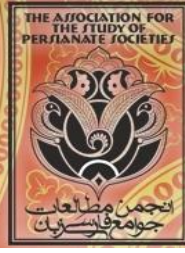


The Association for the Study of
Persianate Societies



انجمن مطالعات جوامع فارسی‌زبان

FALL 2025 NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear ASPS Community,

It was a great source of joy to see many of you in Tashkent only a month ago, to debate pressing questions in recent research, to enjoy the outstanding hospitality of our hosts in food, music, dance and thought, and to visit the captivating sites of the Silk Road with many of you.

The following pages provide ample insights into our past conference, with reports on several panels, initiatives, as well as the award ceremony. I want to thank once again the hard work of our three conference co-chairs Rob Haug, Kazuo Morimoto and Aziza Shanazarova as well as our local hosts at Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, Rector Gulchehra Rikhsieva, Professors Durbek Sayfullayev, Khulkar Mirzakhmedova, Nodir Nuriddinov, and Drs Aziza Nishanbaeva and Behzod Jafarov, for their inspired and inspiring work, creating such enriching experiences and joyful memories for us all.

We were honored to be hosted by Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, a university with such a long and distinguished history in the study of the Near East, of Iran, Central Asia, and East Asia. Besides its study and collection of manuscripts in Turkic languages, Persian, and Arabic, the Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies also teaches South Asian languages, Japanese, Indonesian and Western languages. It further houses distinct departments in Chinese and Korean Studies, as well as a department for comparative philosophy and history and a separate department for foreign policy. During the early years of the Soviet Union, it was this university that trained and sent out language and history teachers into all of Central Asia and indeed beyond. Today, many of the region's leading diplomats and politicians have been trained in its sacred halls of learning.

It was also a great joy to be able to experience the bustling city of Tashkent, with the Hazrati Imam

Complex housing the Samarqand Kufi Qur'an, the Minor Mosque, the Chorsu Bazaar and the wonderful museum of applied arts, showcasing the rich Uzbek traditions of decorative glassware, porcelain, fabrics, and embroidery.

Many of the conference attendees travelled to the cities of Samarqand and Bukhara, which for centuries have been two outstanding focal points in the development and dissemination of Persianate art and culture, science, technology, carpentry, poetry and architecture. Whether during Sogdian, Sasanian, or Islamic times, whether as centres of administration and learning during Samanid, Kharazmid or Timurid times or under Nader Shah Afshar, both Samarqand and Bukhara are not only deeply intertwined with the development of Persianate cultures and arts but have often been constitutive of these. The centrality to our field of these cities was reflected in the broad participation of colleagues from near and afar, which was the largest conference our organization has seen to date. As such, the conference also presented us with the rare opportunity to revisit sites of research, archives and collections, in order to refreshen our memory and curiosity in the relations and sources that make up the foundation of our research endeavours.

The conference offered a plethora of panels, often involving seven in parallel, running over four time slots a day. An exciting new feature was the opportunity to attend brief book talks during parts of the lunch break when authors presented their latest monographs. The Book Exhibit showcased the newest research in Persianate Studies in several languages as well as various ASPS-sponsored publications. Brill, the publisher of our journal *The Journal for Persianate Studies*, graced us with the presence of acquisitions editor Abdurraouf Oueslati who attended throughout the entire five days and offered various points of engagements with both early career and established authors.

On the first evening, following official opening speeches, the Tashkent Conservatory Music Ensemble graced us with highlights of classical Uzbek music that segued into the opening reception of the conference. The ensemble honored us with a full concert on the third evening

of the conference, offering virtuoso soli and infectious rhythms that prompted not few attendees to get up and dance on the sides of the great auditorium.

On the second day, the inaugural ASPS Book Award in the History of Art and Architecture of Iran and the Persianate World, jointly sponsored by ASPS and the Persian Heritage Foundation, was presented to co-winners Sara Honarmand Ebrahimi and Nahid Massoumeh Assemi, with Honorable Mention awarded to Farshid Emami. The evening also saw the presentation of the ASPS/JPS Early Career Prize, which was awarded to Golriz Farshi (for further information on the award ceremony, see below p. 5).

That same evening, attendees debated late into the night about a bylaw reform the ASPSP board had recommended, and I wish to thank our membership for the spirited participation. The reform passed, paving the way for the further growth and professionalization of ASPS.

Film screenings took place each day, with one film showcasing new epigraphic research on the inscriptions of the Timurid mosques in Bukhara and Samarqand. Another film, titled *Baluch Voices*, documented the influence of Baluch musicians of African descent on local rhythms and musical styles, most outstandingly that of an elderly Black lady by the name of Shamsheuk who has made it her mission to collect the lullabies of Baluchistan before these may be forgotten and lost. Filmmaker Mohammad Ehsani, who filmed in Baluchistan throughout 2022, was present throughout the entire conference and offered a Q&A session after each screening, giving insight into the filming process and his artistic considerations during production.

We were fortunate to have most of the regional directors of ASPS in attendance (from Tehran, Khorog, Tbilisi, Moscow, Tokyo, Krakow, Vienna), who enriched the program with presentations and informal updates about the research activities from their respective knowledge communities. (Several have included reports below (p. 23).

On Friday evening, the academic part of the conference closed with a festive banquet – coined by our secretary ‘the Uzbek wedding experience’ – which included presentations of traditional Uzbek dancing, and once again saw a dance floor soon crowded also by conference participants.

This multifaceted programming would not have been possible without the generous financial support of our funders, starting with the Soudavar Memorial Fund, the Sharmin and Bijan Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies at Princeton University, the Persian Heritage Foundation, the American Institute for Iranian Studies, as well as Brill Publishers. Their commitment to supporting Persianate research has been outstanding and unwavering, and the conference could not have been realized if only a single one of them had withdrawn their support. Recent political developments in the West and East have created personal hardships, funding cuts, and diplomatic hurdles that put a question mark over the attendance of many participants and made planning very difficult. As the conference dates approached, we regretted to witness the withdrawal of a number of our colleagues based in Iran, as well as *all* our colleagues from Afghanistan, due to security and diplomatic considerations or necessities. This impacted not only the scientific but also the artistic side of the conference, as the withdrawals involved poets, filmmakers, cultural entrepreneurs and publishers. Their absence was our loss. It is in times like these, that the ties that bind us to each other as seekers of knowledge come to the fore. When politics divide, research and the arts can build bridges. The support of our esteemed funders is therefore more important than ever. We are tremendously grateful and touched by their farsightedness and their commitment.

Overall, the conference presented ample opportunities to present and hear about exciting new research. As a result, numerous manuscripts and several special issues are in the process of being submitted to our flagship journal, the *Journal for Persianate Studies*, which is now listed in the highest category of SCOPUS, Q1, and is in the process of transitioning from two to three issues per year by 2027. The conference also provided the chance to refresh old connections and form new

ones, to explore opportunities for exchange and collaboration with old and new colleagues, and to enjoy oneself in the intellectually stimulating environment of Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies and its charming surroundings.

In ASPS internal news, earlier this year we welcomed our new treasurer Mikiya Koyagi, Associate Professor in Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies at the University of Texas, Austin, and over the summer the new *ex officio* board member Daniel Sheffield, director of the Sharmin and Bijan Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies at Princeton University, and Associate Professor in the Department of Near Eastern Studies.

Our virtual events series continues to shine a light on exciting new research, as it did earlier in the summer, featuring a discussion on “The Unexpected Persianate”, organized by our graduate student board member Amanda Leong. For those who missed it, the event can be viewed on our YouTube channel. On November 27, 2025, the Japan office of ASPS will hold an online workshop on Persian professional storytelling (*naqqālī*) in terms of performance, audience, and narrative (p. 23), based on the papers of three scholars who met at the Tashkent conference. The workshop will close with a performance by Mohammadali Mirzaee Jadideslam, himself a *naqqāl*. For other upcoming events, please see below (p. 19) and look out for an announcement on our mailing list. Special thanks are in order once again to Femke de Ruyter and Alison Cummins at Princeton University for their reliable support in facilitating the smooth technical running of the series.

As members know well, ASPS distinguishes itself by trying to “live in the neighbourhood”. This manifests itself in at least four ways: a) by convening its biennial conference in the Persianate world, thus facilitating easier and more affordable participation by local scholars, b) through the extensive support ASPS offers to conference attendees from soft currency countries, c) by encouraging ASPS regional branches in societies

with strong research traditions in Persianate Studies that shall facilitate a deeper exchange of local research and knowledge cultures across the large ASPS network, and d) by raising funds on an annual basis that can be offered through the Central Eurasia Research Fund (CERF) to scholars in Central Asia in the form of research grants. CERF once again invites applications for its new round of funding. Further information can be found below on page 21.

I would like to remind members that Brill has also digitized the predecessor of JPS, the *Studies on Persianate Societies*, which are now available on the [Brill website](#) as well. If you have a moment, dear Reader, please check whether your institution is subscribed to JPS and if it is not, do send an email to your librarian requesting a subscription. Every subscription helps. On that note, ASPS also offers *institutional* memberships, which – needless to say – any serious research center in Persianate Studies should consider, if not *rush*, to sign up to!

We will hold elections for several board seats (among them, for a graduate student representative) this autumn. Please do consider getting involved. ASPS is a vibrant organization, and you may find that contributing to shaping the organization and with it the field, together with a number of inspiring and energetic colleagues, can be most enjoyable.

For now, I wish everyone a smooth transition into the new semester and peace as the year draws to a close.

Mirjam Künkler, ASPS president



NEWS FROM THE JOURNAL

VOLUME NO. 18.1-2

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Irene Schneider, Honor and "Honor" Killing in the 2013 Iranian Penal Code: New Aspects

ASPS/JPS graduate student prize winner

D Gershon Lewental, 2024 ASPS/JPS Graduate Student Prize Announcement

Obituary

William O. Beeman, Peter J. Chelkowski (1933–2024)

ASPS/JPS Early Career Prize announcement (2025)

As the flagship journal of our association, *the Journal of Persianate Studies* is the premier publication for Persianate studies and is currently in its nineteenth volume. In an effort to support young scholars, I am proud, as associate editor of the journal, to award at this meeting our second ASPS/JPS Early Career Prize, given to an outstanding submission by a member of the association within seven years of the completion of his or her dissertation. Joining me on the prize committee were Professors Sussan Babaie and Jo-Ann Gross, whom I wish to thank for their service. After careful consideration, we decided to grant this year's prize to Dr Golriz Farshi, a recent graduate of the University of Michigan at Ann Arbor, for her paper, "Conversion and Piety: Rashid al-Din's Conceptions of Charity."

My colleagues and I found Dr Farshi's submission to be a well-argued and thoughtful study offering an original analysis of Rashid al-Din's theological and political conception of charity, linking his theological writings to his personal piety, royal favour, and broader Īl-khānid religious culture. It makes effective use of lesser-studied texts to show how the Īl-khānid vizier framed his charitable works as divinely inspired, casting them as both personal expressions of gratitude and instruments of political legitimacy.

This year's award continues the high bar set by our previous winners of the ASPS/JPS Early Career Prize, and I encourage you all to inform your advanced students and early-career colleagues about the opportunity, which will next be granted when we meet again in two years' time. Please join me in warmly congratulating Dr Farshi. *Tabrik!*

D Gershon Lewental
JPS Associate Editor

ASPS ANNOUNCEMENTS

ASPS Tenth Biennial Convention Tashkent, Uzbekistan

Rob Haug, ASPS Secretary

The ASPS held its Tenth Biennial Convention at Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies (TSUOS) in Tashkent, Uzbekistan 12-16 August 2025. The convention was a resounding success, the largest the ASPS has ever hosted, with over 300 participants from more than 30 countries. For the first four days, we gathered on the campus of TSUOS to share our research and then, on the final day, many of the participants traveled by highspeed rail to Samarkand for a cultural excursion. In between, we enjoyed film screenings, concerts, tours of Tashkent, book talks, and a banquet filled with food, music, and dance. The end result was an invigorating week of thought-provoking lectures, stimulating conversations, inspiring engagements with local culture and history, and a lot of fun with friends and colleagues. This was our first time holding the Biennial Convention in Uzbekistan and it was well worth the wait. Tashkent provided the perfect backdrop for our meeting.

Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies was a wonderful and gracious host and we would like to thank our colleagues there, especially Gulchehra Rikhsieva (Rector), Durbek Sayfullayev (Vice-Rector for Research and Innovation), Khulkhar Mirzakhmedova (Director of the Institute of Languages and Literature of Eastern Peoples),

Nodir Nuriddinov (Head of the Department of Iranian and Afghan Studies), Aziza Nishanbaeva (Senior Lecturer, Department of Iranian and Afghan Studies), and Behzod Jafarov (Senior Lecturer, Department of Iranian and Afghan Studies). Special thanks are also deserved for the many TSUOS students who operated the registration desk and provided technical support throughout the conference. Katta rahmat! Our colleagues at TSUOS provided a wonderful environment for our convention, attending to our every need, and we look forward to future opportunities for collaboration with them.

Over the first four days of the convention, over ninety panels were convened with more than three hundred speakers. Papers presented covered fields as diverse as history, literature, art, linguistics, political science, anthropology, economics, sociology, and more while spanning the breadth of the Persianate world from the Balkans to Los Angeles and history from the Achaemenids to the present. We thank everyone who joined us and shared their research. This year we added a new feature to the convention, a series of book talks over the lunch breaks. These sessions featured up to four speakers who presented their recent publications (books published since the previous convention). The book talks were so popular, we ran two sessions each day. Finally, we hosted a book room with tables from Brill (Netherlands), Ketab Araie Iran (Iran), Institute of Oriental Studies named after Abu Rayhan Beruni (Uzbekistan), Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia - University of Tokyo (Japan), and FAN Publishing House - Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Uzbekistan (Uzbekistan).

The first day of the conference closed with an opening reception featuring welcome addresses from TSUOS Rector Gulchehra Rikhsieva and ASPS President Mirjam Künkler followed by light food and a performance of traditional Uzbek music, the perfect opportunity for everyone to gather with friends and colleagues they might not have seen since our previous meeting.

On the second day, the Presidential Address "Is There Such a Thing as Persianate Female Juristic Authority?" was given by ASPS President Mirjam

Künkler. This was followed by the first ever ASPS Awards Ceremony where the second ASPS/JPS Early Career Prize was given to Golriz Farshi for her paper “Conversion and Piety: Rashid al-Din’s Conception of Charity”. We were also proud to present the first ever Persian Heritage Foundation Book Award for the History of Art and Architecture of Iran and the Persianate World to Nahid Massoumeh Assemi for her book *Piety and Politics in Qajar Iran: The Takkiyya Mu’avin al-Mulk in Kermanshah* and Sara Honarmand Ebrahimi for her book *Emotion, Mission, Architecture: Building Hospitals in Persian and British India, 1865-1914*. Honorable Mention was awarded to Farshid Emami for his book *Isfahan: Architecture and Urban Experience in Early Modern Iran*. We thank the Persian Heritage Foundation for not only sponsoring this award but also allowing the ASPS to host the presentation of the prize. Both prizes will be awarded again at our next biennial convention. The second day of the convention closed with the General Assembly where the membership voted on several changes to the ASPS Bylaws with the aim of guiding the organization into the future on a solid foundation.

The third day of the convention closed with a concert of traditional Uzbek and Persianate music performed by members of the conservatory. While the performance started off in a more refined manner, by the end of the evening, everyone was out of their seats dancing along to the music.

The fourth day of the convention closed with a banquet at the Hotel Uzbekistan where guests were entertained by a Karnay group who welcomed everyone with their horns and drums, dancers who performed several traditional dances, and finally the group Shahrston who brought everyone to the dancefloor with more modern and international selections of songs. It was the perfect way to end four days of intense academic exchange.

Once the academic part of the conference was completed, the ASPS boarded an Afrasiyab highspeed train to Samarkand for a cultural excursion. The cultural excursions are always an important part of the ASPS convention, providing everyone an opportunity to leave the lecture halls and experience our host country. This year was no exception as we visited Gur-i Emir Mausoleum,

Registan Square, Bibi-Kahnum Mosque, and the Shakh-i Zinda necropolis before returning to Tashkent by highspeed train.

This year we also added optional cultural excursions to Khiva, Bukhara, and Samarkand both before and after the convention for those who wanted an opportunity to see more of Uzbekistan as well as daily tours of Tashkent during the convention.

I would like to conclude by thanking everyone who helped make the Tenth Biennial Convention of the ASPS such a success. This begins with my co-chairs, Kazuo Morimoto and Aziza Shanazarova, the rest of the convention organizing committee, Evrim Binbaş and D Gershon Lewental, and all our colleagues at TSUOS. Special thanks go to Jamshed Safarov of Veres Vert who provided much of the logistical support including arranging hotels, food for the opening reception and coffee breaks, the banquet, and tours. This convention could not have been the success it was without the contributions of everyone involved.

We look forward to seeing you in 2027... location to be announced soon!



Convention Participants at the Opening Reception



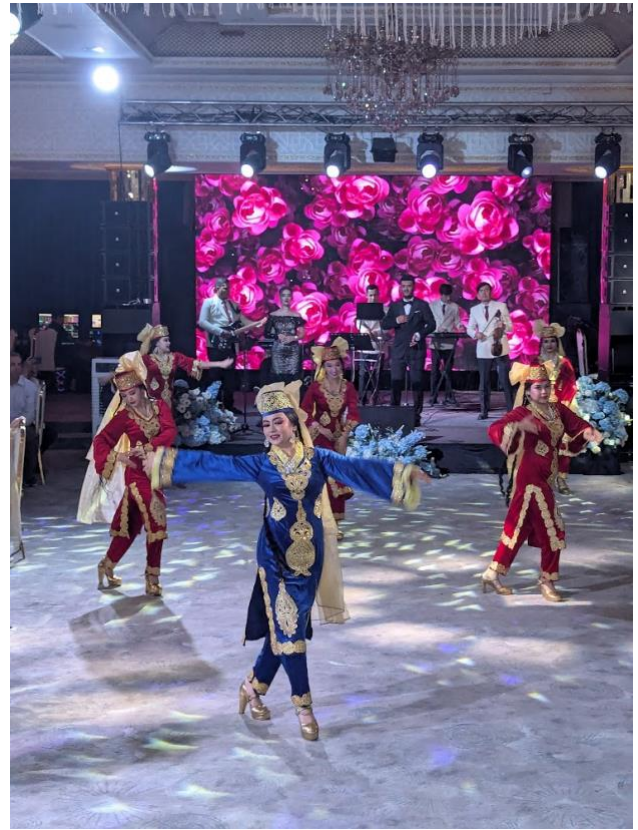
Members of the ASPS Board meet with Representatives of Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies



Ali Gheissari of the Persian Heritage Foundation and Past ASPS President Sussan Babaie award the first ever Persian Heritage Foundation Book Award for the History of Art and Architecture of Iran and the Persianate World



Convention attendees at the Registan in Samarkand



Entertainment at the Closing Banquet

ASPS 2025 Board Elections Announcement

The ASPS elections nominating committee is pleased to announce the candidates standing for election to the board. As chair of the committee, I thank my colleagues Prof. Sussan Babaie and Dr. Karolina Rakowiecka-Asgari, who volunteered their time and service, and we are all grateful to the candidates who have agreed to stand for election.

This year, there are three open positions, and all members are encouraged to vote for one candidate for each: **Vice-President**, **Student Board Member**, and **At-Large Board Member**. Voting will take place from **November 1 to November 30**. A unique voting link will be emailed to all current ASPS members. Your participation helps shape the future of our association. Below, please find short profiles of each of the six candidates.

D Gershon Lewental
Chair, ASPS 2025 nominating committee

Vice-President

Daniel Beben



Daniel Beben (PhD, Indiana University, 2015) is Associate Professor and Chair of the Department of History, Philosophy and Religious Studies at Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan. His research examines genealogical practices, religious conversion and community formation in the Persianate world in the post-Mongol era.

Daniel's publications include *The First Aga Khan: Memoirs of the 46th Ismaili Imam* (ed. and trans. with Daryoush Mohammad Poor, 2018), *Genealogical History in the Persianate World* (ed. with Jo-Ann Gross, 2025), and *Ismailism in Badakhshan: A Genealogical History* (co-authored with Jo-Ann Gross and Umed Mamadsheerzodzhoiev, forthcoming). He is currently preparing a monograph examining the co-production of processes and narratives of religious conversion in Central Asia.

Daniel has served ASPS in multiple roles since 2016, including Treasurer, Secretary, and Board of Directors. He also served as the chair of the organizing committee for the planned 2020 convention in New Delhi. As Vice President, he intends to play a leading role in organizing the 2027 convention, to seek new opportunities for collaboration with academic institutions within the Persianate world, and to pursue funding options to facilitate the participation of scholars from Persianate societies in ASPS conventions.

Florian Schwarz



Florian Schwarz (PhD, Tübingen, 1999) is Director of the Institute for Iranian Studies at the Austrian Academy of Sciences in Vienna and affiliate professor at the University of Vienna. He previously taught at the Ruhr University of Bochum (Germany) and the University of Washington in Seattle (USA). His work on the history of Iran and Central Asia from late antiquity to the early 20th century includes research on Sufi communities, manuscript studies, transimperial elites, urban history and rural spaces. He is particularly interested in long-term transformations, borderlands and trans-regional/-imperial/-national spaces. He is Key Researcher in the Austrian Cluster of Excellence 'Eurasian Transformations' and serves as co-editor of the *Brill Handbook of Oriental Studies, Section 1: The Near and Middle East* and of two Iranian Studies monograph series for the Austrian Academy of Sciences Press. Schwarz is ASPS Regional Director for Central Europe and has served on the boards of *Societas Iranologica Europea*, the Association for Iranian Studies, and the British Institute of Persian Studies.

Student Board Member

Alice Emmanuelle Lyzcia



Alice Emmanuelle Lyzcia is a PhD Researcher at SOAS University of London in the Department of History, specialising in women's Urdu literary and epistolary production in twentieth-century Pakistan. Her research is invested in ontological questions about the consequences of how we imagine history, and the productive possibilities of its reimagination. She is presently revising an article for a special issue of *Critical Pakistan Studies*, concerning the reconstruction of the figure of the *ṭawā'if* in the Urdu *naẓms* of Sara Shagufta. Drawing on years of professional experience in psychiatric healthcare, she is especially interested in histories of women's mental health and illness in the modern Persianate world. She teaches at SOAS in the fields of critical historiography, philosophy, and political theory, and served on the organising committee for the annual workshop at the Centre for Comparative Political Thought on the theme of theory and activism. She is passionate about enhancing the critical engagement of young scholars through teaching, social media, and graduate conferences to promote the value of the humanities and social sciences in a rapidly transforming world.

Omri Zemler



Omri Zemler is a third-year doctoral student in the History Department at the University of Michigan. His research explores cultural exchange between Safavid Iran and Western Europe, focusing on questions of identity and cross-cultural translation through visual and textual materials. He is also a team member of Khamseen: Islamic Art History Online—a digital platform dedicated to expanding Islamic art education worldwide—where he coordinates translations of Khamseen content into several foreign languages, including Arabic, Persian, and Turkish. Omri earned his B.A. and M.A. in History and Middle Eastern Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem, where he also taught Persian in the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies. His master's thesis, titled 'A Tale of Two Çafhras: Ethnography and Identity in the Iranian Parts of Don García de Silva y Figueroa's *Comentarios*', examines the discursive strategies employed by a Spanish ambassador to the Safavid court to negotiate cultural affinities and religious tensions between early modern Iberia and Iran.

