



FALL 2024 NEWSLETTER

FROM THE PRESIDENT	2
NEWS FROM THE JOURNAL	3
ASPS ANNOUNCEMENTS	4
ASPS VIRTUAL EVENT SERIES	6
CERF ANNOUNCEMENTS	7
ANNOUNCEMENTS	8
EDITORIAL NOTES	12

FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear ASPS Community,

Warm greetings from London!

I hope you have had a restful and productive Summer. I know semesters have already started for some and about to start for others so good luck on the new academic year as well!

I am writing to share a few important notes regarding the events, elections, and the Convention to be held in Summer 2025. As you well know, the Tenth Biennial Convention of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies will take place at Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, from August 12-16, 2025. It is a point of pride for us to be holding the next ASPS Convention in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, coming especially after a most successful one in Yerevan, Armenia, in 2023. Thanks to the tireless efforts of some members of the Executive Committee, and in the case of Tashkent, especially Professor Kazuo Morimoto, we are fortunate to roam around the countries where Persianate societies continue to thrive.

Please find details for submitting panel and paper proposals on the website of ASPS. Single papers and preorganized panels are all welcome.

The Deadline for Submission of Abstracts is October 31, 2024.

In view of our upcoming convention, I urge you to please encourage wide participation from your home countries through to your wider network of academic and research communities. Please also renew your membership and encourage your colleagues and students to become members of ASPS. Everyone who wishes to participate as a speaker or observer will need to become a member and, in due course, register for the Convention. Details will be forthcoming and please check the website as well.

We are working on fundraising for the Convention with applications having already been placed or to be submitted soon to help support our student participants, our colleagues from soft-currency countries, and the general set-up and hospitality to be shared by all ASPS community in Tashkent. We welcome your help in raising funds for ASPS!

Two important related events and recognitions are listed in this Newsletter. One is that ASPS is taking submissions for the new Graduate Student Prize and for the second round of the Early Career Prize.

You will also find information in this Newsletter on The Persian Heritage Foundation (PHF) and the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies (ASPS) new initiative, the PHF-ASPS Book Award in the history of art and architecture in Iran and the Persianate world.

I encourage you all to participate, suggest, nominate, and engage with these initiatives. We depend on everyone's enthusiasm and active involvement to sustain a dynamic community. Finally, please take part in the forthcoming elections in November! ASPS Election Committee Secretary will share details.

I look forward to seeing you all at the 2025 Convention in Tashkent!

Sussan Babaie
Professor of Iranian and Islamic Arts,
The Courtauld, University of London



NEWS FROM THE JOURNAL

VOLUME NO. 16.2

CONTENTS

Narges Nematollahi, *The Allegorical Readings of the Shāh-nāma in Comparison with the Allegories of Homer's Epics*

Alexander V. Akopyan, *Ugly yet Popular: The Remarkably Long Life of the Safavid Coins of Hoveyza*

Caspar Hobhouse & Ali Aydin Karamustafa, *A People of the Frontier: An Account of the Ayrumlu Tribe between the Qajar, Ottoman, and Russian Empires*

Ali Gheissari, *Fruits of Gardens: Ethics, Metaphysics, and Textual Pleasures in Late Qajar Iran*

ASPS/JPS prize winners

András Barati, *The Chessboard Toghrās of Safavid Royal Decrees*

Mariano Errichiello, *Beyond the Theosophical Paradigm: Ilm-e Kṣnum and the Entangled History of Modern Parsis*

From the JPS Editor:

The Passing of Dr. Mohsen Zakeri

It is with great sadness that I report the passing of Dr. Mohsen Zakeri, the beloved Assistant Editor of the *Journal of Persianate Studies*, who died on June 20, 2024. His unexpected death is a great loss to all of us who knew him in the Persianate scholarly community for his major contributions to the study of pre-Islamic Iran and the broader Persianate world.

