



Persian Heritage

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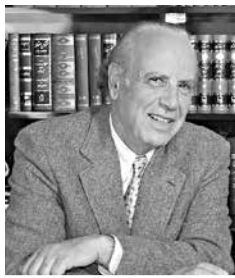
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FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

I would like to take this opportunity to wish all our readers and their families a happy and healthy new year, one filled with hope and peace. This past year, for Iranians living inside and outside of our birthplace, has been filled with joy and despair, because of the good and bad news we received. When I heard the name of the nominee for the Noble prize in mathematics, Maryam Mirzakhani, not only the first Iranian woman, but the first woman in history to have received this honor, I was exhilarated. Immediately, the editorial board changed the cover of the fall issue, and featured her. This great news kept coming when President Obama nominated Azita Raji, former business strategist and Wall Street executive as Ambassador to Sweden, making Ms. Raji the first woman Ambassador to Sweden and then the naming of Pardis C. Sabati, a Harvard University Assistant Professor, computational biologist and medical geneticist, to head the group to analyze the genetics of Ebola sampling.

We need to realize that these accomplishments, by younger hyphenated Iranians and others in the fields of science, arts, medicine, politics and business, have come only 30-40 years after they or their family's migration out of Iran.

During a discussion at a family and friend gathering, I was interrupted by one of my friends daughters, "Dr. Ahkami please stop boasting about Iranians! Please think about the oppression that Iranian women are experiencing in Iran!"

For certain, I was caught off guard by her statement. My chest, once filled with pride by these Iranian achievements, deflated. I tried to calmly ask her what she meant by her comments. Without even thinking about my question, she continued her speech in a now elevated voice, "Aren't you embarrassed to see and read about the atrocities committed against young and old women in Iran?"

Again, I was taken back by her question. I did not expect that a member of this second generation, who grew up in the United States, whose social community is diverse and who I know only visited Iran as a young girl, would have any interest in the daily lives, events and news of Iran and its citizens. I thought it was only my generation who continued with such a strong attachment.

I wanted to interrupt her, but once again she did not permit me to speak. "How is it that in the twenty first century in Iran where 60% of the student population in universities are women, in a century where young girls and women, despite daily discrimination still achieve success and in professions

where the women are superior or equal to their male colleagues, that Iranian women's rights, in Iran, are ranked the lowest among 180 countries around the world?"

Once again I tried to interject a few words but, I was again abruptly interrupted. "Drrrrrr. Ahkami !!!!! this time it's my turn to speak. This time I want you to listen to me and I want you to answer my questions!" And this time, everyone in the room agreed with her leaving me no choice but to listen.

"What what kind of country is Iran? Young brave women have no safe haven in the streets, work place, shops, parks or other places of entertainment! What kind of country allows demonic people to throw acid in the faces of women to destroy their beauty, leaving physical and emotional damage so severe that it is irreparable? This is surprising in a country where its armed forces are so powerful and automatically appear to halt anti government speech. Why are they not equally powerful and visible to stop these crimes against women and seek out and punish these criminals? I cannot believe they actually admitted that their investigation of over 300 acid crimes resulted in no arrests."

With teary eyes she continued, "Did you know that three women were attacked because their faces were visible to the common man? Did you know that three others in Isfahan were attacked with acid because their faces were not covered? Where in the world does any human being deserve such oppression and suffering? If these three women, so brutally attacked in Iran, were in the United States, they could have reached the same level of achievement of the women we discussed?"

I was in shock and despair. I wanted to melt into the floor. As the words left her mouth her tears flowed. Her visible sadness and despair affected the others in the room. I tried to change the mood by stating, "I am very proud to see the younger generation, of Iranian Americans, so attached to their roots and have such an awareness of the suffering of women in their parent's birthplace."

Seeing that they were allowing me to speak, I continued, "I and we must have great respect for Iranian women inside and outside of Iran. It is an undeniable fact that after 38 years, their struggle against oppression and fight for equality continues. It is appalling that this oppression has not yet ended for them and that they must continue to seek their right for equality as human beings."

She wiped her tears, smiled and apologized to me for

FROM THE EDITOR'S DESK

cutting me off. Her father looked at me with surprise. I replied to her "Your words empower me and give me strength. I am grateful that the concerns of my generation, continues in the hearts and minds of our children. Despite the technology available to us, the internet, face book, etc., we, Diaspora, still try to dig through every news source, to find the smallest events that take place in Iran. With your comments today, I am moved by the possibility that as parents, we have been successful in securing Iran's culture and ethnicity in future generations outside of Iran. And, just maybe these future generations will continue to passionately advocate for suppressed people living in the birthplace of their parents. I am happy to know that all of our cultural celebrations throughout the years paid off. You actually learned and understand our concerns."

"Yes we did, Dr. Ahkami! During the hostage crisis and with each anniversary that passes, we are filled with sadness for our parents. You might not have known that as children we were also affected. We always felt the need to defend our ethnic origin and still continue to do so. We were often bullied about the hostage crisis in school."

Bullied, I thought! I was never aware of any bullying against my girls, I was horrified that this happened to them. This young lady then got up and hugged her dad and me, who were still shocked by her words.

Who would have thought that a discussion, on the achieve-

ments of three young Iranian- American women, would have ended in another discussion, a discussion of events that happened more then 37 years ago and the negative impact they had on our children. I thought that only my generation experienced unjustified mistreatment! Of course there is no comparison of our struggles after 1979, with the suffering experienced by those in Iran. But, knowing that our children suffered in our new homes, should make us all a bit more sensitive on how we speak and what we say about other ethnic groups in the same situation.

A new year is coming and I will continue to discuss and post the good things that happen to Iranians in and outside of Iran. I will also, with equal importance, discuss the negative events happening in Iran. As we celebrate Christmas, Yalda Night, the birth of Mithra and New Year let's take a minute to truly understand the freedoms and equalities we enjoy as men and women. And at the same time let's remember those women, who fight every day in Iran and elsewhere in the world, for the same equalities and freedom.

Happy New Year

Shahrokh Alavi

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STILL AMAZED

Dear Editor:

I continue to be amazed by your interviews. These are of people that, as an Iranian, I should know, but am embarrassed to say, I do not. Please continue to educate the younger generation as well as my uninformed generation on the talents of Iranians.

NA, Virginia

KEEP IT GOING

With each issue of your magazine I look forward to reading how we need to continue to support the democratic process for Iranians in Iran. Unfortunately I think we out side of Iran only have "feel good" moments that are brief. Too often we forget and pay too much attention to the role we have as Iranian Diaspora. Keep the conversation going... we must never allow the press or anyone to group us with other nations in the Middle East.

I am not barbaric, nor were my ancestors. So I ask that you continue to remind us that we must defend those in Iran. Every little action we do can result in a movement towards extinguishing sanctions and allow Iran to reenter with dignity, a place in the world they deserve.

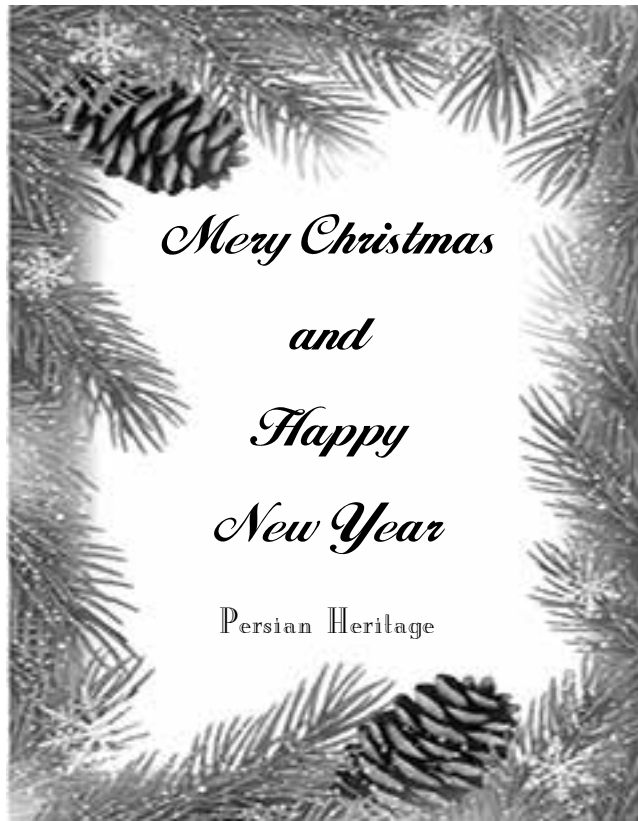
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DEAR DR.AHKAMI

Baa Doroud Va Sepaas,
as always I really enjoyed reading the precious topics and specially "*Sar Maghaleh*".

Viva Persian Heritage! Stay well,with regards and respect

J.Radmard



Iranian-American woman AZITA RAJI

Nominated For Ambassador To Sweden

The United States Embassy in Stockholm is set to get its first female ambassador after the White House announced it was nominating the Iranian-American ex-investment banker Azita Raji to take over from Mark Brzezinski.

Azita Raji is a recognized business strategist, and a former Wall Street executive with international experience, who currently brings her expertise in global financial markets, economics, and strategic thinking to numerous leadership roles in the non-profit sector, by serving as an active trustee, co-founder, and advisor on national boards and appointed commissions, including The President's Commission on White House Fellowships, Barnard College, Columbia Business School's Social Enterprise Program, Athena Center for Leadership Studies at Barnard College, Economic Advisory Council of the Center for American Progress,... During the 2012 Obama campaign, Raji served as National Finance Vice Chair and Chair of the Swing State Victory Fund, in addition to serving on the national advisory board of the Democratic National Committee since 2008.

Raji holds a B.A. in architecture and French from Barnard College, Columbia University, and an M.B.A. in finance from Columbia Business School. She is a designat-



ed Chartered Financial Analyst and a member of the Bretton Woods Committee.

Raji was born in Tehran, Iran, and spent her early years growing up and studying in Iran and Western Europe. She attended and graduated from an international high school in Lausanne, Switzerland, where she was a competitive downhill skier and chess player, before coming to live in the United States for the first time, to attend college at age 17. Throughout her life she has lived, studied, and worked in the Middle East, Latin America, Western Europe, and the Far East, and is fluent and literate in several languages, including Farsi and French. She has drawn from her wide global awareness and cultural perspective throughout her life and career. Raji currently resides in Northern California with her family.

Biography: The White House

IRAN, A NATURAL ALLY

(CNSNews.com) – Former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger said Sunday on NBC's "Meet the Press" that "Iran is a natural ally" of the U.S. "As long as Iran is ruled by the ayatollah and bases itself on its sectarian philosophy, we have to be careful. But basically, as a country, Iran is a natural ally of the United States. It's the ideological, religious component that makes it an antagonist," said Kissinger, who served as Secretary of State for the Richard Nixon and Gerald Ford administrations.

STATUE OF OMAR KHAYYAM TO BE SET UP IN MANHATTAN

Tehran Times, September 9/03/14: A statue of Persian classic poet Omar Khayyam (1048-1131) is scheduled to be installed in Manhattan, New York City. Created by the Iranian sculptor Hossein Fakhimi, the two-meter tall statue was sent from Tehran to New York on Monday evening.

The decision to set up the statue as a Persian symbol was made by Manhattan municipal officials during Iranian President Hassan Rouhani's trip to New York in September 2013.

Fakhimi has made two other copies of the statues, one of which will be installed in Khayyam's hometown of Neishabur and the other in Florence, Italy. "I have conducted two years of studies before starting the carving of the statues, since it was important for me to know different aspects of Khayyam's character," Fakhimi told the Persian service of MNA. Khayyam is not only a poet, but he is a great astrologer, philosopher and mathematician, he added. He said that in addition to his studies, he had conversations with scholars Hossein Elahi-Qomsheii and Gholamhossein Ebrahimi-Dinani on Khayyam. "I decided to carve the statue from stones mined in Iran," he said.

One of the statues was transferred to Neishabur on the National Day of Khayyam on September 2, 2014 and it will be erected in an appropriate place designed for the statue.

Another copy of the statue will be installed in Florence, following an order by Iran's cultural attache in Rome during the Khayyam commemoration ceremony in Italy in 2010. Omar Khayyam, a Persian mathematician, astronomer, and poet was renowned in his own country and in his own time for his scientific achievements, but is chiefly known to English-speaking readers through the translation by the English writer Edward Fitzgerald of a collection of his Rubaiyat ("quatrains") in "The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam" (1859).

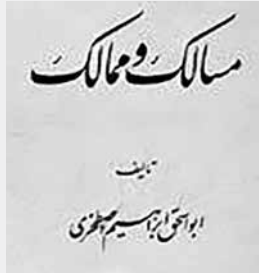


Iranian sculptor Hossein Fakhimi beside his statue of the Persian classic poet Omar Khayyam

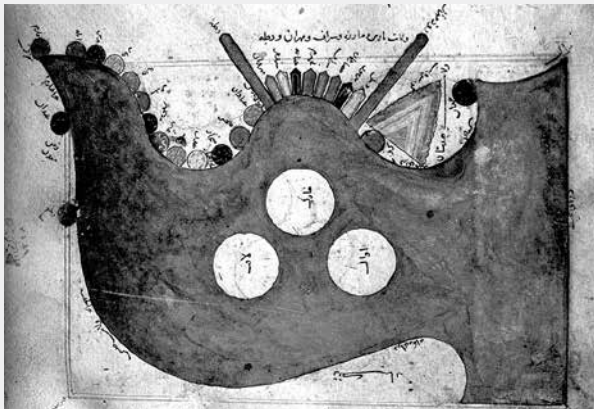
'Al-Masaalik Wa Al-Mamaalik' Proves the Originality of Persian Gulf Name

Iran Book News Agency (IBNA) 26 Oct 2014

IBNA- At the 6th General Meeting of UNESCO's the Memory of the World Committee for Asia-Pacific (MOWCAP) a precious document, the Persian ancient book 'Al-Masaalik Wa Al-Mamaalik', which affirms the originality of the name, Persian Gulf, was registered.



