THE ASSOCIATION FOR THE STUDY OF PERSIANATE SOCIETIES

انجمن مطالعات جوامع فارسی زبان

FALL 2026 NEWSLETTER

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear ASPS Community and Colleagues,

The ASPS is once again looking forward to a busy autumn, with a slew of activities and initiatives under way; at the forefront, preparations for our 25th Anniversary Conference, held in Dushanbe August 9-13, 2027. More on that below.

The academic year kicked off on September 25 with our biennial virtual graduate student conference, bringing together graduate students and scholars for a day of scholarly exchange and engagement across the Persianate studies community. The conference featured panels on Historical Linguistics, Modern Literature, the Cultural Production of Early Islamic Khurasan, and Qajar Histories. The **professional development workshop** "Beyond the dissertation: Publishing in journals and books," organized with Brill Publishers, the *Journal of Persianate Studies* (JPS), and *Al-ʿUṣūr al-Wustā* (The Journal of Middle East Medievalists) advised graduate students on how to prepare publications as they enter the job market (see pp. 12-13). The session was recorded and continues to be available for public viewing on the ASPS YouTube channel.

A further exciting development was the announcement of this year's **ASPS/JPS Graduate Student Paper Prize.** We congratulate Sara Molaie of the University of Toronto, who was awarded the prize for her paper "Dream, Translation and the Afterlife of Meaning: Freud and the Circulation of Meaning in *Suvashun*". The prize includes the opportunity to develop the paper for publication in the *Journal of Persianate Studies*, as well as a financial subsidy to present at the ASPS biennial conference in Dushanbe. The prize committee's praise of the work can be read below on page 7.

Earlier this year, the ASPS board voted Jo-Ann Gross, Professor Emerita at The College of New Jersey, to be an **honorary lifetime member**. Every two years, the board may bestow Honorary Membership on an outstanding internationally recognized scholar who has made major contributions to the study of Persianate societies. A review of her work can be found below on pages 11-12. We congratulate our dear colleague, who with Said Amir Arjomand is the longest-serving member on the ASPS board. The ASPS also recognizes her tireless efforts in raising funds year after year to support the research of Central Asian colleagues through ASPS' Central Eurasia Research Fund (CERF), a commitment dating back to the early 2000s!

On the note of CERF, our board member Professor Julia Rubanovich has kindly agreed to convene, in Russian, a virtual workshop on grant applications and publishing. This may be of interest in particular to our Central Asian and Russian colleagues and students planning to submit grant applications and manuscripts to English-language grant bodies and publishers. Professors Muhammadjon Sufizoda, Aftandil Erkinov and Michael Shenkar have generously assisted in preparing the event. The workshop will take place on Thursday, 5 November 2026, 18:00–19:30 (Central Asian time). Please look out for an announcement on our email list and website.

The **Central Eurasia Research Fund** welcomes new applications by January 15, 2027 (see pp. 13-14). We also welcome nominations for the **ASPS Early Career Prize** by May 31, 2027 (pp. 8-9).

The ASPS is delighted to welcome three **new institutional members**:

- The Giorgi Tsereteli Institute of Oriental Studies at Ilia State University
- The Program of Iranian Studies at the Department of Near Eastern Languages and Cultures (NELC), UCLA
- The Center for Middle Eastern Studies, University of Arizona

Institutional Memberships come with certain benefits, including a JPS hardcover subscription, a number of conference registrations, and ad space in the conference program. We thank the institutional members for their support and commitment to the endeavors of ASPS.

In anticipation of our conference in Dushanbe next summer, the director of ASPS' Dushanbe branch Professor Shodimuhammad Sufizoda describes the **State of Persianate Studies in Tajikistan** (pp. 14-16). Since independence in 1991, Tajik literary scholarship has undergone substantial development, bringing major areas of medieval Persianate heritage back into scholarly circulation, and advancing large-scale projects in manuscript studies, thanks to the strength of a number of re-energized research centers and one of the richest manuscript collections in Central Asia.

In further news, ASPS continues its joint publication series with Ajam on **"The Unexpected Persianate"**. Please see below (pp. 9-10) for the call for papers and do consider contributing.

To honor Dr. Mohsen Zakeri, the distinguished scholar of Iranian and Islamic intellectual history and former Assistant Editor of the *Journal of Persianate Studies* (JPS) who passed away in 2024, the Ruhr University Bochum has generously inaugurated a reading room in his name. Further details can be read on page 12.

The ***Journal of Persianate Studies*** has completed its 19th volume, with Issue 2 about to enter production. Thanks to its growing popularity and the tireless efforts of its chief and associate editor, the journal will move to three issues per year starting in 2027.

The ASPS will elect new board members and a new president this winter. A number of outstanding colleagues have put their candidacy forward. Kindly familiarize yourself with the candidates (see pages 4-6 for their biographies) and do participate in the **elections** when voting opens in December.

Busy preparations are underway for our next biennial conference, to be held August 9-13, 2027, in Dushanbe. Hosted by the National Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan, the conference will mark a meaningful return to the site of ASPS's first conference in 2002, on the occasion of its 25th anniversary. Apart from the usual stellar academic exchanges, we are planning for concerts, film screenings, book talks, and poetry readings. We look forward to welcoming all of you in Dushanbe next summer.

For now, wishing you a peaceful autumn and productive closing of 2026.

In peace,
Mirjam Künkler
ASPS President (2025-2027)

News from the Journal

JPS Vol. 19.1 (2026): In Publication

Kianoosh Rezania, *Madinat al-Salām: The Abbasid Capital in Sasanian Garb*

Mohammad Amin Mansouri, *Beyond Extremism: Rethinking Rajab Borsi's Intellectual Legacy*

Neva Ege, *Migrating Traditions: Shiraz School Manuscript Conventions in an Ottoman Kolliyāt-e Jāmi*

Elham Etemadi, *Sani' al-Molk's Voyage of Discovery in Europe*

Obituaries
Saeed Talajooy, *Bahram Beyzaie (1938–2025)*

Navina Haidar and Martina Rugiadi, *Sheila R Canby (1949–2025)*

Shervin Farridnejad, *Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh (1937–2026)*

A. Asghar Seyed-Gohrab, *Johan G. J. ter Haar (1941–2026)*

ASPS Announcements

ASPS Election Candidates

President (2028–2030)



Daniel Beben Daniel Beben (PhD, Indiana University, 2015) is Associate Professor of History and Religious Studies at Nazarbayev University, Kazakhstan. He previously chaired the university's Department of History, Philosophy and Religious Studies and currently chairs the newly established Department of Humanities, where he also serves as Director of the BA Program in Humanities and Digital Technologies. His research focuses on genealogical practices, religious conversion, and community formation in Central Asia and the Persianate world in the post-Mongol era. He has held visiting appointments at the Institute of Iranian Studies of the Austrian Academy of Sciences and at the AbuSulayman Center for Global Islamic Studies at George Mason University.