At-Large Board Member

Andrew D Magnusson



Andrew D Magnusson is Professor of Islamic and Middle Eastern History at the University of Central Oklahoma. He earned his PhD in History from the University of California at Santa Barbara. His first book, *Zoroastrians in Early Islamic History: Accommodation and Memory*, was published by Edinburgh University Press in 2023. Magnusson's professional interests include Islamic historiographies of ancient Persia, Arabic biographies of the prophet Zoroaster, and cross-confessional culture in Buyid Iran (945-1055 CE). His research has appeared in *Britain in the Islamic World: Imperial and Post-Imperial Connections* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2019); *Islamisation: Comparative Perspectives from History* (Edinburgh University Press, 2017); and the *Cambridge Companion to Modern Arab Culture* (Cambridge University Press, 2015). Magnusson currently serves as Vice President of the Midwest World History Association.

Mahdieh Tavakol



Mahdieh Tavakol is a Postdoctoral Researcher at the Center for the Study of Manuscript Cultures (CSMC), Universität Hamburg. Her research focuses on Iran as a center of intellectual and cultural exchange within the wider Shiite scholarly networks of the 16th–17th centuries. She examines the history of libraries and the circulation of manuscripts across regions stretching from Jabal 'Āmil, Iraq, Bahrain, and Iran to Central Asia and the Indian subcontinent. Mahdieh's academic background spans medical engineering (Tehran Polytechnic), the history and philosophy of science (Sharif University of Technology, Tehran; Oregon State University, USA), and graduate history coursework at the American University of Beirut. She earned her PhD at Freie Universität Berlin in 2024 as a Marie Skłodowska-Curie fellow under Konrad Hirschler and Devin Stewart. Her dissertation *Mobility and Cultural Exchange: The Library of Babā' al-Dīn Muḥammad al-ʿĀmilī (d. 1030/1621) in Safavid Iran* won the Annemarie Schimmel PhD Dissertation Prize (2025) and is being prepared for publication by the Austrian Academy of Science.

**Panel Reports:
Tenth Biennial Convention,
Tashkent, Uzbekistan**

**History of Science is enjoying growing
popularity in Iranian Universities**

Kamran Arjomand

Owing to the efforts of the Institute for the History of Science, University of Tehran (پژوهشکده تاریخ علم) many young scholars are now taking a keen interest in research areas related to this topic. The Institute also publishes the Journal for the History of Science, (تاریخ علم), established in 2003 that can be freely accessed (<https://jih.s.ut.ac.ir>). In this year's convention in Tashkent two panels were devoted to the history of science in the Persianate world. Compared to the last convention in Yerevan, where one panel dealt with the subject, one could observe a growing interest in this very important branch of scholarship. Six young scholars from Iran were to present papers on a variety of topics, covering both traditional and modern science. Although three researchers could not make the journey, due to unforeseen circumstances, contributions of two of them were seen on a video presentation or read out. It would be apt to encourage and promote this promising research trend by giving it a visible focus among the ASPS' areas of concern.

**Digital Humanities and Cultural Studies of
the Persianate World**

Haleh Hajyasini

The panel "Digital Humanities and Cultural Studies of the Persianate World" showcased innovative projects employing digital tools to study Persianate art, architecture, and culture. Presentations included the cataloging of Persianate collections in Geneva (Negar Habibi), the digital mapping of historical travelogues (Mahnam Najafi), and the tracing of Persian architectural historiography (Haleh Hajyasini), revealing new ways to analyze sources, networks, and disciplinary development. Chaired by Edward Shawe-Taylor, the session, scheduled early on the final day, drew

an engaged audience and sparked lively discussion across Iranian- and Western-based perspectives. Conversations ranged from technical issues, such as OCR/HCR processes, visualization tools, and metadata design, to broader questions of historiography, cultural networks, and artifact accessibility. Participants highlighted the importance of open-access resources and cross-regional collaboration. The panel concluded on a forward-looking, collaborative note, reflecting strong enthusiasm for advancing digital humanities in Persianate studies.

**Sunnisms and Shi'isms in the Persianate
World: Varying Definitions and Perceptions**

Kazuo Morimoto

The panel "Sunnisms and Shi'isms in the Persianate World: Varying Definitions and Perceptions" featured members of the JSPS project "'Sunnis' and 'Shi'is': Historical Inquiries into Confessional Identities and Mutual Perceptions." Kazuo Morimoto addressed analytical concepts used to describe Sunni and supra-confessional reverence for 'Alī's kin. Three case studies followed: Ayako Ninomiya on "Official" Sunnism in Sultanate India; Ryo Mizukami on Ni'matullāhī attitudes toward Twelver Shi'ism in Mughal India; and Yayoi Kawahara on perceptions of Twelver Shi'is in a nineteenth-century Central Asian travelogue. Together, the papers highlighted the fluid emic understandings of "Sunnism" and "Shi'ism." We thank Evrim Binbaş, chair and commentator, for his incisive observations (including "there was no politics!"), as well as the audience for their input. As the project proceeds, we look forward to further engaging with these perspectives.

**Centering Central Asia: The Abu'l-Khayrids
(Shaybanids)**

Jaimee Comstock-Skipp

My organized panel "Centering Central Asia: The Abu'l-Khayrids (Shaybanids)" sought to highlight post-Timurid Central Asia, and what better location than in Tashkent for ASPS 2025! Sussan

Babaie was the insightful and gracious chair who reflected on the significance of finally having papers devoted to the under-explored political group. Proceeding chronologically, Ilse Sturkenboom first presented on “Bukharan Decoration and Its Transmediality: The Walls of Khoja Zayn al-Din as an Open Book”; I next discussed “Illustrated Abū’l-Khayrid Manuscript Production between 1547–1557: Political Power in the Service of Culture, Cultural Power in the Service of Politics”; and Florian Schwarz lastly explored the now-lost royal palatial complex (*shishakhāna*) of Bukharan political power in the 16th—17th centuries. The audience asked about the physical site of a *kitābkhāna* workshop/book repository, the role of Naqshbandi Sufis in Transoxiana in architectural and artistic patronage, and transregional links to Safavid Iran in royal and urban planning.

Weaving Identity Through Myth and Memory

Safiyeh Khoddami Fahadan and Hamidreza Pournajafian

This panel examined the Yarsan (Ahl-e Haqq) religion as a prime example of a syncretic and fluid identity, whose formation can be seen as a form of cultural resistance and an effort to revive pre-Islamic traditions. The discussion focused on the strategic use of the first-person pronoun “I” in its sacred texts (*Kalām*), where poets directly channel mythological memory—from creation to the rebellion of Kaveh the Blacksmith—speaking from the perspectives of divinities, natural forces (like fire), or even Satan. Rooted in the beliefs of manifestation and transmigration, this narrative strategy serves as a powerful metaphor for transcending temporal boundaries and reviving a lost collective memory. The session culminated with a screening of a musical piece (the ‘Jalushāhi’ *magām*)—believed to be the celestial melody that persuaded the soul to inhabit the earthly body, according to Yarsan cosmogony—and a vibrant discussion on the transformation of national epic into mystical epic.

Isfahan Special: Material Culture, Built Environment, and Landscape

Sussan Babaie

This was a two-part panel that took place on August 14 in the morning and again in the afternoon, at The Tenth Biennial Convention of the ASPS at Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, in Uzbekistan. The panels were organised by Professor Sussan Babaie, The Courtauld, University of London, and chaired by Babaie and Prof. Sahar Hosseini.

The scholarship presented at the two panels represented the surge in Safavid studies since the 1974 two-volume special issue of *Iranian Studies*, which was dedicated to Isfahan. That publication jumpstarted a new era in the study of Safavid art, architecture and urbanism. The field has since exploded in myriad ways situating this era in Iranian history at the forefront of innovative research. The papers presented in the two panels, and the lively discussions afterwards, compellingly demonstrate that it is time to publish a new *Isfahan Special* bringing together not only those who participated in the Tashkent conference but also others whose research has been breaking new ground in this field. Please see the conference programme for the presentations).

The participants were: Ali Shojae-Esfahani (Art University of Isfahan) and Yaser Jebreili (Independent scholar) on the pre-Safavid urban archaeology; Sahar Hosseini (University of Pittsburgh) and Hossein Savari Jamalouei (Shahid Beheshti University); Reza Daftarian (The Courtauld, University of London); Margaret Squires (The Courtauld, University of London); Sussan Babaie (The Courtauld, University of London); Mahroo Moosavi (Kunsthistorisches Institut in Florenz, Max-Planck Institute, Berlin); and Olga Gillen (The Courtauld, University of London).

“Persianate”: A debate

Sussan Babaie

This panel took place on August 12, 2025, the first day of The Tenth Biennial Convention of the ASPS at Tashkent State University of Oriental Studies, in Uzbekistan.

It was organised, chaired and moderated by Sussan Babaie (Professor of the Arts of Iran and Islam, The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London)

The panel had aimed to energise and renew conversations that reflected on the ways the qualifier ‘Persianate’ would function in different disciplinary contexts and historical frameworks. The short ‘thought pieces’, offered by the four presenters, and the enthusiasm of the audience in both filling the lecture theatre and animatedly engaging in the Q&A testify to the significance of the debate. I cannot capture the spirit of excitement that permeated the session but offer here, thanks to the four colleagues for their generosity, summaries they have drafted of their presentations.

NB: The summaries appear, exactly as submitted by the authors, and in the same order as at the panel in Tashkent.

Dominic Parviz Brookshaw, Professor of Persian Literature and Iranian Culture; Senior Research Fellow in Persian at Wadham College, University of Oxford.

The Persianate problem – a literary-linguistic perspective

One of the key issues as I see it with the term Persianate is the somewhat loose way in which it is often used. We need to differentiate between Persianate when used to describe art, architecture or social practice (e.g., *adab*), and Persianate when used to refer to Persian-inspired style in literary culture (say in Ottoman Turkish, Chaghatay, or Urdu poetry), where the connection to the Persian language and written culture is, arguably, far deeper (and where we intend Persianate to mean something rather different from Persian). If we accept that the Persianate as it relates to texts

encompasses the full gamut of: that which is derived from and inspired by Persian models; that which mimics or imitates them (often, of course, on multiple levels simultaneously) in an act of homage; that which is Persian in character or appearance; and that which has been designed or composed or commissioned or performed with Persian in mind (*bar vazn-e* Italianate, Latinate, Islamicate etc etc), then we rapidly come to the conclusion that *Farsi-zaban* – the current translation for Persianate in the name of our association – is very far from being adequate.

Farsi-zaban (“Persian-speaking”), though a term with considerable age, privileges spoken language over written, thereby diminishing the status of Persian as a written lingua franca, and does not address the idea of Persian *sabk* in literatures *influenced* or *inspired* by Persian. *Farsi-zaban* also suggests an individual who uses Persian on a daily basis as their chief language of communication. There is a somewhat archaic alternative to *Farsi-zaban*, which is *Farsi-khvan*, a term that is perhaps more appropriate as an approximation for Persianate as it focuses on proficiency in *reading*, and therefore reflects the spread of written Persian literature across a large geographical area within Eurasia. Moreover, *Farsi-khvan*, since it suggests someone with reading fluency in Persian and says nothing of their oral abilities, brings it closer in my mind to the concept of Persianate as it pertains to non-native users of Persian. When discussing poetry, my personal preference is for the term *Farsi-gu* (or *Farsi-guy*) that is often used in Persian to denote poets who wrote in Persian but who did so in contexts where the general population was not Persian-speaking (for example, Rumi). In this compound, *gu/y* comes from the secondary meaning of *gofian*: “to compose [poetry]”. This link to the creation of the written word seems closest to the idea of Persianate (or, indeed, Persophone).