According to IBNA correspondent, the 6th General Meeting of the Memory of the World Committee for Asia-Pacific held from 13 to 15 May 2014 in Guangzhou, China. As well as 'Al-Masaalik Wa Al-Mamaalik' written by Abu Eshaq Ebrahim bin Muhammad Farsi Estakhri, three other Iranian works were also registered: 'The Soul of the Reef' documentary film, 'Vendidad' and 'the Collections of Documents and Images of Karbala'.



'Al-Masaalik Wa Al-Mamaalik' which was written in 950s by Estakhri, who in a similar vein to the other geographers and travelers of the Islamic world, elaborates on numerous subjects in his work which were derived from his studies and observations in a detailed manner.

The book provides valuable information on the Islamic lands, particularly about Iran for researchers and scholars and does not suffice to simply geography but also gives information on economic issues, agriculture and handicrafts.

'Al-Masaalik Wa Al-Mamaalik' which contains geographical maps was first printed by Dakuyeh in 1870, and other printed version of the book was presented in 1972. The next printed version was the result of researches made by Muhammad Jaber Abd al-Al al-Hosayni (PhD) which was published in 1961 by Torasona Publication in Cairo.

DR. SHAYDA AHKAMI New Director of Shelter and Veterinary Services

We are delighted to announce the appointment as our Director of Shelter and Veterinary Services. Dr. Akhemi comes to us from VCA Rancho Mirage Animal Hospital where she has served as Associate Veterinarian since 2011. Prior to that, she provided veterinary services to Save a Pet in Desert Hot Springs, the Humane Society of the United States in Ramona, California, and worked as a wildlife rehabilitator at the Fund for Animals Wildlife Rehabilitation Center in Ramona. Dr. Ahkami has served on the board of Friends of the Palm Springs Animal Shelter since August 2013, demonstrating her unwavering commitment to our mission of saving lives and donating her skills and expertise in our surgery suite.



DR. BEHROOZ BROUMAND HONORED



The International Society of Nephrology has selected Dr. Behrooz Broumand, as the recipient of the 2015 ISN Pioneer Award for the Middle East region. The Pioneer Awards recognizes outstanding and sustained contributions to the establishment and development of nephrology, in various emerging regions of the world. Nominations were sought from the ISN Regional Boards and evaluated by the ISN Core Programs Committee. One individual is selected from each region and then ratified by the ISN Executive Committee and Council.

This award recognizes Dr. Broumand's remarkable leadership as the initiator of nephrology and kidney transplantation in Iran. As clinician, researcher and educator, despite many challenging political and economic circumstances, he continued to show the way. He is a role model, innovator and leader, enabling the sustained development of nephrology in Iran.

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Large crowds gather to mourn Iranian singer

MORTEZA PASHAEI



Radio Zamaneh- Thousands of mourners gathered to bid farewell to the popular Iranian singer Morteza Pashaei, who passed away following a long battle with cancer. The *Fararo* website reports that thousands attended the deceased singer's funeral held at Vahdat Hall.

Mohammad Alizadeh, another Iranian pop singer, performed a number of Pashaei's songs. Many of the late singer's peers also attended the ceremony, including Sina Hejazi, Sirvan Khosravi, Zanyar Khosravi and Behnam Safavi.

President Rohani's executive deputy, Mohammad Shariatmadari, issued a statement with a message of condolence for the singer's family and all Iranians.

A message of condolence from the minister of culture of guidance was also read at the ceremony.

Morteza Pashaei began his singing career in 2010 by uploading his initial work to the internet, which immediately brought him widespread popularity. His albums include *Gol-e Bita*, *Yeki Hast* and *Esmesh Eshg-e*.

The 30-year-old singer had been battling gastrointestinal cancer for over a year.



CITY NAMED "SHAHYAR" IN CHINA

Sheda Vasseghi

Sasanian Persian King Narseh, the last Iranian king post-first Islamic invasion of mid-7th c. crowned in exile, is often with us ... as noted before a group of Iranian nobility including Sasanian kings were given refugee in the Chinese court – Tang dynasty; hence, my affections for that Chinese era ... many Iranian princes served as military commanders in the Chinese army and Iranians in general settled in the region in trying to make a new life for themselves. It is notable that a small town near Xinjiang (where many Sassanian nobility had settled) is called "Shahyar" (Persian: companion of the king).

Xinjiang has, since ancient times, been a multicultural region with contacts made with several Iranian peoples, especially the Soghdians of Central Asia. The following is based on Chinese records regarding the region:

Since ancient times Xinjiang (the Western Regions in China) has been home to as many as 30 ancient ethnic groups such as Persians, Greeks, Indians, Chinese, Turks, and the like, some intercultural tools developed early on for social interaction and commerce such as varied linguistic developments ... among 30 languages spoken in Xinjiang region are Iranian Persian and Sogdian ... among 20 written languages are Iranian Persian, Sogdian, and Manichean ... from the 5 different scripts adopted in the region, one used for Yutain, Tubo and Phags-pa come from sisters to Iranians, the Indian Brahmi script; and one used for Sogdian and Turkic scripts come from Persian Aramaic alphabet ...

Readers are invited to see the video below discussing the findings in the region. Note

that a large amount of Sasanian Persian coins have been discovered, alongside other Iranian-style textile; however the expert discussing these findings refrains any mention of their Iranian connections. Instead he provides a general (non-descriptive) overview that refer to inspirations from "some place" ... it would appear that this is consistent with some select academic circles that have a tendency to downplay or avoid mention of possible Iranian origins for cultural artifacts.



A rectangular piece of tapestry coming from the Xingjian Ughur Autonomous Region of China clearly showing Sasanian Persian influences in design and artwork. The physiognomy of the person drawn in the tapestry is Caucasoid as opposed to Asiatic, indicative of the strong Indo-European presence in the region since proto Indo-Europeans (i.e. the Tocharians) first entered the region thousands of years ago (Picture source: blog.hmns.org). Several Western researchers however suggest that the person depicted above is a Greek.

Sheda Vasseghi is an adjunct professor of history at Northern Virginia Community College and a correspondent with Freepressers in relation to Iran's affairs.

ARCHEOLOGISTS DISCOVER ANCIENT TREASURES AT RUSSIAN BURIAL SITE

(taken from Archeology News Network)



The woman's skeleton covered with jewelry and decorations

(Picture Source: State Teachers Training University of Bashkortostan)



Saka Tigr-khanda (Old Persian: pointed-hat Saka/Scythians) as depicted in the ancient Achaemenid city-palace of Persepolis. It was northern Iranian peoples such as the Sakas (Scythians) and their successors, the Sarmatians and Alans, who were to be the cultural link between Iran and ancient Europe

Archeologists have found the intact burial chamber of a noble woman from a powerful tribe that roamed the Eurasian steppes 2,500 years ago in southern Russia, an official said.

The Sarmatians were a group of Persian-speaking tribes that controlled what is now parts of southern Russia, Ukraine and Central Asia from around 500 BC until 400 AD. They were often mentioned by ancient Greek historians and left luxurious tombs with exquisite golden and bronze artifacts that were often looted by gravediggers.

But the burial site found near the village of Filippovka in the Orenburg region has not been robbed – and contained a giant bronze kettle, jewelry, a silver mirror and what appears to be containers for cosmetics, said history professor Gulnara Obydenova who heads the Institute of History and Legal Education in the city of Ufa. Professor Obydenova told RIA Novosti:

The vault – located 4 meters (13 feet) underground – was found in the “Tsar Tumulus,” a group of two dozen mounds where hundreds of golden and silver figurines of deer, griffins and camels, vessels and weapons have been found since the 1980s.

The woman's skeleton was still covered with jewelry and decorations, and her left hand held a silver mirror with an ornamented golden handle, Obydenova said.

The Iranian-speaking Ossetians are the modern-day descendants of the great Sarmatian tribes who once held their mighty sway over Eastern Europe. The descendants of the Sarmatians include Ossetians, an ethnic group living in the Caucasus region, who speak a language related to Persian.

“The find is really sensational also because the burial vault was intact – the objects and jewelry in it were found the way they had been placed by the ancient nomads...”

A comment on the “IRAN AND GERMANY: A 100-YEAR OLD LOVE AFFAIR”

by: **Michael McClain**

November 6, 2014

Dear Sirs:

Commenting on “Iran and Germany: a 100-Year Old Love Affair” in the Fall, 2014 issue of “Persian Heritage”, some precisions are Firstly, all Aryans are Inda-Europeans, but not all Inda-Europeans are Aryans. Until the 19th century, no one had ever applied the name “Aryan” to the Germanic peoples; Herder, Schlegel et al made the rather stupid mistake of confusing the terms “Aryan” and “Indo-European”. The Germanic peoples, though Inda-Europeans, are not Aryans and never were. Only three peoples, all Indo-Europeans ever called themselves “Aryans”, i.e., the Indo-Aryans, the Iranians and the Celts.

Amir Taheri says: “Much later, the Irish also claimed they were Aryans and named their newly-created republic Eire, which means land of the Aryans.” Many falsehoods in a short paragraph.

The Irish, being Celts are Aryans and always have been. In name “Ireland” is not native, but in reality is a Viking word. The native name of Ireland is “Erinn”, or “Erin” in more modern Gaelic, means “land of the Aryans”. “eire is a shorthand for “Saorsat Eireann meaning the Irish Republic, “Eireann” being the adjective form of “Erin”. Besides “Erinn”, “Aryan” is found as an element in a multitude of ancient Celtic place names and tribal names, as I note in my book. Also in my book I devote considerable space to the many special affinities between the Celts on the one hand and the Iranians and Indo-Aryans on the other During the British Raj in India, the British noted the obvious affinities between the Irish and the north Indians. See Kipling’s novel Kim. In other words, there are most excellent grounds for placing the Celts, the Iranians, and the Indo-Aryans in a special, separate grouping within the larger Inda-European context and calling it “the Aryans”.

However, the Germanic peoples are NOT Aryans in any possible meaning of the word.

To put the last nail in the coffin of Hitler’s stupidities, the living language closest to the original Indo-European language is Lithuanian, and the country with the largest percentage of natural blonds is Lithuania, but Lithuanians are not Germanic. So, from whatever point of view, what Hitler said concerning the Aryans is arrant nonsense.

In his recent book Empires of the Silk Road, Christopher Beckwith speaks of the early, close relations between Iranians and Celts at some length and in considerable detail; he also notes that there are no special relations and affinities between the Iranians and the Celts on the one hand and the Germanic peoples on the other.

In Roman times what is today Scotland was known as “Caledonia”, while “Scotia” referred to Ireland. In the 4th century AD a migration from Ireland gave Scotland its name and made the Highlands and the Islands Gaelic-speaking.

According to the Irish tradition, the name “Scotia” is derived from “Scotta”, a Celtic queen in Spain who, as her name indicates, was of Scythian origin, “Scythian” being a Hellenized

form of the Iranian “skuth”, meaning “archer”. One of my paternal great grandmothers was named “Scytha”, the Hellenized form of “Scotta”.

There is a song - commercial, not traditional Irish – whose final strophe goes as follows:

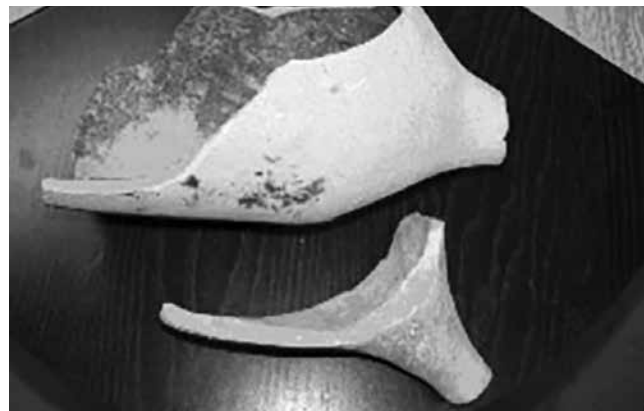
*Then they (the angels) sprinkled it with stardust
Just to make the shamrocks grow
'Tis the only place you'll find them
No matter where you go
Then they sprinkled it with silver
Just to make the lakes so grand
And when they had it finished
Sure they called it “Ireland”.*

The above song must be boycotted. No true Aryan, Celtic son of the ancient Erinn could tolerate the idea that the angels would give the Holy Emerald Isle a Viking name, nor anything which could even remotely suggest that the Vikings were angels.

Sincerely Yours

Sassanians in the Persian Gulf According to Archaeological Data

The article below was first given by Dr. H. Tofighian and the late Dr. Farhang Khademi Nadooshan of Tarbiat Modares University in 2011. This was published on-line by Shapour Suren-Pahlav in the CAIS website in April 2008.



find from the Jalili Coast (Picture Source: CAIS)

Archaeological investigations in the northern coast of the Persian Gulf and in few sites in Khuzistan have yielded evidence for the use of amphorae in Iran, in the Parthian and Sasanian period, in burials as well as trade. No evidence for production centers of amphorae in Iran has yet been found. Nonetheless, given the paucity of excavations and surveys on the coastal regions of Iran and the lack of chemical analysis of the available evidence, the possibility that at least some of the consumed amphorae were made locally must not be ruled out. The amphorae found in these southern regions are mainly of “Torpedo” type. The present paper summarizes the most significant finds of amphorae in the ancient ports of Persian Gulf including discoveries in the course of underwater investigations of Rig Port in 2001.