His dissertation, on the legendary biographies of Nāṣir-i Khusraw, received the Foundation for Iranian Studies Award for Best PhD Dissertation (2015). His publications include *The First Aga Khan: Memoirs of the 46th Ismaili Imam* (ed. and trans. with Daryoush Mohammad Poor, I.B. Tauris and the Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2018), *Genealogical History in the Persianate World* (ed. with Jo-Ann Gross, Bloomsbury, 2025), and *Ismailism in Badakhshan: A Genealogical History* (with Jo-Ann Gross and Umed Mamadsherzodshoev, Brill, forthcoming). His articles have appeared in journals including the *Journal of Persianate Studies*, the *Journal of Islamic Studies*, the *Journal of the Economic and Social History of the Orient*, the *Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society*, and *History of Religions*, and he serves on the editorial board of the *International Journal of Islam in Asia*. He is currently preparing a monograph examining how processes of religious conversion in Central Asia and the narratives told about them shaped one another. His research has been supported by the National Endowment for the Humanities, American Councils for International Education, the Social Science Research Council, the Austrian Academy of Sciences, and the Institute of Ismaili Studies.

Daniel has been a regular participant in ASPS conventions since 2015 and has served the Association in various capacities since 2016, including as Treasurer (and Acting Treasurer in 2020), Secretary, member of the Board of Directors, and member of the CERF evaluation committee. He served on the organizing committee for the 2018 convention in Tbilisi, chaired the planning of the 2020 convention in New Delhi (cancelled due to the pandemic), and currently serves on the planning committee for the 2027 convention in Dushanbe. As President, his priorities would be planning the Association's 2029 convention, developing new partnerships with academic institutions in the Persianate world, and securing funding to support the participation of scholars from Persianate societies in ASPS conventions and activities.



Karolina Rakowiecka-Asgari is an assistant professor (adiunkt) at Jagiellonian University in Kraków, where she directed the BA and MA programs in Iranian Studies (2024-2026) and headed the Department of Interdisciplinary Eurasian Research (2021-2022). She also taught at the University of Rzeszów and Collegium Civitas in Warsaw. She holds MA degrees from Jagiellonian University and Kharazmi University in Tehran, and a PhD from Jagiellonian University (2009).

Her publications include *Poetics of Inquiry: A Case Study in the Poetry of Qeysar Aminpur* (in Polish, 2010), *On the Culture-Shaping Function of Riddles in*

Ancient Eurasia (in Polish, 2011), and the co-authored *Signum Temporis: Sociology of Female Characters in the Iranian Post-Revolutionary Novel* (in Persian, 2015), nominated for Iran's Jalal Al-e Ahmad Award. Her current research focuses on modern Persian literature, poetry, literary translation, and masculinity studies. She also works as a literary translator and considers public outreach an important academic responsibility.

Within ASPS, she initiated and co-organized Virtual Event Series IX, *Iranian Heritage in Today's World* (2022), a three-part event that led to the JPS special issue *Iranian Heritage in Transition* (18 (2025): Issue 1-2), co-edited with Mateusz Kłagisz. She served on the ASPS board from 2023 to 2025 and contributed to the CERF, Graduate Student Awards, and other committees. Towards the end of her term, she initiated efforts to strengthen cooperation among ASPS's regional branches.

If elected, she would prioritize interregional collaboration, viewing regional diversity as a major asset and Central European perspectives as a bridge between Eastern and Western academic communities. Through closer cooperation among regional branches, she would also seek to enhance ASPS's international visibility and expand funding opportunities, particularly to support conference participation by scholars from Persianate societies, especially Iran, who face barriers to international academic engagement, and to further develop the association's research grants and awards.

Board Members at-large (2027–2029)
(3 open positions)



Negar Habibi is an art historian and the Mossadegh Lecturer in Iranian Studies at the University of Geneva, Switzerland. She is the author of *ʿAli Qoli Jebādār et l'occidentalisme safavide* (Brill, 2018) and several articles on painting, women's patronage, and Iranian society in seventeenth-century Isfahan. Her publications also include *Shâhnâmeh de Ferdowsi: Le Livre des Rois persans* (2021), exploring Ferdowsi's *Shahnama* and its artistic significance in the Persianate world. She edited the 2023 issue of *Manazir Journal* on "The Idea of the Just Ruler in Persianate Art and Material Culture." Her current research examines French diplomat and collector Jean Pozzi and his collection of Islamic and Persian art, with a forthcoming publication in *Muqarnas* (2027). Habibi currently serves as a council member of the Association for Iranian Studies and grant administrator at the Soudavar Memorial Foundation. As the holder of the first lectureship in Persian Studies at the University of Geneva, she is committed to amplifying the contributions of scholars in Iran, particularly emerging and early-career researchers.



Yui Kanda (PhD, University of Tokyo, 2021) is Assistant Professor at the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. Her research focuses on the material culture of Iran and the wider Persianate world during the late medieval and early modern periods, particularly ceramics, metalwork, and manuscripts. She examines the transmission of Persian literary texts, Twelver Shiʿi traditions, and the social and cultural contexts of material and textual production. Her recent work explores the collecting of Persian manuscripts and the formation of European knowledge about the Persianate world. Her publications include studies of Qāniʿī Ṭūsī's Persian *Kalīla va Dimna* and Claudius James Rich's collection of Persian manuscripts, both forthcoming, as well as articles in *Muqarnas*, *Iran*, and the *Journal of Islamic Art and Architecture*. She has also co-edited a forthcoming Brill volume on textual transmission across the premodern Middle East, Central Asia, and the Indian Subcontinent. Kanda seeks to strengthen interdisciplinary and interregional scholarly connections while expanding opportunities for early-career researchers and international academic exchange.



Eric Lob is an associate professor of politics and international relations at Florida International University. His research focuses on the intersection of development and politics in Iran. He is the author of Iran's Reconstruction Jihad: Rural Development and Regime Consolidation after 1979 (Cambridge University Press, 2020). His articles have appeared in Digest of Middle East Studies, The International Journal of Middle East Studies, Iranian Studies, Middle East Critique, The Middle East Journal, Middle East Policy, The Muslim World, Third World Quarterly, and others. Since 2022, Lob has served as the graduate program director of political science at FIU. Since 2025, he has been a non-resident scholar in the Middle East Program of the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace. Between 2021 and 2024, Lob served in the same capacity in the Iran Program of the Middle East Institute. From 2018 to 2024, he was a board member of the American Institute of Iranian Studies. Between 2013 to 2014, Lob was a postdoctoral research fellow at Brandeis University's Crown Center for Middle East Studies. He earned a PhD in Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University in 2013 and an MA in international relations at Johns Hopkins University in 2005.



Jane Mikkelson is an Assistant Professor of the Humanities at Yale University, specializing in the classical Persian literary cultures of South Asia and the Near East. Her research focuses on forms of thought, methods of inquiry, and varieties of experience that are made possible by imaginative literature. Recent publications discuss planetary poetics; a geopolitical turn in Persian literary criticism; and the ambient availability of Avicenna's philosophy for Persian poets. Other ongoing projects, both individual and co-authored, aim to bridge the studies of South Asian, Near Eastern, and European cultures through comparison and collaboration.



Eva Orthmann is Professor of Iranian Studies and Director of the Institute of Iranian Studies at the University of Göttingen, Germany, where she has served since 2018. Previously, she was Professor of Islamic Studies at the University of Bonn (2007–2018). She received her Ph.D. from Martin Luther University Halle-Wittenberg in 2000 and held a postdoctoral fellowship at Yale University. Her research and publications explore Persianate and Islamic intellectual and cultural history, particularly Indo-Persian scholarly traditions, the transmission of scientific knowledge, and Mughal court culture. She has authored and edited numerous scholarly publications and has been actively involved in organizing international conferences, including several Perso-Indica meetings. Since 2024, she has been a member of the Academy of Sciences of Lower Saxony.