But how to approximate Persianate in the Persian language itself? What might be a suitable calque for the term Persianate? Here I think we need to draw on the daily practice of our members in Iran who face this challenge when translating scholarship on various aspects of the Persianate into Persian. Here are some possibilities, none of which I find particularly satisfying: *Farsi-ma’ab*, which reminds

us of *Farangi-ma'ab* and carries with it similarly negative connotations; *Farsi-san* or *Farsi-guneh*, but both terms sound too technical and rigid; and *Farsianeh* that apparently has somewhat of a following in Iran itself, but which also sounds rather forced. The problem with these Persian approximations (and, I might say, with the term *Persianate* itself), is that they not only sound artificial in Persian, they also suggest a lack of creativity on the part of the writer or poet in question and, by extension, question the value of the text produced. But is there not a similar lack of authenticity (for want of a better word) at the heart of the architectural term *Italianate*, whence *Persianate* ultimately derives? One somewhat more radical idea would be to drop *Persianate* (or even *Persophone*) in favour of an adjective that stresses the relationship of the imitative practice to Iran (broadly conceived), rather than to the Persian language. It might just be the case that *Irani-gara* or even *Iraniz̤eh* might describe better the phenomenon we are seeking to describe!

Sahar Hosseini, Assistant Professor in History of Art and Architecture, University of Pittsburgh.

Persianate as a Framework for Architectural History: Continuities, Materialities, and Transregional Exchanges
Why do we employ the term *Persianate* in architectural history? What is at stake when we place *Persianate* before a building, a garden, or an architectural form? For me, the value of *Persianate* as a qualifier in architectural history lies in its capacity to illuminate a sphere of shared cultural practices that extends across time and geography, while also acknowledging the ways in which these practices were continually adapted, negotiated, and redefined within specific local contexts. It helps us conceptualize built environments that are now categorized within distinct national frameworks as once belonging to a closely interconnected space of mobilities—of people, ideas, and goods moving across geographies. In doing so, it reveals the need to complicate national, ethno-centric architectural histories and to recognize the transregional flows that shaped them.

It helps us view the Mughal gardens of Kashmir alongside the Safavid gardens of the Caspian region, or to consider the fifteenth-century madrasa of Mohammad Gavan in Bidar in relation to madrasas built in Khurasan and Central Asia under the Timurids, as part of an interconnected world that transcends the fixed national boundaries of present-day Iran, India, Afghanistan, and beyond. Their architectural form, spatial organization, and the cultural practices they nurtured situate them within a *Persianate* sphere, rather than confining them to narrowly defined national categories such as Iranian, Indian, Tajik, or Uzbek.

Persianate is also a useful category in that it allows us to recognize how certain architectural and artistic elements circulated diachronically, despite episodes of political rupture. In this reading, the gardens of Kashmir and the Caspian region can be understood in relation to the suburban gardens of Samarqand and Herat, while the *imān* of the madrasa in Bidar and its fifteenth-century counterparts in Khurasan and Central Asia can be traced back to the pre-Islamic Sasanian *Taq-i Kisrā*. Therefore, at its best, *Persianate* help us communicate continuity through transformation: the ways in which forms, techniques, and ideals travelled, were rematerialized, and acquired new meanings.

Despite the productivity of the concept of *Persianate*, it is important to introduce certain cautions, especially when translating the term from a linguistic to an architectural register. In linguistics, the connective tissue is clear: the Persian language itself constitutes a recognizable and bounded medium, allowing scholars to trace vocabulary, genres, and rhetorical conventions across courts and regions. Even with dialectal variations, the language—and the cultural norms articulated through it—remains broadly legible.

Architecture does not have a singular medium that can serve as its connective tissue in the way that language does. While design repertoires, ornamental grammars, and spatial typologies certainly travelled—carried by itinerant designers and craftsmen or transmitted through drawings and models—the built environment is always

anchored in local conditions. Architecture is deeply bound to the material and environmental realities of its setting. It depends on what is physically available, such as brick or stone for construction, natural pigments for producing color, or clay for making tiles. It also reflects the climate of a region, which influences spatial organization, ventilation, and orientation. In addition, architecture relies on the skills of local craftsmen and the craft practices that develop around specific materials. The processes of adaptation and translation in architecture were therefore not abstract but materially substantial. For this reason, the connective tissue we might call *Persianate* is less obvious, more complex, and more difficult to tease out in architecture than in linguistics.

This material inflection also makes the architectural *Persianate* more porous than the literary one. Persian literary works could have been read with relative fluency from Chinese Turkistan to Constantinople; architecture, by contrast, was always locally negotiated, even as it participated in a shared transregional vocabulary. The networks through which architecture moved were multidirectional, intersecting with other cultural currents and producing hybrid forms. These dynamics complicate any attempt to locate a singular “center” and underscore the contingent and variable character of the architectural *Persianate*.

Another concern is agency of the non-Persian actors whose role tends to get obscured. From the tenth century onward in Central Asia, many of the most significant monuments were commissioned, funded, and shaped by Turkic rulers—the Qarakhanids, Seljuks, Khwarazmians, Timurids, and later Turkmen dynasties. To subsume this architectural landscape under the single rubric of *Persianate* suggests a unidirectional flow from Iran to Turkic Central Asia and sidelines other traditions. The Qarakhanids, for instance, developed monumental brick architecture that included the first known examples of *pishtaq* (for example in the Arab Ata tomb in Tim (977–78))—a feature absent in earlier extant Samanid mausoleum but later foundational for Seljuk, Timurid, Safavid, and Mughal design. This history underscores that what we identify

as *Persianate* emerged through entangled, multi-directional processes rather than diffusion from a singular center.

Alongside the agency of Turkic rulers within the *Persianate* sphere, we must also account for contributions from regions whose makers were not themselves active participants in shaping this material culture. Elements drawn from Chinese, Indic, or Mediterranean contexts did not arrive as part of a shared political or cultural project, yet they were adapted and made integral to architecture and the arts. Whereas external influence in language and identity often moves more slowly, art and architecture tend to respond quicker to the circulation of goods, visual cultures, and materials. This dynamic is particularly visible in the early modern period, for example when European imports such as Venetian mirrors, mechanical clocks, and new painting models arrived in Safavid Persia and were absorbed into existing traditions. How, then, should we account for such elements within a *Persianate* built environment?

So where does this leave us? I would suggest that in the study of architecture and the built environment, the *Persianate* is most productive when understood as open-ended and intersectional: when it recognizes shared practices without flattening difference; when it takes seriously the role of environment and materiality; when it foregrounds the agency of multiple actors—Persian and non-Persian, regional and foreign; and when it situates these within the broader connective tissue of transregional exchange.

Mana Kia, Associate Professor, Department of Middle Eastern, South Asian, and African Studies, Columbia University.

Reflections on the Persianate as subject and as tool

Originally, Hodgson used *Persianate* as a kind of language-based qualifier parallel to and subsumed within his formulation of *Islamicate*, which referred to a notion of culture supposedly different from religion, as law and theology, that defined Islam proper. By extension, across fields the *Persianate* has often been deemed to be a secular way to frame culture. This is extremely

questionable, especially for earlier periods, since the secular as a concept relies on a particularly modern idea of religion.

Any consideration of history requires inquiring into the hermeneutical ground of a place and its time. If we are to consider questions of how or why something happened, we need to understand what something might have meant at a particular time and not just assume that things, ideas, or happenings are transhistorical. That is because our default is almost always our present or modern ideas. Is poetry *shi'r* and can it always comfortably be encompassed by our modern idea of literature? Similar types of questions have been asked about whether the older idea of *din* fits into the modern category of religion, which scholars have identified as modelled after a particularly Protestant Christian mold and universalized as religion. Furthermore, I think it's worth considering that contemporary disciplinary boundaries might be inappropriate for certain kinds of inquiries into the Persianate. This is because those boundaries might result in the dismemberment of particular types of historical phenomena.

In my own work, I focus on the Persianate not as a language or a textual tradition by itself, but as a tradition of *adab*, of proper aesthetic and ethical form, in texts and in life. I find that without taking into account how the Persianate circulated, was received, and redeployed by audiences and text composers alike, we cannot understand what it meant and what work it could do in the world. The two are not mutually exclusive, just as Persian *adab* is not exclusive from the proximate traditions of Arabic or Turkish *adab*, for instance. Indeed, texts were produced in the context of social ethics, as gifts exchanged as appropriate to certain forms of companionship. *Adab* trained a person to read the world, not just texts. The stories and verses in texts, circulated in writing and in speech, trained this perception and also conveyed a set of social sensibilities even as they enacted them, according to *adab*'s aporetic logic. I therefore study *adab* both as a historical subject and as a conceptual tool, through which to understand the Persianate according to its qualities of porousness and simultaneity.

Finally, it is high time that we reckon with what our work on the Persianate means for the present. How do we account for contemporary debates over language and culture in the places that we study, which are significant parts of various kind of political and social aspirations with real consequences for people's lives? For instance, the Persianate as a concept centered on the Persian language, can easily resonate with the tyrannical monolingual imperatives of modern nation-state culture. Lack of critical engagement opens our work to being read and appropriated according to certain dominant default assumptions. We cannot ignore these politics in the very places of the world whose history we tell and to where our work may travel, regardless of the temporal focus and disciplinary approach of our studies.

Mateusz M. Kłagisz, Assistant Professor, Department of Iranian Studies, Institute of Oriental Studies, Jagiellonian University, Krakow.

Persianate' debate through Afghan lens

Hodgson coined "Persianate" to describe cultures that, while not ethnically Persian or politically ruled from Persia (Iran), were deeply influenced by Persian language, literature, and courtly traditions—particularly in Central Asia, South Asia, and the Ottoman world. It was meant to be analogous to, e.g. "Hellenistic"—signifying a cultural sphere shaped by a prestige language and style.

It captures the reality that Persian literary and administrative culture extended far beyond Iran—from the Deccan sultanates to Mughal India, Timurid Central Asia, and even the Ottoman court. Furthermore, it decouples Persian influence from an ethnic Persian identity, which is important for places like Mughal India where rulers were Turko-Mongol but adopted Persian court culture. Nevertheless, the term can be too elastic—applying to everything from Ottoman poetry to Central Asian ceramics. Persian language was central to Hodgson's concept, but Persian influence was often filtered through local idioms (e.g., Indo-Persian in India, Chagatai Persian in Central Asia). This raises the question: how much linguistic borrowing is required for a society to be "Persianate"? Some scholars argue that

“Persianate” can be read as implying a coherent civilizational unity where in reality there were fragmented, competing, and hybridized traditions. It may overemphasise Persian influence at the expense of Arabic, Turkic, Indic, or local traditions.

Hodgson’s framing was partly modelled on European historiographical categories like “Hellenistic” or “Romance”—potentially importing Western assumptions about how cultural spheres operate. Critics from postcolonial perspectives argue it risks essentializing Persian culture as a fixed core radiating outwards. Meanwhile, Persianate culture was not static; it evolved dramatically from the Ghaznavids to the Qajars. A single label may blur important shifts—e.g., the transition from Persian as a lingua franca in India to its decline under colonial policies. Some scholars now prefer “Persian Cosmopolis” for roughly the 1000–1800 period, to stress the mobility and adaptability of Persian culture rather than its fixed “Persianate” essence. Others use more localized terms (e.g., “Indo-Persian,” “Turco-Persian”) to highlight specific hybridities rather than a generalized sphere. There’s also an increased interest in mapping multilingual ecologies instead of centring only Persian as the prestige medium.

To sum up, “Persianate” is still a powerful shorthand for historians, especially in comparative and transregional contexts. But its utility depends on: 1) defining it narrowly (anchored in specific cultural practices or historical moments); 2) acknowledging hybridity and not letting Persian influence eclipse other linguistic and cultural forces; 3) situating it historically rather than treating it as a timeless civilizational zone.

