

2022-24

ANNUAL
REPORT



UCI Jordan Center for
Persian Studies



مرکز مطالعات ایران شناسی دکتر سمویل جردن



Moghadam House and Museum, Tehran, Iran. Photo by Ebrahim Safi.

Message from the Director

It is my pleasure to serve as the Director of the Dr. Samuel M. Jordan Center for Persian Studies & Culture for the 2022–2024 academic years. In the post-COVID era, we have maintained nearly the same level of programming, but the introduction of Zoom talks and events has opened new avenues for connecting with people around the world. We have continued our lectures, seminars, conferences, and movie screenings, as well as art exhibits. Scholars from Iran, Europe, and the U.S. have visited the center to share their knowledge with the university and the Iranian community in Orange County and Southern California. We also hosted several important international conferences on history and literature. I am pleased that the center continues to publish book series in both English and Persian, as well as produce CDs and other media. For the coming year, I hope to help the Jordan Center for Persian Studies & Culture continue to thrive and contribute to a better understanding of the history and culture of the Iranian world. Our mission is to explore the culture of one of the world's oldest civilizations and understand how it has evolved throughout history.



Touraj Daryaei, Director

Staff

Touraj Daryaei

Director, Jordan Center for Persian Studies & Culture
Maseeh Chair in Persian Studies & Culture

Amanda Jeanne Swain

Executive Director, Humanities Center

Arya Moknat

Program Manager, Jordan Center for Persian Studies & Culture

AFFILIATED FACULTY

Houri Berberian, Meghrouni Family Presidential Chair in
Armenian Studies, School of Humanities

Matthew Philip Canepa, Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Presidential
Chair in Art History and Archaeology of Ancient Iran

Carlo G. Cereti, Assistant Professor of Classics
Ferdowsi Presidential Chair in Zoroastrian Studies

Mark Levine, Professor of Modern Middle Eastern History
Hossein Omoumi, Maseeh Chair in Persian Performing Arts
Department of Music

Alka Patel, Professor of Art History

Nasrin Rahimieh, Howard Baskerville Professor of Humanities
Department of Comparative Literature

Catherine Sameh, Associate Professor of Gender and Sexuality Studies

Soorosh Sorooshian, Distinguished Professor of Civil and
Environmental Engineering

Roxanne Varzi, Professor of Anthropology

VISITING SCHOLARS AND ARTISTS

Mahmoud Omidshahar, Scholar-in-residence

Noureddin Zarrinkelk, Artist-in-residence

Elham Gordi, Poet-in-residence

Shahba Shahrukhi, Scholar-in-residence

Sholeh Wolpé, Artist-in-residence

Ali Hüseyin Toğay, Scholar-in-residence

GRAPHIC DESIGNER

Kourosh Beigpour, Graphic Designer

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Elham Salehi

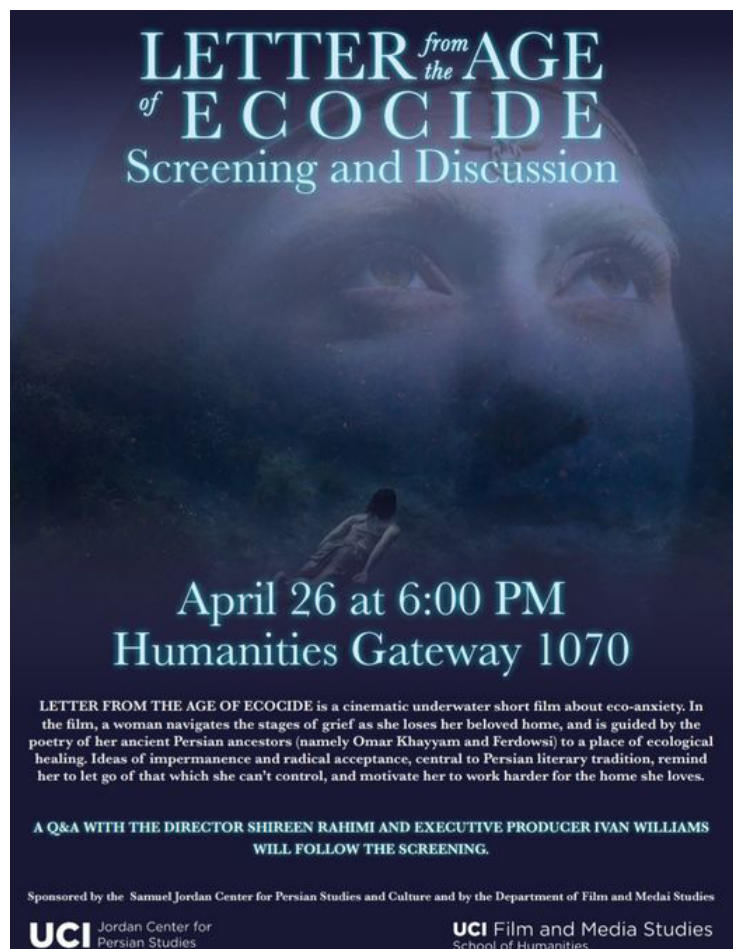
Ebi Safi

VOLUNTEERS

Erisa Taghizadeh

Amir Ali Ardakanian

Campuswide Collaborations



The Jordan Center for Persian Studies, in collaboration with the Department of Film and Media Studies, screened *Letter from the Age of Ecocide*, a film about the sea and the environment. The director, Dr. Shireen Rahimi, discussed the underwater world and incorporated poetic verses from Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh* as well as works by Omar Khayyam. The screening was followed by a question-and-answer session and a reception with Dr. Rahimi in attendance.



2022

(Conference) **The Arsacids: Contextualizing Iranian History** (February/March 2022)

(Talk) **Sickness of the revolution: loss, fetishism, and the impossibility of politics**, by Milad Odabaei (March 2022)

(Talk) **Tehran monoxide**, a project by Negar Farajiani (April 2022)

(Symposium) **Fascination with Zarathustra: Eastern and Western Perspectives** (May 2022)

(Talk) **Some Considerations on the Downfall of the Achaemenid-Persian Empire**, by Prof. Robert Rollinger (May 2022)

(Symposium) **The Iranian Constitutional Revolution**, by Javad Tabatabai, (May 14, 2022)

(Talk) A Persian lecture by Dr. Seyyed Javad Tabatabai on **Henry Corbin and Iranian culture** (June 14)

(Talk) **The Iran Nuclear Deal 2.0: Old Wine in New Bottles or Second Time a Charm?** By Manoutchehr Eskandari-Qajar, May 26, 2022)

(Talk) **The Battle for History: Politics Changes the Past. The Study of History in Central Asia after the fall of the USSR to the present**, by Lukman Boymatov, (June 7, 2022)

(Talk) **lecture on Iranian architecture and music**, by Hossein Omoumi (July 27)

(Book signing) **In celebration of Mrs. Homa Sarshar's two volume memoirs** (September 18, 2022)

(Graduate - Conference) **Interpreting Afghanistan** (October 6-8, 2022)

(Pop-up Round table) **Protest and Repression in Hong Kong and Iran: 2019 to 2022** (October 20, 2022)

(Talk) **Iranian princesses in the age of the Successors** (323-281 BCE), by Krzysztof Nawotka (November 2022)

(Talk) **Daughters of Smoke and Fire**, by Ava Homa (November 17, 2022)

2023

(Docunight) Screening of **The Cat**, by Mary Apick (Feb 16)

(Conference) **International Conference Sassanian** (March 26-8, 2023)

(Conference) **Mithraism: Mithra, Lord of all Lands** (April 17, 2023)

(Docunight) **Yazdgerd's castle** (April 7)

(Talk) Ramin Jahanbagloo on **Iranian revolution and non-violence** (May 2022)

(Commemoration) **Javad Tabatabai** (April 2023)

(Book Launch) **A Narrative of Endurance** by Homa Sarshar (April 2023)

Elika Palenzona-Djalili entitled "Henri Moser's Orient The collection of Persian lacquer objects in Bern, Switzerland" (May 2023)

(Talk) **Abacus of Loss** by Shole Wolpe, (October 2023)

(Int. Conference) **Farhad Ebrahimi joint conference with University of Innsbruck**, Vienna (November 2023)

2024

(Talk) Canepa, **Persian Cultures of Power**, (January 2024)

(Documentary/talk) **Alborz**, (Feb 2024)

(Talk) Milani, **Sarve Irani**, (February 2024)

(Talk) **Chehabi**, (February 2024)

(Talk) Rustam Shukorov on **Byzantine ideas of Persi**, (February 2024)

(Talk) Cereti, **inaugural lecture**, (March 2024)

(Talk) Amir Pourjavadi, **Music Making in Iran from the Fifteenth to the Early Twentieth Centur**, (April, 2024)

(Book Launch) **Mohassess: A Retrospective**, by Dr. Ari Babaknia, and an essay by Dr. Ali Banuazizi, (April 2024)

(Conference) **New Horizons in Premodern Iranian Studies Conference**, (May 2024)

(Talk) **Reformulation of the Ideals of Heroism in Bahram Beyzaie's Early Plays**, (May 2024)

(Talk) **Herodotus, the "Persian Wars" and our view on the past: Problems and Perspectives**, (June 2024)

(Int. Conference) **Naval Connectivity around the Iranian Worlds: Melammu Symposia 17**, (June, 2024)

(Talk) **The Ritual of Cutting Hair in Mourning Practices in Persian Literature**, (October 2024)

(Talk) **The Iconography of the Tetramorph in Spanish and Persian Manuscripts**, (October 2024)

(Talk) **Transgressive Icon of Modern Iran: Presenting the First Critical Edition of Forugh Farrokhzad's Collected Poems** (October, 2024)

(Talk/Exhibition) **To See and Be Seen**, (October 2024)

(Documentary) **The Dawn Is Too Far: Stories of Iranian-American Life**, (November 2024)

(Talk) **The Mirror of the Sun: an Introduction to Rumi's Encounter with Shams**, by Kourosh Beigpour, (December 2024)

Campuswide Collaborations



The Jordan Center for Persian Studies & Culture collaborates with various departments and centers within the School of Humanities and across the UC Irvine campus. We were pleased to co-present Letter from the Age of Ecocide, a documentary by Sheerin Rahimi, in partnership with the UCI Department of History.

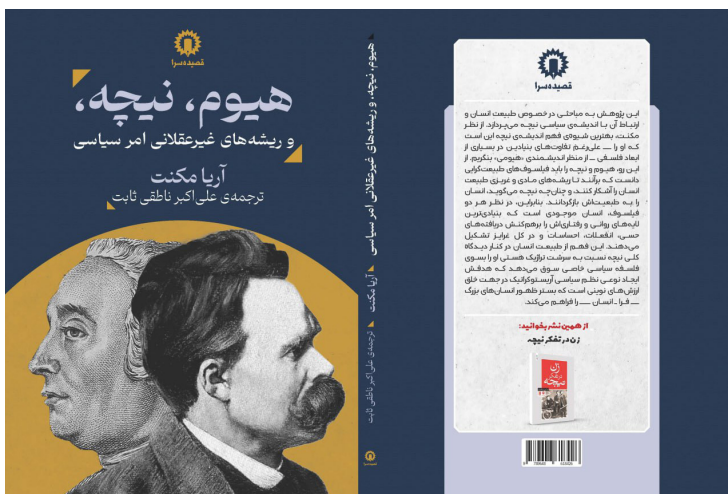


New Staff



ARYA MOKNAT

The Jordan Center for Persian Studies is pleased to welcome Dr. Arya Moknat as the new program manager. Dr. Moknat has been a scholar in residence at the Jordan Center since 2018, where he has taught courses such as Political History of Modern Iran, Introduction to Political Philosophy, and The Philosophy of Friedrich Nietzsche. His new book, *Hume, Nietzsche, and the Irrational Roots of the Political*, was recently published in Iran by Ghasidesarah publishing.



Graduate Student Spotlight



MARK GRADONI

Mark Gradoni studies the Middle East and Central Asia in Late Antiquity, with a focus on Sasanian Ērānšahr and the broader Iranian cultural sphere. His research integrates art historical and archaeological methodologies with traditional historical analysis of written sources, creating a more comprehensive approach to the economic and social history of the ancient Iranian world. His forthcoming article, titled *Found in Egypt: A Sasanian Hoard from the 7th Century*, will soon be published.

Mark holds an M.A. in the Humanities from Hood College, where he studied the art history and archaeology of the ancient Near East, along with dual B.A.s in Ancient Studies and History from the University of Maryland, Baltimore County. He is also a trained archaeologist and has conducted survey and excavation fieldwork on projects in the eastern United States, Romania, and Jordan.

Faculty Spotlight



CARLO G. CERETI

Beginning this academic year (2022), Carlo Giovanni Cereti joins the UCI School of Humanities as the Ferdowsi Presidential Chair in Zoroastrian Studies—the first position of its kind in the United States. This endowed chair enables Cereti to teach courses on Zoroastrianism, ancient Iranian languages, and cultures, as well as train scholars in the field of Zoroastrian studies.