James Pickett focuses on empire and Islam as entangled sources of authority, with particular attention to historical memory and state formation. His first book, *Polymaths of Islam: Power and Networks of Knowledge in Central Asia*, was published by Cornell University Press in 2020. A second monograph, *Russian Subject, Muslim Monarch: Sovereignty and Scribal Culture in Colonial Bukhara* (Cornell, 2026), examines indirect rule in Islamic societies on the eve of the Soviet transformation. James has also published articles about the Soviet legacy of the Persian cultural sphere and modern language politics in relation to pedagogy, as well as a synthetic Cambridge History chapter on Persianate migration, building on a contribution to the *Asia Inside Out* collected volume. This research was supported by grants from SSRC, Mellon/ACLS, and, most recently, a Kluge Fellowship. His teaching focuses on early Islam, Mongol, and Russian history, as well as digital methods.

A Note on the ASPS Newsletter Publication Schedule

As some of you may have noticed, recent issues of the ASPS Newsletter have not always appeared according to our traditional publication schedule. One reason has been our effort to include the latest news on Association activities, conference plans, board elections and nominations, and developments in the *Journal of Persianate Studies*. Waiting for these updates has sometimes meant that the newsletter reached you later than originally planned.

With this experience in mind, we have decided to make our publication schedule more flexible beginning in 2027. **Going forward, the fall issue will appear in October, while the spring issue will generally follow its traditional March schedule, with some flexibility depending on the timing of Association activities, events, and announcements.** We believe this approach will allow us to bring you more timely and comprehensive updates on ASPS activities, conference news, board elections and nominations, the *Journal of Persianate Studies*, and other developments across our community.

We hope this approach will help each issue provide a fuller picture of what is happening across ASPS and make the newsletter an even more useful way for our community to stay informed and connected.

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ASPS/*JPS* Graduate Student Prize Announcement

D Gershon Lewental, Associate Editor, *Journal of Persianate Studies* (Department of Middle Eastern Studies, Ben-Gurion University of the Negev)

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. To encourage and mentor graduate students on their path to publication, ASPS and *JPS* established a biennial Graduate Student Prize for an outstanding submission by a promising graduate student. The prize does not simply reward finished work. Its purpose is to support, nurture, and encourage scholars at the very outset of their careers. Joining me on the prize committee were Mahdieh Tavakol, Alice Lyzcia, and Florian Schwarz, whom I wish to thank for their service. After careful deliberation, and in consultation with several external reviewers, whose generous and incisive assistance I also wish to acknowledge, I am delighted to announce that this year's prize is awarded to Sara Molaie, at the University of Toronto, for her paper, "Dream, translation and the afterlife of meaning: Freud and the circulation of meaning in *Suwashun*."

Sara's paper offers an innovative reading of Simin Dāneshvar's celebrated 1969 novel *Suwashun*. It examines the role of dreams in the novel and their relationship to the Biblical and Qurʾanic story of Joseph, to Persian literary tradition, and to the myth of Siyāvash. It also situates the work within the translation of Freud and the reception of psychoanalytic ideas in post-war Iran. The committee and the external reviewers were struck by the creativity and ambition of the paper. One reviewer described it as "an excellent, even brilliant, treatment of the subject of translation and Freudian thought" that "brings needed attention to how these streams come together in Dāneshvar's novel." Readers commended the paper's treatment of intertextuality and its account of Freud's reception in Iran, whose literary significance was deemed "relevant and important." The paper was described as "conceptually rich," presenting "multiple possibilities for further elaboration of its themes." This combination of originality, intellectual reach, and promise persuaded the committee that the paper is a worthy recipient of this year's prize. Following revision, we are confident it will be, in the words of one reviewer, "a welcome and needed addition to the literature on the modern Persian novel."

In keeping with the spirit of the prize, my colleagues and I sought the submission that

showed the greatest promise: the paper whose ideas, sources, and ambition held the strongest potential to grow into a significant contribution to the field. We are confident that Sara's paper is such a work. As with any research at a formative stage, the next step is one of development and refinement. Sara will now work closely with the editorial office, and with specialists in the field, through a process of revision aimed at bringing the paper to the high standard expected of the *Journal of Persianate Studies*. As the winner, Sara will commit to undertaking this work, and the journal will commit to supporting it through to publication. We regard this collaborative process as the heart of the prize: an investment not only in a single article, but in the development of a promising young scholar. In addition to publication, Sara will be invited to present at the biennial ASPS conference in Dushanbe (9–13 August 2027), with partial funding from ASPS to support her attendance. We look forward to welcoming her there.

We were encouraged by the quality and range of the submissions we received this year. Each applicant will receive detailed feedback from members of the prize committee. These comments are intended not only to strengthen the papers themselves but also to support the authors' broader research and their future dissertations. We would also be glad to put applicants in touch with specialists in their fields who may offer further guidance. We hope every applicant will find the process valuable at this early and formative stage of their careers.

I would also like to draw your attention to the Graduate Student Prize's companion award, the ASPS/*JPS* Early Career Prize, which supports scholars in the years following the doctorate. It is open to non-tenured ASPS members who have received their doctorate within the last seven years. Please see the official announcement later in this newsletter. Those of you completing your degrees, as well as recent graduates among your friends and colleagues, may wish to consider it as a natural next step.

We intend to offer the Graduate Student Prize again in two years, in conjunction with the next ASPS graduate student conference, and I encourage eligible graduate students to consider submitting their work and to tell their friends and colleagues about the opportunity. Please join me in warmly congratulating Sara Molaie and this year's other applicants, and in wishing them well in their academic endeavours.

Announcing the 2027 ASPS/*JPS* Early Career Prize

The Association for the Study of Persianate Societies invites submissions for its biennial Early Career Prize, which recognises outstanding scholarship on the broader Persianate world by ASPS members in the early stages of their careers. The winning paper will be published in the *Journal of Persianate Studies* and its author will receive a cash prize of $250. The deadline for submissions of original, unpublished work is **31 May 2027**.

Papers will be judged on creativity of topic and source materials, originality of analysis, and overall scholarly contribution. The winner, selected by an ASPS prize committee, will be announced at the upcoming ASPS conference in Dushanbe in August 2027. Runners-up may also be considered for publication.

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

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

Application procedure: Submissions must be original, previously unpublished, and within the

scope of *JPS*. They must follow the journal's style, transliteration, and citation guidelines: https://brill.com/fileasset/downloads_products/Author_Instructions/JPS.pdf. Submit papers online through Editorial Manager (https://www.editorialmanager.com/JPSBRILL), selecting 'Early Career Prize' as the article type. By submitting, applicants confirm their intent to compete for the prize and agree, if selected, to the publication of their paper in *JPS*, subject to any revisions required by the editorial office.

For questions, contact the Associate Editor, D Gershon Lewental, at lewental@bgu.ac.il.

ASPS–Ajam Media Collective:
Call for Submissions for
The Unexpected Persianate

The Association for the Study of Persianate Societies (ASPS), in collaboration with Ajam Media Collective, invites submissions for *The Unexpected Persianate*, an ongoing article series exploring the surprising, overlooked, and unconventional places in which the Persianate appears across the past and present.