Mohsen's invaluable contribution to the JPS will also be sorely missed. His full obituary will be included in the forthcoming issue of the JPS (17.1

[HTTP://WWW.PERSIANATESOCIETIES.ORG](http://www.persianatesocieties.org)

[2024]), and selected papers from the last international conference he organized at the Ruhr University in Bochum shortly before his untimely death will in due course be published as a special issue of the JPS dedicated to his memory.

From the JPS Editor: JPS Distribution

The JPS editorial team is aware that, since volume 14 (2021), many (if not most) ASPS members have not received their physical copies of the journal. We would like to emphasize that this problem is due to a distributor issue with Brill, our publisher. The matter troubles us greatly, and we have made every effort to find a resolution. Luckily, it appears that Brill has been able to correct the situation, and we have the following message from our new publishing editor, Abdurraouf Oueslati, to share with you:

In autumn 2022 our distributor Turpin went into administration. This has caused Brill severe problems in delivering print publications to our customers. With our new distributor ABS in place, we are trying to clear our backlogs. The ASPS members can expect the print copies we owe them to be delivered soon. By way of compensation, we would like to offer the members one year online access to JPS online.

Therefore, we hope you will receive all back issues of JPS through our most recently published one, while details about online access will be shared with all members soon. You can always track our issues through the [Brill](#) and [ASPS websites](#). We are honored to serve as the flagship journal of this association and to publish important and innovative scholarship in the field of Persianate studies, and we apologize for the inconvenience that this has caused all of us.

ASPS/JPS Early Career Prize

The Association for the Study of Persianate Societies announces a new round of the biennial Early Career Prize in order to encourage and

reward scholarship about the broader Persianate world by ASPS members who are still in the early stages of their careers. Interested applicants are invited to submit original and unpublished work to the *Journal of Persianate Studies* by 31 January 2025.

Based on creativity of topic and source materials, originality of analysis, and overall scholastic contributions, an ASPS prize committee will select a winner, who will be announced at the upcoming ASPS conference. The winner will receive a cash prize of \$250 and the paper will be published in the *Journal of Persianate Studies* after any revision that may be required by the editorial office. Runners-up may also be considered for publication.

The *Journal of Persianate Studies* is a peer-reviewed publication of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies. The journal publishes articles on the culture and civilization of the geographical area where Persian has historically been the dominant language or a major cultural force, encompassing Iran, Afghanistan, and Tajikistan, as well as the Caucasus, Central Asia, the Indian Subcontinent, and parts of the former Ottoman Empire.

Eligibility: non-tenured scholars who, at time of submission, are members of ASPS and have already received their doctorate within the last seven years.

Application procedure: Paper submissions must fall within the purview of *JPS* and must be original and previously unpublished; they must also follow all regular *JPS* style and citation guidelines, found online

at: https://brill.com/fileasset/downloads_products/Author_Instructions/JPS.pdf. Prize applicants should submit their papers online through Editorial Manager (<https://www.editorialmanager.com/JPSBRILL>), selecting 'Early Career Prize' as the article type. By submitting a paper, applicants acknowledge intent to participate in the ASPS Early Career Prize and waive the right to withdraw their paper from publication, if selected.

ASPS ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL FOR PAPER

The Tenth Biennial Convention of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies ASPS/Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies

August 12-16, 2025
Tashkent, Uzbekistan

The *Association for the Study of Persianate Societies (ASPS)* is pleased to announce its Tenth Biennial Convention, to take place in Tashkent, Uzbekistan, August 12-16, 2025. Our meeting will be hosted by [Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies](#).

The Deadline for [Submission of Abstracts](#) is **October 31, 2024**.

Please note that those wishing to submit an abstract must be a current (2024) ASPS member. Otherwise your submission will not be considered. You must be a 2025 member to register and participate in the conference. To become a new member or renew your ASPS membership please proceed to our [membership page](#). We will likely have a limited number of fellowships available for participants from Afghanistan and Central Asia, and for graduate students from the US. Further details regarding application procedures for travel fellowships will be announced later.