When we zoom in on Afghanistan, the term Persianate runs into some distinctive problems that are sharper than in the South Asia or Ottoman contexts. “Persianate” tends to privilege urban literate elites—poets, scribes, court officials—who wrote in Persian and participated in the courtly aesthetic. In Afghan history, this risks sidelining: 1) Pashto- and Turkic-speaking polities that were not primarily Persian-writing; 2) rural, tribal, and nomadic cultures that shaped much of the political

and social reality. It creates a danger that Afghanistan’s history gets told as a Kabul/Herat-centred Persian story, erasing non-Persian-speaking majority experiences.

Afghanistan has long been a linguistic crossroads: Persian, Pashto, Uzbek, Turkmen, and regional languages coexisted in complex hierarchies. The Persianate frame often treats Persian as the “default prestige language” without fully grappling with: 1) Pashto literary traditions; 2) bilingual courts; 3) non-Persian vernacular chronicles and oral histories.

The Persianate sphere concept is strongest for 1000–1800 (Ghaznavid → Timurid → Safavid/Mughal overlap), while in the 19th–20th centuries, Persian in Afghanistan underwent new nationalizing and modernizing transformations, especially under Amanullah Khan and later reforms. The Persianate label can obscure these modern political uses of Persian as part of state-building and identity politics—which were very different from earlier courtly Persianisation.

Afghan regions like Balkh, Mazar, and Aqcha were deeply embedded in Turkic-Persian and Central Asian Islamic spheres. If one says “Persianate Afghanistan,” it risks underplaying Turkic-language contributions to culture, governance, and military structure (e.g., Uzbek khanates, Chagatai heritage). In contemporary Afghanistan, Persian is bound up in ethno-linguistic politics—especially in relation to Pashtun-centric narratives. Using “Persianate” as an overarching descriptor can be read (by some) as privileging Tajik/Dari heritage over Pashto or other identities. This makes it a politically loaded term in ways Hodgson never intended. Western Afghanistan (Herat, Farah) historically was deeply tied to Iran’s cultural orbit. Eastern Afghanistan (Kabul, Ghazni) linked more to Indo-Persian and Pashto-speaking polities. Northern Afghanistan leaned toward Central Asian Turkic networks. The Persianate concept flattens these regional cultural mosaics into one imagined Persian-centred zone.

In the 19th–20th centuries, British and Russian imperial pressures reshaped Afghan cultural politics—creating new linguistic hierarchies not

well explained by premodern Persianate logic. The Persianate lens tends to look backward to medieval cosmopolitanism, not forward to modernity's ruptures.

In sum, in Afghan studies, "Persianate" can be useful for: 1) Medieval/early modern Herat court culture; 2) Ghaznavid–Timurid literary and architectural traditions. But, it's less effective for: 3) capturing the multilingual, multiethnic nature of Afghan society; 4) understanding modern state-building and ethno-linguistic contestations; 5) appreciating the Turkic, Pashto, and regional Islamic worlds Afghanistan belonged to alongside Persian culture.

ASPS VIRTUAL EVENT SERIES

ASPS Virtual Event Series XV

Actors/Performers, Audience, and Narrative Strategies in *Naqqālī*: New Approaches



The Japan Office of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies and the Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, University of Tokyo, are pleased to co-host ASPS Virtual Event Series XV: "Actors/Performers, Audience, and Narrative Strategies in *Naqqālī*: New Approaches," an online workshop on *naqqālī* that gathers together three

papers by young *naqqālī* scholars across the globe. This workshop explores the vast, almost uncharted terrain of *naqqālī*, Persian professional storytelling in terms of performance, audience, and narrative. It also offers a *Shāhnāma-khāni* performance by Mohammadali Mirzaee Jadideslam who is a *naqqāl*. Pre-registration is required for the participation.

Date and Time: Thursday, November 27, 2025, 15:00 (JST)

Venue: Online via Zoom

Language: English

Pre-registration: Please complete the registration form at <https://forms.gle/YFENy7uJwiqWMix67> by November 24, 24:00 (JST). A Zoom link will be sent to all registrants by the end of the following day.

Co-organized by: Japan Office, Association for the Study of Persianate Societies (ASPS Virtual Event Series XV); Institute for Advanced Studies on Asia, University of Tokyo (Tobunken Symposium).

Contact: Naoki Nishiyama (nishiyama@ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp)

Program

Chair: Kazuo Morimoto (ASPS Japan Office; IASA, UTokyo)

15:00-15:15: Kazuo Morimoto
Opening Remarks

15:15-15:45: Mohammadali Mirzaee Jadideslam (PhD candidate, University of Hamburg):
"Naqqālī, Narrating or Acting?"

15:45-16:15: Sara Mashayekh (PhD candidate, UC Santa Barbara)
"Audience, Performer, Venue: The Role of Spectators and the Space in Shaping *Naqqālī* Performances"

16:15-16:30: *Shāhnāma-khāni* by Mohammad Mirzaee Jadideslam (*naqqāl*)

Break

16:30-17:00: Radman Rasooli Mehrabani
(Independent scholar)
“Negotiating Myth and Reality: *Naqqāls*’ Strategies
for Constructing Narrative Credibility”

17:00-17:20: Kumiko Yamamoto (ILCAA, Tokyo
University of Foreign Studies)

17:20-17:45: Discussion

Abstracts:

Mohammadali Mirzaee Jadideslam, “*Naqqāli*,
Narrating or Acting?”

Bahram Beyzaei identifies the *naqqāl* as an actor who embodies every character of a story alone. In line with Eric Bentley’s definition of theatre—“A impersonates B while C looks on”—*naqqāli* itself can be considered theatre, and the *naqqāl*’s performance, a form of acting. Still, a fundamental question emerges: can the *naqqāl*’s actions be aligned with principles established by major theatre figures such as Stanislavski, Michael Chekhov, or Grotowski? And if alignment exists, does this justify calling the practice “acting”?

To address this question, a precise analysis is necessary. First, *naqqāli* must be examined in its earlier form, when it was closer to the act of narrating. Second, recent elements—innovations within the tradition—must be identified in order to trace their sources, evaluate their impact, and measure their integration. Only then can one assess whether this transformed version of *naqqāli* has merged with theatrical models, or instead taken an alternative path requiring a new classification.

In 20th-century Iran, Western theatre significantly influenced *naqqāli*. These influences shaped performance length, rhythm, suspense, vocal expression, and character building. Singing, costume design, and modern literature also contributed to its development. This study therefore positions *naqqāli* between narrating and acting, aiming to define the skills essential for the *naqqāli*.

Sara Mashayekh, “Audience, Performer, Venue:
The Role of Spectators and the Space in Shaping
Naqqāli Performances”

The relationship between the performer and the audience of a performance has long been the subject of scholarly discussions. However, the nature of the group we call “the audience” changes dramatically depending on time, place and the style of performance; *naqqāli* is no exception. This paper explores the nature of the relationship between the spectators of a *naqqāli* performance and the *naqqāl* who is telling the tale, as well as the influential role that the venue plays in shaping this relationship. By looking at the text of *tumārs* that have been left to us, as well as firsthand observations from those who have witnessed live *naqqāli* performances, this paper is attempting to make a series of inquiries into the power dynamic between the performers and their spectators, the level of audience’s involvement in altering the story being narrated, as well as the effect of the coffeehouse in shaping the performance.

Radman Rasooli Mehrabani “Negotiating Myth
and Reality: *Naqqāls*’ Strategies for Constructing
Narrative Credibility”

Naqqāli, a vibrant and influential performance tradition during the Safavid period, gradually declined from the late Qajar era, and its stories came under increasing criticism in the modern period, especially during the Pahlavi era. In response to these critiques, storytellers (*naqqāls*) sought to defend their art and enhance its credibility. To counter this, *naqqāls* sometimes reduced the hyperbolic elements of the stories to render the narratives more “realistic” and believable. Their responses were sometimes expressed explicitly—through interpreting and explaining the stories and by emphasizing that Ferdowsi’s poetry embodied wisdom, reason, and intellect—and at other times implicitly, through modifications within the narratives themselves. Another strategy was the modernization of the stories. Modernization not only made the tales more engaging for contemporary audiences but also functioned as a means of granting credibility. For instance, one storyteller narrated the revolt of

Kāveh against Zāhḥāk in a manner resembling modern political revolutions, while another claimed that the American story of Tarzan had been stolen from the tale of Goudarz's son, yielding millions of dollars in profit abroad. A further strategy was the historicization of the *Shahnameh*: *naqqāls* sometimes turned to historical works to compare competing versions and occasionally to critique Ferdowsi's account. One of them even claimed to be narrating the "real" history. Finally, embedding moral lessons and ethical reflections into the narratives was another strategy, widely regarded as one of the enduring values of the *naqqāli* tradition.

Bios:

Sara Mashayekh, A PhD candidate in the department of Theater and Dance in the University of California, Santa Barbara where she is writing a dissertation about the performative aspect of *naqqāli*. She is interested in the practice of *naqqāli* during its formative years, the Safavid Period. She has previously earned an MA in history from University of California, Irvine, and a second MA from Central School of Speech and Drama in Advanced Theater Practice. She has also translated several books from English to Persian including, "Defenders and Enemies of the True Cross" (Yuri Stoyanov) and "King of the Seven Climes" (Touraj Daryaei).

Radman Rasooli Mehrabani, Received his PhD in Persian Language and Literature from the University of Tehran. He has published several works on the *Shahnameh*'s oral traditions and their contemporary transformations, the reception of the *Shahnameh* in the Persianate world, Persianate literary and cultural movements in the Golden Horde and the Crimean Khanate, and literary connections across Persian, Arabic, and Turkish contexts. He also practices and performs *naqqāli* and *shāhnāma-kb'āni* in both traditional settings and on social platforms.

Mohammadali Mirzaee Jadideslam, Mohammadali started his theatrical career in 2008 as an actor and director. In 2011, he began training in *naqqāli*. Since 2017, he has been secretary of *Mehr-e Shahnameh*, a *Shahnameh* study association.

He studied Ancient Iranian Culture and Languages at the University of Tehran, and at the University of Bologna (2020), and since 2022, has been pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Hamburg. His *naqqāli* repertoire includes Haftkhan-e Rostam, Akvan-e Div, Rostam va Sohrab, Rostam va Esfandiyar, and Sohrab va Gordafarid, performed in both Iran and Germany.

Kumiko Yamamoto, Yamamoto received her PhD from the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London (2000). She authored *the Oral Background of Persian Epics: Storytelling and Poetry* (Brill, 2003), which has been translated into Persian. She has written extensively on *naqqāli*, contributing to *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online (naqqāli)*, *A History of Persian Literature* (Companion Volume II), *Shahnama Studies* (III), etc.

CERF ANNOUNCEMENTS

CENTRAL EURASIA RESEARCH FUND (CERF) - Call for Applications

Deadline January 15, 2026

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.

NEWS FROM THE OFFICES

Report from the Japan Office

Since the publication of the previous ASPS Newsletter, the Japan Office has co-organized two Gilas Lectures in collaboration with institutions in Japan:

1. Fabrizio Speziale, “Noah’s Grandsons and the Elephant: Functions of Persian Pseudonymous Texts in South Asia,” 2 June 2025.
2. Mimi Hanaoka, “Negotiating Asian Modernity: Educational Reform, Hyderabad, and Japan, 1868–1926,” 19 September 2025.

The Gilas Lectures are generally held in hybrid format. Please look out for the announcements, as the only real obstacle to participation is the time difference. The next lecture will be:

3. David Lelyveld, “A Reflection on Muslim Identities in South Asia,” 24 October 2025 (for details: https://www.ioc.u-tokyo.ac.jp/en/news/news_en20250919111256/).