Tajik-style teahouse in Boulder, Colorado

Where might we encounter the Persianate where we least expect it? The series invites contributors to begin with a family tradition, neighborhood landmark, photograph, song, debate, object, phrase, memory, or fragment encountered in the margins of their research, and to use it as an opening for thinking anew about the reach and movement of Persianate cultures. Contributions might explore objects, places, and ideas that reveal unexpected connections across regions and historical periods, or illuminate ways in which traces of the Persianate continue to surface in contemporary life.



Rug from Soviet Armenia that depicts its own making



An image of the Imam Ali in a taco restaurant in Mexico City

Conceived as both an archive of such encounters and a catalyst for new research trajectories, *The Unexpected Persianate* particularly welcomes contributions that are exploratory, creative, and even speculative in form. Submissions may incorporate images, sound, and other mixed media. Pieces should be **500–1,000 words** and may take the form of a provocation, argument, reflection, photo essay, or comic.

Submissions are accepted **on a rolling basis**, and accepted contributions will be published by Ajam Media Collective, with authors compensated for their work. Contributions submitted in languages other than English should be accompanied by an English translation. When submitting, authors should indicate in the first line that their piece is intended for the **"Unexpected Persianate" initiative**.

The Unexpected Persianate has already begun to reveal the surprising routes through which Persianate forms, words, and symbols have traveled far beyond the regions with which they are conventionally associated. The first two contributions take readers to seemingly unlikely sites, from a plate of quintessentially Hungarian food in Slovakia to the coat of arms of a small village in Switzerland, showing how ordinary objects and local traditions can preserve traces of much wider histories of cultural circulation.

Tarhonya, Tarkhineh: The Persian Roots of Hungary's Most Hungarian Food

In the first contribution to the series, Hungarian-American journalist and geographer **Larkin Cleland** begins with an encounter in Košice, Slovakia. Looking for a distinctly Hungarian meal, he orders *tarhonya*, small pieces of dried egg-and-flour dough widely regarded as a quintessential Hungarian food. Yet this seemingly unmistakable marker of Hungarian identity leads unexpectedly eastward. Both the dish and its name are connected to Persian *tarkhineh* (ترخینه), still eaten in Iran today.

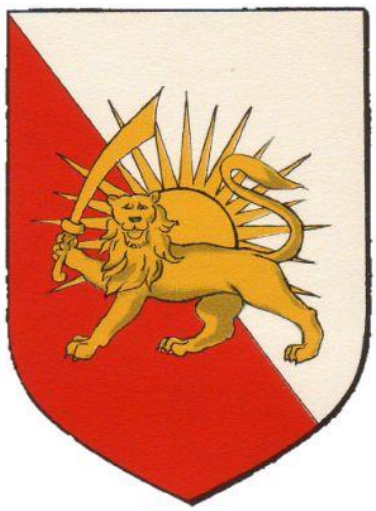


Plate of tarhonya from the restaurant in Košice. (Photo: Larkin Cleland)

Following the history of *tarhonya*, Cleland traces how the dish reached Hungary through the Ottoman world and places it alongside other eastern influences that have become deeply embedded in Hungarian material culture, from food and bathing traditions to decorative arts. The essay uses this culinary history to raise a larger question about national identity. Something imagined as timelessly and authentically Hungarian can itself be the product of centuries of movement, borrowing, and cultural mixture. The Persianate thus appears not as a bounded geography but as a set of connections whose traces can survive in the most familiar features of everyday life.

How the Lion and Sun Became a Royal Symbol in Switzerland

The second contribution begins with an equally unexpected encounter. While hiking through the Francophone Swiss countryside, **Kristof Szitar** noticed the coat of arms of Chesalles-sur-Moudon: a golden lion holding a sword beneath a radiant sun. The unmistakably Persianate **Lion and Sun (*Shir-o Khorshid*)** on the emblem of a small Swiss village leads Szitar into the remarkable eighteenth-century story of Daniel Moginié, a native of the village whose travels eventually carried him through Southeast Asia, Iran, and Mughal India.



The blazon of Chesalles-sur-Moudon, Switzerland with the Persianate-inspired Lion and Sun symbol

Szitar follows both the traveler and the traveling symbol. Moginié reached Bandar Abbas in 1729 and, according to the accounts examined in the essay, entered the service of Nader Shah before eventually moving eastward to Mughal India. The article situates his story within the wider Persianate political world in which the Lion and Sun carried associations of sovereignty, worldly authority, cosmic order, and *farr*, or royal glory.

The story eventually circles back to Switzerland. In 1927, Chesalles adopted the Lion and Sun as its civic emblem in memory of its globe-trotting native. What today appears as an unusual piece of Swiss heraldry thus preserves the afterlife of encounters stretching from rural Europe through Iran to Mughal South Asia. Szitar's microhistory captures precisely the premise of *The Unexpected Persianate*: symbols can travel, acquire new meanings, and become embedded in places far removed from the worlds in which we expect to encounter them.

Jo-Ann Gross Awarded Honorary Lifetime Membership in ASPS

Jo-Ann Gross has a long and distinguished record of service to ASPS. She has served as an officer or board member of the Association in nearly every year since its founding and has contributed to the organization of almost every convention in its history. She was elected the Association's first Secretary-Treasurer in 1999, subsequently served three terms as an at-large member of the Board of Directors, and in 2013 became the Association's first Vice President, a position she held until 2015. She was also instrumental in establishing the Association's regional branches in Central Asia, including its offices in Dushanbe and Khorog.
Reflecting her long-standing commitment to supporting local scholars in the region, Jo-Ann founded the Central Eurasia Research Fund (CERF), which she continues to direct. This donor-supported initiative has funded dozens of publications in Persianate studies by scholars in the former Soviet republics of Central Asia and in Afghanistan, and has also provided travel grants that have enabled many of them to take part in ASPS conventions.

Jo-Ann's service to ASPS builds on a long record of contributions to the field of Persianate studies. Her research, spanning more than four decades, has focused primarily on the religious history of Central Asia, with particular emphasis on Sufism and, more recently, Ismailism in the region. Her work draws equally on the methods of history and anthropology. Since her first visit to the region in 1979, she has combined the close reading of manuscripts and archival documents with extensive fieldwork, treating hagiographies, genealogies, and shrine traditions not only as historical sources but also as ethnographic ones, and reading them alongside the oral narratives of the communities that preserve them.

Her 1982 dissertation on the career of the pivotal fifteenth-century Naqshbandi shaykh Khoja Ahrar laid the foundation for a series of publications exploring the intersections of religion, politics, and economics in Timurid Central Asia. Her edited volume *Muslims in Central Asia: Expressions of Identity and Change* (Duke University Press, 1992), based on a 1988 workshop held at Columbia University, appeared just as the Soviet Union was dissolving, at a critical moment when the newly independent republics of Central Asia were becoming a major focus of scholarship in the West. Its chapters, together with her introduction on approaches to the problem of identity formation, set the agenda for much of the scholarship in the field over the following decades. In 2002 she published, with Asom Urunbaev, *The Letters of Khwāja ʿUbayd Allāh Aḥrār and His Associates* (Brill), a landmark volume that translated and introduced a critical primary source for the history of the late Timurid era, and which has since appeared in a Tajik translation as well.

