SAMUEL JORDAN CENTER IN THE NEWS

In the past academic year a number of visitors and speakers came to the Samuel Jordan Center for Persian Studies and Culture. We were fortunate to host authors, filmmakers, scholars and musicians who deal with the Iranian world at our center. We were also busy with new publications which the center now directly oversees, as well as collaborations with other universities and foundations. New graduate students have also come to UC Irvine to study the Iranian world in various disciplines such as comparative literature, film, and history. In the five years that the Center has been active Iranian Studies has grown tremendously, with students and faculty involved in research and study about Iran and beyond.

LECTURES, CONFERENCES and WORKSHOPS

LECTURES

What did the Greeks know about the capital cities of the Persian Empire? An Archeologist's Perspective from the Homeland.

Ali Mousavi

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LECTURES Continued

On February 2, 2010 Dr. Ali Mousavi, Curator of Ancient Iran & Near East at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art spoke on the major capitals of the Achaemenid Empire, namely those of Babylon, Ecbatana, Susa and Persepolis.

An Encounter and Dialogue with Ostad Hossein Alizadeh

On February 11, 2010 the Center hosted Hossein Alizadeh who is considered one of the most important figures in contemporary Persian music. Dr. Hossein Omumi chaired the discussion. This program was followed by a concert at the Barclay Theater with an unforgettable night of Classical Persian music.

RAMIN JAHANBEGLOO: Satyagraha in Iran: Is Nonviolence Possible?

On February 19, 2010 the Center hosted one of the important Contemporary Iranian philosophers and intellectuals, Ramin Jahanbegloo. Dr. Jahanbegloo spoke on the idea of non-violence and the lessons India could teach the Iranian world in terms of diversity and peace.

Politics of Development of the Steel Industry in Iran

On April 8, 2010 Masoud Rafi spoke about the history and development of the Steel Industry in Iran, as part of the Center’s research project on the history of science, industry, and forms of knowledge production in Iran.

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On May 20, 2010 the Center in collaboration with the Center for Research on International and Global Studies, the Center for the Study of Democracy, Department of Political Science and the International Center for Writing and Translation hosted Roger Cohen, New York Times foreign correspondent and the last foreign journalist to leave Iran after the June 2010 Presidential elections.

On June 2 and 3, 2010 the Center hosted P. Oktor Skjærvø, Agha Khan Professor in Iranian Studies at Harvard University for two lectures. He spoke on the history of scripts used in ancient Iran and the decipherment of the cuneiform script. This was followed by another talk on the Zoroastrian priest Kerdir who lived in the third century CE and made a heavenly journey.
CONFERENCES & WORKSHOPS

The Alborz School


Iran After the June 12, 2009 Elections

On October 28, the Center convened a panel discussion on the recent presidential elections in Iran. The panel was co-sponsored by the Center for the Study of Democracy and the Center for Research on International and Global Studies. The speakers included: Touraj Daryaee, Associate Director, Samuel Jordan Center for Persian Studies, UC Irvine, “The Green Movement in Iran: Aims and Aspirations;” Mateo Farzaneh, History Department, UC Santa Barbara “Khuzestan: Mousavi, Bread, and Sand Storms;” and Fariba Taghavi, Political Science, CSU Long Beach, “The Rise of the neo-conservatives and the Eclipse of the Old Guard in Iran.” The panel was chaired by Deborah Avant, Director of the Center for Research on International and Global Studies and the discussant Bernard Grofman, Director, Center for the Study of Democracy at UC Irvine.
Women in Iran: Continuities and Discontinuities of Context

On January 15, 2010 the Center hosted Hasan Yousefi Eshkevari and a group of scholars to discuss the lives and history of women in Iran. The speakers included: Touraj Daryaee, Howard Baskerville Professor of Iranian History & Associate Director of Samuel Jordan Center for Persian Studies and Culture, UCI, “Women in Pre-Islamic Iranian History;” Hasan Yousefi Eshkevari, “Women’s Rights in Islam;” Nayereh Tohidi, Professor of Women’s Studies, California State University, Northridge & Research Associate at the Center for Near Eastern Studies at UCLA, “Muslim Feminism and Democracy Movement in Iran;” and Nasrin Rahimieh, Masheh Chair and Director of Samuel Jordan Center for Persian Studies and Culture & Professor of Comparative Literature, “Women in Literary and Cultural Production.”