The chair is supported by the Maseeh Foundation, founded by Fariborz Maseeh, Ph.D., an Iranian American businessman and pioneer in the field of microelectromechanical systems.

The chair is named in honor of Ferdowsi, the 10th-century Persian poet credited with reviving the Persian language and history through his composition of the *Shahnameh* (Book of Kings), the national epic of Greater Iran.

“Carlo Cereti’s deep expertise in Zoroastrianism and Iranian culture spans from antiquity to the present day. He has the unique ability to connect multiple graduate, undergraduate, and research initiatives across all periods in UCI’s School of Humanities,” said Matthew P. Canepa, professor and Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Presidential Chair in Art History and Archaeology of Ancient Iran. “We are overjoyed to welcome him as a colleague.”

Cereti’s research has primarily focused on the Zoroastrian religion. His first book examined a Zoroastrian Middle Persian apocalyptic text composed in late antiquity. He is also working on an archaeological project in Iraqi Kurdistan, where he has recovered missing stone blocks from an important Sasanian rock relief at Paikuli, which belonged to King Narseh of the third and early fourth century CE. Before coming to UCI, Cereti was a professor of Iranian studies at La Sapienza University in Rome.

“Professor Carlo Cereti is one of the most renowned scholars of Zoroastrianism and ancient Iranian studies,” said Touraj Daryaee, director of UCI’s Samuel M. Jordan Center for Persian Studies & Culture and holder of the Maseeh Endowed Chair in Persian Studies & Culture. “He brings several decades of teaching and research experience, and it is a great honor to be his colleague and work with him.” Currently, Professor Cereti teaches courses on Indo-Iranian mythology and ancient Iranian religions in the Department of Classics.

Faculty Spotlight



NEDA SAHRANAVARD

Dr. Neda Sahranavard is the Assistant Director and Lecturer of the Program in Global Languages & Communication at the University of California, Irvine, where she teaches Academic English and Persian courses. With over 20 years of experience working with multilingual students in both the United States and Iran, Dr. Sahranavard has developed a deep understanding of the unique needs of diverse learners.

She is the recipient of the 2020 TESOL Teacher of the Year Award and CATESOL's Teacher Recognition Award. Dr. Sahranavard is dedicated to her students and believes that responsive and supportive communication is key pillars of effective teaching and learning.

In addition to her teaching, Dr. Sahranavard is passionate about professional development and volunteers her time and expertise to support institutions in her field. Her research interests focus on student-oriented instruction, intercultural communication, and world Englishes.

Currently, Dr. Sahranavard is conducting research on the use of English signs in everyday life in Iran, examining both language and store signage. She is continuing this exciting work during her travels to Iran.



Recent Publication:

- “Transnationalism in the Linguistic Landscape: The Case of Tehran and Tehrangeles” (Co-Author with Professor Jerry Lee; Forthcoming)
- “Reconceptualizing the Teaching of Academic Reading/ Vocabulary: Reader-Response Theory as a Framework to Empower Multilingual Repertoires” (Co-Author with Dr. Qian Du; Forthcoming)
- “Daily Iranian Discourse: Persian, English, or Persianized English?” (Forthcoming)
- “Re-Imagining ITA Training: Promoting Student-Scholars’ Agency” (Co-Author with Dr. Qian Du; 2022)
- “The Persianization of English in Multilingual Tehran” (Co-Author with Professor Jerry Lee; 2020)
- “Teaching Listening and Speaking: Using Pictures to Promote Agency” (2020)
- “Reading in English as a Global Language for Academic Purposes” (Co-Author with Dr. Sarah Sok, et al.; 2020)
- “Spotlight on the 2020 TESOL Teacher of the Year: Neda Sahranavard” (2020)
- “With or Without Translingualism” (Co-Author with Professor Jerry Lee, et al.; 2020)

Fourteenth Biennial Iranian Studies Conference



The Fourteenth Biennial Iranian Studies Conference was held in Mexico City over four days, bringing together scholars from around the world to discuss various aspects of Iranian history and civilization. In addition to faculty and graduate students from UCI, the Center for Persian Studies was an institutional sponsor of the conference.

Dr. Rahimieh, Dr. Daryaei, and graduate student Eleana de Giuseppe presented papers on behalf of UCI's Jordan Center for Persian Studies & Culture.



Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Symposium on Persian Language and Literature



On Monday, May 2, 2022, the third Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Symposium on Ancient Iranian History and Civilization, titled "Fascination with Zarathustra: Eastern and Western Perspectives," took place. We are deeply grateful to Dr. Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali and the Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute for their continuous support of the Jordan Center for Persian Studies & Culture, which made this event possible.

The symposium was organized by Arya Moknat and Touraj Daryaei from UCI. Antonio Panaino from the University of Bologna delivered the keynote speech, 'Zoroaster 'the Astrologer': Genesis and Development of a Cultural Myth. His presentation explored the evolution of Zarathustra's cultural significance and the development of his myth in both Eastern and Western contexts.

In addition to Panaino, several distinguished scholars presented their research at the symposium, including Soheila Saremi, Benjamin M. Sullivan, Talinn Grigor from UC Davis, and Andrew Magnusson from the University of Central Oklahoma. Their presentations further enriched the discussions on Zarathustra's influence across cultures and historical periods, highlighting the figure's continued relevance in the study of ancient Iranian civilization.



ELAHÉ OMIDYAR MIR-DJALALI

SYMPOSIUM ON ANCIENT IRANIAN HISTORY AND CIVILIZATION

Fascination with Zarathustra

Eastern and Western Perspectives

ORGANIZERS: ARYA MOKNAT AND TOURAJ DARYAEI

MONDAY, MAY 2ND, 2022 | 9:30 AM – 6:30 PM | UCI HUMANITIES GATEWAY (HG) 1030

Sponsored by Roshan Cultural Heritage Institute | Jordan Center for Persian Studies and Culture

ROSHAN
CULTURAL HERITAGE
INSTITUTE

UCI

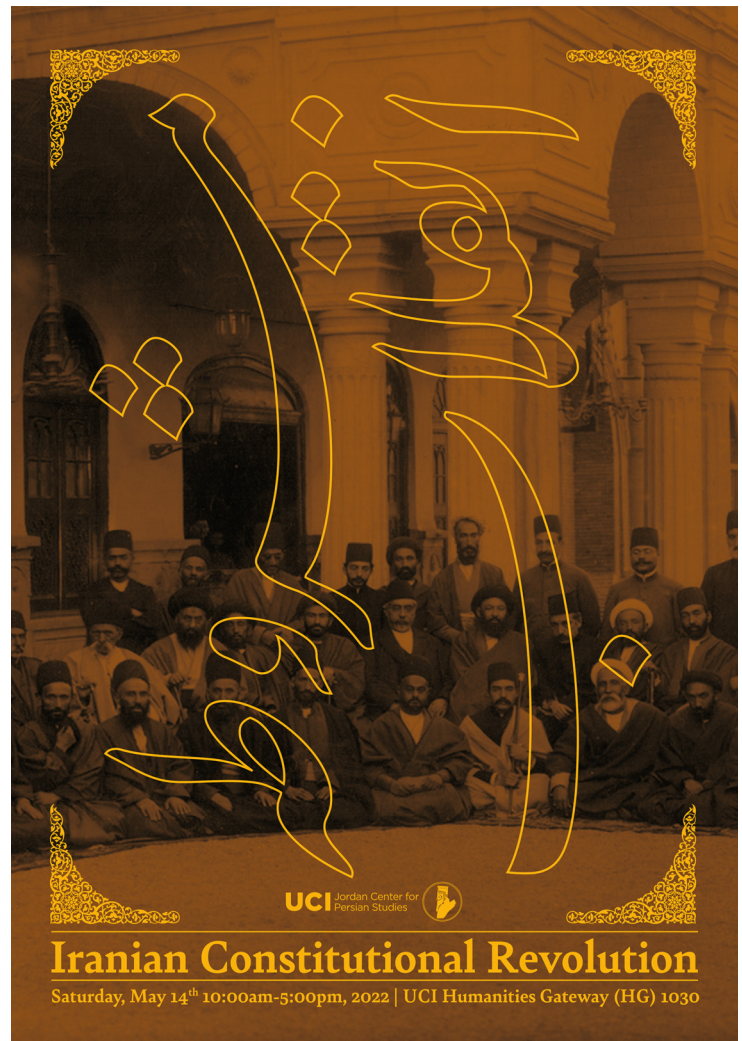
Jordan Center for
Persian Studies



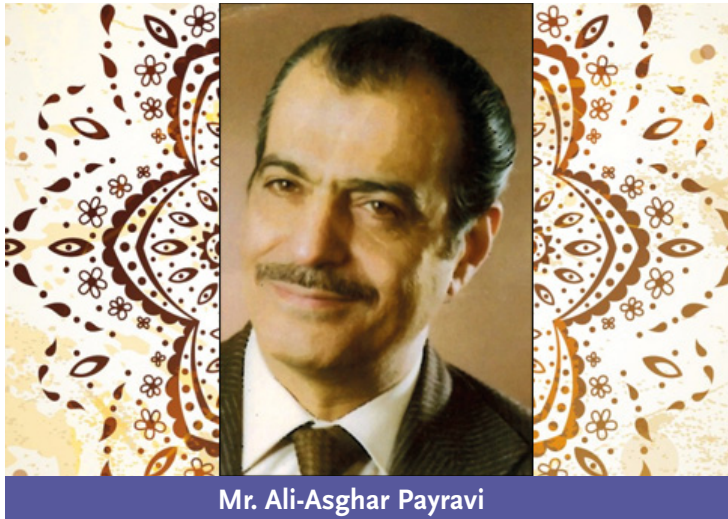
Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Symposium On Iranian History and Civilization

The Iranian Constitutional Revolution Symposium, held on Saturday, May 14, 2022, at the Center for Persian Studies, gathered scholars from multiple UC campuses and other institutions for a one-day conference focused on the 1905/6 Iranian Constitutional Revolution. Esteemed scholars, including Dana Lee, Houri Berberian, Janet Afary, Fariba Zarinebaf, Amir Hosein Pouredjavady, Ali Gheissari, and Seyyed Javad Tabatabai presented their research on topics ranging from the historical role of the press in Iran to the significance of the city of Tabriz and the involvement of Armenians in the revolution.

This academic gathering provided a rich exploration of the social, political, and philosophical aspects of the revolution. The conference culminated in a unique performance lecture that showcased musical pieces from the constitutional period, offering attendees an engaging and immersive perspective on the era. The symposium served as an important platform for the exchange of ideas and contributed to a deeper understanding of this pivotal moment in Iranian history.



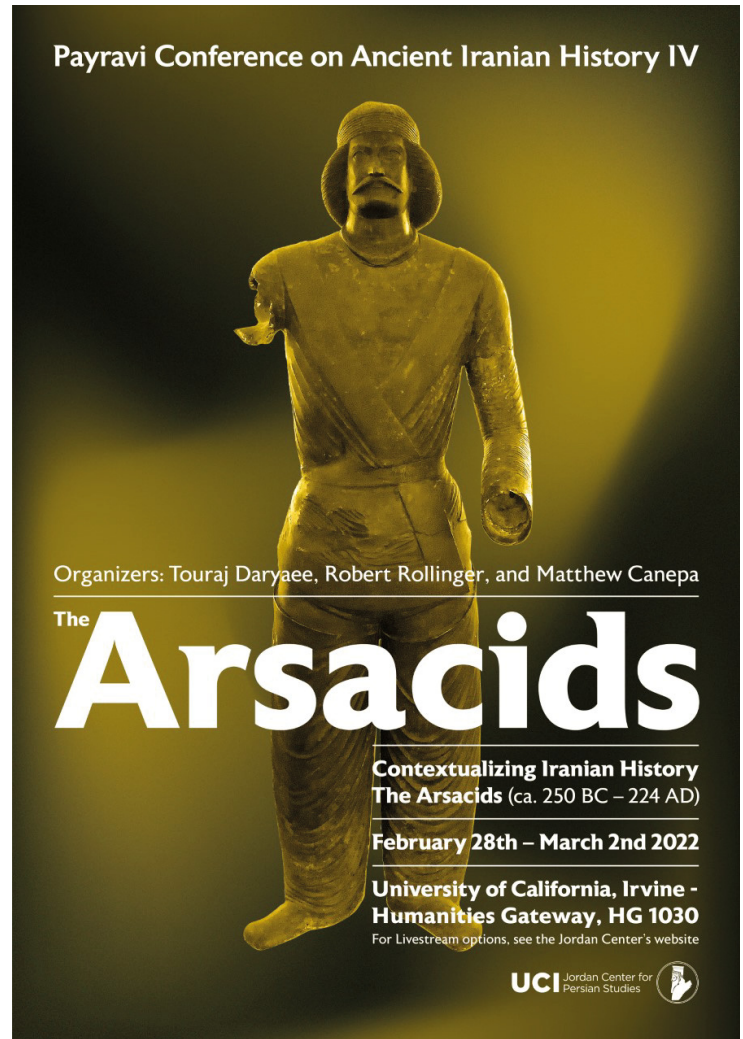
Payravi Conference on Ancient Iranian History IV



Mr. Ali-Asghar Payravi

UC Irvine's Jordan Center for Persian Studies & Culture is proud to host the first annual Payravi Conference on Ancient Iranian History in memory of the late Mr. Ali-Asghar Payravi. Mr. Payravi was a passionate enthusiast of ancient Iranian history and an avid collector of books on the subject. We are grateful to the Payravi family for their generous gift, which supports a series of five conferences and related publications.