More recently, her work has focused on shrines and genealogical traditions in Tajikistan. Drawing on two decades of fieldwork at hundreds of sacred sites, she has published studies of the narrative and shrine traditions surrounding figures such as Muḥammad Bashārā, Khoja Isḥāq Khuttalānī, and Nāṣir-i Khusraw, and in 2011 she guest-edited a special issue of the *Journal of Persianate Studies* on shrine traditions, human ecology, and identity in the Pamirs. In 2018 she and Devin DeWeese co-edited *Sufism in Central Asia: New Perspectives on Sufi Traditions, 15th–21st Centuries* (Brill), a volume that brought together new research on Sufi communities from the Timurid period to the present.

In 2017 Jo-Ann was awarded a major National Endowment for the Humanities Collaborative Research Grant for the project "Ismailism in Badakhshan: A Genealogical and Documentary History." The project involved the digitization and analysis of more than one hundred genealogical documents held in private collections in Tajikistan and Afghanistan, around sixty of which are now available in an open-access digital collection at Princeton University Library. It has so far resulted in the volume *Genealogical History in the Persianate World* (Bloomsbury, 2025), co-edited with Daniel Beben, and will culminate in the forthcoming monograph *Ismailism in Badakhshan:*

A Genealogical History, co-authored with Beben and Umed Mamadsherzodshoev.

In recognition of both her scholarship and her support for scholars in the region, the Academy of Sciences of the Republic of Tajikistan elected Jo-Ann an honorary foreign member in 2012. It is with deep gratitude for her many contributions to the Association and to the field that ASPS now names her an Honorary Lifetime Member.

Inauguration of the Mohsen Zakeri Room at Ruhr University Bochum

On July 14, 2026, the Center for Religious Studies (CERES) at Ruhr University Bochum, Germany, inaugurated a room dedicated to the memory of Dr. Mohsen Zakeri, a distinguished scholar of Iranian and Islamic intellectual history and former Assistant Editor of the *Journal of Persianate Studies* (JPS), who passed away on July 20, 2024. The ceremony brought together colleagues and friends to honor his scholarly contributions and his lasting legacy within the academic community.



The Mohsen Zakeri Room at Ruhr University Bochum, inaugurated on July 14, 2026. Image: CERES, Ruhr University Bochum.

Dr. Zakeri made significant contributions to the study of pre-Islamic Iran and the transmission of Iranian intellectual traditions into the Islamic world. His scholarship explored the movement of knowledge, literature, and political thought across cultural and linguistic boundaries, particularly between the Sasanian and early Islamic periods. Among his major scholarly achievements was *Persian Wisdom in Arabic Garb*, an edition, translation, and commentary recognized with Iran's Book of the Year Prize in 2009. At the time of his passing, he was conducting research at CERES on the transmission of Sasanian knowledge and literature through translation in Late Antiquity. His service to JPS and the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies (ASPS) formed another important part of his scholarly legacy. Following his passing, Saïd Amir Arjomand, editor of JPS, described his death as a significant loss to the Persianate scholarly community and to ASPS and JPS in particular.

The newly inaugurated Zakeri Room, located in the university's GB Building, houses a reference collection of books from his personal library, preserving part of his intellectual legacy for future generations of scholars and students. The room and its library were arranged through the efforts of his colleague Professor Kianoosh Rezania. This initiative provides a lasting tribute not only to Zakeri's scholarly achievements but also to the generosity, collegiality, and intellectual engagement for which he is remembered. Further information**:** CERES, Ruhr University Bochum

ASPS Virtual Event Series

2nd Biennial ASPS Virtual Graduate Student Conference

September 25, 2026

The Association for the Study of Persianate Societies (ASPS) held its second biennial Virtual Graduate Student Conference on September 25, 2026. Hosted by the Sharmin and Bijan Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies at Princeton University, the conference brought together graduate student presenters and scholars from various institutions to explore a range of topics in Persianate studies.

The conference featured five sessions covering historical linguistics, the cultural production of

early Islamic Khurasan, modern literature, and Qajar histories. Presentations examined subjects ranging from Turkic historical sources and ancient linguistic connections to Persian Sufism, literary interpretation, and the experiences of minority communities in modern Iranian history.

The program also included a professional development session, "Beyond the Dissertation: Publishing in Journals and Books," on publishing in academic journals, featuring Zayde Antrim (*al-ʿUṣūr al-Wusṭā*), Gershon Lewental (*Journal of Persianate Studies*), and Abdurraouf Oueslati (*De Gruyter Brill*), along with an announcement concerning the ASPS/JPS Graduate Student Prize.

The conference provided a forum for emerging scholars to present their research and engage with established academics across disciplines and institutions, reflecting ASPS's continuing commitment to supporting graduate scholarship in Persianate studies.

CERF Announcements

Central Eurasia Research Fund (CERF)

Call for Applications
Deadline January 15, 2027

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.

Selection
Awards are made once a year. The CERF Evaluation Committee reviews 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
- Academic merit of the proposed project
- Demonstrated career commitment to the field
- Feasibility of the project
- Adequate academic and professional experience of the candidate
- Clarity of the grant proposal

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. Background Information - Curriculum Vitae that includes the following:

- Name, home address, email address and citizenship

- Professional affiliation (institutional name and address)
- Research field or discipline
- Educational degrees and the highest degree obtained
- Professional experience
- Previous publications

B. Research Proposal

- Title of research project
- Description of project (1-2 typewritten pages). The description should include:
  - Theme
  - Purpose
  - Methodology
  - Outline of chapters with brief description
  - Potential impact and importance of the book
  - Language of publication

C. Budget (including detailed account of specific expenses)

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

Award and Final Report

Grant recipients must submit a written report and two copies of any publication resulting from the award within two months of the award completion period. The report must include the following: name of project and objectives; extent to which the objectives were met; impact of project; receipts of all expenses. Final reports, including receipts of all expenses, must be remitted at the end of the project period in order for the CERF to meet its own internal accounting requirements that ensure the CERF's continued operation.

NEWS FROM THE OFFICES

From the ASPS Tajikistan

Persianate Studies in Tajikistan: Institutions, Scholarly Traditions, and Current Challenges

Shodimuhammad Sufizoda
National Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan

The collapse of the Soviet Union marked a decisive turning point for Tajik philology and literary scholarship. With independence in 1991, scholars in Tajikistan gained new opportunities to revisit the country's long Persianate literary heritage beyond the ideological constraints that had shaped much of Soviet-era scholarship. Over the past three decades, Tajikistan has built a substantial institutional framework for the study of Persianate literature, language, folklore, manuscripts, and cultural history. Its scholars have made significant contributions to textual scholarship, manuscript cataloguing, folklore studies, and the reassessment of medieval and early modern literary traditions. At the same time, the field continues to face pressing challenges, particularly in the renewal of literary criticism and the training of a new generation of researchers.

Institutions and Research Centres

The Rudakī Institute of Language and Literature, now part of the National Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan, remains one of the country's central institutions in the humanities. Founded on 17 March 1932 as the Historical and Linguistic Sector of the Tajik Base of the Academy of Sciences of the USSR, the Institute played a foundational role in the formation of academic philology in Tajikistan. Its early development was closely associated with such major Russian Orientalists as E. E. Bertel′s, I. S. Braginskii, A. A. Semenov, and M. S. Andreev.

In 1951 the Institute became an independent research institution within the Academy of

Sciences of the Tajik SSR. In 1958, on the occasion of the 1100th anniversary of Abū ʻAbdullāh Rudakī, it was named after the poet widely regarded as the founder of Persian-Tajik literature. Today, the Institute brings together more than 150 researchers and staff members working across five main areas: literary history, modern Tajik literature, Tajik and ancient languages, lexicography, and folklore.