Workshop on History and Culture of Late antique Iran

Parvaneh Pourshariati lecturing

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On February 26, 2010 with the generosity of Dr. Keyvan Safdari and Haleh Emrani a workshop was convened on the idea of Late Antiquity and Iran. The invited guest was Parvaneh Pourshariati of Ohio State University. Other participants included: Touraj Daryaee (UC Irvine); Michael Morony (UCLA); Thomas Sizgorich (UC Irvine); and Jennifer Rose (Stanford University). These talks were followed by a Round-Table Discussion which included Dr. Gregory Areshian (UCLA); Kevin Van Bladel (USC), and Khodadad Rezakhani (UCLA) among others who were present.

The Islamic Revolution and Academic Research: Three Generations of American Ethnographic Work

On May 10, 2010 the Center in collaboration with University of California, Irvine’s Center for Ethnography, headed by George Marcus (Anthropology, UCI), organized a one-day workshop to discuss three generations of American ethnographic work before and after the revolution in Iran. The participants included: Michael Fischer (MIT), Margaret Mills (OSU), Fereydoun Safizadeh (Boston University), Shahram Khosravi (Stockholm University), Arlene Dallalfar (Lesley College), Narges Erami (Yale University), Taran Hemami (CA College of the Arts), Mazyar Lotfalian (UCI), Philip Grant (UCI), Janet Alexanian (UCI), Orkideh Behrouzan (MIT), and Talieh Rohani (MIT). The goal was to study how strategic knowledge emerged as a result of the severing of diplomatic ties between Iran and the United States.

FILM SCREENINGS

There were several film screenings including Abbas Kiarostami’s film Ten on December 3, 2009 in the series entitled Cinema Across Borders. Shirin Neshat was present in a dialogue with Simon Leung about her projects, including her latest film, Women without Men on April 5, 2010. As a special guest, Rakhshan Bani-Etemad was present and a number of her films including two documentaries on women’s shelter in Tehran and another on the June Presidential elections in Iran and a also her film entitled Under the Skin of the City were screened on May 6 & 7, 2010. She also engaged in a discussion about her films. The Farhang Foundation along with the UC Irvine Film and Video Center generously supported this event.. Finally on May 22, 2010 Hamid Rahmanian’s The Glass House about Iran’s underclass in Tehran was screened.
THE PERSIAN CENTER
AT THE NEW HUMANITIES GATEWAY BUILDING

The Center for Persian Studies moved to its new home at the Humanities Gateway Building and is now at its permanent home at a wing of the building. The centre has twelve offices, a conference room, a library and lounge along with other facilities. Several rooms in the building now have names associated with Iran and have been generously supported by donors and supporters of the Center. These include the library (Lida Jahangiri), the screening room (McCormick), a colloquium room (Rollestone) and a state-of-the-art auditorium (Alborz), jointly supported by Dr. Fariborz Maseeh and Alborz alumni.

OSTAD HOSSEIN OMUMI AND PERSIAN MUSIC AT UC IRVINE

UC Irvine is the only university in the United States to have a chair in Persian music which is held by the master, Dr. Hossein Omumi. He performs twice a year at the Barclay Theater for the lovers of Persian music. On February 11, 2010 he invited Hossein Alizadeh who engaged in a dialogue about Classical Persian music in the twentieth century and where it is headed. The next night the virtuoso performed at the Barclay to an amazing night of Persian Classical music. Finally, on May 10, 2010 Bahram Osquezadeh, from UC Santa Barbara presented a talk entitled: “Varying intervals do not equal varying identity: A comprehensive survey of Iran's urban musical intonation.”
BOOK SIGNING

The author Angella Nazarian was present at the university for a book signing and dialogue with Dr. Nasrin Rahimieh on February 18, 2010. Her book entitled *Life as a Visitor* chronicles the life of her family and immigration from Iran to the United States, along with wonderful drawings and photographic images. Angella Nazarian is also a regular contributor to the *Huffington Post*.

CENTER’S NEW ASSOCIATE: DR. MAZYAR LOTFALIAN

We are particularly fortunate to have a research associate at the Center for Persian Studies at UC Irvine. Mazyar Lotfalian, an anthropologist by training, studies the development professional cultures in Iran as well as culture and politics in the diaspora. He is currently working on providing comprehensive information through our interactive website on Iranian documentaries. We would like to welcome him to the centre. As part of his research on Muslim scientists and technology, he organized a number of seminars and talks, including Masoud Rafi’s “Politics of Development of the Steel Industry in Iran.”
ALI ASGHAR PAYRAVI FELLOWSHIP IN PRE-ISLAMIC IRANIAN HISTORY AND CULTURE

We are pleased to announce the Ali Asghar Payravi Fellowship, funded by the generous support of the Farhad family. This fellowship is for two international students pursuing doctoral research in pre-Islamic Iranian history and culture at UC Irvine. The fellowship will be administered by the Samuel Jordan Center for Persian Studies and Culture. The first recipient of the Ali Asghar Payravi Fellowship is Mr. Hamid Reza Yeganehshakib who is working on the environmental history of ancient Iran.