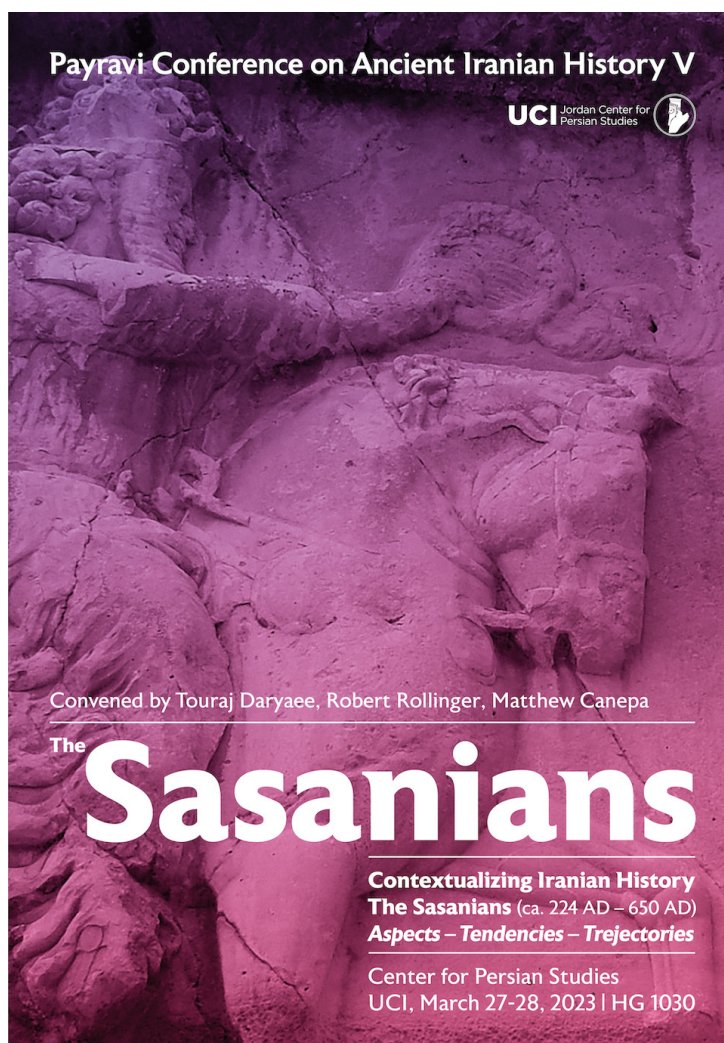
This year's all-day conference was held at UC Irvine's School of Humanities on February 28th-March 2nd, 2022, and focused on the Iranian Plateau and its Histories: From the Beginnings to the 1st Millennium BCE. The conference was organized by Dr. Touraj Daryaee (UCI), Dr. Robert Rollinger (University of Innsbruck), and Dr. Matthew Canepa (UCI).



Payravi Conference on Ancient Iranian History V

UC Irvine's Jordan Center for Persian Studies & Culture is proud to host the first annual Payravi Conference on Ancient Iranian History in memory of the late Mr. Ali-Asghar Payravi. Mr. Payravi was a passionate enthusiast of ancient Iranian history, having collected and read many books on the subject. We are grateful to the Payravi family for their generous gift, which supports five conferences and publications.

This year's all-day conference, held at UC Irvine's School of Humanities on March 27-28, 2023, focused on the Iranian Plateau and its Histories: From the Beginnings to the 1st Millennium BCE. The conference was organized by Dr. Touraj Daryaee (UCI), Dr. Robert Rollinger (University of Innsbruck), and Dr. Matthew Canepa (UCI).



Farhad Ebrahimi Conference on The Achaemenid-Persian Empire

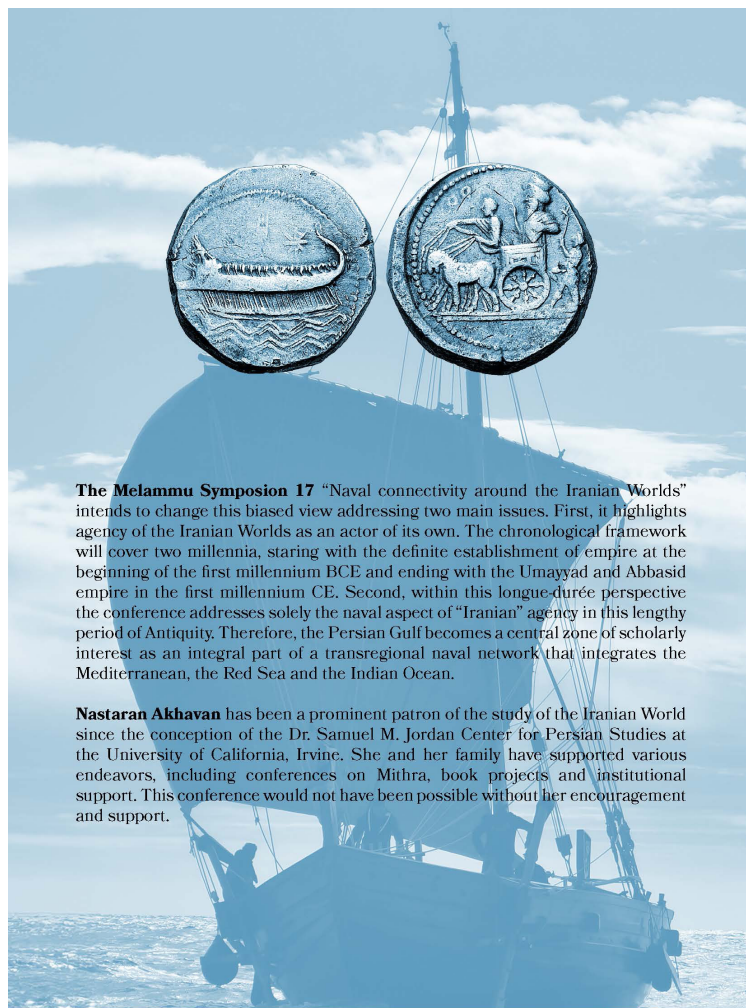


In collaboration with the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW) and the Institute for Iranian Studies in Vienna, a two-day conference on the history of the later Achaemenid Empire was held. Florian Schwartz, Robert Rollinger, and Touraj Daryaee invited scholars from across Europe to come together and discuss the latter half of Achaemenid Persian history, as well as its reception in the European imagination. This event was made possible through the generosity of Farhad Ebrahimi.



Nastaran Akhavan International Conference on Iranian Studies

Nastaran Akhavan International Conference on Iranian Studies (Melammu Symposia 17): Exploring Naval Connectivity Across the Iranian Worlds – From the Persian Gulf to the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean.



The Melammu Symposion 17 “Naval connectivity around the Iranian Worlds” intends to change this biased view addressing two main issues. First, it highlights agency of the Iranian Worlds as an actor of its own. The chronological framework will cover two millennia, starting with the definite establishment of empire at the beginning of the first millennium BCE and ending with the Umayyad and Abbasid empire in the first millennium CE. Second, within this longue-durée perspective the conference addresses solely the naval aspect of “Iranian” agency in this lengthy period of Antiquity. Therefore, the Persian Gulf becomes a central zone of scholarly interest as an integral part of a transregional naval network that integrates the Mediterranean, the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean.

Nastaran Akhavan has been a prominent patron of the study of the Iranian World since the conception of the Dr. Samuel M. Jordan Center for Persian Studies at the University of California, Irvine. She and her family have supported various endeavors, including conferences on Mithra, book projects and institutional support. This conference would not have been possible without her encouragement and support.



Nastaran Akhavan International Conference
on Iranian Studies (Melammu Symposia 17)

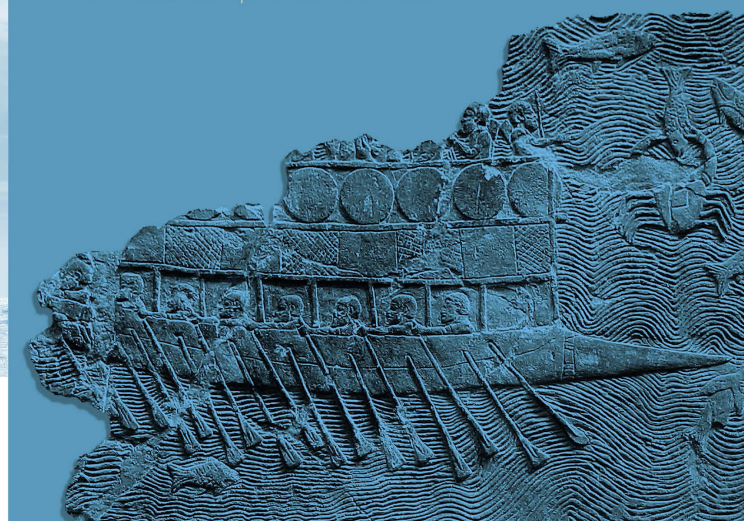
Naval Connectivity around the Iranian Worlds – From the Persian Gulf towards the Mediterranean and the Indian Ocean



Organized by Touraj Daryace (Irvine),
Robert Rollinger (Innsbruck/Wroclaw), Christoph Schäfer (Trier)