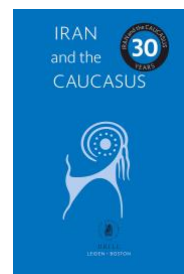
Building on the collegial networks established at the recent ASPS conference in Tashkent, the Japan Office is now co-organizing an online workshop, “Actors/Performers, Audience, and Narrative Strategies in Naqqali: New Approaches” (ASPS Virtual Event Series XV). The announcement for this workshop appears in the relevant section of this issue of the ASPS Newsletter. The Office looks forward to the participation of ASPS colleagues from around the world.

Kazuo Morimoto
ASPS Japan

Report from the Armenia Office

Conference Announcement 30 Years of “Iran and the Caucasus”: A Proud Milestone

International Conference Dedicated to the 30th Anniversary of *Iran and the Caucasus*



19-21 September 2026
Armenia

The Editorial Board of *Iran and the Caucasus*, in collaboration with *De Gruyter Brill*, is pleased to announce an international conference marking the 30th anniversary of the journal’s founding.

Since its inception in 1997, *Iran and the Caucasus* has emerged as a leading interdisciplinary platform for scholarly engagement with the diverse historical, linguistic, literary, folkloric, textual, religious, archaeological, economic, and political dimensions of Irano-Caucasica—an expansive geo-cultural region extending from Asia Minor to the Indian subcontinent, encompassing Central Asia, Afghanistan and other territories historically situated within Greater Iran’s political orbit, inhabited by Iranian peoples, or profoundly influenced by Iranian cultural traditions including Northern Pakistan and the North Caucasus.

We extend a cordial invitation to scholars worldwide to contribute to this academic gathering by submitting papers that critically engage with the journal’s legacy, present original research consonant with its thematic scope, and articulate new analytical perspectives on the region’s historical trajectories, contemporary dynamics, and future perspectives.

Publication

Selected papers will be considered for publication, after undergoing peer review, in the journal *Iran and the Caucasus* (<https://brill.com/view/journals/ic/ic-overview.xml>) or as a separate volume of the

conference proceedings in the Series *Iran and the Caucasus Monographs* (<https://brill.com/display/serial/ICM?language=en>).

Individual and Panel Presentation Format

Abstract submissions must be anonymized and should not exceed 400 words. Submissions must be sent in both Word and PDF formats. A separate file should include the following information:

- Full name(s)
- Institutional affiliation(s)
- Email address(es)
- ORCID iD(s)

This requirement also applies to panel proposals, which may include a maximum of four participants. All submissions will undergo blind peer review.

- Keynote Speeches: 40 minutes, followed by 20 minutes of discussion
- Individual Presentations: 20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes of discussion

Working Language: English

Conference Email Address:
iranandthecaucasus30@gmail.com

Important Dates

- Abstract Submission Deadline: 31 March 2026
- Notification of Acceptance: 30 April 2026
- Registration: 30 June 2026

Participation Fee

The conference participation fee is EUR 500, which includes:

- Accommodation;
- Lunches and refreshments;
- Two banquets (opening and closing) and one dinner;
- A cultural programme during the conference;
- Transportation from the conference venue to Yerevan.

Call for Proposals

Iran and the Caucasus Monograph Series (Ed. Garnik S. Asatrian)

Iran and the Caucasus Monographs is a double-anonymous peer-reviewed book series that covers recent findings in Irano-Indian, Caucasian, Near-Eastern, Armenian, and Turkic studies. The focus will be on linguistics and philology, history, archaeology, anthropology, history of religions, art history, as well as ethnopolitical and security issues concerning the said regions. The Series includes monographs presenting original research, revised high-quality theses, commissioned edited volumes, festschrifts, opera minora of prominent scholars, and scholarly translations with commentaries and appropriate apparatus. The predominant language of the volumes in the Series is English, but German and French submissions are welcome too.

See the already published volumes here: [Iran and the Caucasus Monographs](#)

Garnik Asatrian
ASPS Armenia

Report from the Iran Office

Draft Plan:

History of Formation and Development of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies 1996 – 2026

By the year 2026, it will have been thirty years since 1996, when the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies was established, developed and started activities in New York—the time span on which the present research is conducted. However, no independent research has ever been carried out on the activities of this association. Thus, at the Tenth Conference of the Association in Tashkent, a proposal was presented to the Board of Directors to compile a “History of the Formation and Activities of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies” based on the oral histories of the founders, presidents, secretaries, and hosts, as well as written documents including the association’s website, media reports, conference program brochures, and other materials. The proposal was then approved, and it was decided that the research plan should be sent to the President, selected members of the Board, and the

rotating presidents of the association for review and completion. Once finally approved, the implementation of the project is to be coordinated and carried out by the Office and Regional Director of the association in Iran, with the support and collaboration of the Board of Directors, founders, rotating presidents, executive secretaries of conferences, regional office directors, and other key members.

Structure of the Project of Formation and Development of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies

1. Introduction and Problem Statement:

- 1-1. Introducing the association and its significance in connecting Persian-speaking communities and Iranian studies;
- 1-2. Developing a comprehensive scholarly source on the history of the association;
- 1-3. Documenting and preserving a collective experience of Persian-speaking communities and international scholars of Iranian studies

2. Research Objectives:

- 2-1. Documenting the history of the Association's formation and development from 1996 to 2026;
- 2-2. Introducing the founders of the Association;
- 2-3. Examining the role and performance of the Association's presidents during different terms;
- 2-4. Documenting the Association's international conferences and regional meetings;
- 2-5. Introducing the Association's publications, books, and other cultural-academic outputs;
- 2-6. Clarifying the Association's role in strengthening cultural and academic ties among Persian-speaking communities and scholars worldwide

3. Methodology:

- 3-1. Collecting and reviewing written documents, including brochures, reports, journals, media coverage, and the Association's website
- 3-2. Conducting oral history interviews with:
 - 3-2-1. Founders,
 - 3-2-2. Presidents of the Association during different terms,
 - 3-2-3. Conference secretaries,
 - 3-2-4. Selected key members of the Board of Directors in different terms,

- 3-2-5. Regional directors who hosted the ten conferences in various countries

4. Implementation Plan:

- 4-1. Compiling written and digital documents;
- 4-2. Designing interview questionnaires and establishing contact with interviewees;
- 4-3. Conducting and transcribing interviews;
- 4-4. Analyzing data and preparing reports;
- 4-5. Reviewing and finalizing materials for publication and digital release

5. Expected Outcomes:

- 5-1. A documented book on the history of the Association;
- 5-2. A collection of recorded and transcribed interviews (the Association's Oral History Archive);
- 5-3. An index of conferences and meetings (location, date, and theme);
- 5-4. An index of the Association's publications (journals, books, and brochures).

Proposed Table of Contents for the Book: The History of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies

Preface

- The Necessity of Documenting the History of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies
- Acknowledgments to Interviewees, Collaborators, Supporters, and Members of the Association
- Brief Overview of Research Methodology

Chapter 1: The Formation of the Association (1996–2002)

- 1-1. Social and Cultural Context of Persian-Speaking Communities during the Time
- 1-2. The Founders' Perspective on the Idea of Establishing the Association
- 1-3. Initial Objectives, Charter, and Foundational Declarations
- 1-4. Evolution of the Objectives and Charter over Time
- 1-5. Introductory Meetings and Early Activities

Chapter 2: The Founders

- 2-1. Introducing the Founders and Key Members through Profiles and Brief Biographies
- 2-2. Providing Oral Accounts of the Early Days

Chapter 3: Presidents of the Association

- 3-1. Interviews with the Association's Each Term President
- 3-2. Brief Biographies of all Presidents
- 3-3. Major Measures Taken at Each Term (Achievements and Challenges)

Chapter 4: Conferences and Meetings

- 4-1. The Timeline of the Ten International Conferences (Country, City, Year, and Theme)
- 4-2. An Overview of Key Speakers, Papers, and Themes from Each Conference
- 4-3. The Timeline of Regional Meetings (Country, City, Year, Theme)
- 4-4. Compiling Reflections and Reminiscences of Conferences through Interviews with Secretaries and Host Directors

Chapter 5: Publications of the Association

- 5-1. An Overview of Association Journals
- 5-2. An Overview of Books and Conference Proceedings
- 5-3. The Reception and Impact of the Association's Publications in Persian-Speaking Communities and Iranian Studies

Chapter 6: Influence, Challenges, and Future Directions of the Association

- 6-1. The Association's Impact on the Field of Iranian Studies
- 6-2. Financial, Administrative, and Structural Challenges
- 6-3. An Evaluation of the Association's Pros and Cons
- 6-4. A Report on the Thirty-Year-long Activity
- 6-5. The Future Prospects for the Association

Chapter 7: Conclusion

- 7-1. A Summary of Findings
- 7-2. The Historical, Academic, and Cultural Significance of the Association
- 7-3. Research Implications and Suggestions for Further Future Studies

Appendices:

1. Documents and Photographs from Thirty Years of the Association's Activities (Brochures, Posters, Photographs, and Documents)
2. The Timeline of Conferences
3. The Timeline of Association Presidents' Terms
4. A List of Association Supporters over the Years
5. A Bibliography of Written and Oral Sources

طرح تدوین

تاریخ تکوین و تکامل انجمن جوامع فارسی‌زبان 1996 - 2026

از زمان تأسیس انجمن جوامع فارسی‌زبان در سال 1996 در نیویورک تا سال 2026 که بازه زمانی انجام این پژوهش خواهد بود، سی سال از تکوین و تکامل و فعالیت انجمن جوامع فارسی‌زبان می‌گذرد. باتوجه به اینکه تاکنون پژوهشی مستقل در مورد فعالیت‌های این انجمن شکل نگرفته است، در دهمین کنفرانس انجمن در تاشکند، پیشنهاد تدوین «تاریخچه شکل‌گیری و فعالیت‌های انجمن جوامع فارسی‌زبان» براساس تاریخ شفاهی بنیانگذاران، رؤسا، دبیران، میزبانان و نیز اسناد مکتوب شامل: وبسایت انجمن، اخبار رسانه‌ها، برشورهای برنامه کنفرانس‌ها و... به هیات رئیسه انجمن ارایه گردید که مورد تصویب نیز قرار گرفت و مقرر گردید که پروپوزال این پژوهش برای تصحیح و تکمیل به رییس و برخی از اعضای هیات رئیسه و رؤسای دوره‌ای انجمن ارسال گردد و پس از تأیید نهایی، اجرای طرح توسط دفتر و مدیر دفتر منطقه‌ای انجمن در ایران، با حمایت و همکاری هیات رئیسه، بنیانگذاران، روسای دوره‌ای، دبیران اجرایی کنفرانس‌ها، مدیران دفاتر منطقه‌ای و دیگر اعضای موثر، پیگیری و اجرا شود.