Submissions in all humanities and social science disciplines related to Persianate Societies are welcome. Pre-organized panels are strongly encouraged. Submissions for pre-organized panels must include a panel abstract of no more than 300 words plus individual abstracts of no more than 300 words for each panelist. Panels must be limited to a minimum of three panelists and a maximum of four.

Submissions for pre-organized panels and individual papers can be made by clicking [here](#).

We are very excited about the forthcoming Tenth Biennial Congress of the Association in Tashkent. Founded almost 2500 years ago, Tashkent sat on the frontiers between the Persianate and Turkic worlds and was an important point of contact and exchange between the two since antiquity. Today it is the most populous city in Central Asia and the fourth largest in the former Soviet Union. Tashkent's history and cultural heritage offers many opportunities for visitors, as does its location as the gateway to destinations across Uzbekistan and Central Asia. We are excited to welcome congress participants to Uzbekistan for the first time in the ASPS's history.

We look forward to an engaging tenth convention in Tashkent. Past conventions of ASPS have been held in Dushanbe/Tajikistan (2002); Yerevan/Armenia (2004); Tbilisi/Georgia (2007), Lahore/Pakistan (2009), Hyderabad/India (2012); Sarajevo/Bosnia and Herzegovina (2013); Istanbul/Turkey (2015), Tbilisi/Georgia (2018), and Yerevan/Armenia (2023). We invite you to review our [past programs](#). The ASPS Congresses have provided a rare and valued opportunity for scholars from across Asia, Europe and North America to participate in an interdisciplinary dialogue. The interchange of ideas has also found its place in our publication, the *Journal of Persianate Societies*, published by Brill Academic Publishers. We encourage scholars from all backgrounds to take the opportunity to participate in what promises to be a unique gathering.

For questions, please contact the Chair of the Convention and ASPS Secretary, Rob Haug at haugrt@ucmail.uc.edu.

PHF-ASPS Book Award

The Persian Heritage Foundation (PHF) and the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies (ASPS) announce the PHF-ASPS Book Award in the history of art and architecture in Iran and the Persianate world. This biannual award is

[HTTP://WWW.PERSIANATESOCIETIES.ORG](http://www.persianatesocieties.org)

presented to the author of a distinguished monograph in the history of art and architecture published in English between 1 January 2023 and 31 December 2024. The committee will consider rigorous single-authored academic works within the discipline of art history and its closely allied fields (cultural, material, and visual studies, design, and archeology). In exceptional cases, Persian language monographs might be considered at the committee's discretion. Edited collections, exhibition catalogs, and creative/non-academic works will not be considered. Nominations and self-nominations emails should include the author, book title, description, and publisher's contact to PHF-ASPS Book Award chair, Talinn Grigor (tgrigor@ucdavis.edu) by February 1, 2025. Shortlisted nominees will be contacted to provide copies of the book to the committee members by April 1, 2025: Talinn Grigor (chair), Professor of Art History, University of California, Davis; Sussan Babaie, Professor of Islamic and Iranian Arts, The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London; and Tomoko Masuya, Professor of Islamic Art History, University of Tokyo. The first award will be announced at the ASPS convention in August 2025 in Tashkent, Uzbekistan.

CALL FOR PAPERS

First Biennial Virtual Graduate Student Conference

The *Association for the Study of Persianate Societies* (ASPS) is pleased to announce its First Biennial Virtual Graduate Student Conference, to take place online, October 23, 2024. The conference will be hosted by the Sharmin and Bijan Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies at Princeton University.

The Deadline for [Submission of Abstracts](#) is August 23, 2024.

Please note that those wishing to submit an abstract must be a current (2024) graduate student and ASPS member. Otherwise your submission will not be considered. To become a new member or renew your ASPS membership

please proceed to our [membership page](#). The ASPS offers reduced student memberships. There will be no registration fee for participating in the conference.