Its recent projects include the three-volume *Encyclopaedia of Rudakī* (*Dānishnāmai Rūdakī*), the English-language volume *King of Poets* (*Sulṭoni shoiron*, 2024), the ongoing 35-volume *Collection of Tajik Folklore* (*Kulliyoti folklori tojik*), and scholarly editions of major literary figures, including the 22-volume collected works of Sadriddīn ʻAynī. The Institute also maintains a valuable museum complex devoted to leading Tajik writers, among them ʻAynī, Mirzo Tursunzoda, Abulqosim Lohutī, and Mu'min Qanoat. Its Folklore Fund contains more than one million pages of archival material.

Tajik National University is another major centre of literary scholarship. Since 1948, two departments have played a particularly important role in the field. The Department of the History of Tajik Literature focuses on literary developments from antiquity to the early twentieth century and also trains specialists in written heritage and codicology. The Department of Theory and Modern Persian-Tajik Literature covers twentieth- and twenty-first-century literature, literary theory, and folklore. Across several generations, the university has formed an important scholarly lineage, from ʻAbdulghanī Mirzoev to S. Sh. Tabarov, Sh. Ḥusaynzoda, Kh. Sharifov, and contemporary scholars such as M. Imomzoda, A. Rahmonzoda, and A. Sattorzoda.

Outside Dushanbe, Khujand State University has long served as a major intellectual centre in northern Tajikistan. Its Faculty of Tajik Philology, whose history dates back to 1933, includes departments of modern Tajik literature, classical Tajik literature, and journalism. Scholars such as A. Sayfulloev, N. Salimov, M. Mirzoyunus, and A. Nasriddinov have helped shape regional traditions of literary research. Other important centres include Bokhtar State University named after Nosir Khusrav, Kulob State University named after Abū ʻAbdullāh Rudakī, Khorog State University, and the pedagogical institutes in Rasht and Panjakent, all of which contribute to the training of teachers and regional specialists.

The Institute of Humanities in Khorog, founded in 1991, occupies a distinctive place in the study of Badakhshan's languages, folklore, and literature. Its scholars have published four volumes of *Folklore of the Pamirs*, studied local genres such as *dargilik* and *madhiyā*, and collected manuscripts by Pamiri poets in Shughnani, Rushani, and other regional languages.

The Center for Written Heritage of the National Academy of Sciences of Tajikistan is equally significant. Established in 1958 as the Department of Oriental Manuscripts, it houses one of the largest collections of Oriental manuscripts in Central Asia, with more than 6,000 manuscripts and 6,500 lithographs in Persian-Tajik, Arabic, Turkic, and Hebrew. Among its oldest holdings are Bal'amī's *Tārīkh-i Ṭabarī* (974), Bīrūnī's *al-Tafhīm* (1038), and Ghazālī's *Kīmiyā-yi saʻādat* (1111). The Center has published extensive catalogues in Tajik, Russian, and Persian and is currently engaged in the digitisation of its collections.

New Directions since Independence

The post-Soviet period opened important new directions for research. Older ideological categories gradually lost their authority, allowing scholars to return to fields that had previously been marginalised or treated with suspicion. Sufism, religious literature, sixteenth- to nineteenth-century poetry, and other areas of the Persianate tradition entered scholarly discussion with renewed force. The study of the *Avesta* and ancient Iranian motifs has also developed as a distinct area of inquiry.

International cooperation has expanded considerably. Tajik scholars now participate in academic events in Iran, India, Germany, Russia, and beyond. Khujand State University maintains

links with institutions in Tehran, Delhi, and St. Petersburg, while the Institute of Humanities in Khorog has become an important centre for research on Pamiri languages and Persianate literature.

A more recent addition to this institutional landscape is the Kamol Khujandī Scientific Center, established in Sughd Province in September 2014. The Center is devoted to the study, preservation, and promotion of the literary, historical, and spiritual legacy of Khwāja Kamol Khujandī. Its work focuses on three main areas: Kamol Khujandī studies, historical research on the cultural and social world in which the poet lived, and the translation, preparation, textual editing, and publication of works connected with his legacy. One of its major priorities is the preparation of a new critical edition of Kamol Khujandī's *dīvān*, including the collection of dispersed poems, the correction of textual variants, and the removal of poems wrongly attributed to him.

Achievements and Challenges

Over more than thirty years of independence, Tajik literary scholarship has undergone substantial development. It has strengthened its institutional base, brought major areas of medieval Persianate heritage back into scholarly circulation, trained generations of textual scholars, and advanced large-scale projects in manuscript studies and folklore. Tajikistan now possesses an impressive scholarly infrastructure: universities, academic institutes, regional research centres, and one of the richest manuscript collections in Central Asia.

The most serious unresolved challenge, however, is the renewal of professional literary criticism. As the critic ʻAbdukhāliq Nabavī has argued, contemporary scholarship requires intellectual freedom and the objective evaluation of literary phenomena. Without a strong critical culture, literature risks becoming, in his memorable formulation, a garden without a gardener. The future of Persianate literary culture in Tajikistan will therefore depend not only on the preservation of heritage, but also on the formation of a new generation of scholars and critics equipped with contemporary methods and prepared to exercise independent judgment.

RESEARCH UPDATE

Mapping the Reception of Amir Khusraw's Works

Sunil Sharma

I spent two months at the Bodleian Library, University of Oxford, in the spring of this year on a Bahari Visiting Fellowship in the Persian Arts of the Book. Access to this collection and intellectual exchanges with the curators and scholars of Persian studies at Oxford enriched my experience and allowed me to delve deeper into several connected research projects. My project, "Mapping the Reception of Amir Khusraw's Works," is a study of the thirty-plus manuscripts of the medieval poet's poetry and prose housed in the Bodleian, and continues research I began at the British Library four years ago and discussed in a blog post. In my project I attempt to map the geographical and chronological spread of the readership of these texts. I am interested in who was reading these works, and for whom, when and where they were being copied.

The 160 or so manuscripts in British collections have their provenance in various parts of South Asia, Central Asia, and Iran, from the fifteenth to the nineteenth century. Some of the sumptuously illustrated copies of Amir Khusraw's *divan*s and *Khamsah* were made for Timurid and Mughal patrons, while other humbler copies, usually in the form of single texts in a codex with extensive annotations, were produced for use by Indian students or for colonial period British officers who would learn Persian for administrative purposes. Among the latter, it was surprising to see that among the poet's many *masnavi*s, the

Qiran al-sa'dayn, which is little known to contemporary scholars, was the most frequently copied. The Amir Khusraw manuscripts in the Bodleian Library include many from the collections of the brothers William Ouseley (1767-1842) and Gore Ouseley (1770-1844), John Bardoe Elliott (1785-1863), and Simon Digby (1932-2010), all of whom had connections to India or Iran.

In addition to the Bodleian and British Library, I have also studied the manuscripts of Amir Khusraw in the libraries of the University of Cambridge, SOAS, Ancient India and Iran Trust, and at the John Rylands Library. My findings have expanded my database of the poet's manuscripts and furthered my understanding of how medieval Persian poets were being read and copied in the early modern period as part of a *long durée* canonization process. Another way to approach this question is to examine poets' verses in the numerous anthologies and miscellanies in these libraries, which can be a more challenging project.