SUMMARY OF FINDS FROM ANCIENT PORTS OF PERSIAN GULF AND OFF COAST SITES

As early as the 2nd millennium BCE, amphora jars were used in the Eastern Mediterranean; it was produced and used in most commercial centers of Mediterranean world in the two millennia afterwards. The remarkable varied typology of these vessels provides a good basis for the dating of other materials which are found along with amphorae.

In general, the so-called Greek amphorae have relatively wide bases enabling them to stand alone while the Roman type has pointed bottom and need a support. Roman amphora was highly popular in the period from 3rd century BCE to the 3rd century CE and its geographical distribution in the Near East reached as far as ancient Indus. The amphorae to be discussed below are mainly a category of this type, named Torpedo Jars (after their shape) or Persian Gulf amphorae (after their geographical distribution).

The chronological and spatial distribution of finds around Persian Gulf proves their use in the maritime trade through this critical economic route, at least from the beginning of Parthians dominion (3rd century BCE) up to the first two centuries of Islamic era (9th century CE). The Torpedo jars are similar to the Mediterranean type in their elongated body and pointed bottom, but differentiated in the lack of neck and handle and for their relatively wide openings.

Their economic use mainly concerns transportation of valuable liquids such as olive oil and wine, thus a good number of complete vessels or sherds are found to have had bitumen coating inside. However, other goods such as cereal and fish were too transported in this type of container. In Iran, the remains of amphorae are found both on the coast and under sea, the

latter case often understood to be associated with shipwrecks.

FINDS BY THE SEA

Several sites in the Bushehr Peninsula, such as “Radar” (one km south of Tel Pey Tel) and Jalali coasts have revealed remains of Torpedo Jars all coated with bitumen.

Also, some sites in southern coast of the Persian Gulf in UAE have also yielded amphorae of the same type dated to the Sasanian period (Kennet 2007). A summary of evidence from the Rig Port, retrieved by the author follows: The modern day port of Rig is a small town located 25 km southeast of Genaveh. In 2001, reports of pottery and metal objects found by local fishermen lead to the discovery and investigation of an underwater site near the old port town of Rig. The site is about six hectares, not far from the coast, and the finds are collected from the depth of 3-10 meters.

Beside the sherds and complete pieces of Torpedo jars used as liquid containers, finds include glazed blue ceramics, a helmet, a knee cap and a shield, as well as pieces of plain coarse ware and semi coarse ware in the form of storage jars, bowls and pots. (Amir Chaichi, 2005).

Concentration and distribution of many amphorae on the site and a large amorphous stone anchor among the deposited objects suggests a shipwreck as the reason for deposition of material. A similarity in typology of jars from Rig and those collected on the coasts of Bushehr is observed.

OFF COAST FINDS

A complete amphora of the so called Greek type is kept in the National Museum of Iran; the assumed find spot is Susa. Many Parthian and Sasanian sites around Haft Tape, identified by Robert Wenke between 1970-77, yielded amphorae sherds. The sherds were provisionally dated to the middle and late Parthian period. Amphorae sherds were found by Moghaddam, in his survey of “Mianab” plain in Shushtar (Moghadam. A., 2005). Also from Shushtar are shreds found in Golalak, excavated by Rahbar (1966).

Remains of a bitumen coated burial amphorae were found on the ground in the survey of (Kuhmand region) Botol, a site in the Bushehr province in 1995. Several amphorae sherds along with other Parthian ceramics and Seleucid coins were found in the survey of Kuzaran region by Motarjem (1997). Also Amphorae sherds along with architectural remains and other pieces of ceramics were retrieved from a stepped trench in the Parthian site of Bistone.

BURIAL

Several Torpedo jars containing bones were found in a cemetery in the Shoghab region, near Bushehr, on a rocky hill; jars are of the same type but different in size. Some jars were broken and restored after accommodating the bones (unpublished report, Rahbar and Mir Fattah 1966). These Jars were similar to the finds from royal cemeteries of Susa and the Canaanite type, all bitumen coated, with long pointed bottoms.

In the Bushehr region, several other burial amphorae containing bones have been found by local people while digging for different purposes. Several Parthian amphorae have been found in Susa and other archaeological sites in Khuzistan in burials. Parthian burials were mostly placed in the defensive walls of both Acropole and Ville Royale.

A shaft dug in the mud brick wall led to an underground tunnel and several chambers. Some amphorae, all of Torpedo type and bitumen coated, were found in these graves, all broken in the upper part. A few Parthian coins found in the graves were the basis of their dating. One torpedo jar with assumed burial function is kept in the national museum of Iran. This jar is of the kind retrieved from Shogab and Susa cemeteries; its exact place of find is not known.

The Persian Gulf (Torpedo) jars found up to now are comprised of Parthian and Sasanian amphorae. The retrieved Parthian amphorae do not show significant variety in their form and size and were solely used in the burials. The Sasanian amphorae, however, are much more varied in form and size and were used both in burials and for trade.

The distribution of amphorae on the sites far from the sea

in the non-burial context primarily comes from Khuzistan and the coastal provinces of Persian Gulf. This is an indicator that they were used both on land and in the sea trade between the Mediterranean world and the Near East.

A comparative study of typology of amphorae over in the wider regional context, in particular between Iran, Mesopotamia and the southern regions of Persian Gulf could tell much about the cultural and economic interactions of these communities. Nonetheless, our knowledge of the use and distribution of these jars is limited at the moment.

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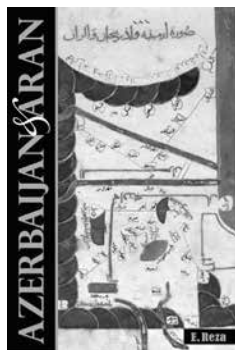
REVIEWS

ENGLISH TRANSLATION OF THE BOOK “AZERBAIJAN AND ARAN (CAUCASIAN ALBANIA)”

Professor Enayatollah Reza

Published by Bennett & Bloom, London, 2014

An important and seminal history book “Azerbaijan and Aran (Caucasian Albania)”, written by the late Professor Enayatollah Reza (1920-2010) was originally published in Persian in 1980, and so far has gone through eight reprints and editions. The book deals in depth with the problems of naming the newly established country of Azerbaijan with a name borrowed from its southern neighbor, the Iranian Province of Azerbaijan in 1918, including the conflicts and problems that this action has created. One of the major issues at present is the official re-writing of history that has been taking place within the Baku establishment as documented in the video below (originally announced in Iranian.com by Dr. Mohammad Ala, recipient of the 2013 Grand Prix Film Italia Award)



The book has been translated into English by Dr. Ara Ghazarian of the Armenian Cultural Foundation of Arlington Massachusetts. It must be noted however that this project was initiated and finally made possible through the hard work and dedication of Rouben Galichian, an accomplished scholar in his own right.

The book has so far been translated into Armenian and Russian, but until now there had not been an English translation of this extremely valuable work. This gap had to be filled and Galichian decided to act upon it. In 2008 he spoke to Professor Reza asking his permission to translate the book to English, to which he graciously consented. Galichian began the hard work of the translation but due to other urgent projects and commitments the partially completed work had to be abandoned.

Then, in 2011, Galichian heard from his friend and scholar Dr Ara Ghazarians of the Armenian Cultural Foundation of Arlington Mass., that he has started the translation of Dr. Reza’s work. Galichian encouraged him and promised to locate suitable maps for the book. Afterwards, Galichian assisted in getting the financial backing and the publication for the English translation of the book. This has resulted in Dr. Ghazarians’ excellently translated and beautifully produced book, to which he has added important explanatory footnotes and complementary information.

Historic defeats of the late Qajar period resulted in loss of territories for Iran to its north and east. In the early decades of the twentieth century, a group of political leaders in the historic Aran (Caucasian Albania), to the north of the Araxes River, which, during the 17-19th centuries was known as Shirvan, renamed their country Democratic Republic of Azerbaijan.

Prominent Iranian scholar and historian, Professor Enayatollah Reza (1920-2010), based on extensive research of historical geography of Iran and the Caucasus, provides a picture of the boundaries and the two territories of Azerbaijan to the south and Aran to the north of the Araxes River, respectively, and the advent of the Turks on the world stage, their movement and penetration into Azerbaijan, the Caucasus and Anatolia. A chapter in this book discusses the cultural character of these lands at the time of the

arrival of the Turks, followed by a response to the claims of the Pan-Turkist historians in Turkey and Azerbaijan, who claim that the Turkish racial element had been present in these territories before others. Other topics in the book include a discussion of the arrival and incorporation of the Turkish language in Azerbaijan and the Aryan roots of the people of Azerbaijan upon whom the Turkish language has been imposed.

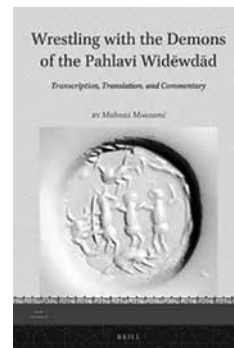
WRESTLING WITH THE DEMONS OF THE PAHLAVI WIDEVDAD

Mahnaz Moazami

(Brill 2014)

This book is one of a series dedicated to the interdisciplinary study of Iran.

It is a fifth-century Middle Persian commentary on the Avestan Videvdat, and describes the rules and regulations that protect pollution caused by dead matter. It recognizes the perpetual presence of the demons, the forces of the Evil Spirit, which should be fought through law-abiding conduct. The book covers many topics from jurisprudence to penalties, procedures for dealing with pollution, purification, and arrangements for funerals. Viewed together, they provide the reader with an exquisite interlace of a community’s concerns.



GARDEN OF THE HEART’S DESIRE

by Mahin Ghanbari

If only one word was used to describe this book it would be “treasure.” The author has compiled a collection of outstanding and beautiful fabrics (textile art), the Persian carpet. Her endeavors to find the pieces of this collection took her around the world. Some were purchased for her own pleasure and enjoyment and others in an effort to preserve the ancient artistic form of Persia.

This particular collection of pieces Garden of the Heart’s Desire is from the Golzar collection. Her intense dedication and passion for Persian textile is exhibited in her educational introduction to the book. What is most fascinating is the extent in which Persian textiles are used in the Persian household, to this day! They play an important role in the daily life of the Persian family and are used as table covers, decoration, wall hangings and gifts. To them it is a part of the story of their life, each piece another chapter.

Ms. Ghanbari describes the book as “a story of the Persian family and heritage, told through allegorical gardens meticulously crafted into magnificent texture.” No one can describe it better.



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The works of the 14th Century poet Hafez can be found in almost every Iranian home - more than 600 years after his death, the writer still offers an insight into his country's identity. In Iran they say there are two books in every household - the Koran and Hafez. One is read, the other is not.

To understand this joke you need do no more than join the millions who regularly throng the tomb of Hafez, the 14th Century poet of Shiraz and Iran's national hero, as I did one recent afternoon. The atmosphere was buzzing, happy and relaxed - Iran at its best.

Day and night the tomb, raised up on a beautifully decorated dais surrounded by its own fragrant rose gardens, water channels and orange trees, is crowded with devotees stroking Hafez's alabaster sarcophagus, declaiming his verses, relishing his clever plays on words.

Hafez represents all the rich complexities of the Iranian identity. His brilliant use of metaphors in their native Farsi language unites them.

But there is another reason the tomb is so popular. In today's Islamic Republic of Iran it is hard to express resistance to the powers that be. The ruling clerical elite has consolidated its grip on power. It uses the rhetoric of revolution while crushing opposition. President Hassan Rouhani's smiling face has projected a new image outside the country, but inside everyone tells me things are worse, more oppression, and more executions than ever before.

But dissent can be displayed in subtle ways. Thanks to Hafez, Shiraz is Iran's most liberal city. Women's fashion is the giveaway, affecting the whole mood of the place. While women are obliged by law to cover themselves from head to toe, in Shiraz the women dress almost outrageously by Iranian standards. The compulsory headscarf is highly coloured and worn dangling precariously from the back of the head, hardly covering any hair at all; the young sport tight black leggings topped by close-fitting slinky mini-coats, each one daring the next to raise the hemline further.

Far from concealing the feminine curves as the rules dictate, the outfits flaunt them, and the lively groups both young and old, men and women mix freely, laughing and chatting together. This is



The Book in Every Iranian Home

Diana Darke

*Don't make me fall in love
with that face.*

*Don't let the drunk
the wine seller embrace.*

*Sufi, you know
the pace of this path.*

*The lovers and drunks
don't disgrace.*

(Rubaiyee 21, by Hafez)



Iran at its least compliant, a far cry from the religious conservatism the establishment seeks to impose on its population. A famous actor arrives to pay his respects and is mobbed Hollywood-style by adoring fans.

As the sun disappears from the sky and the illuminations come on round the tomb, the atmosphere becomes ever more festive. People start singing and reciting their favourite poems. Children dangle their feet in the pools, giggling and soaking up their parents' infectious high spirits.

The scene conceals the paradoxes of Iran but, thanks to the Mullah's policy of education for all, there are some surprising changes afoot in Iranian society.

More women than men now graduate from university. The birth rate has dropped so dramatically, to one child per family, that the clerics have introduced financial incentives for couples to breed more. Most refuse, saying that it is still too expensive to have more than one child.