Submissions in all humanities and social science disciplines related to Persianate societies are welcome. Pre-organized panels are encouraged. Submissions for pre-organized panels must include a panel abstract of no more than 300 words plus individual abstracts of no more than 300 words for each panelist. Panels must be limited to a minimum of three panelists and a maximum of four.

Submissions for pre-organized panels and individual papers can be made by clicking [here](#).

For questions, please contact the ASPS Secretary, Rob Haug at haugrt@ucmail.uc.edu.

ASPS VIRTUAL EVENT SERIES

One Thousand and One Sherds: The Material History of the Bukhara Oasis

With Gabriele Puschnigg & Jacopo Bruno
(Institute of Iranian Studies, ÖAW)



This event will present the results of a collaborative research project between the Institute of Iranian Studies at the Austrian Academy of Sciences and the MAFOUB (Mission Archéologique Franco-Ouzbèke dans l'Oasis de Bukhara) and Uzbek authorities. For more than a decade the MAFOUB project

conducted fieldwork, including surveys and excavations, covering the whole extension of the Oasis and some of its main sites. The surveys and

excavations produced a large amount of ceramic material. The goal of our study is to outline the breadth and multi-faceted potential of this huge assemblage, including a fresh approach to the narratives of cultural and socio-economic developments as well as the reconstruction of a material history of Bukhara's population based on the comprehensive and integrated study of the ceramic material. In this presentation, we highlight the main themes of our current research, combined methodologies and approaches as well as our main results so far. Introducing our most significant site assemblages, we provide an overview over the main characteristics of the material and its archaeological contexts, the challenges we face and the different types of analyses we apply.

Respondent: Michael Shenkar (Hebrew University of Jerusalem)

Hosted by the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies and the Sharmin and Bijan Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies, Princeton University.

ASPS Virtual Events Series X: Female Religiosity in Central Asia: Sufi Leaders in the Persianate World



A book launch and discussion with Aziza Shanazarova (Columbia University) on her new book *Female Religiosity in Central Asia: Sufi Leaders in the Persianate World* (Cambridge University Press)

Respondent: ASPS President-Elect Mirjam Künkler (Institute of Advanced Legal Studies)

Hosted by ASPS and the Sharmin and Bijan Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies, Princeton University

CERF ANNOUNCEMENTS

CENTRAL EURASIA RESEARCH FUND (CERF) - Call for Applications

Deadline January 15, 2025

CERF grants support original research leading to the publication of a book or monograph concerning Persianate culture by individual scholars from Afghanistan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, and Uzbekistan. Grants do not exceed US \$1500 and provide funding for the following: publication costs for a book or monograph, technical equipment necessary for specific research projects, such as computers, printers, scanners, voice recorders, or digital cameras; travel expenses for archival research that will directly result in an original book or monograph. The deadline for receipt of electronic submissions is January 15th of each year. Awards are announced on March 1st.

The award period is for one year. CERF does not support the publication of periodical articles. The publication of previously published works, including translations from English, will be considered only in exceptional circumstances when the applicant can demonstrate a critical need for such a work. Applications for projects based on original archival or field research and those leading to the publication of previously unpublished manuscripts, lithographs, documentary sources or material culture are strongly encouraged.

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, and no more than two awards may be granted in total, and preference will be given to first time applicants.

Selection: Awards are made once a year. The CERF Evaluation Committee consisting of three members of the ASPS Board of Directors and the CERF Director, reviews and ranks the applications. Every effort is made to provide

regional balance in the distribution of grants based on:

- Importance of the topic and its potential impact on the study of Persianate societies
- Clarity of the grant proposal
- Academic merit of the proposed project
- Demonstrated career commitment to the field
- Feasibility of the project
- Adequate academic and professional experience of the candidate

Application:

CERF candidates must submit an electronic application in MS Word format by January 15th to the Director of the CERF program, Dr. Jo-Ann Gross, at gross@tcnj.edu, with the following required information:

A. Curriculum Vitae (CV) that includes the following:

- Name, home address, email address, telephone number and citizenship
- Educational degrees and the highest degree obtained
- Professional affiliation, including institutional name and address
- Research field or discipline
- Professional experience
- Previous publications

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.