Next year I plan to return to the Bodleian to do a comparative study of the manuscripts of other medieval poets such as Nizami and Jami, using the approach I applied to the reception history of Amir Khusraw manuscripts. I will also identify which masnavis were copied and read in single text codices rather than as part of a *Khamsah* or larger collections of their works. One of the pleasures of working in the archives of a library such as the Bodleian is that one is constantly distracted by tangential manuscripts. As a result, I uncovered a number of unpublished and under-studied texts, one of which is the Persian version of the *Qissah-yi chahar darvish*, long attributed to Amir Khusraw, which I am now studying as well.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Job Announcement

Assistant Professor in Pre-Modern History of the Islamicate Middle East or Central Asia, University of Chicago

The Department of Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Chicago invites applications for a tenure-track position at the rank of Assistant Professor in the Pre-Modern History of the Islamicate Middle East or Central Asia, with an expected start date of July 1, 2027, or as soon as possible thereafter. The department welcomes historians working on the social, political, economic, or intellectual history of Muslim/ Islamic societies from the Late Antique through the Early Modern periods (ca. 600–1700 CE).

Candidates must have completed all requirements for a Ph.D. in a relevant field before the start of the appointment and should demonstrate strong potential for original research and excellence in undergraduate and graduate teaching. Excellent command of either Classical Arabic or Persian is required, and research competency in an additional Middle Eastern or Central Asian language is highly desirable.

Applicants should submit a CV, cover letter, research statement, writing sample, and the names and contact information of three recommenders. A teaching statement and additional materials may be requested following the initial review.

Application deadline: October 19, 2026, at 10:59 PM Central Time.
Application: apply.interfolio.com/190288

Open Search in Early Islamic History

The Department of Near Eastern Studies at Princeton University invites applications for a tenured or tenure-track faculty position in the

field of Early Islamic History, with a primary focus on the period ca. 600–1300 CE. We seek a dynamic and innovative scholar whose research engages critically with the historical development of Islamic societies in this formative era. While the core of the position is historical in nature, we welcome applications from candidates whose work is grounded in related disciplines and whose scholarship brings fresh perspectives to the study of early Islam.

Applicants should submit a cover letter, curriculum vitae, and research statement. Please also include the names and contact information for three references. Referees will not be contacted until later in the process. Junior level applicants need to also provide a writing sample, for example one chapter or an article. Review of applications will begin on October 30, 2026, and continue until the position is filled. Applicants must hold a Ph.D. in a relevant field by the time of appointment. A strong record of original research is essential. Proficiency in classical Arabic and strong paleographic skills are also important. We are particularly interested in candidates who can contribute meaningfully to the department's teaching and research missions at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.

The successful candidate will be expected to maintain an active research agenda, participate fully in departmental activities, and contribute to fostering a diverse and inclusive academic community.

This position is subject to the University's background check policy.
Application https://apply.interfolio.com/193875

Call for Entries

Lives Beyond the Archives: Alf Muslimah Research Competition

Al-Mujadilah Research invites scholars, researchers, and experts to submit proposals for research-based entries for **Alf Muslimah**, a forthcoming encyclopaedia dedicated to documenting the lives, intellectual contributions, and social impact of leading Muslim women across the globe and throughout the ages.

The project seeks to recover and present the stories of Muslim women exemplars whose lives, achievements, and legacies have often been overlooked, underrepresented, or preserved only through local community histories, oral traditions, or regional archives.

Entries should focus on regional figures who are exemplars of a broad and holistic framework of Muslim leadership known as ri'aya (stewardship), which is not only limited to political power or economic prosperity but also extends to forms of leadership and influence through the transmission and production of knowledge, spiritual and ethical embodiment, socio-economic engagement, and domestic authority.

Submission Details
Proposals should include:
• **a 250-word abstract** (including an outline of the entry)
• **a bibliography**

Accepted authors will be invited to submit a full entry of approximately **1,000–2,000 words**. A **$400 honorarium** will be awarded upon completion of all editorial and review processes, provided the final entry is submitted by the assigned deadline. Submissions are welcome in **English or Arabic**. Authors may submit **up to three proposals**. For full details, eligibility, deadlines, and the application form, please visit: https://almujadilah.qa/en/lives-beyond-the-archives-alf-muslimah-2/details

Upcoming Events

Third Persian-Speaking Linguistic Forum: "Our Language Is Our World"

October 15–18, 2026
Dushanbe, Tajikistan

The Committee on Language and Terminology under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan is organizing the Third Persian-Speaking Linguistic Forum, titled "Our Language Is Our World," on October 15–18, 2026, as part of the commemorations marking the 35th anniversary of Tajikistan's independence.

The forum will bring together scholars, researchers, university faculty, and representatives of public institutions to examine the role of language in shared cultural and civilizational traditions. Its principal themes include the historical and contemporary development of Tajik-Persian, language and society, linguistic policies and terminology, manuscript studies, the translation of literary works among Persian-speaking communities, and the relationship between language and modern information technologies.

Conducted in Tajik-Persian, the forum aims to encourage scholarly exchange on the preservation, development, and contemporary challenges of a shared linguistic and cultural heritage. The event is particularly relevant to scholars of Persianate societies, offering opportunities to explore the connections between language, cultural identity, and intellectual traditions across Persian-speaking regions.

Organizing institution: Committee on Language and Terminology under the Government of the Republic of Tajikistan.

Fourth Achaemenid Workshop: The Achaemenid-Persian Empire and Its Western Borderlands

October 19–23, 2026
University of Innsbruck, Austria

The Fourth Achaemenid Workshop, titled "The Achaemenid-Persian Empire and Its Western Borderlands: A Change of Paradigm," will take place at the University of Innsbruck, Austria, on October 19–23, 2026. Organized in collaboration with the Austrian Academy of Sciences, the University of Innsbruck, UCLA's Pourdavoud Institute, and the Yarshater Center, the workshop will examine the history of the Achaemenid Empire's western borderlands beyond conventional narratives centered on Greek-Persian political and military conflict. Bringing together scholars of the ancient world, the workshop seeks to reconsider imperial interactions, cultural exchanges, and historical transformations across these interconnected regions.
Workshop information and program

Sufis in Premodern Persianate Society and Politics

November 5, 2026
University of California, Los Angeles (UCLA)

The UCLA Center for Near Eastern Studies will host the 2026 Giorgio Levi Della Vida Award Presentation and Conference, titled "Sufis in Premodern Persianate Society and Politics," on November 5, 2026, at Royce Hall, UCLA.

The conference will examine the historical roles of Sufi communities, intellectual traditions, and religious networks in shaping Persianate societies and political cultures across South Asia, Central Asia, Anatolia, and the Ottoman Empire. Its four thematic panels will bring together scholars to explore the relationships among Sufism, political authority, literary and religious traditions, and cultural exchange across the premodern Persianate world.

The program includes a keynote address by Richard M. Eaton (University of Arizona), as well as presentations by Saïd Amir Arjomand (Stony Brook University), Bruce Lawrence (Duke University), Devin DeWeese (Indiana University Bloomington), and other scholars working on the histories of Sufism and Persianate societies.

The conference is organized at UCLA, with Nile Green and Choon Hwee Koh serving as faculty co-organizers.

