese Studies & I.B. Tauris, 2006), 62-95 and 231-258, respectively; "New Ropes for Royal Tents: Shaykh-i Baha'i and the Imperial Order of Shah 'Abbas (996/1038-1587-1629), *Studies on Persianate Societies*, 1(2003): 29-56. She has also written a number of book chapters and encyclopedia entries relating to Safavid Persia, and Twelver Shi'ite thought and social history.

**Shahzad Bashir**, Associate Professor of Religious Studies at Stanford University. Prof. Bashir works on the intellectual and social history of Iran, Central and Southern Asia with a focus on Sufism and Shi'ism. His research has been supported by fellowships from the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Council of Learned Societies. He is the author of *Messianic Hopes and Mystical Visions: The Nur-bakhshiya Between Medieval and Modern Islam* (2003) and *Fazlallah Astarabadi and the Hurufis* (2005). His current major projects are books entitled *Bodies of God's Friends: Sufism and Society in Medieval Islam* (a study in religious history focusing on corporeal themes) and *Baha' ad-Din Naqshband: Hagiographic Portraits of a Sufi Saint from Bukhara* (a translation and study of 15th-century narratives dedicated to a Sufi master).

**Parvaneh Pourshariati**, Assistant Professor of Islamic and Iranian Studies in the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures at Ohio State University, as well as associate faculty member in religious studies in the Department of Comparative Studies and member of the Graduate Interdisciplinary Program in *Religions of the Ancient Mediterranean World* at OSU. Prof. Pourshariati is also Coordinator of the Persian and Islamic Studies programs. She received her BA in sociology from New York University and her M. Phil. and PhD. degrees in history from Columbia University. Her doctoral dissertation, "Iranian Tradition in Tus and the Arab Presence in Khurasan," (Columbia University, 1995) won honorable mention in the Foundation of Iranian Studies dissertation prize. Her book, *Decline and Fall of the Sasanian Empire: the Sasanian/Parthian Confederacy and the Arab Conquest of Iran*, is forthcoming in February 2008 (I. B. Tauris). Her articles have appeared in *Studia Iranica*, *Journal of Iranian Studies*, and *Res Orientalis*, among others. She is currently working on early medieval Iranian history, pre-modern popular romances of the Iranian world, and Mihr worship. She is a member of *Mondes iraniens et indiens* of the CNRS in Paris and is on the editorial board of the *Bulletin of Ancient Iranian History*. Prof. Pourshariati was instrumental in establishing MESA's *Houshang Pourshariati Iranian Studies Book Award*, in memory of her father, journalist Houshang Pourshariati.

**Sunil Sharma**, Senior Lecturer, Department of Modern Languages and Comparative Literature at Boston University. Prof. Sharma received his Ph.D. from the University of Chicago in Persian Language and Literature. Previously he was the Persian Bibliographer at Harvard University's Widener Library and Junior Fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin. He is the author of two books: *Persian Poetry at the Indian Frontier: Masud Sad Salman of Lahore*, 2000, of which a

Persian translation is in press in Tehran; and *Amir Khusraw: The Poet of Sultans and Sufis*, 2005; he has also published a number of scholarly articles on Persian literature and has translated poems and short stories from Persian, Tajik and Urdu. Currently he is working on Persianate travel writing and biographical dictionaries.

### Current *Ex-Officio* Board Members

**Habib Borjian** received his academic training in the fields of engineering and humanities and has taught and published in both fields. He began taking graduate courses in Iranian Studies at Columbia University while completing his postgraduate work in solid-state mechanics in the late 1980s. He continued his study of Iranian languages at the University of Tehran and Yerevan State University, where he earned master and doctorate degrees, respectively (1997, 2004). His research interests in Iranian studies include languages and dialects, historical geography, Central Asia and the Caucasus, history of the Eurasian Steppes, history of science and technology, and Persian literature. His articles on these subjects have appeared in journals and collected works, including *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, to which he is a regular contributor. His book reviews, often comprehensive, surpass forty in number, and his own books are *Orthography of Iranian Languages* (2000) and *The Median Dialects of Isfahan* (forthcoming), both in Persian. Borjian's current research includes documentation of the northwestern Iranian languages, especially those at the verge of disappearance.