While the west remains obsessed with Iran's nuclear enrichment it is an open secret that the well-connected clerics and businessmen enrich themselves through sanction busting.

When I hesitate over buying a Persian rug through lack of cash, knowing Western credit cards are banned from use inside Iran, the carpet dealer disregards my concerns and simply rings a friend in Dubai to seal the transaction.

Unfortunately for the mullahs the mystic poetry of Hafez, besides lauding the joys of love and wine, also targeted religious hypocrisy. "Preachers who display their piety in prayer and pulpit," he wrote 600 years ago, "behave differently when they're alone. Why do those who demand repentance do so little of it?"

Bans apply to many things in Iran, including the BBC, yet the BBC's Farsi is the most watched TV channel here. Facebook, Twitter, GooglePlus and Instagram are all officially blocked.

Rouhani is calling for internet restrictions to be eased but the last word on such matters rests with the supreme leader, who is so far unrelenting.

Small wonder the people of Iran comfort themselves with the poetry of Hafez. Even the mullahs cannot ban their own national poet.



Persian Dance and Its Forgotten History

part two

Nima Kiann (2002)

Founder and Artistic Director of Les Ballet Persans

Persian Heritage: Our thanks is given to the author and Iran Chamber Society for this article

ISLAM FORBIDS DANCING

Dance as a respected social behavior and as a part of the Persian culture existed and was elaborated through millennia; alike the antique dance of China, Greece and India until the Arabs invaded Iran. Their new religion prohibited dancing, and this practically implied the extinction of the antique Persian dance traditions.

The English dance historian, Lilly Grove, writes in her book "Dancing" which was published in 1895: "Mohametan views concerning music and dancing have greatly narrowed the circle of amusements in Persia. Dancing girls were numerous at Court until the reigning family ascended the throne of Persia; but at present the dance is given up to women of low condition and of slack morality, or to young boys dressed as women."

Centuries of political instability, civil war and occupation by foreign powers, first Arabs and then Mongols resulted in a slow but steady

disappearance of some Persian prehistoric heritage like the dance traditions.

Beside the religious prohibition, a historic tragedy and a national humiliation was the other important reason for Iranians, not to appreciate the art of dance for a long time to come. After the fall of Persian Empire, when the country was torn into pieces, Iranian women and young girls were slaved and soiled in the slave bazaars of the new conquerors. They were forced to sexual intercourse and to erotic dances for pleasing these uncivilized rulers.

One corrupted caliph, Harun ul-Rashid, had approximately three thousand musicians and dancers in his palace who were at his disposal, among them many Persians. This although dance and music was strictly forbidden according to the Islamic instructions. A particular Iranian family named as "Mowseli" has been mentioned as the responsible for the caliph's entertainment.

This historic shadow and national dishonor, for a people

who were losing their cultural identity and human dignity, characterized their view of dance during centuries to come. No Iranian man wished to see his woman dancing in the presence of a stranger. This is why the attitude of Iranian Muslims toward dancing has been of a more conservative nature compared to other Muslim countries throughout the history.

SUFISM AND RISING OF SAMA' DANCE

By and by dancing appeared in the Persian mystic and Sufi faith. It took a central place in literature and was performed by religious men. Hafiz (d. 1388), Saadi (d. 1292) and Mevlana (d. 1273) were three great Persian poets who extolled dancing in their poems and used this art form as a symbol of the power of life. Sufism recommends dancing as a spiritual instrument to "become one with God", which is the final goal in this faith.

One of the great spiritual masters and poetic geniuses of Persian literature is Jalal ud-

Din Rumi, known as Mevlana. He is the most appreciated Sufi of all times, who made dancing a central element in his Sufi doctrine. He was born in Balkh, in the province of Khorasan in the northeast of Iran and flew to the west, away from the invasion of Mongols in the 12th century. He finally resided in the city of Konya where his mausoleum is located today.

It was there he established and developed his order with strong portions of spiritism. Due to the Sufi instructions he stands in the middle point of this belief as the great Sheik, the "spiritual leader" in connection with the hidden, divine dimension and guides his followers "upwards" to the "Immortal".

The goal will be achieved by practicing a strong ecstatic ritual performed with music and dance as the central strain. This charismatic performance is called Sama' and represents a spiritual rapprochement to the "Creator" and is practiced until today.

Jean Börlin namely cho-

reographed his ballet "Whirling Dervishes" for "Les Ballets Suédois" in 1920:s, inspired by this great Sufi faith and its ritual.

DANCE, A POPULAR ART IN QADJAR COURT

The only original form of Persian dance in its existing condition, which has survived throughout the centuries, is the folkloric dance of various Iranian focal groups and in particular the nomads. Few dance shows occurred in bigger cities and in public, not at least because of the religious belief and the Islamic prohibition in a strongly traditional, religious and undeveloped society.

But it was different in the royal court of the Qadjars. Old dance traditions can be found there, especially among Qadjar women, even if the art of dancing had no popularity among ordinary people.

However, the rise of the Qadjars in 1796 meant a liberalization of people's attitude toward dancing, although this art form remained in the monopoly of the royal court. There are illustrations such as both splendid paintings and texts in form of memoirs and official reports emphasizing the popularity of these dances in court and among the elite and bourgeois families.

Thus dancing became much in vogue and a social phenomenon, usually performed during diverse entertaining programs like coronations, marriage festivities and ceremonies of Norouz (the Iranian new year celebration).

In 1998 an art exhibition was arranged in the Brooklyn Museum in New York, USA, where paintings from the Qadjar era was shown. Some of these paintings portray dancing court women at festivities or professional female dancers who entertain the guests.

As mentioned, the Iranian folkloric dance was more de-

veloped outside the big cities. Lilly Grove, who I quoted earlier, has reported about a kind of a Tarantella looking dance, which existed in Buzabatt, near the city of Kashan and which looked similar to the Italian one in Sicily.

Further she writes, "In Persia the student of the history of the dance meets with the same difficulties in his investigations as he does in Scotland. The religion of the country has endeavored not only to suppress the pastime, but also to forbid any record of it."

Another English dance researcher, E. G. Browne, who traveled in Iran and studied the Persian dance in late nineteenth century, has mapped folk dances in the province of Khorasan and Kurdistan. "Yet in some remote provinces of Persia there are dances performed by peasants at night, and at Tehran itself Georgian girls are employed as dancers".

He speaks with admiration of the dancing boys of Persia; he praises their "elaborate posturing, which is usually more remarkable for acrobatic skill than for grace, at any rate according to western ideas."

Thanks to the care and efforts of some Iranian minority groups, such as Iranian Armenians and Jews, a fraction of what is called Persian dance has been saved throughout the history among ordinary people. Obviously, several Iranian artistic and cultural heritage including the art of dance would have been lost, if it was not for the devotion of these people.

We Persian Iranians owe a debt of gratitude to our minorities, who in some cases have lived in Iran for thousands of years, because our cultural heritage thus survived difficult times of turbulence and social decadence. Any tradition of Persian dance, which could have been saved, has been preserved through these minorities.

to be continued

*The Birth of God Mithra
& Significance of Winter Solstice
in Iranian Culture & Heritage*

Festival of Zayesh Mehr (YALDA)

By Massoume Price
Edited by CAIS (2010)



Zayeshmehr also known as Yalda and Shab-e Cheleh in Persian is celebrated on the eve of the first day of the winter (December 21-22) in the Iranian calendar, which falls on the Winter Solstice and forty days before the next major Iranian festival “Jashn-e Sadeh (fire festival)”.

As the longest night of the year, the Eve of Zayeshmehr or the Birth of Mithra (Shab-e Yalda) is also a turning point, after which the days grow longer. It symbolised the triumph of Light and Goodness over the powers of Darkness.

Yalda celebration has great significance in the Iranian calendar. It is the eve of the birth of Mithra, the Sun God, who symbolised light, goodness and strength on earth. Shab-e Zayeshmehr is a time of joy. The festival was considered one of the most important celebrations in ancient Iran and continues to be celebrated to this day, for a period of more than 5000 years.

Yalda is a Syriac word meaning birth (NPer. *milād* is from the same origin) in the 3rd century CE, Mithra-worshippers adopted and used the term ‘yalda’ specifically with reference to the birth of Mithra.

The original Avestan and Old-Persian term for the celebration is unknown, but it is believed that in Parthian-Pahlavi and Sasanian-Pahlavi (Middle-Persian) it was known as *Zāyishn* (*zāyīšn-i mithr/mihr* – birth of Mithra). The New Persian “Shab-e Cheleh Festival” is a relatively recent term. The celebration was brought to Iranian plateau by the Aryan (Iranian) migrants around middle of the 2nd millenniums BCE, but the original date of celebration could be reach as far as pre-Zoroastrian era, around 3rd to 4th millennium BCE.

In Ancient Iran, the start of the solar year has been marked to celebrate the victory of light over darkness and the renewal of the Sun. The last day of the Iranian month of “Āzar” (21st December) is the longest night of the year, when the forces of Ahriman (darkness) are assumed to be at their peak. While the next day, the first day of the month of “Dey” known as “Khorram rūz” or “Khur rūz” (the day of the sun, 22 December) symbolises the creator, Ahura Mazda (the Lord of Wisdom). Since the days are getting longer and the nights shorter, this day marks the victory of the sun over darkness, and goodness over evil. The occasion was celebrated in the festival of “Deygān” dedicated to Ahura Mazda, on the first day of the month of “Dey” (December-January).

Fires would be burnt all night to ensure the defeat of the forces of Ahriman. There would be feasts, acts of charity and a number of Zoroastrian deities honoured and prayers performed to ensure the total victory of the sun that was essential for the protection of winter crops. There would be prayers to God Mithra (Mithr/Mihr/Mehr) and feasts in his honour, since Mithra is an

īzad (av. Yazata) and responsible for protecting “the light of the early morning”, known as “Hāvangāh”. It was also believed that Ahura Mazda would grant people’s wishes in that day.

One of the themes of the festival was the temporary subversion of order, as the masters and servants reversed roles. The king dressed in white would change place with ordinary people. A mock king was crowned and masquerades spilled into the streets. As the old year died, rules of ordinary living were relaxed. This tradition in its original form persisted until the fall of Sasanian dynasty (224-651 CE), and is mentioned by the Persian polymath Bīrūnī and others in their recordings of pre-Islamic rituals and festivals.

The Iranian traditions merged into ancient Rome belief system, in a festival dedicated to the ancient god of seedtime, Saturn. The Romans exchanged gifts, partied and decorated their homes with greenery. Following the Iranian tradition, the usual order of the year was suspended. Grudges and quarrels would be forgotten and wars interrupted or postponed. Businesses, courts and schools were closed. Rich and poor became equal, masters served slaves, and children headed the family. Cross-dressing and masquerades, merriment of all kinds prevailed. A mock king, the Lord of Misrule, was crowned. Candles and lamps chased away the spirits of darkness.

Another related Roman festival celebrated at the same time was dedicated to “Sol Invictus” (the Invincible Sun) dedicated to the God Mithra. This ancient Iranian cult was spread into the Roman world by Emperor Elagabalus (r. 218 to 222 CE) and declared as the god of state.

With the spread of Christianity, Christmas celebration became the most important Christian festival. In the third century various dates, from December to April, were celebrated by Christians as Christmas. January 6th, was the most favoured day because it was thought to be Jesus’s Baptismal day (in the Greek Orthodox Church this continues to be the day to celebrate Christmas). In year 350, December 25th it was adopted in Rome and gradually almost the entire Christian church agreed to that date, which coincided, with the Winter solstice and the festivals, Sol Invicta and Saturnalia. Many of the rituals and traditions of the pre-Christian festivals were incorporated into the Christmas celebration and are still observed to this date.

It is not clear when and how the word “Yalda” entered to the Persian language. The massive persecution of early Christians in Rome which brought many Christian refugees into the Sasanian Empire and it is claimed that these Christians re-introduced and popularised “Yalda” in Iran. Gradually “Shab-e Yalda” and “Shab-e Cheleh” became synonymous and the two are used interchangeably. With the conquest of Islam the religious significance of the

ancient Iranian festivals was lost. Today “Shab-e Cheleh” is merely a social occasion, when family and friends get together for fun and merriment. Different kinds of dried fruits, nuts, seeds and fresh winter fruits are consumed. The presence of dried and fresh fruits is reminiscence of the ancient feasts to celebrate and pray to the ancient deities to ensure the protection of the winter crops.

Iranian Jews, who are amongst the oldest inhabitants of the country, in addition to “Shab-e Cheleh”, also celebrate the festival of “Illanout” (tree festival) at around the same time. Illanout is very similar to the Shab-e Cheleh celebration. Candles are lit and all varieties of dried and fresh winter fruits are served. Special meals are prepared and prayers are performed. There are also very similar festivals in many parts of Southern Russia that are identical to “Shab-e Cheleh” with local variations. Sweetbreads are baked in the shape of humans and animals. Bonfires are made and dances resemble crop harvesting. Comparison and detailed studies of all these celebrations no doubt will shed more light on the forgotten aspects of this wonderful and ancient festival, where merriment was the main theme of the festival.

Because Shab-e Yalda is the longest and darkest night, it has become to symbolise many things in Persian poetry; separation from a beloved one, loneliness and waiting. After Shab-e Yalda a transformation takes place - the waiting is over, light shines and goodness prevails.