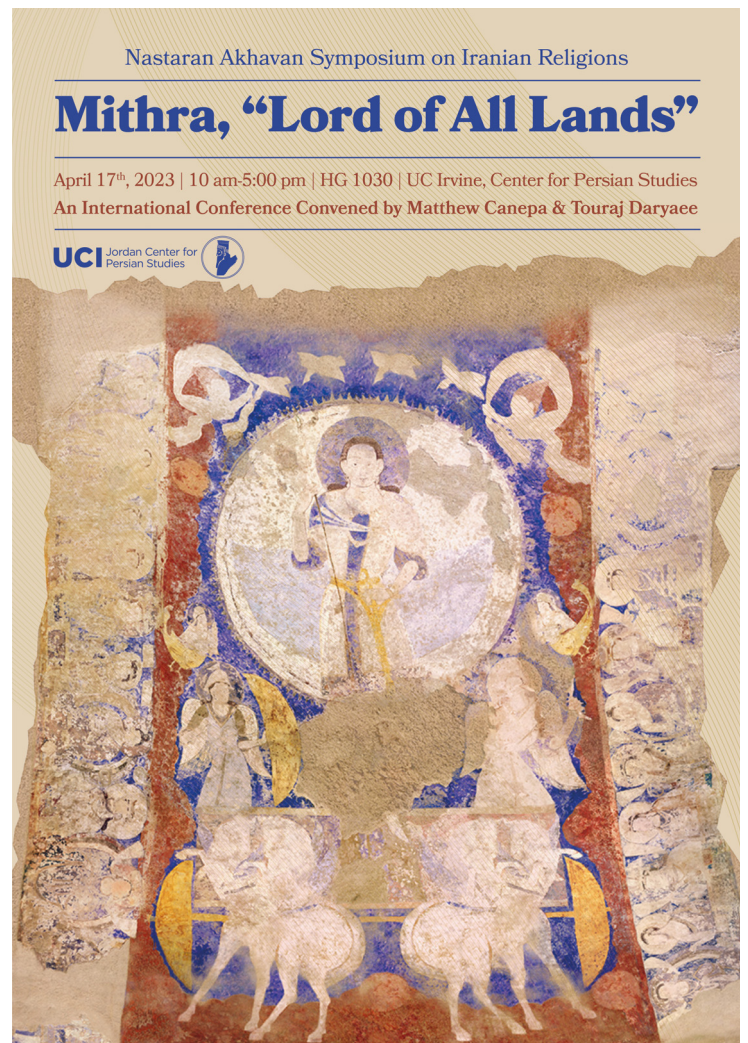
UC Irvine | June 19-20th, 2024

9AM to 5:30PM | HIB 135 - HG 1030



Nastaran Akhavan Symposium on Iranian Religions

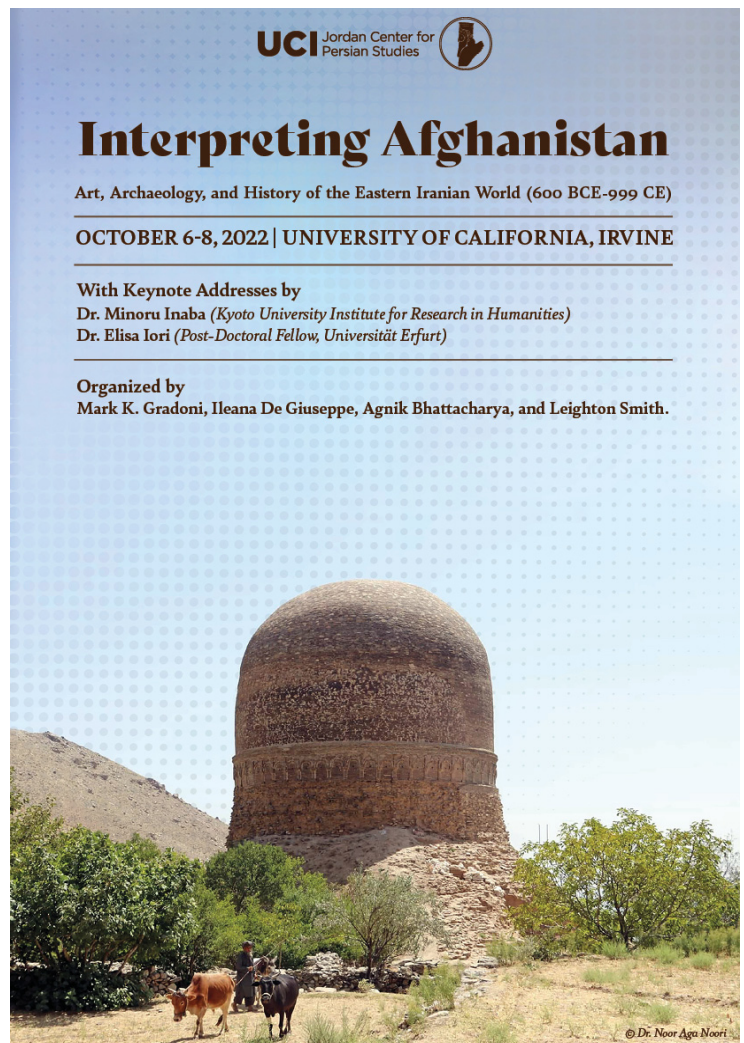
With the support of Nastaran Akhavan, the symposium on Iranian religions, Mithra, Lord of All Lands, was held on April 17, 2023. This international conference brought together scholars from Europe and the United States to explore various aspects of the god Mithra, whose significance in the Mediterranean and his role as a god of oaths and contracts are well-documented in the Avesta and Zoroastrian Pahlavi literature. Italian archaeologists and philologists presented findings from recent excavations of Mithraeums and discussed the widespread occurrence of Mithra in Iranian personal names.



Graduate Student Conference

Interpreting Afghanistan: Art, Archaeology, and History of the Eastern Iranian World (600 BCE - 999 CE)

This one-day conference explored the history of East Iran and Afghanistan and was organized by graduate students from UCI's History Department and Visual Studies program. The keynote speaker was Dr. Adam Benkato from UC Berkeley, followed by scholars from Europe—including Stefan Hartel—and graduate students from Harvard, UCSB, Vienna, and other universities worldwide. The conference explored topics such as Achaemenid relations in the East, Eastern Iranian languages, the significance of the Kushan Empire, and the circulation of Iranian motifs and objects.



Conference and Book Release Homa Sarshar

With the support of the Kimia Foundation, the Center for Persian Studies hosted a one-day program celebrating the work of Mrs. Homa Sarshar and the publication of her memoirs on Iranian life in Los Angeles. The event was led by Dr. Mandana Zandian, followed by talks from Houman Sarshar, Alireza Meybodi, and Touraj Daryaei, who discussed Mrs. Sarshar's contributions to documenting the history of Iranian lives in Los Angeles. The program concluded with a book signing and reception.



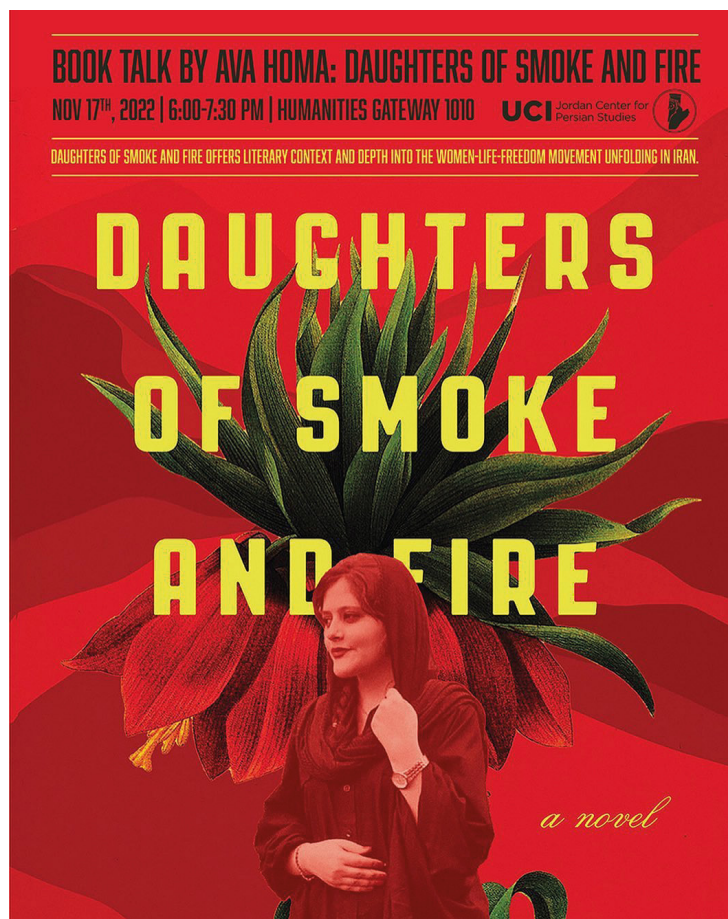
Mrs. Homa Sarshar

Book Talk by Ava Homa

The unforgettable, haunting story of a young woman's perilous fight for freedom and justice for her brother.

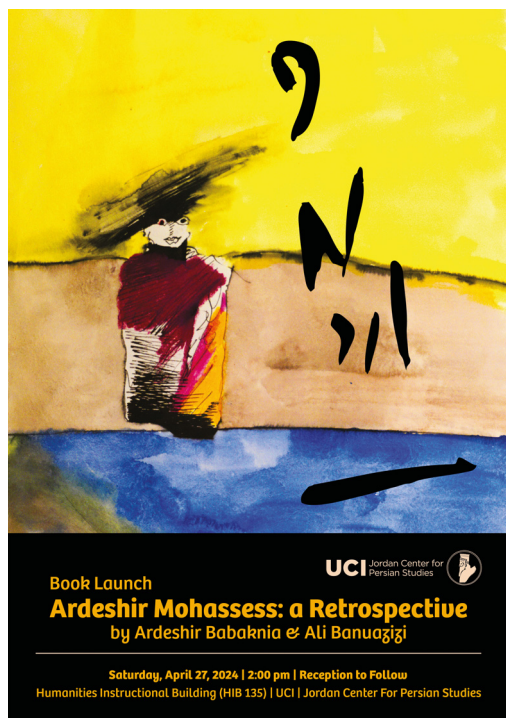
Set in Iran, this extraordinary debut novel immerses listeners in the everyday lives of the Kurds. Leila dreams of making films that bring the suppressed stories of her people to the global stage, but obstacles keep piling up. Leila's younger brother, Chia, influenced by their father's past torture, imprisonment, and his deep-seated desire for justice, begins to engage with social and political affairs. However, his activism grows increasingly risky, and one day, he disappears in Tehran. Desperate to uncover the truth about her brother's whereabouts, Leila fears the worst and starts a campaign to save him. But when she publishes Chia's writings online, she finds herself in grave danger as well.

Daughters of Smoke and Fire is an evocative portrait of the lives and challenges faced by 40 million stateless Kurds. This powerful story brilliantly explores the meaning of identity and the complex bonds of family, making it a perfect read for fans of Khaled Hosseini's *The Kite Runner* and Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie's *Half of a Yellow Sun*.



Mrs. Ava Homa

Book Launch of Ardeshir Mohassess: A Retrospective, by Ary Babaknia & Ali Banuazizi



The Samuel M. Jordan Center for Persian Studies and Culture at the University of California, Irvine, is pleased to present Ardeshir Mohassess: A Retrospective. This book showcases a generous selection of line drawings, caricatures, and paintings by Ardeshir Mohassess, the internationally renowned Iranian satirist, graphic artist, and painter. Compiled and edited by Dr. Ardeshir Babaknia and Ali Banuazizi, the volume chronicles the stages of the artist's life, spanning nearly six decades, from the early 1950s to his passing in 2008.

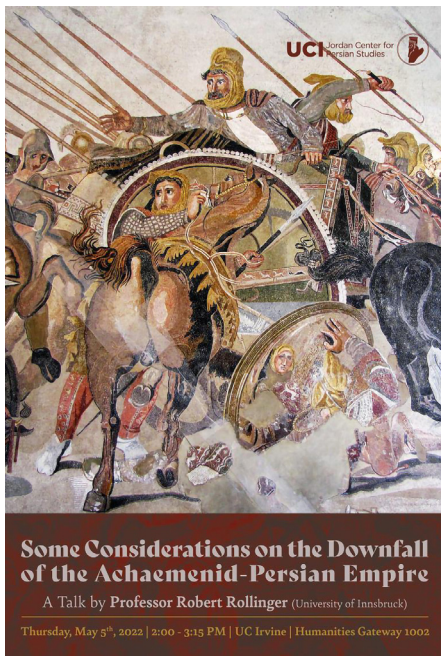
Dr. Babaknia was an admirer, loyal friend, and supporter of Ardeshir Mohassess during the artist's long and difficult years in exile in the United States. Thanks to him, we are able to share this extraordinary collection of Mohassess's works with the public. Professor Banuazizi, a distinguished scholar of Iranian culture and politics, draws from his extensive conversations, interviews, and correspondence with Mohassess to provide the introduction and brief commentary at the beginning of each thematic section. These reflections offer a probing account of Mohassess's personal life and exceptional artistic career, as well as the cultural and political contexts that shaped his critical vision as an artist.

Altogether, the book is not only a visual feast but also a penetrating, complex, and often disquieting portrayal of Iranian culture and politics in the latter half of the twentieth century.



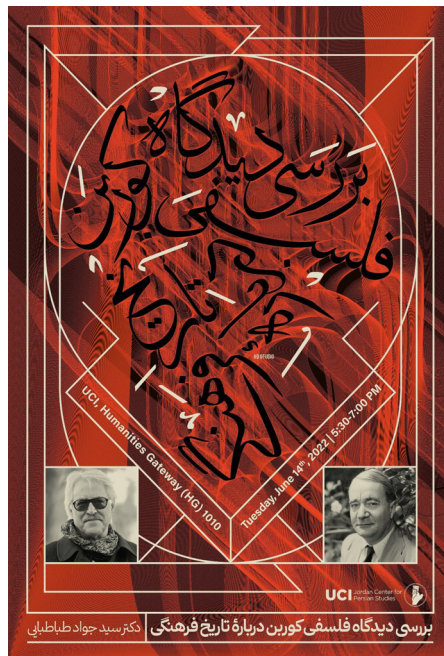
Ary Babaknia & Ali Banuazizi

Selected Lectures



SOME CONSIDERATIONS ON THE DOWNFALL OF THE ACHAEMENID-PERSIAN EMPIRE, BY PROF. ROBERT ROLLINGER (MAY 2022)

Robert Rollinger is a Professor of Ancient History and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the University of Innsbruck, Austria, where he has held the Chair for "Cultural Interactions between the Ancient Near East and the Mediterranean" in the Department of Ancient History and Ancient Near Eastern Studies since 2005. This talk, co-sponsored by the Classics Department, focused on re-reading the so-called "Greco-Persian Wars." Dr. Rollinger provided a historical analysis of the Greek historians' accounts of the wars and explored how one might offer a Persian perspective on the events that took place between the Persian Empire and several Greek city-states.



A PERSIAN LECTURE BY DR. SEYYED JAVAD TABATABAI ON HENRY CORBIN AND IRANIAN CULTURE (JUNE 2022)

Javad Tabatabai, a prominent Iranian philosopher and historian of political thought, provides critical insights into Islamic philosophy, particularly in relation to Henry Corbin. While Corbin emphasizes mysticism and Iranian Shiism, Tabatabai focuses on the development (or stagnation) of political thought in the Islamic world, especially in Iran. He critiques aspects of Islamic philosophy, particularly its limitations in fostering secular governance and intellectual modernization. At times, Tabatabai's critiques intersect with Corbin's spiritual and esoteric focus, which he sees as obstacles to the development of modern political thought.



THE IRAN NUCLEAR DEAL 2.0: OLD WINE IN NEW BOTTLES OR SECOND TIME A CHARM? BY MANOUTCHEHR ESKANDARI-QAJAR (MAY 2022)

Manoutchehr Maximilian Eskandari-Qajar (Kadjar), known as "Manou," was born in 1956 in Vienna, Austria, to a Persian father and an Austrian mother. He spent the first 20 years of his life between Austria and Iran, with regular vacations in Beirut, Lebanon, which remain some of his fondest childhood memories. He was educated at the French Lycée in Vienna and the French Lycée in Tehran (Lycée Razi). In 1975, he earned his baccalauréat in philosophy and French literature in Vienna before studying political science and international law at the University of Vienna, with the aim of pursuing a career in international law and diplomacy.