**Rosemary Stanfield-Johnson** has been Assistant Professor of Religious History at University of Minnesota Duluth since 2002. She received her Ph.D. in 1993 in Near Eastern Languages & Literatures (now Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies) at New York University. Her research interests in Iranian studies include early Safavid history; polemic; religion and politics; and recently, popular romances. Her articles on these subjects have appeared in journals and edited works, including *Muraqqa'e Sharqi*, a volume in honor of Peter Chelkowski (AIEP Editore S.r.l., 2007). She is currently working on a book on polemic and the public square in early Safavid Iran. Prof. Stanfield-Johnson is currently the editor of the ASPS newsletter.

### Travel Fellowship Program

Our Travel Fellowship Program is supported by a generous grant from the Open Society Institute through 2008. We are currently accepting applications for travel fellowships.

**Qualifications:** Applicants from Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan who are engaged in teaching or research in the humanities or social sciences, and have a formal invitation or acceptance of a paper from an academic institution or sponsors of a conference in the United States, may submit (1) a letter explaining the research, the title of the paper, and details of the conference; (2) a letter of acceptance from the conference, and; (3) a *curriculum vitae* to:

Houchang Esfandiari Chehabi  
Professor of International Relations and History  
Department of International Relations  
Boston University  
154 Bay State Road #401  
Boston, Massachusetts 02215  
[chehabi@bu.edu](mailto:chehabi@bu.edu)

**Please Note:** The Travel Fellowship Program will reimburse only against original receipts for expenses including travel, lodging, meals, and conference registration. The limit is \$3,000. Those who receive travel fellowships agree to write a report of their travel and to submit a copy of the paper delivered.

### *Studies on Persianate Societies*

Your issue of *Studies on Persianate Societies* should be in your hands by the time you receive this Newsletter. Because ASPS has strived for regular and timely delivery of its journal, together with a greater reach to the academic community through library subscriptions, two goals that have not been achieved through past and present publishers, we have decided to place our journal in the hands of a new publisher. A contract has been signed with Brill for the publication of a new journal, which will commence in 2008.

The new publication, *Journal of Persianate Studies*, is to be a regular interdisciplinary academic journal for the benefit of ASPS members. It will be published twice a year in two issues of 128 pages each.

ASPS welcomes papers from members and other scholars for the *Journal of Persianate Studies*. Please send your submissions to:

Said Amir Arjomand, Editor-in-Chief  
[said.arjomand@ston Brook.edu](mailto:said.arjomand@ston Brook.edu)

### ASPS at MESA 2007

#### Schedule of Meetings

Business Meeting, Saturday, 11/17, 2:00-3:00 pm, Palais-512F  
Board Meeting, Saturday, 11/17, 3:00-4:00 pm, Palais-512G  
**ASPS Reception, Saturday, 11/17, 7:00-8:30 pm, Hyatt-Auteuil A**

Editorial Board Meeting, *Journal of Persianate Studies*, Sunday, 11-18, 12:30-2:00 pm, Hyatt-Auteuil A

#### Panel at MESA 2007

Thematic Conversation: (TC004) - Building Linkages between Civil Society and Constitutionalism in Iran

Monday, November 19 from 2:30-4:30 pm

Discussion Leader: Mehrzad Boroujerdi, Syracuse University  
Kaveh Ehsani, University of Illinois at Chicago  
Ali Rezaei, Calgary University  
Ardeshir Amir Arjomand, UNESCO, Iran  
Fateme Sadeghi, University of Tehran, Iran

This thematic conversation has been organized to bring Iranian civil society leaders from different organizational and ideological backgrounds together to discuss how linkages can be built between different arenas of civil society activism. The thematic conversation has been developed from panels on similar concerns held at two previous MESA sessions: at MESA 2003, *The Internet in Iran: A Sociological Perspective*, and at MESA 2006, *Reforming Iran's Theocratic State*.

The thematic conversation planned for this year shall be followed at MESA 2008 by another thematic conversation that looks at the topic from a comparative angle: *Civil Society and Constitutionalism in Iran and Egypt*.

After the MESA Annual Meetings of 2007 and 2008, participants of the thematic conversations will be invited, for a follow-up conference at the Stony Brook Institute for Global Studies (SBIGS), New York, also sponsored by ASPS.