ساختار طرح تاریخ تکوین و تکامل انجمن جوامع فارسی‌زبان 1. مقدمه و بیان مسئله:

- 1-1. معرفی انجمن و اهمیت آن در پیوند جوامع فارسی‌زبان و مطالعات ایران‌شناسی
- 1-2. تدوین منبع علمی جامع درباره تاریخ انجمن
- 1-3. ثبت و مستندسازی یک تجربه جمعی در جوامع فارسی‌زبان و نیز ایران‌شناسان جهان

2. اهداف پژوهش:

- 2-1. تدوین تاریخ شکل‌گیری و تحولات انجمن از سال 1996 تا 2026
- 2-2. معرفی بنیانگذاران انجمن
- 2-3. بررسی نقش و عملکرد روسای انجمن در دوره‌های مختلف
- 2-4. مستندسازی کنفرانس‌های بین‌المللی و نشست‌های منطقه‌ای انجمن
- 2-5. معرفی نشریات، کتاب‌ها و سایر تولیدات علمی-فرهنگی انجمن

2-6. تبیین جایگاه انجمن در ارتقای پیوند فرهنگی و علمی جوامع فارسی‌زبان و ایران‌شناسان جهان

3. روش‌شناسی:

- 3-1. جمع‌آوری و مطالعه اسناد مکتوب براساس برشورها، گزارش‌ها، نشریات، اخبار رسانه‌ای و وبسایت انجمن
- 3-2. مصاحبه جهت تدوین تاریخ شفاهی با:
 - 3-2-1. بنیانگذاران
 - 3-2-2. روسای دوره‌ای
 - 3-2-3. دبیران کنفرانس‌ها
 - 3-2-4. برخی از اعضای کلیدی هیات رئیسه در دوره‌های مختلف
 - 3-2-5. مدیران منطقه‌ای میزبان ده کنفرانس در کشورهای مختلف

4. برنامه عملیاتی:

- 4-1. گردآوری اسناد مکتوب و دیجیتال
- 4-2. طراحی پرسشنامه مصاحبه و ارتباط با مصاحبه‌شوندگان
- 4-3. انجام مصاحبه و پیاده‌سازی
- 4-4. تحلیل داده‌ها و تدوین گزارش
- 4-5. بازبینی و آماده‌سازی نهایی برای چاپ و انتشار دیجیتال گزارش

5. خروجی‌های مورد انتظار:

- 5-1. کتاب مستند تاریخ انجمن
- 5-2. مجموعه مصاحبه‌های ضبط شده و پیاده‌سازی شده (آرشیو تاریخ شفاهی انجمن)
- 5-3. نمایه کنفرانس‌ها و نشست‌ها (محل، زمان، موضوع)
- 5-4. نمایه آثار منتشر شده انجمن (نشریه، کتاب، بروشور)

فهرست پیشنهادی برای کتاب تاریخ انجمن جوامع فارسی‌زبان

پیشگفتار

ضرورت تدوین تاریخ انجمن جوامع فارسی‌زبان
 قدردانی از مصاحبه‌شوندگان، همکاران، حامیان و اعضای انجمن
 مروری مختصر بر روش پژوهش

فصل 1. شکل‌گیری انجمن 1996 - 2002

- 1-1. شرایط اجتماعی و فرهنگی جوامع فارسی‌زبان در آن دوره
- 1-2. بررسی ایده تأسیس انجمن از نگاه بنیانگذاران
- 1-3. اهداف اولیه، اساسنامه و بیانیه‌های آغازین
- 1-4. تغییرات اهداف و اساسنامه در طول زمان
- 1-5. نخستین نشست‌ها و فعالیت‌ها

فصل 2. بنیانگذاران

2-1. معرفی و ارایه زندگی‌نامه کوتاه بنیانگذاران و اعضای کلیدی

2-2. ارایه روایت‌های شفاهی از روزهای آغازین

فصل 3. رؤسای انجمن

- 3-1. گفتگو با رؤسای انجمن در هر دوره
- 3-2. زندگی‌نامه کوتاه رؤسای انجمن
- 3-3. اقدامات شاخص هر دوره (موفقیت‌ها و چالش‌ها)

فصل 4. کنفرانس‌ها و نشست‌ها

- 4-1. ارایه جدول زمانی ده کنفرانس انجمن (کشور، شهر، سال، موضوع)
- 4-2. معرفی سخنرانان و مقالات و موضوعات شاخص هر کنفرانس
- 4-3. ارایه جدول زمانی نشست‌های منطقه‌ای (کشور، شهر، سال، موضوع)
- 4-4. تدوین تجربه‌ها و خاطرات کنفرانس‌ها در گفتگو با دبیران کنفرانس و مدیران میزبان

فصل 5. انتشارات انجمن

- 5-1. معرفی نشریات انجمن
- 5-2. معرفی کتاب‌ها و مجموعه مقالات
- 5-3. بررسی بازتاب انتشارات انجمن در جوامع فارسی‌زبان و مطالعات ایران‌شناسی

فصل 6. نقش و اثرگذاری و چالش‌ها و آینده انجمن

- 6-1. بررسی تاثیر فعالیت‌های انجمن در روند ایران‌شناسی
- 6-2. بررسی مشکلات مالی، مدیریتی و ساختاری انجمن
- 6-3. بررسی نقاط قوت و نقاط ضعف انجمن
- 6-4. گزارشی از تجربه سی سال فعالیت
- 6-5. چشم‌انداز آینده انجمن

فصل 7: نتیجه‌گیری

- 7-1. خلاصه‌ای از یافته‌ها
- 7-2. اهمیت تاریخی، علمی و فرهنگی انجمن
- 7-3. پیشنهاداتی برای فعالیت و پژوهش‌های آینده

پیوست‌ها:

1. اسناد و عکس‌های مربوط به سی سال فعالیت انجمن (برشور، پوستر، عکس، سند)
2. ارایه جدول زمان‌بندی کنفرانس‌ها
3. ارایه جدول زمان‌بندی فعالیت رؤسای انجمن
4. ارایه فهرست حامیان انجمن در دوره‌های مختلف
5. ارایه فهرست منابع مکتوب و شفاهی

کوروش کمالی

انجمن جوامع فارسی‌زبان، ایران

ANNOUNCEMENTS

CALL FOR APPLICATION

**Provost's Distinguished Faculty Fellow and
Assistant Professor in the history of the
Persianate World, Department of History
Georgetown University**

Location: Washington, DC

Deadline: Oct 30, 2025

Description

The Department of History at Georgetown University invites applications for a tenure-track position at the rank of Assistant Professor in the history of the Persianate World from the Muslim conquest to the present, to begin in August 2026.

The teaching load consists of two courses per semester, with teaching responsibilities at both the undergraduate and graduate levels, including courses that fulfill General Education requirements.

During the first year in this position, the successful candidate will also hold the title of Provost's Distinguished Faculty Fellow, with no teaching or service responsibilities. This arrangement allows for a dedicated focus on research while benefiting from mentorship and support from two senior faculty members.

Qualifications

A Ph.D. in History or related field is required prior to appointment start date. Candidates must show strong promise of excellence in teaching as well as research.

Application Instructions

Click on Apply Now to submit the following required materials:

1. Cover Letter. The cover letter should describe the candidate's research interests, teaching experience, and commitment to academic excellence and diversity, equity, and

inclusion in their teaching, research, and/or service.

2. CV
3. Writing sample
4. Three letters of reference

Applications are due by October 30.

For questions related to this position, please contact Professor Gabor Agoston at agostong@georgetown.edu.

The projected salary range for this position is \$103,678-\$115,281, which represents the full range of anticipated compensation for this position. Compensation is determined by a number of factors including, but not limited to, the candidate's individual qualifications, experience, education, skills, and certifications, as well as the University's business needs and external factors.

CONFERENCE ANNOUNCEMENT

Problems of Studying, Description and Cataloguing of Arabic Manuscript Heritage

Organized by Center for Oriental Studies of the National Library of Russia.

This conference will be dedicated to the problems of studying, describing and cataloging the Arabic-script manuscripts. The conference is scheduled to take place on 16-17 October 2025 in the National Library of Russia (St Petersburg). This conference is planned as an annual event of the National Library of Russia. It is planned to publish the materials as a new periodical on Oriental studies. The main topics of the conference are:

1. The history of the formation and cataloging of Oriental manuscript collections;
2. The experience of creating databases of manuscripts and electronic catalogs of Arabic manuscript collections;
3. Codicological, textological and source studies of collections of Arabic manuscripts collections and individual manuscripts.

Conference Organizing Committee: Olga Yastrebova, Alexander Matveev.

Contributors are requested to submit the title of their paper and an abstract of up to 300 words by 15 September 2025 to centr_vostok@nlr.ru.

Nuclear Diplomacy, Instability and the Survival of the Islamic Republic

Date: 23 October 2025 14.00 BST

Venue: The Royal Society for Asian Affairs

Presenters: Richard Dalton, Ali Ansari, Banafsheh Keynough, and Holly Dagres.

This panel discussion is part of our new series Power, Legitimacy and Influence: the Future of Asia. The series will run over two years exploring six long-standing regimes in Asia that have had and continue to have a huge influence outside their own borders, shaping the region and its trajectory. It will consider their leadership, the sources of their legitimacy and their guiding doctrine in order to gain an insight into what the future of Asia might look like.

In the second event of this series, we will examine the Islamic Republic of Iran and its position in the Middle East, particularly in light of Israeli attacks on Iranian proxies in the region over the past two years, the regional instability caused by the humanitarian crisis in Gaza and the collapse of the Assad regime, a key ally of Iran.

The recent twelve-day war between Israel and Iran and the US strikes against Iranian nuclear sites have also added a new layer of complexity and instability to the regimes position. The event will consider how the development of the Islamic Republic, its domestic politics and the leadership of Ayatollah Khamenei have led Iran to this point and what recent developments might mean for the future of the Islamic Republic.

Full details can be found here - <https://rsaa.org.uk/upcoming-events/nuclear-diplomacy-instability-and-the-survival-of-the-islamic-republic/>

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

NEWS

“Research for Life” initiative

Brill supports the “Research for Life” initiative, which means that institutions from a group of countries can apply for free reading access and open access publishing (including Bangladesh, Lebanon, Sudan) or discounted access and discounted open access publishing (including Armenia, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Kyrgyzstan, Pakistan, Uzbekistan, for the full list see [here](#)). If your institution may be interested in this, please get in touch with us.

Persica Centropa: Cosmopolitan Artefacts and Artifices in the Age of Crises 1900-1950

Sponsored by the Austrian Science Fund (FWF) and directed by Yuka Kadoi as Principal Investigator (PI) with a team of experts from diverse backgrounds, *Persica Centropa: Cosmopolitan Artefacts and Artifices in the Age of Crises 1900-1950* (V-995) seeks to redefine what used to be called ‘Persian art’, while reframing it as an alternative narrative of aesthetic thinking that evolved in Central Europe during the first half of the twentieth century. Spanning from the declining years of the Habsburg empire to the emergence of new nation states within its former territories after 1918 and the devastation of World War II, this project maps out the network of collecting and interpreting Persian objects and images against a backdrop of the socio-political upheaval of a once-thriving cosmopolitan cultural region.

For further information, please visit the project website:

<https://persicacentropa.univie.ac.at/>

Invisible East Digital Corpus 2.0

We are delighted to announce the launch of the new version of the *Invisible East Digital Corpus* 2.0 (IEDC), which will be available at <https://www.invisible-east.org/>. This update introduces a new Persian-language version of the website—an important step in making these 1,200

documents more accessible to Persian-speaking audiences.

From the outset, one of the central aims of our project has been to enable digital repatriation—ensuring that manuscripts and documents held in collections around the world can be studied and engaged with in the regions from which they came. With this new development, we hope to open up new avenues for collaboration, and to encourage more people to explore and work with these remarkable documents.

Master's-level Courses in Iranian Studies The Mossadegh Foundation in Geneva & the University of Geneva

In 2024, the Mossadegh Foundation in Geneva formalized a partnership with the University of Geneva—specifically with the Department of Art History—to establish Master's-level courses in Iranian Studies (études persanes). This collaboration created a lectureship in Iranian Studies at the University, marking a decisive step toward the institutional recognition of Iranian heritage in Geneva.

The study of Islamicate arts in Geneva is closely tied to Iranian material culture and the traditions of Persianate societies, including those of North India, Central Asia, and Afghanistan. Since the mid-nineteenth century, Geneva's collections in these fields have grown steadily. Today, the Ariana Museum, the Museum of Art and History (MAH), the Museum of Ethnography (MEG), and the Martin Bodmer Foundation hold some of the most important collections of this kind in Switzerland. These collections provide unique opportunities to study Iran's history and culture, while also tracing the transregional exchanges that linked Persianate societies with one another and with Europe. They now serve as essential resources for Iranian Studies teaching, which, thanks to its interdisciplinary approach, attracts students from history, art history, gender studies, and cultural studies.

Reflecting on Islamic Art: Painters, Craftsmen and their Schools

Dedicated to the Anniversary of Adel Tigranovna Adamova.