Selected Lectures



IRANIAN PRINCESSES IN THE AGE OF THE SUCCESSORS (323-281 BCE) (NOVEMBER 2022)

Krzysztof Nawotka

Navotka presented the oldest and first known image of Apama, the Iranian queen and wife of Seleucus I. The mosaic depicting her, recently discovered in Syria, offers valuable insight into her role. Apama's contributions to the shaping of Hellenism in the East were also significant.

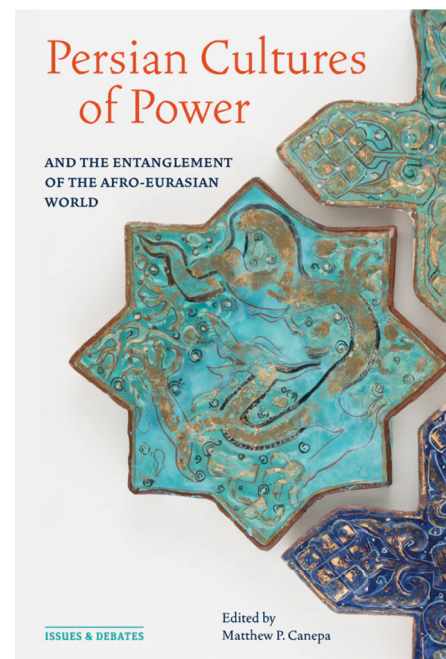
Navotka was invited to UCI for two lectures by the Department of Classics and the Persian Center for Persian Studies



HENRI MOSER'S ORIENT THE COLLECTION OF PERSIAN LACQUER OBJECTS IN BERN, SWITZERLAND (MAY 2023)

Elika Palenzona-Djalili

This talk was about the Persian art collection at the University of Bern from the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and its importance for the study of the history of the Qajar period and the Iranian world. Dr. Palenzona-Djalili gave an overview of the collection in the museum in Bern, focusing on the history of lacquer objects in Iranian art.



PERSIAN CULTURES OF POWER AND THE ENTANGLEMENT OF THE AFRO-EURASIAN WORLD (APRIL 2023)

Matthew P. Canepa

With the rise of the Achaemenid Empire (550–330 BCE), Persian institutions of kingship became the model for legitimacy, authority, and prestige across three continents. Despite enormous upheavals, Iranian visual and political cultures continued to connect an ever-wider swath of Afro-Eurasia over the next two millennia, exerting influence at key historical junctures. This book provides the first critical exploration of the role Persian cultures played in articulating the myriad ways power was expressed across Afro-Eurasia, spanning from the sixth century BCE to the nineteenth century CE.

Friends of Persian Humanities Lecture Series



Day 1: The Iconography of the Tetramorph in Spanish & Persian Manuscripts (October 1, 2024)

Day 2: The Ritual of Cutting Hair in Mourning Practices in Persian Literature (October 3, 2024)



Saeideh Ghasemi holds a Ph.D. in Persian Language and Literature from Allameh Tabataba'i University in Tehran. In 2018, she served as the director and professor at the Jeyyam Iranology Center at Nebrija University in Madrid. From 2019 to 2021, she was a visiting researcher at Complutense University of Madrid, where she focused on comparative research between Persian and Spanish literature. Currently, she is dedicated to researching Persian manuscripts in Spain and teaching classical Persian literature at the Autonomous University of Madrid.

Additionally, she curated the Persian manuscripts collection at the National Library of Spain and authored a catalog of the library's antique Persian manuscripts. Dr. Ghasemi has delivered two talks: "The Ritual of Cutting Hair in Mourning Practices in Persian Literature" and "The Iconography of the Tetramorph in Spanish and Persian Manuscripts."

Selected Lectures



ABACUS OF LOSS

Sholeh Wolpé is an Iranian-born American poet, playwright, librettist, and literary translator. She was born in Iran and lived there until the age of 13. Afterward, she spent her teenage years in Trinidad and England before settling in the United States. Currently, she resides in both Spain and California.

Her notable works include:

Keeping Time with Blue Hyacinths: Poems (2013), University of Arkansas Press
Cómo escribir una canción de amor (2017), Colección Olifante, Olifante Ediciones de Poesía
The Outsider (2018), Vol. 14 of IPSI chapbook, International Poetry Studies Institute (IPSI), Australia: Recent Work Press, University of Canberra
Abacus of Loss (2022), University of Arkansas Press, ISBN 978-1-68226-198-9

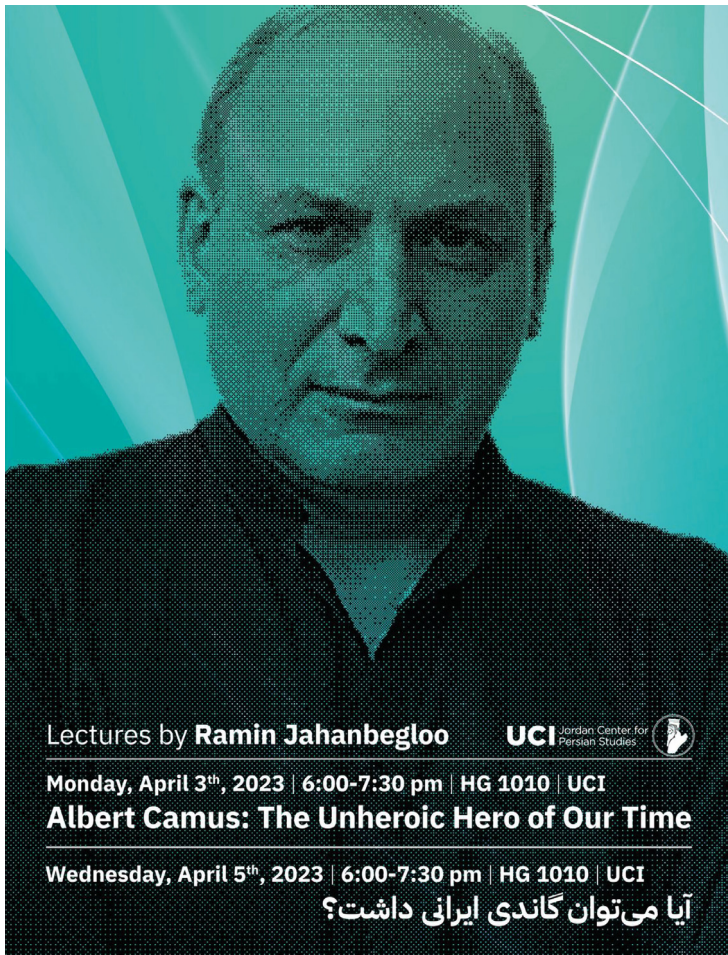


IRAN'S STRUGGLE FOR SOVEREIGNTY CHEHABI

Houchang Chehabi has taught at Harvard and been a visiting professor at institutions such as the University of St. Andrews, UCLA, and the Universidad Argentina de la Empresa. He has published two books: Iranian Politics and Religious Modernism: The Liberation Movement of Iran under the Shah and Khomeini (1990) and Distant Relations: Iran and Lebanon in the Last 500 Years (2006). Additionally, he has co-edited several influential works, including:

Politics, Society, and Democracy: Comparative Studies (1995)
Sultanistic Regimes (1998)
Iran's Constitutional Revolution: Popular Politics, Cultural Transformations, and Transnational Connections (2010)
Iran and the Challenges of the Twenty-First Century: Essays in Honour of Mohammad-Reza Djalili (2013)
Chehabi has also written numerous articles, book reviews, and translations. His areas of expertise include Middle Eastern politics, cultural history, Shiism, and international law.

Selected Lectures



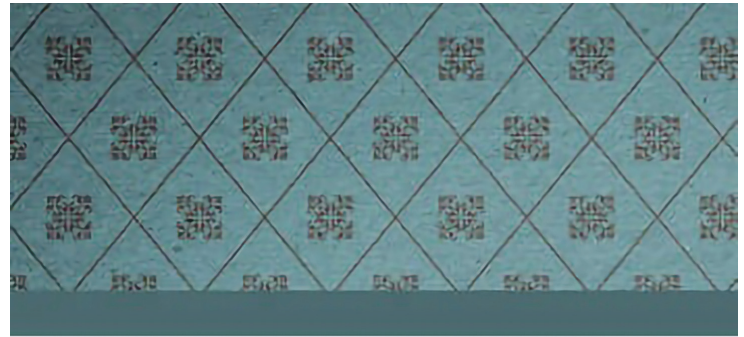
Lectures by **Ramin Jahanbegloo** UCI Jordan Center for Persian Studies
Monday, April 3rd, 2023 | 6:00-7:30 pm | HG 1010 | UCI
Albert Camus: The Unheroic Hero of Our Time
Wednesday, April 5th, 2023 | 6:00-7:30 pm | HG 1010 | UCI
آیا می‌توان گاندی ایرانی داشت؟

ALBERT CAMUS: THE UNHEROIC HERO OF OUR TIME

Ramin Jahanbegloo is a distinguished political philosopher currently serving as the Executive Director of the Mahatma Gandhi Centre for Nonviolence and Peace Studies and as the Vice-Dean of the School of Law at Jindal Global University in Delhi, India.

He holds a B.A. and M.A. in Philosophy, History, and Political Science, and later earned his Ph.D. in Philosophy from Sorbonne University. In 1993, he began teaching at the Academy of Philosophy in Tehran. Jahanbegloo has been a researcher at the French Institute for Iranian Studies and a fellow at the Center for Middle Eastern Studies at Harvard University.

From 1997 to 2001, he taught at the University of Toronto's Department of Political Science. He later became the head of the Department of Contemporary Studies at the Cultural Research Centre in Tehran and, from 2006 to 2007, served



ALBERT CAMUS THE UNHEROIC HERO OF OUR TIME

Ramin Jahanbegloo



as the Rajni Kothari Professor of Democracy at the Centre for the Study of Developing Societies in New Delhi, India. In April 2006, Jahanbegloo was arrested at Tehran Airport on charges of planning a velvet revolution in Iran. He spent four months in solitary confinement before being released on bail.

Dr. Jahanbegloo served as an Associate Professor of Political Science and a Research Fellow in the Centre for Ethics at the University of Toronto from 2008 to 2012. He also held a position as an Associate Professor of Political Science at York University in Toronto from 2012 to 2015. He is a member of the advisory board of PEN Canada.

Jahanbegloo's contributions to promoting dialogue between cultures and advocating for non-violence have earned him numerous accolades, including the Peace Prize from the United Nations Association in Spain (2009) and the Josep Palau i Fabre International Essay Prize.

Selected Lectures



REFORMULATION OF THE IDEALS OF HEROISM IN BAHRAM BEYZAIE'S EARLY PLAY

In this talk, held on May 3, 2024, Saeed Talajooy first introduces his recently edited volume on Bahram Beyzaie and then briefly discusses his two chapters in the book, which analyze Beyzaie's reformulation of the ideals of heroism in *Ārash* and *So Dies Pahlevān Akbar*.

In his analysis of *Ārash*, Talajooy, after examining the origins of the myth of *Ārash*, demonstrates how Beyzaie's play creates a new form that stands between *naqqāli* and *ta'ziyeh*, while commenting on citizenship, leadership, marginalization, and heroism.