Both thematic conversation participants of 2007 and 2008, as well as SBIGS conference participants shall meet and conclude their work in 2009 at a final conference to be held at the International Institute for Sociology of Law in Onati, Spain.

Two edited volumes are expected to emerge from the two thematic conversations.

### Member News and Announcements

**Touraj Daryaee**, Ph.D. UCLA, 1999, has been appointed Baskerville Professor of Iranian History of the Persianate World.

**Hamideh Sedghi**, *Women and Politics in Iran: Veiling, Unveiling, and Reveiling* Cambridge University Press, July 2007. Please contact the author at: [hsedghi@fas.harvard.edu](mailto:hsedghi@fas.harvard.edu)

**Rosemary Stanfield-Johnson**, Ph.D. NYU, has been appointed to the graduate faculty of the Center for Medieval Studies, University of Minnesota, Twin Cities campus.

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**New Iranian Studies Book Series in French:** Les Presses de l'Université Laval is pleased to announce the creation of a new book series: *Collection études iraniennes*. Submissions of scholarly manuscripts in French are invited on all topics related to Iranian history, culture and society. Les Presses de l'Université Laval ([www.pulaval.com](http://www.pulaval.com)) is the premier French-language scholarly publisher in North America, distributed in France and throughout the francophone world. Please direct all queries and submissions to:

**Richard Foltz**, Directeur  
Collection études iraniennes  
Dépt. des sciences de la religion  
Université Concordia  
1455 de Maisonneuve O., R-302  
Montréal (Qc) H3G 1M8, Canada  
e-mail: [rfoltz@alcor.concordia.ca](mailto:rfoltz@alcor.concordia.ca)

**Habib Borjian**, secretary-treasurer and board member of ASPS, in his trip to Tajikistan last March was admitted to the International Society of the Tajiks and Persian Speakers (*Anjumani tojikonu forsizabononi jihon*, ATFJ). ATFJ is headed by the president of the Republic and holds yearly meetings in the fall. During several public speeches and two television interviews, Dr. Borjian introduced ASPS to the Tajik public and explained its activities and goals. Participation of an ASPS member in the annual congresses of ATFJ is crucial to establishing and maintaining ties between the two societies, which share the goal of bringing together scholars conducting research on Persianate societies.

### The Central Eurasia Research Fund (CERF)

ASPS is happy to announce that we are now accepting CERF grant applications. The deadlines for receipt of electronic submissions are January 15, 2008 and June 15, 2008. The dates of the announcement of awards are March 1, 2008 and August 1, 2008. The award period is for one year.

CERF grants support research and publications concerning Persianate culture by individual scholars from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, and North-west China.

*Eligibility:* a minimum degree equivalent to a B.A. Grantees may only reapply for a CERF Grant after five years from the receipt of a previous CERF award.

Grants *do not exceed US \$1500* and provide funding for the following:

- Book or monograph publication costs (includes translations from English)
- Technical equipment necessary for specific research projects, such as computers, printers, scanners, voice recorders, or digital cameras
- Travel expenses for archival research that will result in a scholarly publication

*Selection:* Awards made twice a year. An ASPS evaluation committee reviews applications. Every effort is made to provide regional balance in the distribution of grants based on:

- Importance of the topic
- Academic merit of the proposed project
- Demonstrated career commitment to the field
- Feasibility of the project
- Potential impact of the research
- Adequate academic and professional experience of the candidate

CERF candidates must submit an electronic application in MS Word format to the Director of the CERF program, Dr. Jo-Ann Gross, at [gross@tcnj.edu](mailto:gross@tcnj.edu) with the following required information:

1. Name and address, email address, fax number
2. Place and date of birth
3. Citizenship
4. Institutional name and address
5. Research field or discipline
6. Highest degree obtained

7. Title and description of research proposal (1-2 pages) that includes objectives and potential impact of research and/or publication
8. Budget (included detailed account of specific expenses)

Please keep a copy of the application requirements for your records and check off each category prior to application submission. Incomplete applications will be invalidated.

*Award and Final Report:* Grant recipients must submit a written report and two copies of any publication resulting from the award within two months of the award completion period. The report must include the following:

- Name of project and objectives
- Extent to which the objectives were met
- Impact of project
- Receipts of all expenses

Final reports, including receipts of all expenses, must be remitted at the end of the project period in order for the Research Fund to meet its own internal accounting requirements that ensure the Research Fund's continued operation.