*‘The sight of you each morning is a New Year
Any night of your departure is the eve of Yalda’*

(Sa’adi)

*‘With all my pains, there is still the hope of recovery
Like the eve of Yalda, there will finally be an end’*

(Sa’adi)

Happy Cyrus Day

Amil Imani



October 29th has been designated as the international day of Cyrus the Great, king of Persia, who declared the first charter of human rights in the world, also known as the Cyrus Cylinder. In 539 BC, Persian troops entered the city of Babylon, without encountering any resistance. On October 29th, Cyrus himself entered the city, assuming the titles of “King of Babylon, King of Sumer and Akkad, King of the four corners of the world.” The Cyrus Cylinder was placed under the walls of Babylon as a foundation deposit, following a long Babylonian tradition.

Cyrus the Great proclaimed more than 2500 years ago: “Today, I announce that everyone is free to choose a religion. People are free to live in all regions and take up a job provided that they never violate other’s rights.” Cyrus the Great declared himself not a conqueror, but a liberator and the rightful successor to the crown. In the book of Isaiah, Cyrus, the King of Persia, a non-Jew was called the “mash’aka” God, according to Isaiah when he wrote: “Thus said the Lord to his ‘mash’aka (anointed), to Cyrus” (Isaiah 45:1). Jeremiah also told that Cyrus was commissioned by God to go to Jerusalem and build the Second Temple.

The Iranian People of China

sender: Ardeshir Lotfalian

The western part of Xinjiang was within Sassanid Empires borders, around 450 A.D. and the inhabitants of these regions were referred to as “Cina-deva-gotra” (from Sanskrit). The name literally means “descendant of Han and the sun-god.”

The Tokharians (Yuezhi) and The Saka (Scythians) were the first group of People who settled Tarim-Basin. They were both indo-european people. We know of the language of the Saka via the kingdoms of Khotan and Tumxuk in what is now Xinjiang, China. The language and dialects are classified as a part of the Middle Iranian family of languages. Other languages in this group are Khwarezmian (Chorasmian), Sogdian and Bactrian. Originally, these languages would have all derived from the language of the Zoroastrian scriptures, the Avesta. According to Litvinsky and Vorobyova-Desyatovskaya, both the Saka dialects share features with modern Wakhi and Pashto. Many Prakrit terms were borrowed from Khotanese into the Tocharian languages. The Sakan language is also known as Khotanese. Khotanese itself is linguistically divided into old and new Khotanese. The Tocharians and the Khotanese Saka would eventually mix and become one group. This happened due to the successive invasions by Turko Monglo groups such as Xiongnu, Uyghur, and Kyrgyz. These Tukic Nations absorbed and integrated much of the original Iranian people of Xinjiang.

Jean Henri Dunant

Hooshang Guilak

“The man of genius does not ordinarily soar easily to heights to dominate the earth, but hacks a way through a thousand obstacles; he is long unknown, fiercely criticized and often rejected by half his generation.”

Franz Liszt

AUGUST 3, 2002

In the administration building, at the Landegg International University, in a small town, northeastern Switzerland, I asked the assistant administrator “Is there any place around that we could visit?”

“Yes Sir.” She said directing my attention to the stands in a corner of the room. I picked up leaflets for localities in the vicinities of Weinacht. The one being the closest was the town of Heiden. It was in the southeast of Weinacht, a little over a mile up the mountain. It briefly described the attractions of the city, among them, “Jean Henri Dunant’s Museum.” I had no idea who he was. Inquiries from the employees of the university failed to furnish any worthwhile information. The place sounded mysterious. It was an instant decision to pay a visit to Heiden and see the museum.

Couple of days later, blessed with abundant sunshine, we started our much thought about trip. The distance of a little over a mile took us over fifteen minutes. Absence of fog let us enjoy the beauty of the nature; the narrow tortuous road flanked in one side by the picturesque small summits of the mountain chains and on the other side by the beautiful valleys with grazing cows and sheep, and a marvelous view of the Lake Constance.

The town square was small, surrounded by remarkable buildings, all about the same sizes and heights. In the center was a beautiful garden with well-maintained trees, shrubberies and flowers. Several streets had their starts or endings in the corners of this garden. The

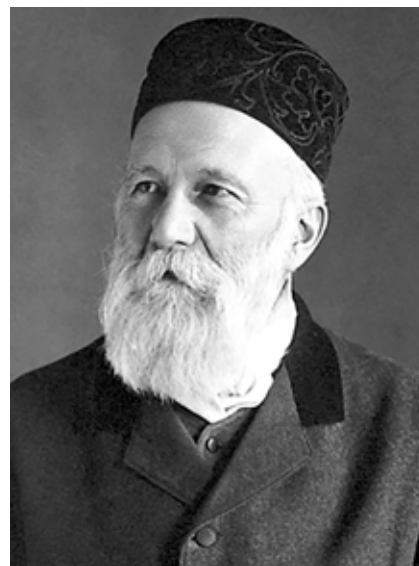
city had a population of a little over 2000. In the centuries past through the mid-twenties, it was a haven for the rich and aristocrat Europeans. There were signs hanged on the light poles with arrows pointing toward the Dunant Museum.

The sole attendant of the museum at the time was a Polish-Swiss lady, Mrs. Frei. She welcomed us; the only visitors on that early hour. There was a minimal fee of about five dollars per person. The museum was a transformed large building, redesigned to accommodate its new function. There were many artifacts, but nothing similar to what one expects to see in a similar national or international institution.

She gave us a brief history of Jean Henri Dunant and showed us a 45 minute film about his life and his achievements. We could not be more surprised by what we heard and saw. What an outstanding human being he was. Intrigued by what we were told and noticed, I found myself compelled to look deeper into this man life.

Jean Henri Dunant: borne in Geneva, Switzerland, on May 8, 1828. From the early age he showed concerns for human wellbeing. In his youth, he joined the “Elms Society”, (Société d’Elms). Also, at the same time he formed the “Thursday Evening Society” where they would meet and try to help the unfortunates, the sick, and even the prisoners.

Without having a formal education, he was extremely bright in finance and trade. At the age of 26, he represented the firm, “The Setif-Colonie Company of Geneva for North Africa and Sicily (Compagnie Genevoise des Colonie de Setif en Afrique du Nord et de Sicile). He had to make visit to these areas. It was during this trip that for the first time he took cognizance of the evil of slavery. Disheartening effects of this human tragedy weighed heavily on his mind, forcing him to write a book on the subject, “Notes to Tunisian Reagence; Slavery among the Moslems and the United States of America” (Notice Sur la Regence de Tunis. L’Esclavage chez les Musulmantset au Etats-Unis d’Amerique). This book found its way into the United States, apparently just before or during the civil war, and accordingly had some impact on the US Government’s policy. It was through his efforts that finally on February 1, 1875, the International Congress was formed in London for the full and definitive abolition of “The Sale of Negroes and the



Slave Trade.”

He created a business in North Africa near the town of Mons-Gémila in Algeria, The Mons-Gémila Mills Company. Needing to obtain water right for his business, he was forced to seek the help of the French emperor, Napoleon the Third (Algeria was a French colony at that time). The Emperor was fighting the Austrian Army in the region of Solferino, Italy (the greatest European war of the nineteenth century). Dunant traveled to the war zone but was not permitted to meet Napoleon. Instead, he witnessed the most appalling effect of destruction and savagery of the war. He could not understand the futility of the big governments’ actions, with the end results for their nations: “death and misery.” Wounded soldiers and dead bodies were scattered in a fifteen square kilometers of the war theater (That war caused close to 40,000 deaths).

Lack of food, water, and care for wounded, had created a heinous scene. The heartbreaking cry of the injured, asking for mercy was something not acceptable to any decent human beings. He recounted what he was hearing from the injured soldiers, “Ah! Sir, we fought valiantly, and now we have been left to die.”

There was no care available for the wounded, neither parties would engage in saving or helping them, nor burying the dead. Dunant was gravely touched by what he saw. On his return, in 1862, he published the book that made him famous overnight; “A Souvenir from Solferino,” (Un Souvenir de Solferino). His efforts paid off. The book became an instant success. People were aroused, thus forc-

ing the European governments to pay attention to what was going on. They got together and formed societies to help the war victims, mainly the soldiers, and later on, other military personnel.

As a remedy he put forward that “All nations of the world should come together and form a relief society providing care for the wounded.”

He suggested that volunteers should be trained in taking care of the injured, and to notify their next of kin. Also, the parties at war had to give these caregivers safe passage enabling them to perform their duties.

On February 7, 1863, “The Geneva Society of the Public works” (Société Genevoise d’Utilité Publique) appointed a five men committee to evaluate Durant’s suggestion. Durant was also asked to serve on that committee. The committee created what we know today as, “The Red Cross.” The emblem of the Red Cross, contrary to general belief, does not by itself represent a religious emblem. It is the reverse of the Swiss flag, composed of five red blacks on a white base.

In August 22, 1864, twelve nations signed a treaty, known as the Geneva Convention of 1864. They gave neutrality to Sanitary Personnel (Red Cross workers).

Dunant working hard in his humanitarian project neglected his business. He went bankrupt and was sued by the shareholders and convicted in a Geneva court. He lost everything. According to friends he became so poor that he was living at the level of beggars. He wrote that “He dined on bread crumbs, blackened his coat with ink, and whitened his collar with chalk and slept out of doors.”

From 1875-1895, he lived in solitude, before settling in Heiden. For the first time in 1890, a teacher, Wilhelm Sonderegger informed the Swiss that Dunant was alive. No one took notice.

In 1892, he was moved to Heiden Hospice, room 12, under the care of a humanitarian physician, Dr. Altherr. He remained there for 18 years. In 1895, he was rediscovered; this time by a journalist from St. Gallen, George Baumbergen. He wrote a great article about the founder of the Red Cross, living in poverty in a hospice in Heiden. The article received world-wide attention. Help began pouring in for Dunant. Many dignitaries: kings, queens and high society groups sent him financial help. In 1901, he became the first recipient of the Nobel

Peace prize, which he shared with the French philanthropist, Frédéric Passy.

He was not only the founder of the Red Cross, but he was also instrumental in the creation of the Young Men Christian Association (YMCA), making it one of the most active European institutions.

Jean Henri Durant died on October 30, 1910 in room 12 at the Heiden Hospice, now the Durant Museum. Per his request he was buried in an ordinary fashion in a Zurich cemetery, and without any fanfare. In his will he instructed that all his worldly goods be given to charity organizations in Switzerland and Norway.

I was touched beyond myself by this man’s history. I purchased his book. “A souvenir from Solferino” and read it from cover to cover. It was a sad moment for me to realize once again that the good men will never get the help needed by the general population in combating the evils of the human race.

Back home, in Houston, I painted his portrait from a small black and white photo and sent it to Heiden. The painting reached its destination on November 1, 2003, a day after the yearly ceremony of his death. It became a part of the museum displays.

JULY 2014:

After twelve years we made another visit to Heiden for a three weeks rest. We met Mrs. Frei, still the curator of the museum. She received us warmly. This time the museum was much more crowded. Student from the other parts of the country were there by the group to know about the man for whom the institution was created. His portrait was on the wall on the main hall.

History shows us that many men like Durant tried hard and spent their lives to show and guide us through to none existing and often erroneously and imagined entity called “Human morality and integrity.” Alas, those great men never achieved their goal, only because the society failed to extend them a helping hand.

Today’s war crimes are being committed in every corners of the world: Palestine-Israeli conflict, Iraq, Afghanistan, and Pakistan, and Syria; just to name a few.

I am reminded of the Edmund Burke’s (1729-1797) phrase:

“The only thing necessary for the triumph of evil is for the good men to do nothing.”

PARDIS C. SABETI

D.PHIL. (OXON), M.D.



Wikipedia: Pardis C. Sabeti is an Iranian-American computational biologist, medical geneticist and evolutionary geneticist, who developed a bioinformatics statistical method which identifies sections of the genome that have been subject to natural selection and an algorithm which explains the effects of genetics on the evolution of disease.

In 2014, Sabeti headed a group, which analyzed the genetics of the Ebola samples, pinpointing a single late 2013 introduction from an unspecified animal reservoir into humans. RNA changes suggest that the first human infection was followed by exclusive human-to-human transmissions.

Sabeti is an associate professor in the Center for Systems Biology and Department of Organismic and Evolutionary Biology at Harvard University and on the faculty of the Center for Communicable Disease Dynamics at the Harvard School of Public Health, and is a senior associate member at the Broad Institute.

Sabeti was born in 1975 in Tehran, Iran to Nancy and Parviz Sabeti. Sabeti studied biology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology and graduated with a Bachelor of Science in 1997 where she was a member of the varsity tennis team and class president, and was then a Rhodes Scholar at University of Oxford and completed her doctorate in evolutionary genetics in 2002, and graduated summa cum laude with a Doctor of Medicine at Harvard Medical School in 2006. She has received a Burroughs Wellcome Fund Career Award in the Biomedical Sciences, a Packard Foundation award in Science and Engineering, and an NIH Innovator Award.

Sabeti is also the lead singer and writer for the rock band Thousand Days.

A Perpetual Paradigm on the Concept of Time, Calendar, and Norouz

last part

DAVOOD N. RAHNI

THE OLYMPIC ERA

In honor of Zeus, the Olympiad was celebrated by the Greeks every four years since 776 BCE. Referred to as Attic calendar, it was a lunar-solar one of 12 months of 29 or 30 days. A month began on the day when the moon would first showed after conjunction, divided into periods of ten days or decades. The year began at the summer solstice, around July 2. The Olympic Games were held on the 11th through the 15th day after the New Moon following the summer solstice. The Olympian months were: 1 Hecatombaen, 2 Metageitnion, 3 Boedromion, 4 Pyanepsion, 5 Maemacterion, 6 Poseideon, 7 Gamelion, 8 Anthesterion, 9 Elaphebolion, 10 Munychion, 11 Thargelion, 12 Scirophorion. The Olympia Era epoch is July 9, 776 BCE.