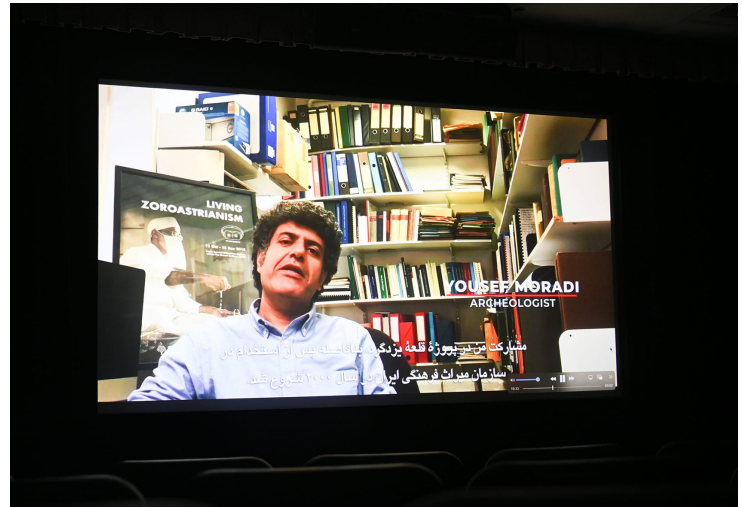
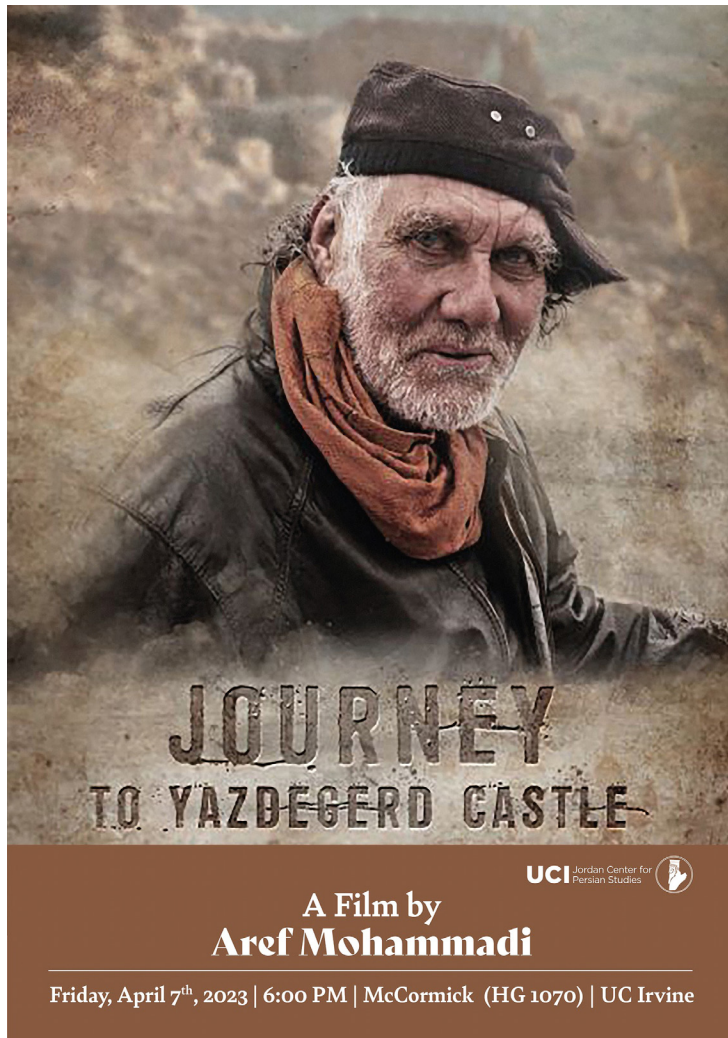
In his analysis of *So Dies Pahlevān Akbar*, Talajooy argues that the play introduced a new conception of heroism and initiated a renewed interest in the Iranian chivalry cult, *Āyin-e Javānmardi*, and its ideal heroes, *Pahlevān* and *Ayyār*, as tragic figures in contrast with the streetwise tough guys who had become central to Iranian cinema after 1958.



THE MIRROR OF THE SUN: AN INTRODUCTION TO RUMI'S ENCOUNTER WITH SHAMS

Kourosh Beigpour is an award-winning graphic designer from Kermanshah, Iran, currently based in Los Angeles. His work seamlessly merges contemporary and traditional design elements, drawing deep inspiration from his Kurdish heritage and mysticism. After earning a BFA from Tehran University of Art and an MFA from Limkokwing University in Malaysia, Kourosh founded K-B Studio in 2011. His notable clients include Google, The Broad, and The Getty, and he has collaborated with prestigious institutions such as Stanford and UCLA. Currently, Kourosh is a fellow at Stanford University, where he is refining his type design expertise at TypeWest. His typography continues to be shaped by spiritual and mystical influences, pushing boundaries in the design world.

Movie Screening



JOURNEY TO YAZDGERD CASTLE A FILM BY AREF MOHAMMADI

Aref Mohammadi is an Iranian-Canadian filmmaker, journalist, and film critic renowned for his work highlighting Iranian cinema and culture. He has directed numerous documentaries that delve into the lives of Iranian artists, the Iranian diaspora, and the intersection of culture, politics, and identity. One of his notable works, *A Survivor from Magadan*, tells the story of an Iranian man who endured Soviet labor camps during World War II. Mohammadi's documentaries are praised for their narrative depth and their focus on lesser-known stories that enhance the understanding of Iranian history and culture. In addition to his filmmaking, Mohammadi is a passionate advocate for Iranian cinema on the global stage, frequently speaking at film festivals and cultural events about its impact and significance worldwide.

Journey to Yazdegerd Castle is about Dr. Edward Keall, a British-Canadian archaeologist now in his 80s, who developed a passion for Iranian history during his youth in London, leading him to make a transformative journey to Iran. In the early 1970s, he immigrated to Canada and was employed by the Royal Ontario Museum (ROM). In 1974, he assembled a team and equipment from the ROM and returned to Iran, where he encountered challenges at Yazdegerd Castle in Kermanshah. Despite these difficulties, his efforts resulted in a significant historical discovery related to the Arsacid and Sassanid eras. However, following the 1978 revolution in Iran and the ensuing instability for foreign nationals, Dr. Keall was forced to leave Iran and return to Canada.

Movie Screening and Book Launch of Alborz



On February 3, 2024, the Jordan Center for Persian Studies hosted the book launch of *The American College of Tehran: A Memoir Album 1932*, edited by Ali Gheissari, followed by a documentary screening of *Alborz, We Climb Mountains* by Maryam Sepehri.

Maryam Sepehri is an Iranian-American filmmaker and photographer. Her photography has been featured in both group and solo exhibitions, and it accompanies travel articles and a book of short stories she has published. She completed her MA thesis at Tehran Art University, titled *A Study on Contemporary Ethnographic Photography of Iran*, which analyzed the works of four prominent photographers. Her interest in documentaries evolved during her time at university, and she has since made five documentaries.

Ali Gheissari is a prominent historian, scholar, and professor specializing in modern Iranian history, intellectual history, and the development of political thought in Iran. His research often focuses on the evolution of modernity



in Iran, examining how political, social, and intellectual movements have shaped contemporary Iranian society. Gheissari has written extensively about the intersections of religion, politics, and culture in Iran, particularly within the context of modernization.

Sanaz Toossi: Pulitzer Prize Winner in Drama at UCI



Sanaz Toossi is an Iranian-American playwright from Orange County, California, who holds an MFA in playwriting from NYU Tisch School. Her plays include the critically acclaimed *ENGLISH* and *WISH YOU WERE HERE*. Toossi's works are poignant, bold, and often infused with humor, reflecting her experiences as a second-generation bilingual and bicultural Iranian-American.

ENGLISH is the 2023 Pulitzer Prize-winning play, set in a classroom near Tehran where four Iranians take English lessons for the TOEFL test. The play explores the role of language as a tool for identity, migration, and connection, particularly amid the disruptions caused by the travel ban. *WISH YOU WERE HERE* examines the lives of five Iranian women from 1978 to 1991, with their complex relationships unfolding against the backdrop of the Iranian Revolution, the Iran-Iraq War, emigration, and socio-political crises.

Toossi is currently under commission at Atlantic Theater Company, Roundabout Theatre Company, Williamstown Theatre Festival, Manhattan Theatre Club, South Coast Repertory, and Oregon Shakespeare Festival. She has received multiple prestigious awards, including the 2019 P73 Playwriting Fellowship, the 2020 Steinberg Playwright Award, the 2022 Horton Foote Award, the 2023 Best New American Play Obie Award, and the 2023 Pulitzer Prize in Drama.



Performance by Hossein Omoumi and Shahrokh Yadegari



Hossein Omoumi is a distinguished Iranian musician, celebrated for his mastery of the ney, the traditional reed flute of Iran. Born in 1944 in Isfahân, Iran, Omoumi's early musical education began with his father, and by the age of 14, he was studying the ney. His academic background in architecture did not hinder his passion for music, as he pursued formal training at the National Superior Conservatory of Music in Tehran, learning under the tutelage of renowned masters Mahmud Karimi, Farhâd Fakhreddini, and ultimately the great ney virtuoso Hassan Kassâei.

Omoumi's performance career spans across major festivals and prestigious venues in Europe and the United States. He has appeared at renowned locations such as San Francisco's World Music Festival, UCLA's Schoenberg Hall, Wadsworth Theater, the Getty Center in Los Angeles, the World Music Institute and Asia Society in New York, and Théâtre de la Ville in Paris. His performances, which showcase the intricate sounds of the ney, have contributed significantly to the global recognition of Persian classical music.



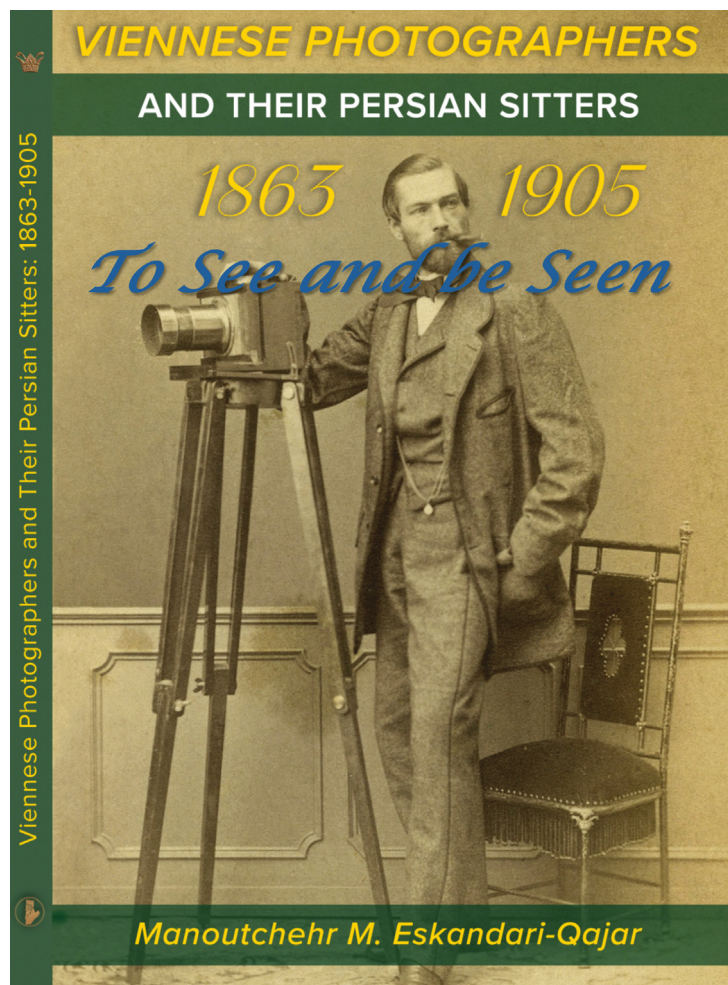
A notable moment in his career was his collaboration with UCSD Music Professor Shahrokh Yadegari at UCI, where the two artists brought the beauty of Iranian music to life. The photos from this performance capture the deep cultural and artistic connection between these two musicians.



Book Launch & Photo Exhibition By Manoutcher M. Eskandari-Qajar

TO SEE AND BE SEEN (OCTOBER 24, 2004)

The research presented in this volume is part of a broader study examining the historical interactions between Persia and Austria dating back to the 17th century. This larger study will culminate in a forthcoming book exploring the movement of Austrians to Persia and Persians to Austria during the 19th century. The primary focus of the original study was on the significance, impact, and activities of individuals who visited or resided in these countries. However, it became clear that the role of Viennese photographers in capturing the arrival of Persian guests in the 19th century deserved separate attention. Many of the photographs of Persian subjects featured in this volume are being displayed for the first time, accompanied by contextual explanations of the circumstances in which they were taken. These images represent only a small fraction of the actual photographic corpus, much of which remains scattered across private collections and archives globally. Unfortunately, these photographs are often misidentified, leaving their existence largely unknown to the wider academic community. This volume aims to correct these gaps in knowledge and serve as a significant first step in furthering the study of these invaluable historical records.



Center Publications ■ Books

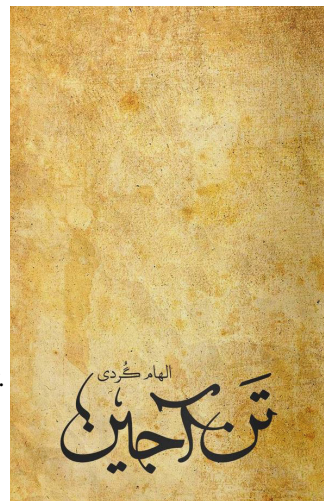


TEHRAN MONOXIDE

Negar Farajiani

(UC Irvine Jordan Center for Persian Studies & Culture, 2022)

This book revisits and reviews Tehran Monoxide, an ongoing project initiated in 2010 by artist and curator Negar Farajiani, which addresses Tehran and the environmental effects of modernity.

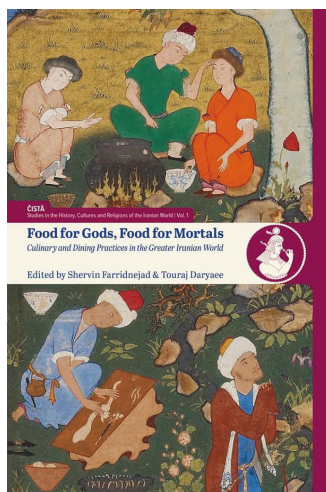


TANAJIN (PERSIAN EDITION)

Elham Gordi

(UC Irvine Jordan Center for Persian Studies & Culture, 2024)

This book presents a collection of modern Persian poetry by Elham Gordi, blending traditional themes with a contemporary voice to explore identity, culture, and the human experience.