## Conferences and Exhibitions

### *Call for Panels and Individual Abstracts*

The **Fourth ASPS Convention** is tentatively scheduled for December 27-30, 2008 in Lahore, Pakistan. Please send all ideas for panels and individual abstracts to:

Dr. S. A. Arjomand  
[said.arjomand@stonybrook.edu](mailto:said.arjomand@stonybrook.edu)

Dr. Rosemary Stanfield-Johnson  
[rstanfie@d.umn.edu](mailto:rstanfie@d.umn.edu)

Dr. Janet Afary  
[afary@purdue.edu](mailto:afary@purdue.edu)

### *Conferences*

The 28<sup>th</sup> **All India Persian Teachers' Conference** will be held in Amristar, December 27-29, 2007. For further information, contact Professor A. W. Azhar, Secretary General, All India Persian Teachers' Association, 98 Haji Bhawan, Sadar Bazar, Delhi-110006, India.

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### **The Women's Association of Historical Researchers**

(WAHR) in cooperation with a number of cultural institutes and universities in Iran (including Yazd University, The Center of the Great Islamic Encyclopedia, Institute for Interreligious Dialogue, The Center for Religious Studies and Imam Musa Sadr Institute, Lebanon) will hold a conference on women in Islamic history from Nov. 20-21, 2007 in Yazd, Iran.

**Women in Islamic History from the Rise of Islam to the collapse of the Abbasid Caliphate (610- 1258 AD).** Nov. 20-21, 2007.

The conference will cover topics, including but not limited to, Women in: biography, jurisprudence, economy, literature, Islamic mysticism, education, politics, power systems, society, and will include views of the various Islamic schools of thought on women.

For information, please contact the conference secretariat at: [zanantarikh@yahoo.com](mailto:zanantarikh@yahoo.com)

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**The Central Eurasian Studies Society Eighth Annual Conference, 2007**, was held at the University of Washington and hosted by the Ellison Center for Russian, East European and Central Asian Studies.

Full details are available on the CESS website:  
[http://cess.fas.harvard.edu/CESS\\_Conference.html](http://cess.fas.harvard.edu/CESS_Conference.html)

## Employment

**Syracuse University** announces a tenure-track assistant professorship position in Arabic in its Department of Languages, Literatures & Linguistics. The position will begin in fall 2008. The successful candidate will teach advanced Arabic language courses, as well as courses in Arabic Linguistics, Literature & Culture. The candidate's research specialty may be in one or more of these areas. We seek candidates with native or near native fluency in Arabic and a demonstrated record of excellence in research and teaching. The candidate hired must have Ph.D. in hand by August 2008. Salary is competitive. Send cover letter, dossier (CV, 3 letters of recommendation, evidence of teaching excellence and research interests, with at least one writing sample) to Gerlinde Ulm Sanford, Chair / Languages, Literatures & Linguistics, 340 D HBC Hall, Syracuse, NY 13244-1160. Submission deadline is December 1, 2007 (postmark). Women, minorities urged to apply: AA/EOE employer.

**McGill University**, the Institute of Islamic Studies, seeks to fill a tenure-track or tenured position at the level of Assistant or Associate Professor, in the field of Pre-Nineteenth-Century Textual and/or Visual Cultures of the Persian World, including literature (e.g., poetry and belles-lettres, as well as mystical, religious, philosophical, scientific and medical literature), art and architecture. The ability to teach graduate-level courses using Persian-language materials is required. The committee is particularly interested in receiving applications from scholars who adopt innovative and theoretically informed approaches to their areas of specialization. Salary will be negotiable, according to qualifications and experience. Starting date: August 1, 2008.

Interested candidates should submit a letter of application and a complete CV and arrange for three letters of recommendation to be sent to Professor Robert Wisnovsky, Director - Institute of Islamic Studies, McGill University, 3485 McTavish Street, Montreal, Quebec, Canada H3A 1Y1. Informal inquiries may be directed to Professor Wisnovsky (fax: 514 398-6731; [director.islamic@mcgill.ca](mailto:director.islamic@mcgill.ca)). Further information about