THE ERA OF TYRE

The Phoenicians, a seafaring people from as far back as 600 BCE, had initially used Babylonian, Assyrian and Chaldean calendars in turn. However, after the conquest of their territories by Alexander, especially their Headquarters Tyre in 333-332 BCE, they adopted a calendar similar to the Macedonian's around 125 BCE. The New Year was celebrated 17 days later than the Macedonian's, and the whole calendar was abandoned after the Roman conquest that followed. The era of the Tyre epoch is October 19, 125 BCE.

ROMAN CALENDAR

Romulus, the legendary founder of Rome is credited with devising the Roman 365-day solar calendar that consisted of ten months: March, April, May, June, Quintrilis, Sextilis, September, October, November, and December. Roman King Numa Popilius reformed the calendar in 715 BCE by adding January and February. He later devised a lunar based calendar of 354 days, but since even numbers were considered unlucky, he added a day making it 365 days. Again, the spring was when the New Year began. The Roman calendar epoch is 715 BCE.

THE ARMENIAN CALENDAR

The era of Armenians was established

in the mid-6th Century CE, although the nation herself had been established as early as the early 5th century CE. Previously, the residents of the area in eastern Asia Minor had used Babylonian and Greek calendars. The Armenian calendar is based on a vague solar year of 365 days only, and makes no allowance for a leap year. The calendar was replaced by the Julian calendar after the full advent of [catholic] Christianity in the area. The Armenian epoch is July 9, 552 CE.

THE ISLAMIC CALENDAR

Computed from the Hejira, the flight of the Prophet Mohammad from Mecca to Medina, the epoch in this still lunar calendar is, therefore, equivalent to be the sunset of July 16, 622 CE. A purely 354 days lunar calendar of 12 months, each comprised of 29 days, 12 hours, 44 minutes and 2.90 seconds, with periodical addition of a day to correct for a leap year, it consistently moves back 11 days for each solar year equivalent. The Islamic months are: Muharram, Safar, Rabi I, Rabi II, Jamada I, Jamada II, Rajab, Sha'ban, Ramadan, Shawwal, Dhu al-qada, and Dhu al-Hijjah.

The Islamic epoch is the year of the Prophet Mohammad migrating from Mecca to Medina to take refuge there from his Meccan persecutors. While Saudi Arabia and other smaller Arab countries in the Persian Gulf area utilize this calendar as the official government calendar, in most other Muslim countries it is used for religious purpose. A modified solar version of it with Persian names of the months and many pre-Islamic Persian along with Islamic observances is utilized in Iran, has been used for centuries.

FASLI (SOOR SAN) CALENDAR

This is one of the calendars that was devised and used in Asia Minor and India after the advent of Islam. It is comprised of 12 months of 30 days each, with an extra five or six (leap year) days added in the end. It follows another rather interesting complicated cyclical structure of 10, 100, and 1000 years.

The calendar used to begin in late May according to the Julian calendar and

now begins in early June according to the Gregorian calendar as adopted in 1582 by the Catholic Church. Certain forms of this calendar are still used in the Middle East. Fasli (Soor San) epoch is May 24, 600 CE. The names of the Fasli months are: Baune, Abib, Meshri, Tot, Babe, Hatur, Kyak, Tabe, Mashir Amshir, Buramat, Barsude, and Bashans.

AFRICAN CALENDAR

Until the mid-20th century, historians had wrongly assumed that except for Egypt there were no mentionable civilizations in Africa. This assumption was, however, proven wrong when many archaeological discoveries dating back to 6th Century BCE of the six Western and Central Empires: Nok, Benin, Mali, Songhay, Kanem Bornu, and Ancient Ghana. Among Africa's peoples- Negroid, Semitic, Berber and Hametic-time was regulated by their way of life as hunters, gatherers, farmers and nomads. Generally speaking, unwritten calendars were kept by correlating the motion of the moon with annual seasons: a wet, a growing and a hot season. These groups recognized the times of the solstices and equinoxes as well as rising and setting of bright stars. Sirius, the brightest of such stars played a prominent role in the African Calendars. After the arrival of the Persians in 6th century BCE, the Greeks in the 3rd Century BCE, the Romans in the 1st century, the Arabs in the 6th century and other conquerors most of the original African calendars went into oblivion.

EGYPTIAN CALENDAR

The Egyptians first had a lunar calendar, but as time progressed they attempted to bring it in line with solar motion. The initial 360 days-based calendar was finally changed to 360+5 days during the 8th century BCE. The Egyptian calendar is the only one based on geophysical rather than astronomical fact, dependent on the rising and falling of Nile flood lines. The Egyptian epoch is August 29, 293 BCE. There are variations for Coptic and Ethiopians (Abys-sinians) names of the months as presented in the Table IV.

SOUTHEAST ASIA CALENDAR

The earliest recorded Southeastern history dates back to Kali Yuga, January 21, 3102 BCE. In the 11th Century, Islam began to spread to the East, and within a short period of time the entire region was controlled by Muslim governments. In the 16th century, European influence began to penetrate the area, thereby imposing the Western calendar. After colonization in the 20th century, many nations revived their local calendars and used it along with the Gregorian calendar. A number of outside calendars, such as the Zoroastrian, were used as well. In the 16th and 17th centuries, Akbar, Mogul emperor of India (1556-1605) who had become disillusioned with orthodox Islam, promulgated an eclectic creed of his own, derived from Islam, Zoroastrianism, Hinduism, and Christianity. The Akbar calendar epoch is February 19, 1556.

The Buddhist lunar Calendar, originating in India, is used extensively in Southeast Asia, e.g., Sri Lanka, Thailand, Cambodia, Laos, Vietnam, and Burma.

FAR EAST CALENDAR

The Chinese calendar is the longest unbroken sequence of time measurement in history. Its epoch is said to be 2953 BCE. The calendar was later adopted by Koreans and Japanese. It is based on the apparent motion of the sun, moon, and the planets, which is expressed by the Chinese concept of three Roads: Red, Yellow and White through the heavens. It is based on 60-year cycles. The Chinese New Year falls on the new moon nearest to the 15th degree of Aquarius. In modern times this corresponds to about the 4th or the 5th of February so that the new moon could be 15 days on either side of that date. The year is divided into 24 periods of about two weeks each, i.e., 150 on the 360o circle. Zodiac symbols are still used to names years in a 12-year cycles: rat, ox, tiger, hare, dragon, snake, horse, sheep, monkey, rooster, dog, and pig. The Chinese adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1911 for official purposes, but the ancient calendar is still used extensively. The year 2000 CE is the year of the dragon according to Chinese calendar.

CENTRAL AMERICA CALENDAR

The oldest writing in the Americas known today is two carved tablets with calendric information produced by the Zapotec people in present-day Oaxaca, Mexico around 500 BCE (National Geographic,

Vol. 196, No. 2, August 1999). The many ancient civilizations of Central America-the Mayan, Aztec, Inca, etc. employed almost the same calendar, differing only in the epoch and the New Year. For instance, rock made sundials in the Aztec civilization was quite widespread. Although initially a system of time measurement was used which was based on a 60-year cycle (where a year consisted of twelve 30-day months plus 5 extra days) later for instance, the Mayans used a 365-day with 18 months to a year, 20 days each month, and one short month of only 5 days, called Uayeb (considered to be very unlucky).

EARLY NORTHERN EUROPEAN CALENDAR

Until the 7th and 8th centuries when England and other countries conquered the Scandinavians and other “Barbarian” tribes in Northern Europe, they used a peculiar construction know as “week-year”, consisting of 52 weeks of seven days (subdivided into two 26 weeks of winter and summer), approximately 1 ¼ days shorter than the tropical year. It was lunar-solar calendar, when the year began on December 25, shortly after the winter solstice; this pagan celebration date is the precursor to Christmas. The Celts celebrated the New Year the first of November at an early juncture. Some of the months are as follows: Solmonath, the month of offering cakes, Blodmonath, the month of sacrifice, and

Eosturmonath, named after the spring goddess of spring and twilight, Eoster, which in turn is the precursor term for Easter. Though Julian and Gregorian calendars were gradually accepted, Lapland and Iceland held on to the old local calendars through the 20th century. The Celts year ended October 31st, but not at midnight. The hours that were not accounted for, was the time the dead washed.

JULIAN AND GREGORIAN CALENDAR

In 46 BCE Julius Caesar reformed the Roman calendar once more, replacing the lunar based calendar with a completely solar calendar, at the advice of astronomers. It was a 365 ¼ days with the extra day added every fourth leap year. During the Roman era March 1 was celebrated as the New Year. In 1582, Pope Gregory XIII reformed the Julian calendar to rectify an error that had moved the vernal equinox from March 21 to March 11 over time. The Gregorian calendar was immediately accepted by the Roman Catholic countries, later adopted by France, Germany and eventually by Protestant countries. Great Britain adopted the Gregorian calendar in 1750, and put it into effect in 1752. At the same time, the beginning of the legal year was changed from March 25 to January 1. The Gregorian calendar is presently the most extensively used calendar for international business and diplomacy.

| Ethiopian | Coptic | Arabic | Fasli | Islamic | Acadian | Babylonian |
|-----------|------------|----------|---------|----------------|------------|------------|
| Maskarram | Thith | Tor | Tot | Muharram | Nasannu | Nisanu |
| Tekemt | Paophi | Babe | Babe | Safar | Airu | Aiaru |
| Hadar | Arthyr | Hatur | Hatur | Rabi-ol Awval | Simjannu | Simanu |
| Tahsas | Cohiac | Kyak | Kyak | Rabi-os Sani | Duzu | Duzu |
| Tarr | Tybi | Tobe | Tabe | Jamadiol Awval | Abu | Abu |
| Yekatit | Mesir | Meshir | Amshir | Jamadiol Sani | Ululu | Ulu |
| Magawit | Pharmenoth | Buramar | Buramat | Rajab | Tischritu | Tashritu |
| Miaziah | Pharmouri | Baramude | Barsude | Sha'ban | Arah-samna | Arahsamnu |
| Genbor | Pachons | Bashans | Bashans | Ramadan | Kislimu | Kislimu |
| Sanni | Payni | Baune | Baune | Shawwal | Tebitu | Tebatu |
| Hamle | Epiphi | Abib | Abib | Dhu al-qada | Sabatu | Shabatu |
| Nas'hi | Mesori | Meshri | Meshri | Dhu al-hijjah | Adaru | Addaru |

Both Tables (up/down): Names of the Months

| Zoroastrian | Macedonian | Hebrew | Olympian | Gregorian | Persian |
|--------------------|----------------|-------------|--------------|-----------|-----------|
| Furvurdeen | Dios | Tishri | Hecatombaen | March | Farvardin |
| Ardibehesht | Apellaeus | Marheshevan | Metageitnion | April | Ordibehe |
| Khordad | Andyanaeus | Kislev | Boedromion | May | Khordad |
| Tir | Peritius | Tebeth | Pyaneption | June | Tir |
| Amerdad | Dystrus | Shebat | Maemacterion | July | Mordad |
| Sherever | Xanticus | Adar | Poseideon | August | Shahrivar |
| Mohr/Mehr | Artemisios | Nissan | Gamelion | September | Mehr |
| Aban | Daesius | Lyyar | Anthesterion | October | Aban |
| Adur/Azar | Panaemus | Sivan | Elaphebolion | November | Azar |
| Dey/Day | Lous | Tammuz | Munychion | December | Day |
| Bahman | Gorpiaeus | Ab | Thargelion | January | Bahma |
| Aspendadmad/Espand | Hyperberetaeus | Ellul | Scirophorion | February | Espand |

| CALENDAR | EPOCH | REGION |
|---------------------|-----------------------|-----------------|
| Babylonian | March 23, 625 BCE | Mesopotamia |
| Zoroastrian | March 3, 388 BCE | Persia/Iran |
| Yezdezdred | June 16, 632 CE | Persia/Iran |
| Borji | July 16, 622 CE | Persia/Iran |
| Shahanshahi | 559 BCE | Iran |
| Indian (Jain) | 569 BCE | India |
| Era of Nabonasser | Feb 26, 747 BCE | Mesopotamia |
| Macedonian | October 4, 526 BCE | Macedonia |
| Jewish | September 3, 3762 BCE | Jerusalem |
| Seleucid | 48 BCE | Asia Minor |
| Era of Antioch | October 2, 312 BCE | Greece |
| Olympia era | July 9, 776 BCE | Greece |
| Era of Tyre | October 19, 125 BCE | Phoenicia |
| Roman | 715 BCE | Rome |
| Armenian | July 9, 552 CE | Armenia |
| Islamic | July 16, 622 ACE | Medina |
| Fasli (Soor San) | May 24, 600 CE | Persia/Iran |
| African | 600 BCE | Central Africa |
| Egypt/Coptic | August 29, 293 BCE | Egypt/Mesr |
| Kali Yuga (SE Asia) | January 21, 3102 BC | Sri Lanka/Burma |
| Akbar | February 19, 1556 CE | India |
| Chinese | 2953 BCE | China |

Table: The Origin of Calendars

CHRISTIAN ECCLESIASTICAL CALENDAR

Used by Roman Catholics and some Protestants, this calendar relates the year to various events in the life of Christ and the history of the Church. In 325 ACE the Council of Nicaea decreed that Easter should be observed on the Sunday following the first full moon occurring after the vernal equinox, which they determined to be March 21. A calendar of Saints has from 3 to ten Christian saints' names for every day of the year.