FOOD FOR GODS, FOOD FOR MORTALS

Shervin Farridnejad, Touraj Daryaei

(UC Irvine Jordan Center for Persian Studies & Culture, 2022)

This book features a collection of modern Persian poetry by Elham Gordi, blending traditional themes with a contemporary voice to explore identity, culture, and the human condition.

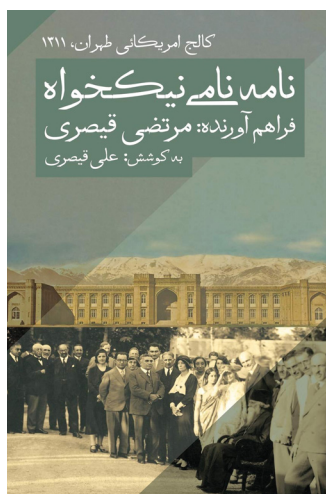


ARDESHIR MOHASSESS: A RETROSPECTIVE

Ardeshir Babaknia, Ali Banuazizi

(UC Irvine Jordan Center for Persian Studies & Culture, 2022)

This book is a collection of paintings by Ardeshir Mohassess, accompanied by an essay from Dr. Ali Banu Azizi, exploring the life and work of Ardeshir Mohassess, one of the most influential artists of twentieth-century Iran.

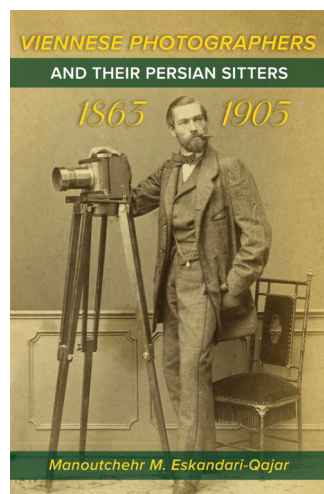


THE AMERICAN COLLEGE OF TEHRAN: A MEMORIAL ALBUM, 1932 (PERSIAN EDITION)

Morteza Gheissari, Ali Gheissari

(UC Irvine Jordan Center for Persian Studies & Culture, 2020)

This volume presents a previously unpublished memorial album of the American College of Tehran, compiled by a former student during the early Pahlavi period



VIENNESE PHOTOGRAPHERS AND THEIR PERSIAN SITTERS 1863-1905

Manoutchehr M. Eskandari-Qajar

(UC Irvine Jordan Center for Persian Studies & Culture, 2024)

The research presented in this volume is part of a larger study on the interactions between Persia and Austria dating back to the 17th century, which was later followed by an exhibition at the Jordan Center for Persian Studies.

Center Publications ■ Musical CDs



IN VINO VERITAS. HOMMAGE À KHAYAM

Anousha Nazari, Laurianne Corneille & Amin Ebrahimi

In celebration of the release of *In Vino Veritas: Homage to Khayyam*, this exceptional concert features Iranian mezzo-soprano Anousha Nazari, pianist Laurianne Corneille, and clarinetist Amaury Viduvier. The album, composed for lyrical voice, clarinet, and piano, highlights the works of four contemporary Iranian composers, each of whom selected a quatrain from the famous poet Omar Khayyam to inspire their composition.

These musical pieces capture the timeless essence of Khayyam's poetry, drawing on themes of wine, love, and the fleeting nature of existence. The compositions are rich with emotion and storytelling, offering a musical journey that both reflects on distant worlds and invites a deeper exploration of self. Through this vibrant and melodious tribute, the album honors the enduring legacy of the 11th-century poet and his philosophy on life's transience and beauty.

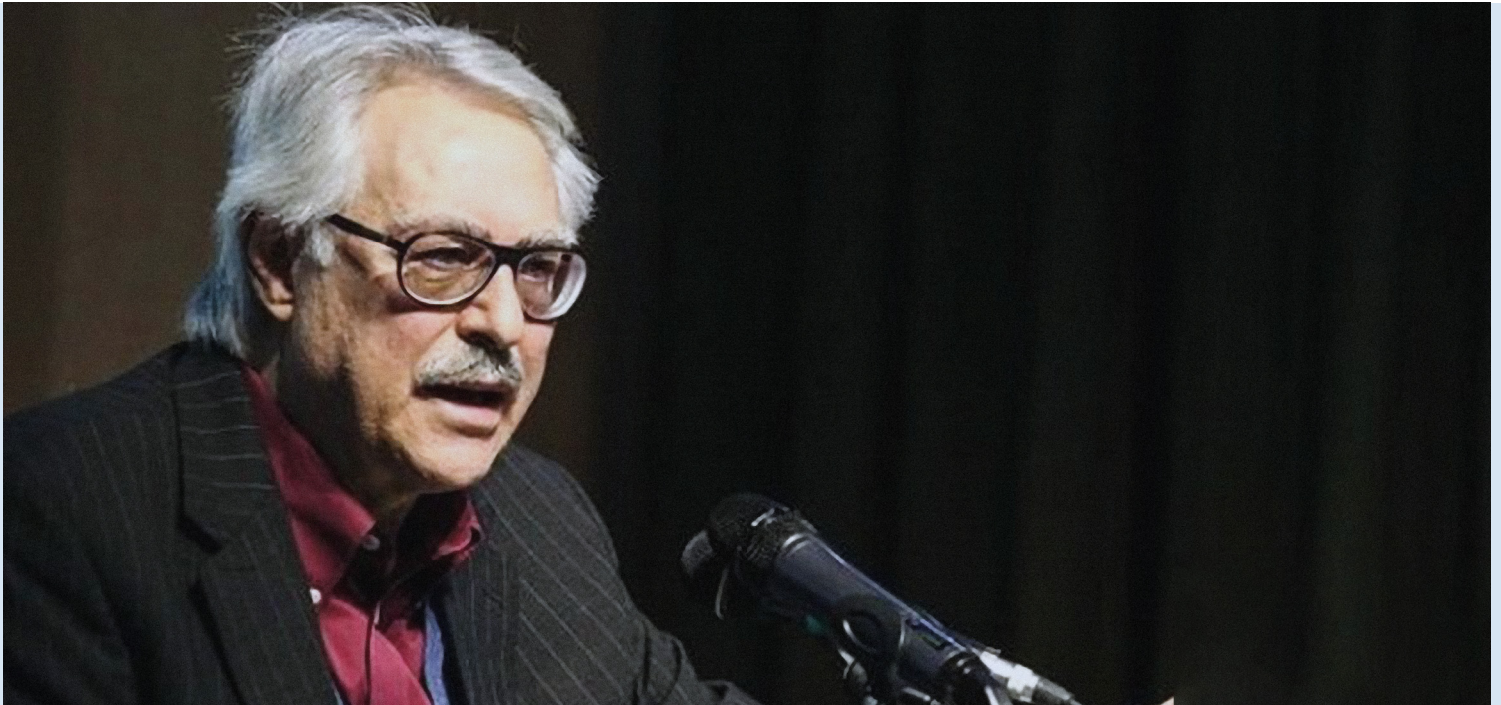
Anousha Nazari is a distinguished Iranian lyric mezzo-soprano, recognized for her unique ability to merge Persian and European musical traditions. Through her performances, she serves as a bridge between these two worlds, offering a captivating blend of both cultures.

Born in Sâri, a city by the Caspian Sea, Anousha's passion for music began with local Iranian orchestras. She eventually became a member of the renowned Tehran Symphony Orchestra. In 2016, she moved to France, where her career flourished with performances at prestigious venues such as the Philharmonie de Paris and Salle Cortot. Over the years, Anousha has worked with a wide range of international artists and released several music albums.

In addition to her performances, Anousha has ventured into music video projects, collaborating with prominent institutions like the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, the Philharmonie de Paris, and the Guimet National Museum of Asian Arts. Her work continues to foster a unique dialogue between Eastern and Western musical traditions.



Visiting Research Scholars



Remembering Dr. Javad Tabatabai at The Jordan Center for Persian Studies

The Jordan Center for Persian Studies had the honor of hosting Dr. Javad Tabatabai, the eminent political philosopher, during his final years in Irvine, CA. During his time there, Tabatabai delivered two lectures and began a collaborative project with Dr. Daryaei on Iranshahr.

Born on December 14, 1945, in Tabriz, Iran, Tabatabai was of Iranian Azari descent. His father was a merchant in the Bazaar of Tabriz. After studying theology, law, and philosophy in Tabriz and Tehran, he earned his PhD in political philosophy from the University of Paris 1 Pantheon-Sorbonne, with a dissertation on Hegel's political philosophy.

Upon returning to Iran, Tabatabai was appointed professor and deputy dean of the Faculty of Law and Political Science at the University of Tehran. However, in the 1990s, he was dismissed from his positions for critiquing the Iranian government's ideology.

Tabatabai continued his research in various countries, including France, England, Germany, and the United States. He was a guest fellow at the Wissenschaftskolleg zu Berlin and the Moynihan Institute of Global Affairs at Syracuse University. Throughout his career, he published around twenty books on the history of political ideas in Europe and



Iran. On July 14, 1995, he was decorated as a Knight of the Ordre des Palmes Académiques in France.

After a battle with cancer, Dr. Tabatabai passed away on February 28, 2023, in Irvine, California, at the age of 77. The Jordan Center hosted a commemoration in his honor, where scholars and admirers gathered to remember his immense contributions to political history and philosophical discourse.



ALI HÜSEYİN TOĞAY

Ph.D. in Ancient Iranian Studies, University of Tehran
M.A. and B.A. in History, Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University

Research Interests

Specializing in Sasanian history, Pahlavi language, and focusing on the diplomatic, commercial, and political relations between the Sasanian Empire and the Türk Khaganate, the author completed both undergraduate and graduate studies at Nevşehir Hacı Bektaş Veli University. He began his doctoral program at Tehran University in 2018, where he took courses in Avesta and Pahlavi under the guidance of Professor Jaleh Amouzgar. Notably, he produced the first Turkish translation of *Karnamag i Ardashir i Pabagan*. In 2022, he completed his doctoral research with a dissertation titled *Relations and Challenges between the Sassanids and the Göktürks in Central Asia*.

Dr. Toğay's primary area of focus is Sasanian history, and he has written two notable works in this field: *Historical Sources of the Sassanid State (Sasani Devletin Tarihi Kaynakları)* and *Iranian Cities of the Sassanid Period (Sasani Dönemi İran Şehirleri)*. He has also published *Introduction to the History of the Parthians (Part Tarihine Giriş)*. In addition to his original books, he has contributed scholarly articles including: "The Battle of Kušmēhan between the Sassanids and the White Huns during the



Reign of Bahram Gur," "Conflicts between Sassanid Shah Fīrūz and White Hun Khan Aksungur," "An Analysis of the Silk Road Struggle between Istemi Yabghu and Khosrow Anoushirvan," and "An Evaluation of Bahram Chobin's Campaign against the Göktürk Khaganate." The author has also translated *Name-ye Tansar be Goshnasb*, edited by Mojtaba Minovi, which will soon be published in Turkish.

Dr. Toğay will conduct academic research under the supervision of Prof. Dr. Touraj Daryaee at the Samuel Jordan Persian Studies and Culture Center between 2024-2025 through the TÜBİTAK program. The aim of this research is to examine the political, diplomatic, commercial, and strategic relations between the Sassanid and Türk States, two important empires of the Late Antique Period, and to analyze how these interactions transformed the dynamics of the Central Asian region. Additionally, the study aims to construct a coherent and nuanced narrative of Eurasian history by incorporating another significant power of the era, the Byzantine State, into this analysis.

Visiting Research Scholars



ELHAM GORDI

Elham Gordi is a poet of Iranian descent whose works have been translated and published in numerous online magazines, newspapers, and editorials. She has become a significant and inspiring voice in the celebration and promotion of modern Persian poetry, particularly within the Iranian diaspora.

In addition to her literary pursuits, Gordi has made meaningful contributions as a social worker, teaching literature to children of workers in Tehran and supporting female runaways while working to prevent domestic violence. She published her first poetry collection at the age of eighteen, and her second collection, *Scent of a Woman in the Elevator*, received notable mentions from critics in various Persian literary circles and publications.

Gordi also co-authored *An Anthology of Modern Persian Poetry*, one of Iran's most important resources on modern Persian poetry, curating a literary museum of over a hundred poets with diverse writing styles. She served as a jury committee member for the 2021 Rowzan Poetry Competition and has translated and edited various works for online magazines, including Mike Finley's poem *House Trees*.

A passionate advocate for Persian poetry, Gordi regularly recites poetry and gives speeches at academic symposiums and literary conferences. She has spoken at venues such as Pierce College, Irvine Public Library, the Hilton Hotel, and UCLA.



MAHMOUD OMIDSALAR

Dr. OmidSalar holds a Ph.D. in Persian Literature and Folklore from the Department of Near Eastern Studies at the University of California, Berkeley. He is the consulting editor for folklore at the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, where he has written many entries on the subject. Alongside the late Iraj Afshar, Dr. OmidSalar co-edited the series *Folia Medica Iranica* and *Persian Manuscripts in Facsimile*.