The conference took place on 17-18 September 2025 in the Hermitage Museum (St Petersburg). The conference covered the questions of authorship in Islamic art, individual features of the style of artists and craftsmen, as well as common features of their schools and workshops. In essence, the conference addressed a wide range of scientific issues, to which Dr. Adamova devoted her research.

Conference Organizing Committee: Anna V. Moiseeva and Anton D. Pritula.

Persian and Georgian-Persian Historical Documents of Afshar Period in Georgian National Centre of Manuscripts (Digitalization And Cataloging)

British Library Endangered Archives Program

In May 2025, archival records (an electronic catalogue) of 61 rare Persian and Georgian-Persian historical documents of Afshar period (1736-1796) from funds of the

Korneli Kekelidze National Centre of Manuscripts of Georgia appeared on the site of the British library, all the data is available on the following site: <https://eap.bl.uk/project/EAP1526/search?page=3> with the DOI: <https://dx.doi.org/10.15130/EAP1526>.

This is a result of the pilot project realized as part of the Endangered Archives program (EAP 1526) with the British Library in 2023-2024.

The project's lead is Dr. Tamar Abuladze, the head of manuscripts fund at the National Centre of Manuscripts of Georgia, the main participant is Dr. Helen Giunashvili, the member of ASPS, researcher at the G. Tsereteli Institute of Oriental Studies/Ilia State University.

The project aimed at cataloging and digitizing the unique Persian and Georgian-Persian documents preserved in the Korneli Kekelidze National Center of Manuscripts still remaining unknown to the wide scholarly society. The issue is important in order to improve the possibilities of their fully preservation and detailed study. Historical and social-political peculiarities of the Qizilbash period are reflected in Georgian, Persian, Armenian, and European narrative sources as well as in Persian and Georgian-Persian historical documents in the archives of Georgia. Iranian social-political dominance during the Qizilbashs in East Georgia (1735-1749) straightly relates to Nadir-Shah's rulership (1736-1747) and presents his military and social policy towards Georgia and the Caucasus. The mentioned context significantly influenced the selection of the topic.

Initially, 150 documents were selected for cataloging and digitization, but with the reduction of the period allocated for the grant by the Advisory Panel, the number was also reduced and was determined by 61 items. This amount meant the study and processing of Georgian-Persian and Persian published and unpublished historical documents with appropriate parameters.

The material was selected based on the following criteria: 1. chronologically - the Afshar period (1736-1796); 2. According to degree of damage of the documents.

The chronological framework of the documents is 1736-1796. They belong to the following types: *firman*s, decrees, separate orders, rulings, tax documents, appointment of Georgian officials, requests, letters, salary determinations, judgments, purchase documents.

Issuers of documents are: *Shahs of Afshar period*-Nadir Shah, Ibrahim Shah; *Iranian officials* -Sefi-Khan, Azad-Khan, as well as *kings of Georgia* - King of Kartli-Kakheti, Erekle II, *Georgian officials*.

The addressees of the documents are: *Shahs of Iran* (Nadir Shah, Ibrahim Shah), *Georgian kings and governors of the Afshar period*: Teimuraz II, Erekle II; *Georgian begs, other officials, nobles of East Georgia* - Kartli-Kakheti, etc.

Digitized material includes 120 images - front (r) and back (v) sides of all documents.

The results obtained from the implementation of the grant are extremely fruitful considering the following points:

- Digitization of Georgian-Persian and Persian documents of the Afshar period will contribute to the protection and deep study of this material;
- Damaged documents from this period preserved in the Center were identified and specific steps for their conservation-restoration were determined;
- The subject, date and personnel of some unidentified documents were determined;
- The material became accessible to wide scientific circles.

For the present, these rare and valuable historical documents are widely available for the Iranian scholarly world.

New Issue “Konteksty Kultury” Polish-Persian Cultural Relations

We are pleased to announce the publication of the full electronic version of the latest special issue of the Jagiellonian University journal *Konteksty Kultury*, devoted to Polish–Persian relations.

The issue is available for free download at:

<https://ejournals.eu/en/journal/konteksty-kultury/issue/volume-22-issue-1>

On behalf of the editor-in-chief, Łukasz Tischner, and the lead editors, Renata Rusek-Kowalska and Mateusz Kucab, I am pleased to share with you a brief overview and warmly invite you to read the issue and share it with our Colleagues.

“Konteksty Kultury” 2025, issue 1 Polsko-perskie relacje kulturalne / Polish-Persian Cultural Relations

It is with great pleasure that we present the latest issue of *Konteksty Kultury*, devoted to the multifaceted and often underexplored connections between Poland—known in Persian as *Labestan*—and the broad Iranian world. This “Polish–

Persian” volume aims to highlight literary interactions, historical parallels, and shared experiences that link Poles and Iranians despite geographical distance and differing religious contexts.

The issue opens with Renata Rusek-Kowalska’s article *Distant Affinity: An Overview of Polish–Iranian Cultural Relations*, which offers a concise overview of the history of Polish–Persian cultural relations. The next two contributions examine encounters between the two cultures on the diplomatic stage. Mirosław Michalak, in *Polish–Iranian Relations: A Three-Act Play in Latin, Persian and Polish*, explores Polish–Persian relations from three distinct perspectives and historical periods. Ali Abolghasemi and Adam Jaśkowski, on the other hand, in the article entitled *A New Source on Safavid–Polish Relations and What It Tells Us*, present previously unpublished seventeenth-century letters written by the Safavid ruler Shah Safi to the King of the Polish–Lithuanian Commonwealth, Władysław IV Vasa, which were believed to have been lost along with the envoy Teofil Szemberg on his return journey from Persia.

The following series of articles traces the presence of Poles from Anders’ Army in Iran during World War II. In *Polish Women Immigrants in Iran Since World War II: Social and Cultural Activities in the Host Land*, Sara Yarmahdavi and Habibullah Saeidinia write about Polish women’s social and cultural engagement in Allied-occupied Iran—activities that, to some extent, contributed to a renegotiation of views on women’s participation in Iranian public life.

In this context, we are particularly pleased to publish a Polish translation of the Persian short story *Yereneczka* by Bozorg Alavi (*Yereneczka – The Polish Phantasm of Bozorg Alavi: Analysis and Translation*). Its titular heroine is the first Polish woman to be portrayed in Persian prose. Translator, Anna Krasnowolska, enriches her rendition with an insightful commentary, offering a new interpretation of this quasi-erotic fantasy. The motif of Polish women as objects of desire also appears in Persian poetry from the World War II period. In her article *Polish Women as Sweet Pillagers in Persian Poetry*, Renata Rusek-Kowalska analyses a humorous Persian poem that depicts

Polish women through the lens of the playful *Luli* gypsies known from classical Persian poetry.

Poetry—this time as a space of exotic formal inspirations and spiritual affinities—constitutes another thematic thread of Polish–Persian reflection. In *Wilderness is Paradise Enow. Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska’s Poetics of Rubaiyat. Preliminary Reconnaissance*, Mateusz Kucab revisits the lesser-known wartime poetry of Maria Pawlikowska-Jasnorzewska, who, imitating the concise quatrain form of Omar Khayyam’s *rubā’iyāt*, sought to respond to the apocalyptic disintegration of the world around her. Equally intriguing is Katarzyna Wąsala’s comparative analysis of autobiographical motifs, shared themes, and sensibilities in the works of the Polish poet Halina Poświatowska and her Persian contemporary Forugh Farrokhzad, presented in *Are Those Two Windows Mirroring Each Other? On the Poetry of Foruq Farroxxād (1935–1967) and Halina Poświatowska (1935–1967)*. Meanwhile, Karolina Rakowiecka-Asgari, in *Unexpected Resemblance of Distant Cousins: Can Iranian and Polish Cultures Meet in Translation?*, demonstrates through her translation of Forugh’s satirical poem that the political cultures of Pahlavi-era Iran and communist Poland were, to a considerable degree, mutually translatable.

The research section of this issue concludes with two articles that reach beyond the Polish–Persian dyad into the broader Iranian world. Paulina Niechcial, in *Zoroaster and the Poles: An Overview of Academic and Non-Academic Interest in Zoroastrianism in Poland*, analyses the history of Polish engagement with the ancient Iranian religion of Zoroastrianism, traces of which appear as early as in the writings of Mikołaj Rej. Zuzanna Blajet, in *The Snake in Pamiri and Polish Folk Narratives and Proverbs: A Comparative Study of the Most Common Traits*, explores the folk culture of Tajik Badakhshan, tracing parallels in representations of the snake in Pamiri oral narratives and Polish folklore.

As a delightful epilogue, we recommend *The Story of Amelia Wojciechowska Told by Her Son*—the story of a Polish woman who came to Iran with Anders’

Army and married an Iranian. Recorded by Marcin Chrobak, Amelia's life—recounted by her son as he rediscovers his Polish identity—reads like a ready-made film script and contributes to the growing field of postmemory studies. The issue closes with Anna Krasnowolska's review of Katarzyna Rodacka's new book *Domy na piasku. Polacy w Iranie (1942–1945)* [*Houses on Sand: Poles in Iran (1942–1945)*].

We are aware that this special issue of *Konteksty Kultury* offers only a modest contribution to the development of Polish–Iranian studies and does not explore all the spheres of mutual influence—such as the visual arts—that undoubtedly deserve further scholarly reflection. We nevertheless hope that it will serve as an inspiration for future Polish–Persian cultural studies.

Renata Rusek-Kowalska
Mateusz Kucab
Lead editors

Reza Ghotbi's Legacy in Iran's National Television

August 26 was the first anniversary of the death of **Reza Ghotbi**, the director of National Iranian Radio and Television in the years before the Islamic Revolution. Mr. Ghotbi's performance has always been a subject of discussion, especially during the Revolution, and his silence in the following years further fueled this. On the first anniversary of Reza Ghotbi's death in exile, I have reviewed his achievements through the words of his close colleagues at National Television: <https://youtu.be/79VtLuzzAqA>

Pejman Akbarzadeh

Oral Literature, Adaptation, and Resistance in the Zoroastrian Community, Prof. Saloumeh Gholami,

Venue: SOAS University of London

Date: 10 November 2025

We have the pleasure of inviting you to an event the Institute is hosting this Autumn:

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

Oral Literature, Adaptation, and Resistance in the Zoroastrian Community by Prof. Saloumeh Gholami | SOAS will take place on the 10th of November in the KLT of SOAS, at 6 pm. This event will be streamed on Zoom, so we welcome online registration. A reception will follow the Q&A. Please contact for any further information: sspizs@soas.ac.uk

Best wishes,
SSPIZS Team

<https://www.soas.ac.uk/about/event/oral-literature-adaptation-and-resistance-zoroastrian-community-prof-saloumeh-gholami>

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Faraji Mehdi and Mohammad Ameli, "The Middle-Class Poor in Iranian Cinema: Shattered Lives, Fading Horizons in *At the End of the Night* (2024)," *Cinema Iranica*, September 27, 2025.

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Mwangi wa Githinji, ed. *Decolonial Reconstellations: Towards an Ethical Global Studies*, Volume Two: *Dissolving Master Narratives* (New York, NY: Routledge, 2025), II: 120-148.

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طرفداری علی محمد ، شاهنامه‌ای برای شاه: ناسیونالیسم شاهنشاهی و مراسم هزاره فردوسی در دوره پهلوی اول، پژوهشکده تاریخ معاصر، ۱۴۰۴.

گویناشویلی هلن و ولی کالچی، منظومه پلنگینه‌پوش شوتا روستاوی در ایران، دانشگاه دولتی ایلیا، انستیتوی خاورشناسی تسرتلی، ۱۴۰۴.

<https://www.iras.ir/?p=12137>

Editorial Notes

The **deadline** for the **next Newsletter** will be **March 1, 2026**.

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.

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