CONCLUSION

It is fortuitously credent that March 25 was observed as the day commencing a New Year through 1562 in Europe and as late as 1755 in England according to the Old Style Calendar (12). This had been preceded by the Romans celebrating March 1 over two thousand prior years. The contributions of the Persians/Assyrians to provide December 25 as a Yalda day of celebration, subsequently adopted by the Europeans and later Christians, was also discussed earlier. Furthermore, the Assyrian Calendars seem to be the precursors to many of calendars used throughout history. Duncan (16) provides an excellent timeline on calendars.

An examination of the concept of time reckoning and calendars reveals, despite apparent divergence among peoples and regions, and on the contrary to common wisdom, the human contacts and cultural, social and economic interdependencies have existed far longer than initially perceived. Such intercommunications, not exclusive

something tangible to the table. The barter system of trade was one of the early outcomes enhancing everyone's quality of life. These interactions have also impacted religions and the essence of life throughout the world. For instance, it is estimated that as many as ten thousand languages were spoken at one point or the other by almost the same number of tribes and clans. The current number of languages, disappearing at an alarming pace due to overpopulations, dominant [western] cultures, and a media and communication explosion, seemingly threaten many of such indigenous cultures and languages. Besides, we are not certain as to the possible impact of five mass extinctions of species on human evolution in the earth's life span of four and one half billion years. While one can not deny the influence of technological advances on indigenous cultures, it is, nevertheless, reassuring to note that its effect might not be as detrimental as one is led to believe. Cultures seem to go through adaptation of imported rituals, yet they retain their original identities for millennia. A recent 1999 book by B. Blackburn & L. Holford-Strevens (17) on an exploration of calendar customs and time reckoning provides a comprehensive compendium to the subject.

The far more serious challenge to recognize and mitigate, is the rapid depletion of natural resources and the pollution and global warming dilemma. In response to our rapidly depleting natural and energy resources, progressive and proactive people especially in the West rediscovered a new level of appreciation and concern over such

to Mesopotamia-the so-called cradle of civilization-was quite broad in scope and encompassed every corner of the planet where pre-historic inhabitants moved about. It is, hence, safe to conclude that not one civilization was the sole contributor to our modern civilization, but rather the human race is indebted to great many historical civilizations spanning form Africa, Asia to Latin America who each in their own unique approach brought

realities in the mid-twentieth century. Respect for nature has existed in many indigenous societies of the Americas and in Asia for millennia. Recognizing the time juncture of the third millennium has prompted many to critically assess the quality of life for all World citizens anchored on guiding visions on the concept of sustainability and inter-generational equity for all. It is based on the notion that Earth's natural resources are finite, and its carrying capacity is limited; therefore, we must modify our exploitation of such resources in ways to maximize use, and minimize harmful effects, thereby stretching these resources for generations to come. Whereas scientific and technological advances have facilitated and enhanced our lifestyles, they have adversely impacted the Earth and us, ironically by scientific breakthroughs.

It was in response to the importance of the aforementioned facts that the 20th century evangelical John McConnell declared Earth Day, to coincide with March 21, the vernal equinox. His concept was later moved to April 22 to better accommodate participations in the much colder climate in north America. All the above notwithstanding, however, and irrespective of the specific calendar(s) we may follow, as eloquently illustrated by the 13th century Persian Poet Rumi, we are only passing through the smallest juncture of our cosmic journey on the earth:

*We are as the flute,
and the music in us is from thee;
We are as the mountain
and the echo in us is from thee.
We are as pieces of chess
engaged in victory and defeat:
Our victory and defeat is from thee,
O' thou whose qualities are comely!
Who are we, O' Thou soul of our souls,
that we should remain in
being beside thee?
We and our existences
are really irrelevant;
thou art the absolute Being
which manifests the perishable.
We all are lions, but lions on a banner:
because of the wind they are rushing
onward from moment to moment.
Their onward rush is visible,
and the wind is unseen:
may that which is unseen
not fail from us!
Our wind whereby we are moved
and our being are of thy gift;
our whole existence is from thy
bringing into being.*

The sustainability concept, truly interdisciplinary in nature and multi-jurisdictional in approach, is based on a series of parameters that could be summarized as follows: Earth, Ecology, Environment, Energy, Economics, Ethics, Equity, Education, Empowerment, and, Aesthetics.

Lee Lawrence in www.earthday.org (10) writes: "The coming of the New Millennium may impel us to examine what remains to be done to improve the quality of life for individuals all over the world. The past need not be a prologue. At the closing of the preceding millennium, 999 C.E., Europe had become poor, backward, superstitious, and infested with the crusaders. There was no maintenance of cities and roads had fallen into ruin. By our standards, life for most Europeans was unimaginable, mean, dirty and unhealthy. The impact on Europe of the fall of the Roman Empire, five centuries earlier, proved to almost wipe out their civilization."

The Earth Day of March 21 has been endorsed by a long list of distinguished Nobel Laureates, scientists, politicians, the United Nations, international leaders, artists, entrepreneurs, etc. Periodical anniversaries, observed by people throughout time to keep track of their sorrow, joy, victories, revolutions and revelations have played a crucial role in recording history. Isn't about time to universalize Earth Day when the bounty of nature is celebrated by all people of our fragile planet, as a platform for common understanding and accommodations?

"The vernal equinox calls on all mankind to recognize and respect Earth's beautiful systems of balance, between the presence of animals on land, the fish in the sea, birds in the air, mankind, water, air, and land. Most importantly there must always be awareness of the actions by people that can disturb this precious balance." To epitomize, stride to achieve a just unity for the human race requires the recognition of human intra-diversity, dignity and culture on one hand, and the inter-relationship with all other forms of matter at its pinnacle, on the other. A circular paradigm, based on perpetual cultural echydis has emerged where humans are not any longer the central superior creature of the World as promoted by certain religious doctrines, but similar to early philosophies a mere member of a whole integrated community.

As we stroll along the cosmic journey of life, via this transient stroll of the earthly passage, the poem by the Persian 13th Cen-

tury Poet, Sa'di, and as inscribed on the entrance arch of the UN in Geneva, sums up the pillar of our earthly ideals:

*All humans are members of one frame,
Since all, at first
from the same essence, came.
When by hard fortune
one limb is oppressed,
The other members lose their desired rest.
If thou feel'st not for others' misery,
A human is no name for thee (13).*

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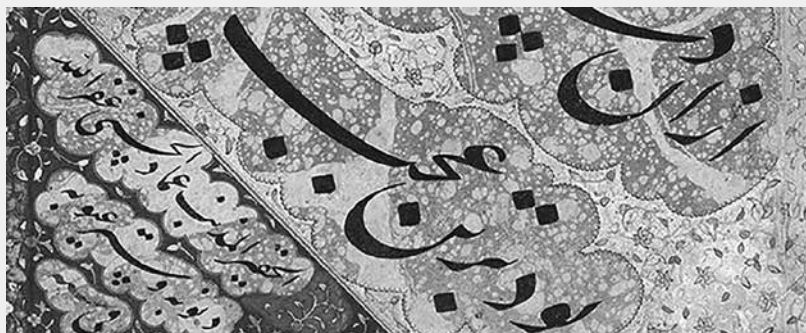
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**Words Take Flight in Persian Calligraphy
at Sackler Gallery**



During a prolific 200-year period in the 14th-16th centuries, four master calligraphers invented one of the most aesthetically refined forms of Persian culture: nasta'liq, a type of calligraphy so beautiful that for the first time the expressive form of the words eclipsed their meaning. "Nasta'liq: The Genius of Persian Calligraphy," opening Sept. 13 at the Smithsonian's Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, displayed 20 rarely seen masterworks created by the script's greatest practitioners, tracing its evolution from a simple style of writing to a potent form of artistic expression.

This is the first exhibition ever to focus specifically on nasta'liq, which was used primarily to write poetry, Persia's quintessential form of literature. With sinuous lines, short vertical strokes and an astonishing sense of rhythm, the script was an immediate success and was rapidly adopted throughout the Persian-speaking world from Turkey to India. The exhibition shows how generations of itinerant calligraphers, bound by the master-pupil relationship, developed, enhanced and spread nasta'liq between major artistic centers.

"Nasta'liq represents one of the most accomplished forms of Persian art, developed at a time of cultural and artistic effervescence in Iran," said Simon Rettig, exhibition curator and curatorial fellow at the Freer and Sackler galleries. "In a sense, it became the visual embodiment of the Persian language enthusiastically embraced from Istanbul to Delhi and from Bukhara to Baghdad."

Each of the four masters featured in the exhibition--Mir Ali from Tabriz (active ca. 1370-1410), Sultan Ali from Mashhad (d. 1520), Mir Ali from Herat (d. 1545) and Mir Imad Hasani from Qazvin (d. 1615)--further evolved the nasta'liq style, intentionally slanting the script for dramatic effect, modulating lines to balance fluidity and discipline, and adding delicate, twisting flourishes. Often attached to royal and princely courts, many calligraphers were the celebrities of their time, and visitors will learn fascinating anecdotes of fame and rivalry.

Mastering nasta'liq can take a lifetime, but it remains the most popular form of Persian calligraphy today. A demonstration video in the exhibition, along with calligraphic tools and accessories, shows how techniques developed more than 500 years ago are still practiced by contemporary calligraphers.

Primarily drawn from the collections of the Freer and Sackler galleries, highlights include the only known signed work by the "inventor" of nasta'liq Mir Ali from Tabriz, two folios from a collection of poetry by the late 15th-century ruler Sultan Husayn Bayqara and sumptuous illuminated pages from imperial Mughal albums.

The exhibition will be on view through March 22, 2015, and will be featured during the museum's annual family festival celebrating Nowruz, the Persian New Year, Saturday, March 7, 2015. Other exhibition-related programs include a Point of View talk with exhibition curator Simon Rettig Oct. 14 and lectures by eminent specialists, including David J. Roxburgh of Harvard University Dec. 14 and Dick Davis of Ohio State University Jan. 25, 2015. ■

*The Daughter of
Isfahan*

**Upon hearing women being attacked
with acid in Isfahan**

Daughter of Isfahan!

I love you

For your beautiful courage.

If you have to wear chador

You let it slide down

to your shoulders.

If you have to wear scarf

You let it recede

to the back of your head.

The one who has to cover his face

Is a sick little man

Who's wearing

a beard and turban today

To hide his impotence.

If acid rains from the sky

Or blood bubbles up from the earth

Daughter of Isfahan!

Do not cover your beautiful face

Hold your lover's hand

Walk along the waterless river

And speak of love

With your sweet accent.

Majid Naficy
October 20, 2014

Persian  Heritage

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The Fall

A new painting by Negar Ahkami



How does the artist generate beauty from the trials of the immigrant experience? *The Fall* depicts a group of Iranians picnicking on a Persian rug. They read, drink, and carouse — so far so good. But we can't help noticing that they do so in the dark, far from their colorful homeland. They are on the way to their destination: a hypnotic golden tree that embraces the whole composition.

This is the fate of immigrants, away from the land of their birth, not yet part of their adopted home. Ahkami, herself the daughter of immigrants, expresses this fate — not only through her subject matter, but her distinct style, too. Impressively, her paintings marry the pattern and narrative of Persian miniatures to the painterliness and ambiguity of western art (the work of the French symbolist Gustave Moreau particularly springs to mind).

Consider the image closely. The homeland is at the center of the composition, radiating in vibrant segments of patterns and colors. Why would the immigrants want to leave such an idyll? But look again. Amidst the beautiful grounds of lapis lazuli, ruby red, and fertile brown, you spy a hunting scene. Armed horsemen are cutting down nude women. The white and blue ripples that crisscross the composition away from the brightness and into the shadows are hordes of dejected immigrants.

Yet our first impression was correct; *The Fall* is not a sad artwork. We come to realize that the title doesn't only refer to a fall from grace, but to the season. The golden tree in the foreground signifies the future. It is no accident that the tree's leaves are the same colors as the mournful immigrants — they are part of the tree, and dot their new land, enriching its lavender soil with new color, literally joining it. The scene reminds us of the words of Albert Camus: "Autumn is

a second spring when every leaf is a flower."

THE FALL

In "*The Fall*," a distant skyline evocative of Iran's ornate mosques melts at the horizon. An exodus of sad figures spirals away from a jewel-like landscape, that up-close, reveals repression. A Persian idiomatic expression is scrawled within the landscape: "From a distance it is beautiful, but up close, it wrenches the soul." The glittery bubble of immigrant nostalgia for homeland is burst.

At the foreground of the painting, a proud immigrant couple sits proudly on their baggage. They observe citizens of their new country flippantly interacting with objects that remind them of Iran. The new-world citizens treat a Persian carpet like a picnic blanket, sipping full glasses of Shiraz — a red wine named after an Iranian city. They read magazines that headline Iranian terror, and Herodotus — an ancient history that depicts Persia as an enemy and loser. The fallen leaves from the tree framing the landscape are blue and white, like the diasporic figures — hinting at collective loss.

The textures and colors in my work pay tribute to Iran's ceramic traditions and jewel-like aesthetic. The composition is inspired by Persian miniatures and the symbolic landscapes of Hudson River School paintings. The original painting is in the Collection of Roya and Massoud Heidari.