B. Research Proposal

- Title of research project
- Description of project, which should include:
 - Theme, methodology and purpose
 - Outline of chapters with brief descriptions
 - Potential impact and importance of the book
 - Language of publication

C. Budget (must include a detailed account of specific expenses)

D. Final Report

Grant recipients must submit a written report summarizing the results of the project, along with two hard copies and a pdf file of any publication resulting from the award. The report must include the following:

- Name of project and objectives, extent to which the objectives were met, and impact of project
- Expenses with receipts must be remitted at the end of the project period in order for CERF to meet its own internal accounting requirements that ensure the CERF's continued operation.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Obituary Notice



On July 20th, 2024, **Mohsen Zakeri** passed away at the age of 70 after a severe and sudden illness. He died in the University Hospital in Essen, Germany. His loss is deeply felt in the field of Middle Eastern, and particularly Persianate, Studies. At the time of his passing, he was the Assistant Editor of the *Journal of Persianate Studies*.

Mohsen Zakeri graduated from the College of Mass Communications in Tehran in 1977. He went on to earn a B.A. in Psychology and Anthropology (1981) and an M.A. in Near Eastern Studies (1984)

from the University of Washington in Seattle. He later enrolled in the Ph.D. program in Middle Eastern History at the University of Utah, where he began work on his dissertation. However, after a brief visit to Iran, he was denied re-entry to the United States due to sanctions against Iranian nationals at that time. This led him to remain in Germany, where he completed his thesis in 1993, defending it online in Frankfurt. His dissertation was subsequently published under the title *Sāsānid Soldiers in Early Muslim Society: The Origin of 'Ayyārān and Futūwā* in 1995.

Zakeri continued his academic career by teaching at the universities of Halle-Wittenberg and Jena until 2009, while simultaneously working on a major research project titled “‘Alī Ibn ‘Ubayda ar-Rayḥānī and His Contribution to the Transfer of Iranian and Greek Wisdom Literature to the Early Islamic World.” This research culminated in the publication of his book *Persian Wisdom in Arabic Garb: ‘Alī b. ‘Ubayda al-Rayḥānī (d. 219/834) and His Jawābir al-ḳilām wa-farā'id al-ḥikām* in two volumes in 2006. The book received immediate acclaim, winning the Prize for the Best Iranian Book of the Year in 2009.

In 2010, Zakeri moved to the University of Göttingen to work on a new research project titled “The Wise King in Persian Mirror of Princes Literature,” while also teaching courses as a substitute professor for Islamic studies in 2014-15. He later moved to Bochum to take up a research position at the Center for Religious Studies at Ruhr University, where he worked on the project “How Sasanian Science and Literature Passed on to the Muslims.” He was also appointed a Fellow of the Käte Hamburger Kolleg. This project resulted in several publications, including a monograph-length chapter titled “Translations from Greek into Middle Persian as Repatriated Knowledge” in *Why Translate Science: Documents from Antiquity to the 16th Century in the Historical West (Bactria to the Atlantic)*, edited by Dimitri Gutas, Charles Burnett, and Uwe Vagelpohl (Leiden: Brill, 2022), pp. 52-169.

In June 2024, Zakeri co-organized an international conference at Ruhr University in Bochum with Professor Kianoosh Rezania on “Late Antiquity as

an Epoch of Translation” (June 20-21, 2024). Selected papers from this conference will be published as a special issue of the *Journal of Persianate Studies* dedicated to the memory of Mohsen Zakeri.