First Biennial International Conference on the History of Science: Kūshyār Gīlānī

November 11–12, 2026
University of Guilan, Rasht, Iran

The University of Guilan will host the First Biennial International Conference on the History of Science: Kūshyār Gīlānī on November 11–12, 2026, in Rasht, Iran. Named in honor of Kūshyār ibn Labbān Gīlānī, the distinguished Iranian mathematician and astronomer of the tenth and eleventh centuries, the conference aims to promote research on the history of science and highlight Iran's contributions to the development of scientific knowledge.

The conference invites contributions on a broad range of topics, including the history of mathematics, astronomy, physics, chemistry, and engineering; the history of science and artificial intelligence; mathematical games, puzzles, and riddles across historical periods; scientific manuscripts in Iran and beyond; and scientific tourism. It seeks to provide an interdisciplinary forum for exploring the development, transmission, and preservation of scientific knowledge across historical and cultural contexts.

The deadline for paper submissions is October 22, 2026.

Scholars and researchers interested in participating are encouraged to consult the conference website for submission guidelines and further information.

Conference website: https://ichs-kushyar1.ir

نخستین کنفرانس دوسالانه بین‌المللی تاریخ علم کوشیار گیلانی

تاریخ: ۲۰ و ۲۱ آبان ۱۴۰۵
دانشگاه گیلان، رشت، ایران

نخستین کنفرانس دوسالانه بین‌المللی تاریخ علم کوشیار گیلانی در روزهای ۲۰ و ۲۱ آبان ۱۴۰۵ به میزبانی دانشگاه گیلان در شهر رشت برگزار خواهد شد. این کنفرانس که به نام کوشیار بن لبان گیلانی، ریاضی‌دان و اخترشناس برجسته ایرانی در سده‌های چهارم و پنجم هجری، نام‌گذاری شده است، با هدف گسترش پژوهش‌های تاریخ علم و معرفی سهم ایران در شکل‌گیری و گسترش دانش علمی برگزار می‌شود.

محورهای کنفرانس طیف گسترده‌ای از موضوعات را دربرمی‌گیرد، از جمله تاریخ ریاضیات، نجوم، فیزیک، شیمی و علوم مهندسی، تاریخ علم و هوش مصنوعی، بازی‌ها و معماهای ریاضی در دوره‌های مختلف تاریخی، نسخه‌های خطی علمی در ایران و دیگر کشورها و گردشگری علمی. این گردهمایی فرصتی برای گفت‌وگو و تبادل نظر میان پژوهشگران رشته‌های مختلف درباره شکل‌گیری، انتقال و حفظ دانش علمی در بسترهای تاریخی و فرهنگی فراهم می‌آورد.

آخرین مهلت ارسال مقالات ۳۰ مهر ۱۴۰۵ (۲۲ اکتبر ۲۰۲۶) است.
از استادان، پژوهشگران و دانشجویان علاقه‌مند دعوت می‌شود برای آگاهی از شرایط ارسال مقاله و اطلاعات تکمیلی به وب‌سایت کنفرانس مراجعه کنند. وب‌سایت کنفرانس:

https://ichs-kushyar1.ir

Past Events and News

The Zoroastrian World Book Launch
October 8, 2026, SOAS

The Zoroastrian World presents a global guide to Zoroastrianism from the earliest period to the modern day, offering original perspectives through substantial thematic contributions on the lived experience of Zoroastrian communities worldwide.

This event celebrated the launching of the book together with a brief introduction from the three co-editors together with short presentations from some of the many contributors from different regions of the world. This event followed by a Q&A and light reception. For more information, please visit.
https://www.soas.ac.uk/about/event/zoroastrian-world-book-launch

Fourth Young Researchers' Indo-Persian Conference: Patronage in Persianate South Asia

June 11–12, 2026
Marseille, France
The Fourth Young Researchers' Indo-Persian Conference, titled "Patronage in Persianate South Asia," was held on June 11–12, 2026, at the Centre de la Vieille Charité in Marseille, France, with online participation. Organized by Victor Baptiste (EPHE-GREI) and Raffaello De León-Jones Diani (EHESS-CESAH-CeRCLes), with the collaboration of Maria Ashak and Mathys Colin, the conference brought together emerging scholars working on the literary, religious, intellectual, and cultural histories of Persianate South Asia.

The two-day program explored patronage as a central feature of cultural production and intellectual exchange in the Mughal and broader Indo-Persian worlds. Presentations addressed relationships between Sufi networks and imperial authority, Rajput engagement with philosophical traditions, literary patronage in Mughal Banaras, and interactions between Sanskrit intellectuals and Muslim rulers in Kashmir. Other topics included literary relationships among Persianate poets, representations of interreligious love in Indo-Persian narratives, Jain communities at the Mughal court, and the architectural history of the Taj Mahal through Persian manuscript sources.

Professor Saïd Amir Arjomand, founder of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies (ASPS) and editor of the *Journal of Persianate Studies*, was a special guest for a concluding session on Persianate Studies. By foregrounding the relationships among political authority, religious communities, literary networks, and cultural patronage, the conference highlighted the diversity and interconnectedness of Persianate intellectual traditions in South Asia.

Pourdavoud Institute and Yarshater Center, UCLA

Digital Video Libraries
The Pourdavoud Institute for the Study of the Iranian World and the Yarshater Center for the Study of Iranian Literary Traditions at UCLA continue to expand their online video libraries, making professionally recorded academic lectures and discussions accessible to researchers worldwide. During the 2025–2026 academic year, the Pourdavoud Institute reported ten new or forthcoming recordings, bringing its collection to 188 videos at the time of its report. The Yarshater Center similarly reported five additions, bringing its collection to 16 videos. Both libraries serve as freely accessible, citable resources for scholarship on Iranian history, culture, and literary traditions.
Pourdavoud Video Library | Yarshater Video Library

Bulletin of the Asia Institute: A New Home at UCLA
The Yarshater Center has assumed responsibility for publishing the *Bulletin of the Asia Institute* (BAI), beginning with Volume 32 (2026). Long associated with the scholarship and editorial leadership of Carol Altman Bromberg, the journal has been an important venue for research on

Iranian, Near Eastern, and Central Asian history and culture. M. Rahim Shayegan now serves as its editor. The continuation of the journal under the Yarshater Center marks a new chapter in its publication history, with Volume 32 available in print and as a free Open Access publication.
Bulletin of the Asia Institute

Legacies of Ancient Persia Podcast
Launched in October 2023, the Pourdavoud Institute's podcast, *Legacies of Ancient Persia*, explores the enduring significance of ancient Iranian civilizations and their contributions to global cultural heritage. As of spring 2026, the series had released 40 episodes and received more than 23,600 downloads. Its fourth season is scheduled to begin in October 2026, with new episodes released monthly during the academic year. Listen to the podcast

Archaeological Gazetteer of Iran
The Pourdavoud Institute continues to develop the *Archaeological Gazetteer of Iran*, a freely accessible digital research resource documenting archaeological sites across the Iranian world. The project encompasses major monuments as well as lesser-known, recently discovered, and endangered sites, covering periods from the Neolithic through the Islamic era. With 148 sites catalogued at the time of the Institute's report, the Gazetteer continues to expand through new entries, revisions, and scholarly collaboration, contributing to the documentation and preservation of Iran's archaeological heritage.
Explore the Archaeological Gazetteer of Iran

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Editorial Notes

The **deadline** for the **next Newsletter** will be **April 10, 2027.**

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