NEGAR AHKAMI

Negar Ahkami is a painter from Clifton, NJ and New York City. She was born in Baltimore, MD. Ahkami received a B.A. in Middle Eastern Languages and Cultures from Columbia University and an MFA from School of Visual Arts. She attended Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture, and participated in the Lower Manhattan Cultural Council's Workspace Residency and Swing Space Residency on Governors Island. She has had three solo exhibitions, at Leila Heller Gallery in NY (2013, 2009) and LMAK Projects Brooklyn (2007). Her work has also been featured in two-person and group exhibitions at Miki Wick Kim Gallery (Zurich), Princeton University, The Austrian Cultural Forum NY, Longwood Arts Project, Stefan Stux Gallery, Kravets Wehby Gallery, and other galleries and museums. Ahkami's work is represented in the collections of The New Britain Museum of American Art, the DePaul University Art Museum, the Farjam Collection (UAE), and private and corporate collections. She currently lives and works in the DC and New York areas. She is represented by Leila Heller Gallery in New York.



Copies of this piece can be purchased from 20x200 at: www.20x200.com



An interview with

Professor Francis Richard

Scholar and expert on Iranian Studies

Shahrokh Ahkami

Thank you for Dr. Mirshahi's efforts in putting this meeting together and his participation and contributions in this discussion.

On every occasion during my visits to Paris I looked forward to meeting with you and have the privilege to ask you this question: What inspired you to learn the Persian language and to pursue the Persian culture?

In my immediate family I found no reason why this passion arose in me, but my grandfather, an architect by profession, had a collection of Persian books and miniature paintings in his library. My passion arose initially based on the Persian art miniature. I was passionate about this form of art so when I began my college career I studied Latin and Persian with Gilbert Lazar. Gilbert Lazar, a well known linguist, was a wonderful professor and inspired me to learn the Persian language. I was able to attend Tehran University for one year where I studied Persian literature and art. I then pursued library studies and was given the opportunity to be in charge of the department of Persian manuscripts at the National Library of France. I loved Persian art and also the classic literary works of Ferdowsi and Faramarz. Nameh.

Because I constantly worked on Persian manuscripts at the National Library of France, indexing highly revered Persian poets, I was in continuous contact with Persian literature, art and culture. As you know in Paris there are a number of classic miniature works, which helped me with my research. Slowly, I became more entangled in this path and more involved with foreign collectors. Also, in Iran professors like Iraj Afshar, Danesh Pajooch and Mohammad Taghi mentored me and encouraged me to publish some of the works.

What year did you visit Iran?

What was your perception at that time of Iran and the students?

I visited Tehran, Iran in 1970, where I lived in the dorms of Teheran University. Those were wonderful times because of the friendships I developed. I continued with them afterwards and on a number of occasions set up meetings with them in Paris.

What about your publishing?

Over the past fifteen years, I am very proud to say that I have been successful and enjoyed publishing over two hundred journals on Persian writings. I also organized exhibitions of calligraphy in Paris. Fifteen years ago I was able to exhibit and show more than 200 calligraphies.

How many centuries of work did you cover? During these historical times which dynasty was more advanced and progressive?

I covered the 11th century AD to the Safavids, Shah Tahmasab 2nd. In the art of the miniature, the Timurid Dynasty was very advanced. Later, the classic style was developed especially during the Bysonghor Period (the son of Shahrokh) Hossein Mirza Byghara rule. I was always under the impression that there was only one style and was surprised at the ones I later discovered.

One of the characteristics that most Iranians are guilty of is our belief that we are the original inventor of any sort of art idea. In this case we also make the argument that the art of miniature originated during

the Mazdakian times, travelled to China and then stretched out to the world. What are your thoughts on the origination of this art form?

The Greeks started placing pictures into manuscripts. We do not know when this style started in Iran, it could be with Mani's works. The reason this cannot be verified is because of the destruction of all materials that could have given us the answer. During the Sassanid Dynasty the book "The Yadegar Vazirs" existed with images of strong built body types that are painted into the writings. I believe in any strong culture. It remains a fact that, out of all that became Islamic, Iran stayed unique in a lot of ways. Books with pictures were of great value. This could be credited to the Iranian love of nature, for example flowers and birds are always seen in literature, evidencing that nature and agriculture were part of the minds and the souls of the books written by the scholars. This is very exceptional.

(Mirshahi: This is visible during the Sassanid Dynasty drawings, of women in garden settings. We also have mural drawings showing this painted on the walls of the Achaemenid and Sassanid palaces)

How do you see the changes in the art of the miniature? Do you see these changes to be the right thing for them? Like the changes that Behzad brought about in this art form?

I think the end of the Timurid rule is very important because there were changes in principal and values in that civilization. People indulged in this art form out of

passion and love of nature, not because of professionalism or as an elite. This changed during the Saffavid rule, during the reign of Shah Abbas I. The techniques changed. There was less written and more picture forms. Images were emphasized and they became an independent painting out of the book's pages. The use of color is plentiful in Persian miniature art and is unbelievable, you cannot find this in Pantone colors. When you open the book of Shahnameh the colors used are incompatible to Pantone colors.

You only do research in Persian linguistics and calligraphy (writings) do you also consider other areas of Iran?

I am interested in a collection of related topics. For example when it comes to the relationship between the Persian civilizations and those who love Iran, you must remember that the Persian civilizations and culture are not only visible in Iran but, all across the Asian continent and other regions. Exposure must not be limited. I have written several articles on this issue, on Iranian literature and history outside of Iran. This was for the sole purpose of introducing the Persian culture in Europe.

(Mirshahi: Your name is written as an author to catalogue books of exhibitions of Persian miniatures.)

Was this your own personal work?

I just wrote the outline and put together the pictures.

(Mirshahi: Because he was in charge of the National Library of France in the Eastern Studies Department he held an exhibition of a collection of Persian miniature art and each work had an underlying description written. These were the works of Professor Richard, therefore the book was published under his name.)

To introduce the works of the arts of Iran, Khamseh Nezami (the Quintet) book, is a perfect example. This book is present in Paris. It was done during the Saffavid Dynasty in Isfahan style and put together by a group of artists and calligraphy artists in the city of Nesa in the Turkmenistan near the city of Eshghabad. This edition of his works is phenomenal. I am constantly looking for ways to introduce the public

to new works that I come across in my field, in order to educate them on all that is available out there. One of the interesting things I did this year was a seminar at the National Library of Iran. I spoke on the topic of Persian writings. The students that attended were also librarians at that library. It is important to establish relationships with people in the same research field so that we can exchange knowledge and ideas.

When did you move from the National Library of France to the Louvre Museum, in Paris?

For 29 years I was in charge of the manuscripts of the National Library of France, in Paris. In 2003 I was transferred to the Louvre and nominated for the position to work on an Islamic Art section. I worked there for 3 years.

This must have been very difficult for you based on your background and the collection of work that you have produced on Iran and as Dr. Mirshahi said, you had to call all Persian art pieces, Islamic art?

Yes, I was not satisfied or happy. But because the budget for this project was put out by the Arab nations they insisted on presenting everything as Islamic art not Iranian art.

I think they have opened a section of the Louvre in Dubai?

Yes, but you know this problem exists everywhere. Even in Iran, in a section for Islamic art at the museum of Pre-Islamic Iran (Iran Bastan), they are struggling with what to name the works of that period. People come to see Pre Islamic Art and etc.

(Mirshahi: At the Louvre there is a huge collection of Persian art and when I went to the museum in Qatar about eighty percent was Iranian Art.)

Yes, at the Louvre about forty percent of the Islamic collection is Iranian and the remainder Egyptian, Syrian and other Islamic countries.

Have you done any other research in relation to Iranian studies that have been published?

Of course and most recently as the head of the Eastern Studies at this new library I have placed a lot of emphasis on Persian studies. I have also tried to develop and improve this section by placing copies of newer books, for the students and other interested parties to have additional access to this culture and civilization.

What is a perception of the French youth of Iran and the culture?

Here the majority of students studying the Persian Language are French and not from Iranian descent. It is interesting to see how receptive the French people are towards Iran.

During one of my exhibitions I had young students, as well as highly educated people and ordinary French, receive it with open arms. Most of them are familiar with Persian cinema and familiar with the book *Persian Letters*, written by Charles de Secondat, Baron de Montesquieu. You know since the old times Iran has always had a positive image amongst the French. Though their knowledge of Iran in some cases is limited, it is positive.

(Mirshahi: Yes, there is a center that we are familiar with where about twenty French engineers are studying Persian. Of course this could be because they want to work for a company called "Total." Why is it that some books that were printed in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries about Iran and a few physics books do not get reprinted?)

They do not reprint them because the French language used in those books is too old.

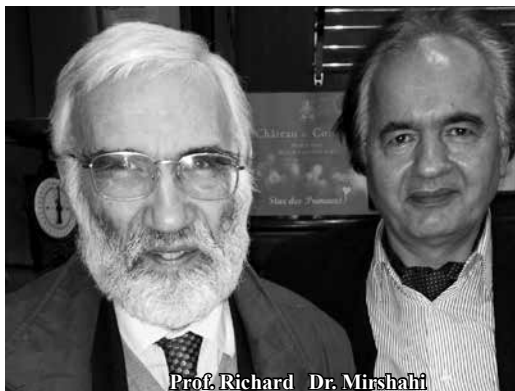
Like Shakespeare and today's English language?

Yes, and some of these old books were about Cyrus the Great and his relationship with the Jews and how the Jews traveled to Iran to pilgrim Cyrus's tomb.

(Mirshahi: Yes in the Torah he is called the savior of the people of Judaea.)

Are you currently holding a position at the Institute of Eastern Studies and Languages?

I am currently in charge of the library. I focus on Iranian studies



Prof. Richard Dr. Mirshahi

Are you in contact with Iran at this time? How do you see things currently in Iran?

Yes, I am in contact. Though many problems exist there, they had and have great researchers, like the late Iraj Afshar and other scholars, especially younger ones. There is currently a new group of scholars working hard in doing research.

The best Persian writings in Iran previously were found at Tehran University's central library and at the Iranian National Library in Tehran and in Mashhad at the Ghods Razavi Library, which is well furnished. Many of my colleagues work there and great opportunities are still available.

You spoke of Iraj Afshar, what kind of person was he?

He was very active, intelligent, progressive and loved his work. He supported the youth and their works. Additionally he had a good working relationship with the west and was at the same knowledge level of the best western scholars.

Please let us hear a bit about Professor Richard?

I was born in 1948 in Paris. My father was a history professor working in the outskirts of Bourbon. My mother was also working in a cultural society. Coming from parents who both sought knowledge made it easy for me to pursue my dreams in the same profession. I wanted to talk briefly about my mentor and professor Gilbert Lazar. Professor Lazar, who is 93, is still active and doing research. He would tell us that when you translate the Persian language you must be very specific and pay close attention to the meanings. You have to be devoted to your translation.

He had a special way with humor.

Which Persian poet is your favorite?

Manouchehri Damghani and of course Nezami, Ferdowsi, Sa'di. Hafez is very difficult for me to understand but his work is beautiful. Others of course are Salman Savedji and Obeid Zakani.

You spend a lot of time on Persian literature, do you also spend a lot of time on French literary works? Can you compare the two works?

Yes of course, for example Bart, his works have the similarities of the 17th century with a Persian style and Indian style.

Which influenced the other?

Neither did the other. This is out of respect to nature. The first Persian writing translated into French was the book, Anvar Soheili.

Do you know what piece it was?

Yes, from Anvar Soheili, someone liked it and then translated it into French. Lafontaine had knowledge of this piece and had a copy of the translation in his library.

(Mirshahi: In your opinion which is the most valuable piece of Persian writing that exists at the National Library of France and also which one has the most beautiful miniature art?)

The most beautiful miniature work is Khamseh Nezami (The Quintet), which was done in the city of Nesa. The most valuable writing is "Jame al-tawarikh-Rashid al Din. And, the most valuable miniatures are by Reza Abbassi.

(Mirshahi: What is the best piece of Persian art in the Louvre, listed as Islamic art?)

There are some pots, "Mina ceramics," where you will see a horseman who has a bird in one hand and a manuscript in the other. The other ceramic is "Simorgh" in a white and brown color.

What are the changes you have seen in the writings over different periods in time?

There are very few that remain from the old times, but there are collections of medical writings. The 12th century book of *Kalileh O Demneh* is very beautiful. There are some writings from the 16th century that are my favorites.

The piece that Mr. Mirshahi mentioned earlier is very interesting, how old pieces translated, no longer are comprehensible in today's society, because of the changes in linguistics.

We still, however, can comprehend the book of Ferdowsi, which was written over a thousand years ago, and also the works of Manouchehri Damghani. But as previously discussed when it comes to Shakespeare, it is very difficult if not impossible to comprehend, why?

The reason for this is that the old Persian language and literature are verbalized and memorized. They are recited over and over again. This keeps the spirit of the language alive. Today, the Shahnameh is alive because the people still recite the verses in this book.

Persian writing is a difficult language. You have to be very literate to comprehend it because the same letter used in a different context can mean something entirely differently. It is very abstract and ambiguous. The constant recital of poetry has kept poetry and the language alive to this day!

Perhaps the language has not changed as much, what is your opinion about modern Persian literature?

I know there are a lot of students of Persian literature who are highly motivated and have a lot of interest and knowledge in new and modern literature; I am not very familiar with this era myself.

Thank you so much for your time.

Thank you for your continued work to keep Iranian culture and the arts alive.