Kamran Arjomand

CALL FOR APPLICATION

New York University: Tenure Track Position in 18th and 19th Century Middle Eastern History

New York University, NYU–NY: Arts and Science (A&S), Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies

Location: New York, NY

Open Date: Sep 20, 2024

Deadline: Nov 1, 2024 at 11:59 PM Eastern Time

Description

The Department of Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at New York University invites scholars of the eighteenth and/or nineteenth century Middle East (broadly defined) to apply for a tenure-track position at the assistant professor level. Candidates should be grounded in historical methods and be able to contribute to the department’s joint PhD program with History. The position will begin on September 1, 2025, pending budgetary and administrative approval. The department’s strong preference is for an expert on the eighteenth- and/or nineteenth-century Persianate world broadly defined, including but not limited to Iran, the Caucasus, Central Asia, Afghanistan, and the Indian Ocean world. All applicants are expected to contribute to MEIS’s interdisciplinary undergraduate curriculum and its doctoral programs.

The Faculty of Arts and Science at NYU is at the heart of a leading research university that spans the globe. We seek scholars of the highest caliber that

embody the diversity of the United States as well as the global society in which we live. We strongly encourage applications from women, racial and ethnic minorities, and other individuals who are under-represented in the profession, across color, creed, race, ethnic and national origin, physical ability, gender and sexual identity, or any other legally protected basis. NYU affirms the value of differing perspectives on the world as we strive to build the strongest possible university with the widest reach. To learn more about the FAS commitment to diversity, equality and inclusion, please read [here](http://as.nyu.edu/administrative-resources/office/facultydiversity.html). (<http://as.nyu.edu/administrative-resources/office/facultydiversity.html>).

EOE/Affirmative

Action/Minorities/Females/Veterans/Disabled/
Sexual Orientation/Gender Identity.

In compliance with NYC’s Pay Transparency Act, the annual base salary range for this position is \$70,000 to \$110,000. New York University considers factors such as (but not limited to) the scope and responsibilities of the position, the candidate’s work experience, education/training, key skills, internal peer equity, as well as market and organizational considerations when extending an offer.

Qualifications

Candidates must have the Ph.D. by the time of appointment, demonstrate potential for superior scholarly accomplishment, and be prepared to teach a wide range of graduate and undergraduate courses and to supervise doctoral dissertation research.

Application Instructions

Application materials should include: 2-3 page cover letter; cv; 1 article or chapter-length writing sample; the names and contact information of 3 references; and a 1 page statement of your approaches to teaching, including how you support diversity and inclusion in the classroom.

Application Process

This institution is using Interfolio’s Faculty Search to conduct this search. Applicants to this position receive a free Dossier account and can send all application materials, including confidential letters of recommendation, free of charge.

Equal Employment Opportunity Statement

For people in the EU, click here for information on your [privacy](#) [rights](#) under GDPR: www.nyu.edu/it/gdpr

NYU is an Equal Opportunity Employer and is committed to a policy of equal treatment and opportunity in every aspect of its recruitment and hiring process without regard to age, alienage, caregiver status, childbirth, citizenship status, color, creed, disability, domestic violence victim status, ethnicity, familial status, gender and/or gender identity or expression, marital status, military status, national origin, parental status, partnership status, predisposing genetic characteristics, pregnancy, race, religion, reproductive health decision making, sex, sexual orientation, unemployment status, veteran status, or any other legally protected basis. Women, racial and ethnic minorities, persons of minority sexual orientation or gender identity, individuals with disabilities, and veterans are encouraged to apply for vacant positions at all levels.