CENTER PUBLICATIONS

Dr. Nasrin Rahimieh translated and introduced the late Taghi Modarressi’s novel, *The Virgin of Solitude*, Syracuse University Press. She edited the Persian edition which was also published with an introduction by Anne Tyler, Modarressi’s wife.

Dr. Rahimieh was also one of the guest editors of *Radical History* which had an issue dedicated to the Iranian Revolution after thirty years. She along with Dominic Parviz Brookshaw also published an edited volume on the great female poet and filmmaker of 20th century Iran, Forough Farrokhzad.

The book was the proceedings of a conference held in the United Kingdom and is entitled: *Forough Farrokhzad: Iconic Woman and Feminine Pioneer of New Persian Poetry*, IB Tauris, 2010.

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In collaboration with Iraj Afshar, Daryaee published a new book on the correspondences of S.H. Taqizadeh and W.B. Henning. These letters are between 1933 and 1966 and provide an insight into the world of Iranian Studies.

Dr. Touraj Daryaee published a new book on late antique Iran entitled: *Sasanian Persia: The Rise and Fall of an Empire*, IB Tauris, London, 2009. It was awarded a prize by the British Society for Middle Eastern Studies (BRISMES) as one of the best books in the field of Middle East Studies in the UK for 2009.

Sasanian Persia wins BRISMES Prize

Under the auspices of the Samuel Jordan Center for Persian Studies & Culture and the Afshar Publishers, and in collaboration with Dr. Kho-dadad Rezakhani (London School of Economics) and Matteo Compareti (Venice), Dr. Daryaee published a booklet on the importance of the Iranians on the Silk Road as part of the lecture he gave at the Bowers Museum in Santa Ana during the Silk Road exhibit at that museum.
As part of Sasanika: Late Antique Near East Project two volumes were published under the auspices of the Samuel Jordan Center for Persian Studies & Culture. The first volume was by M. Morony (UCLA) and the second volume by T. Greenwood (St Andrew) on the Sasanians in the context of late antique history and the importance of Armenian sources for the period.

**COLLABORATION WITH UCLA: THE SHAHNAMEH: IRAN’S NATIONAL EPIC**

On May 25th and 26th 2010 an international conference on the *Shahnameh* was held at UCLA in collaboration with the Samuel Jordan Center for Persian Studies & Culture. Scholars from Iran and the US convened to discuss the significant epic narrative, manuscripts and its study.
Touraj Daryaee delivered the First Government Fellowship Lectures in Mumbai, India in August 2010. The three talks were as follows: 1) The King is Dead! Long Live Many Kings and Queens: The Sasanian Empire in Chaos; 2) War, Blood and Conquest: The Arab Muslim Takeover of Fars; and 3) Iranian Resistance and Remembrance: Zoroastrian Apocalypse as History.

Through a memorandum of agreement the Samuel Jordan Center for Persian Studies and the Cama Oriental Institute will collaborate in projects dealing with Zoroastrianism and Zoroastrian Studies.

Through a generous grant from the Farhang Foundation the Samuel Jordan Center for Persian Studies at UC Irvine will invite a leading scholar or artist in the field of Iranian Studies and culture to present several lectures. The first invitee is Dr. Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis of the British Museum who will lecture in May 2011 on the Arsacid and the Sasanian world and also its reception in the modern period.

Mr. Mehmet Alici is a Ph.D. candidate at the Faculty of Theology, Istanbul University, Turkey, focusing on Zoroastrian Studies. He is spending this academic year at the Center to further his study in Zoroastrianism and interact with the associated faculty. He will be the first person in Turkey to finish a dissertation on the religions of ancient Iran.

In March 2011 the Center will welcome Maria Blaim, a PhD student, from Germany awarded a Fulbright Fellowship to consult with Dr. Rahimieh on the subject of “Constructing Identities in Iranian American Self-Writing”. The Fulbright Fellowship will support Ms. Blaim for six months of research at the Samuel Jordan Center beginning on March 2, 2011.