His published works include *The Shahnameh of Ferdowsi*, co-edited with Dr. Djalal Khaleghi-Motlagh (*Bibliotheca Persica*, 2005), and *Poetics and Politics of Iran's National Epic, the Shahnameh* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2011). Dr. OmidSalar's collected articles on Persian literature, folklore, and codicology were published by the Bonyade Moghofateh Iraj Afshar in Tehran, Iran. He is currently working on a new edition of the *Garshasb-nameh*, an important Persian epic, and is preparing to deliver three lectures on the history of Persian language and literature.

Afghan Scholars at Risk



SARWERASA RAFIZADA

Dr. Sarwerasa Rafizada is a Scholar at Risk, currently serving as a Visiting Researcher and adjunct Professor at UCLA's Center for Near Eastern Studies. Her research primarily focuses on contemporary Persian literature, with a specific emphasis on Afghan women's works, gender studies, and feminism.

Among her notable publications are *Critical Discourse Analysis of the Image of Women in Afghan Fiction*, *Representations of Women in Contemporary Literary Fiction of Afghanistan*, *The Impact of Media on Gender Violence in Afghanistan*, *The Role of Women Writers in Diaspora Literature or Afghan Immigration Literature*, and *Halliday's Functional Grammar: A Model for Text Analysis and Interpretation*.

Her current project delves into women's diaspora literature, exploring the narratives and experiences of Afghan women in the context of immigration and exile.



SHAHBA SHAHRUKHI

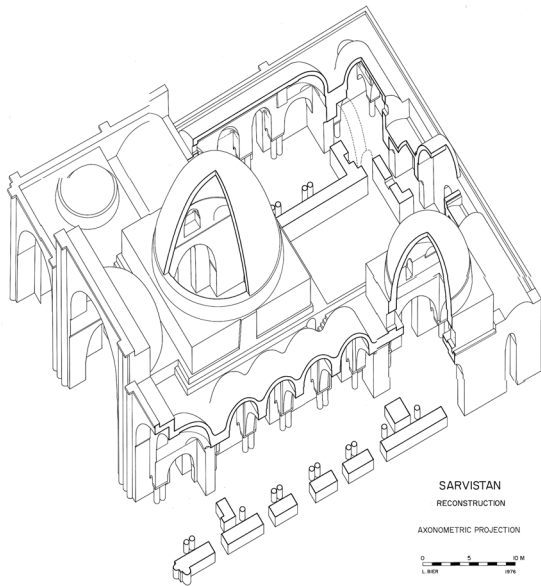
Shahba Shahrukhi is a dedicated psychologist and advocate for women's rights, having worked as a professor at Balkh University and a psychological consultant at the Women's Protection Center in Mazar-e-Sharif. She holds a bachelor's degree in psychology and is a member of Afghan Youth Leaders, an organization focused on improving the lives of Afghan citizens. Shahba firmly believes in the power of education for women and sees their empowerment as crucial for societal development.

Shahba reflects on the challenges she faced growing up under the Taliban regime, where her dreams of pursuing higher education and professional aspirations were suppressed. She recalls, "When I was young, and the Taliban dominated Afghanistan, I always dreamed of studying in a peaceful place and serving myself. But under the Taliban, this was merely a dream." However, after the fall of the Taliban in 2001, girls like her began to realize their educational goals. Tragically, the progress made was reversed when the Taliban regained control in August 2021, imposing severe restrictions on women, girls, and Afghan society at large. This has caused immense mental and physical hardship, especially for young girls, who now find themselves unable to access education, work, or political participation. Despite this, Shahba's commitment to advancing women's rights remains steadfast.

Archives at Jordan Center

Carol Bier and Lionel Bier Collection; Gift of Carol Bier

We are honored to have this important archive of photos taken by Carol and Lionel Bier in 1972, 1975 and 1976, of Sasanian rock reliefs and rock-carved inscriptions in Iran for the following sites: In Frars Province: Naqsh-e Rostam; Naqshe-e Rajab; Darab . . Vuqsh-e Rojob. Sarab Bahram, Sar Mashhad; Guyum, Barm-e Dilak; Tang-e Qandil and Bishapur; and in the province of Kermanshah: Taq-e Bustan. The images will be uploaded to the Sasanika Website which is dedicated to the Sasanian Empire. The black & white negatives and contact sheets, which correlate with the color images shared with us, are held in the Smithsonian Archives, which can be found as “Carol Bier and Lionel Bier Collection. FSA. A2008.01. National Museum of Asian Art Archives. Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. Gift of Carol Bier” at <https://www.si.edu/es/object/archives/sova-fsa-a2008-01>



Gluck Archive

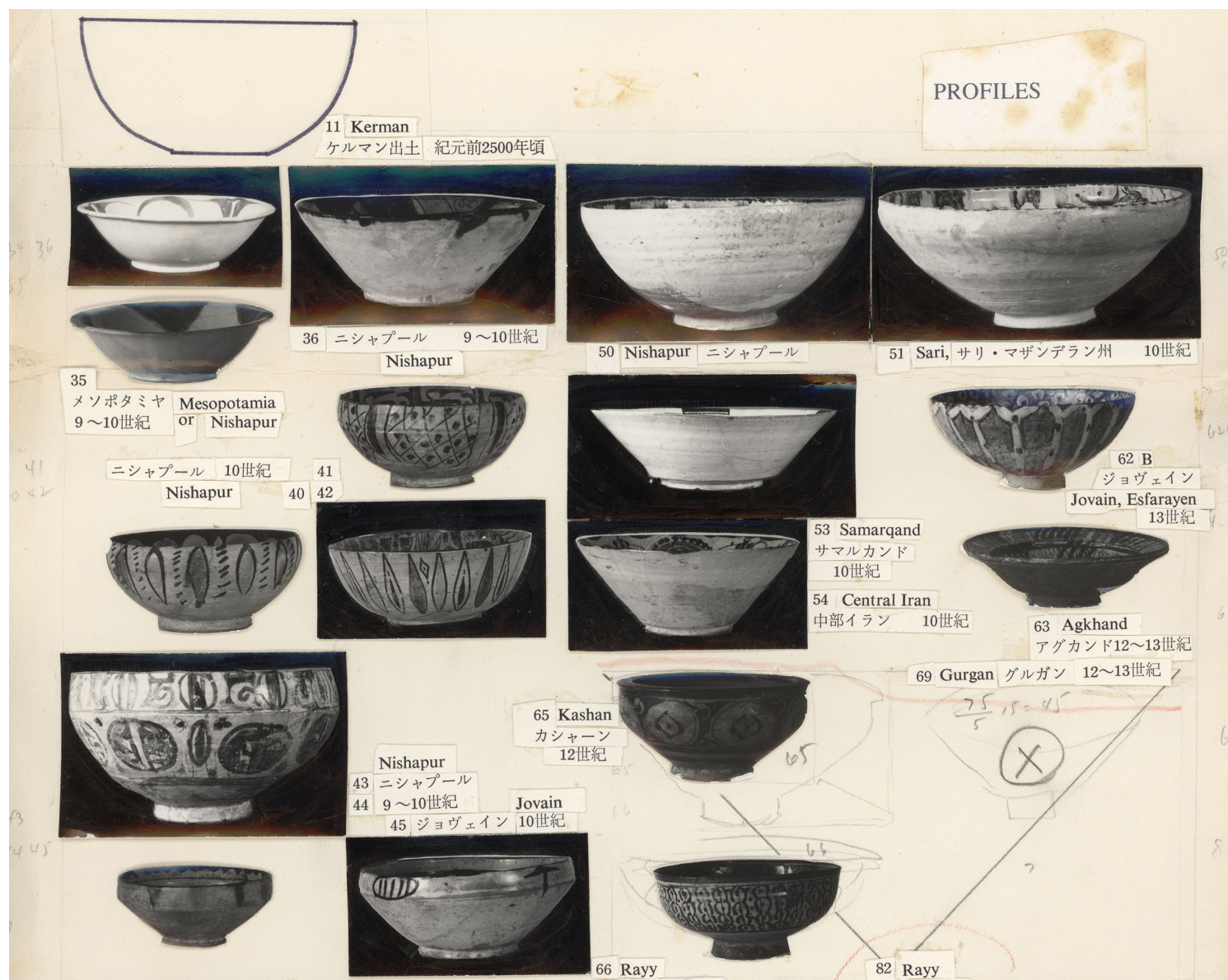
The archive of Jay and Sumi Gluck—testament to four decades of their scholarship on the history and art history of Iran—is an invaluable resource for the study and deeper understanding of Iranian art history, spanning from prehistory to the early 20th century. The collection comprises over three thousand pages of documents (including correspondences, speeches, personal notes, and article/book drafts), thirty photograph albums documenting objects and sites across a wide range of Iranian historical periods, more than two hundred loose photographs, over one hundred rolls of 35mm and 120mm film negatives, dozens of hand-drawn plans, and nearly two hundred books from the personal library of Jay and Sumi Gluck. A particularly significant component of the archive is the set of documents related to Jay Gluck’s efforts in republishing and continuing Arthur Upham Pope’s *A Survey of Persian Art*—a project he stewarded from the final years of Pope’s life until his own passing.



Archivist at Jordan Center



Amirali Ardekanian is a PhD student in the Visual Studies (Art History) program at the University of California, Irvine, whose work reflects a deep commitment to the preservation and interpretation of Iranian visual and material culture. His research focuses on the reception of the ancient Iranian world in late 19th and 20th century Iran, particularly through the lens of photography and its role in shaping historical memory and the modern Iranian identity. In the summer of 2024, he received a grant from the American Institute of Iranian Studies—administered through the Jordan Center—to support his work (research and digitization) on the personal papers and photographs of Jay Gluck, now housed in the Center's newly found Archive. He is currently responsible for coordinating the development and management of the Jordan Center's Archive. In addition to his academic pursuits, Amirali is an avid collector of Iranian art and photographic materials. He has curated two exhibitions in Tehran on the history of early Iranian picture postcards, drawn from his personal collection. His forthcoming book explores the significance of these postcards in tracing the evolution of Iran's urban and architectural landscape.



Student Awards & Fellowships



THE SARRAFIAN FAMILY FELLOWSHIP

Mark Gradoni Kenneth

Ph.D. in Ancient Iran and the Premodern Persian World
B.A. in History, University of Maryland-Baltimore County. (2010)
M.A. in the Humanities, Hood College. (2018)

Research Topic

Ancient Iran and the Premodern Persianate World



DEAN'S GATEWAY FELLOWSHIP

Arnold Alahverdian

Ph.D. Candidate in History
MA, History, UCI (2015)
BA, History, Middle Eastern and Islamic Studies minor, Cal State Northridge (2013)

Research Topic

Sasanian World, Armenia in Late Antiquity



THE FARZANEH FAMILY FELLOWSHIP. & THE HUMANITIES DEAN GATEWAY AWARD

Simin Amini

Ph.D. Student in Visual Studies
M.A., Near and Middle Eastern Studies, SOAS University of London
B.A., Fashion and textile design, Alzahra University, Tehran, Iran

Research Topic

Ancient Iran Art and Archaeology, Persian mythology and literature, Zoroastrianism, Museum Studies



DEAN'S GATEWAY FELLOWSHIP

Ileana De Guiseppe

M.A. (Summa cum laude), History, Preservation and Enhancement of the Artistic and Archaeological Heritage and Landscape, University of Bologna
B.A. (Summa cum laude), Cultural Heritage, University of Bologna, Ravenna, Italy

Research Interest

Achaemenid Art and Archaeology, Hellenistic Art and Archaeology



THE RAZI FAMILY FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP

Layah Ziaii-Bigdeli

Ph.D. Student in Visual Studies
M.A., Art History Concentration in Cultural Heritage and Preservation, Rutgers University-New Brunswick
B.A., Art History & Archeology, Columbia University

Research Topic

Sasanian Art and Archaeology, Islamic Art and Archaeology, Persian Language and Literature



THE HUMANITIES DEAN GATEWAY AWARD

Melissa Depiero

M.A., Art History, University of Georgia
B.A. (with distinction), Art History and Classical Archaeology, UNC Chapel Hill

Research Topic

Cross cultural interactions between Persian and Greco-Roman empires, animals in antiquity, Roman mosaics, Roman North Africa, Achaemenid Egypt, Late antiquity.

A Group photo of Nowruz Celebration and Winter reception at UCI



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New Horizons in Premodern Iranian Studies

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Gracious financial support also provided by the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Presidential Chair in Art History and Archaeology of Ancient Iran



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STATE BUILDING AND THE
POLITICS OF DECENTRALIZATION

KIAN TAJBAKSH

Presentation by **Kian Tajbaksh**

Respondent: **Walter Nicholls**, Chair, Department of Urban Planning &
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The talk is sponsored by the Howard Baskerville Endowment, Department of Comparative Literature, and Department of Urban Planning & Public Policy.

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