Sustainability Statement

NYU aims to be among the greenest urban campuses in the country and carbon neutral by 2040. Learn more at nyu.edu/sustainability
<https://apply.interfolio.com/155283>

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

Textual Transmission in the Islamic Manuscript Age: On the Variance, Reception, and Usage of Arabic and Persian Works from the Middle East to the Indian Subcontinent

(German-Japanese Bilateral Conference)

University of Münster, 5–7 September 2024

The transmission processes of handwritten texts that confront today's researchers into the Islamic world before the widespread introduction of printing in the 19th century take different forms and can include both minor "corrections" and additions as well as complete revisions of a text with changes to its central statements. The aim of the international cooperation between scholars in Germany and Japan is to make existing approaches

[HTTP://WWW.PERSIANATESOCIETIES.ORG](http://www.persianatesocieties.org)

and findings relating to the creation, transmission, and reception of texts from the Middle Eastern subjects of Arabic Studies, Islamic Studies, and Iranian Studies, which are strongly represented in both countries, internationally fruitful and visible. The objective is to shed light on how historiographical, religious, scientific, legal, or literary works in Arabic and Persian were copied, handed down, received, deliberately altered, and made newly usable in the region ranging from the Near East to the Indian subcontinent throughout the extended early modern period.

The case studies to be discussed include texts from various regions of the Near and Middle East, the majority of which were written or handed down between c. 1300 and 1800. The focus is on authors, copyists, and later recipients who composed, copied, interpreted, and used texts in new contexts, modifying them according to changing socio-cultural contexts, (religious) political necessities, or individual preferences. The following questions are addressed:

- (1) What type of narrative or motif in literary and historiographical works is selectively transmitted from one context to another?
- (2) What changes in content can be demonstrated here, and to what factors can they be attributed?
- (3) Which actors were involved and how?
- (4) How did the transmission of knowledge take shape with regard to phenomena such as collected manuscripts (*majmu'a*) with partial sections from works or abridged versions (*mukhtaṣar*)?
- (5) What does this say about the contemporaneous understanding of texts and knowledge?

Information:

https://www.uni-muenster.de/ArabistikIslam/translapt/events/textual_transmission.html

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

Empire in Translation: Perso-Arabic Knowledge and the Making of Early Modern Ottoman Civilisation

University of Münster, 15–17 January 2025

The Ottoman polity initially emerged as a peripheral entity in the broader knowledge network of the Islamic world. Following the conquest of Constantinople, however, the ascending Empire rapidly became a central hub, as sultans Mehmed II and his son Bāyezīd II increasingly sponsored scholarly and literary works. Translation activities played a pivotal role in this transformation, further accelerated in the early sixteenth century by two major events: the conquest of Mamluk Syria and Egypt by Sultan Selīm I and the Safavid takeover of Iran.

In addition to transforming the Ottoman Empire's standing in the (Sunni) Islamic world and establishing its (Shia) archenemy in the East, these events marked a definitive shift in the making of Ottoman literature and scholarship. The influx of Arab scholars from classical Islamic centres like Cairo and Damascus, along with Persian scholars seeking refuge from anti-Sunni persecution in Iran, exposed Ottoman elites in Istanbul and across the Empire to Arabic and Persian knowledge on an unprecedented scale.

The translation of texts across all genres of Islamic literature and scholarship, including poetry, history, encyclopedias, and religious sciences, played a crucial role in the development and acculturation of this emerging Ottoman civilisation. It legitimised the Ottomans' self-image as heralds of a new Islamic 'golden age', embodying a symbolic *translatio imperii* of cultural and political leadership within the Islamic world.

The early modern Ottoman approach to translation (*terceme*) differed from a strict literal rendition from the source language to the target language. Instead, it embraced diverse forms of adaptation, imitation, rewriting, and repurposing. This characteristic suggests that Ottoman

translations were more than just a means of conveying knowledge; they served as a tool in shaping a distinct literary and scholarly culture. To investigate these phenomena, we are convening a conference titled **“Empire in Translation: Perso-Arabic Knowledge and the Making of Early Modern Ottoman Literature and Scholarship,”** to be held at the **University of Münster (Germany)** on **15–17 January 2025**.

This conference is organized by the Emmy Noether Junior Research Group **TRANSLAPT, Inner-Islamic Transfer of Knowledge within Arabic-Persian-Ottoman Translation Processes in the Eastern Mediterranean (1400–1750)**, which aims to investigate the transregional transfer of knowledge holistically by focusing on **translation as a concept, process, and product** in a large portion of the Islamic world.

In this framework, the conference will focus on early modern translation processes between Arabic, Persian, and Turkish, with particular attention to the study of manuscript copies of these translations. Our inquiry is structured around the following research questions: What underlies Ottoman notions of translation (*terceme*), and what defines their nature and limits compared to other literary practices? Who were the actors involved in translation processes, and what roles did they play? What was the intended and actual readership for the translations, and what was the socio-cultural context of their circulation? In essence, what role did translation play in the transformation of the Empire through the transfer of knowledge?

PUBLICATIONS

D Gershon Lewental, “Symbol of (Iranian) empire: The Sāsānian imperial standard (*Derafsh-e kāviyān*) from Arab-Islamic conquest narratives to modern nationalist myths,” *History & Memory* 36.2 (September 2024), 5–38.

Philip Bockholt, “Shah Ṭahmāsp and the Tazkira: A Sixteenth-Century Ruler's Justification of his Policies,” in *Rulers as Authors in the Islamic World: Knowledge, Authority and Legitimacy*, editors, Maribel

Fierro, Sonja Brentjes and Tilman Seidensticker (Leiden and Boston: Brill, 2024), pp. 631–655.

Cameron Cross, *Love at a Cross: The New Persian Romance in a Global Middle Ages* (University of Toronto Press, 2023).

Richard Foltz, *Les Tadjiks: Persanophones d'Afghanistan, d'Ouzbékistan et du Tadjikistan* (Hermann, 2024).

Katarzyna Maksymiuk, “Early Sasanian Expansion and Military Institutions,” in *Brill’s Companion to War in the Ancient Iranian Empires*, editor, J. Hyland, K. Rezakhani (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2024), pp. 435–475.

Patryk Skupniewicz and Katarzyna Maksymiuk, “Cavalry Arms and Armour from the Achaemenids to the Sasanians: Iconography and Methods of Reconstruction,” in *Brill’s Companion to War in the Ancient Iranian Empires*, editor, J. Hyland, K. Rezakhani (Leiden & Boston: Brill, 2024), pp. 476–505.

Katarzyna Maksymiuk, “The Sassanian Empire’s Strategies,” in *The Cambridge History of Strategy, Volume 1: From Antiquity to the American War of Independence*, editors, I. Duyvesteyn, B. Heuser (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 20224), pp. 191–203.

Bruno De Nicola, *The Chobanids of Kastamonu: Politics, Patronage and Religion in Thirteenth-Century Anatolia* (London: Routledge, 2024). Open access here: <https://e-book.fwf.ac.at/detail/o:1935>

Jason M. Silverman’s project “Work without End: Informal Taxation and Forced Labor within Persian Southern Levantine Temple Economy and Society” (WORK-IT) (ERC) will be starting at the University of Helsinki in September and running for five years. There will be a team of about six researchers studying the Achaemenid Empire and its socio-economic structures around labor.

Editorial Notes

The **deadline** for the **next Newsletter** will be **March 1, 2025**.

If you have not yet renewed your membership, please do so as soon as possible.

Your continued support is now made easier with online membership renewal. Please visit: <http://www.persianatesocieties.org/index.php/membership> to access the online form and link to PayPal (which accepts multiple currencies). ASPS’ online form should reflect the address to where you would like your issues of *JPS* to be sent and your preferred e-mail address for ASPS communications. Please note, the PayPal site requires your billing address. If you have paid, but have not received the latest volume of the *Journal of Persianate Studies*, please let us know.

Please send your news and all items of professional interest to **Mehdi Faraji** at: newsletter@persianatesocieties.org