Iran Heritage Foundation is the leading supporter of Iranian studies in the UK. It promotes academic research through fellowships, grants, scholarships and publications. In association with museums and leading institutions, IHF organises exhibitions and convenes conferences on the history and contemporary culture of Iran.
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Management and Organisation
The Foundation’s mission, vision, budgets and programme scope is set and approved by the Board of Trustees. The Management Board deals with various aspects of the organisation, including issues of administration and compliance, finance and budget, public programmes, events, and development. The Advisory Board, the Foundation Secretary and a number of specialist committees support the Foundation. These include the Academic Council and its sub-committees on grants, publications, conferences and institutional partnerships, which provide direction, set priorities, control quality and disburse the budget approved by the Trustees for academic endeavours. The Events Committee organises and coordinates the Foundation’s social and cultural events throughout the year. The Finance Committee manages the finances of the Foundation, and provides financial reports to the Board of Trustees. The Norouz Committee holds the Foundation’s annual fund-raising dinner in London on the occasion of the Iranian New Year.

Sources of Funding
Our most important sources of funding include the Norouz gala and contributions from individuals corporate and institutional sponsors, donors and friends. To ensure the Foundation’s independence of action and non-political status, the Trustees do not accept funding from governmental sources.

How You Can Help
The Foundation achieves much of its work through volunteers. In addition, every donation, large or small, helps us to make a real difference in achieving our objectives. We welcome your support!

Additional information and updated news on our programmes and events may be found at www.iranheritage.org and at www.facebook.com/iran.heritage.foundation
In 2011, IHF’s main focus remained on the continued development and expansion of its hallmark Institutional Partnership Programme (IPP) and its Digitisation Initiative.

The IPP enables IHF’s partner institutions to fund posts in Persian language, arts and history at major universities and cultural institutions in the UK. These posts would otherwise struggle for funding in the current climate of budget cuts. IPP partners help fund and fundraise for these positions and make long-term commitments to them, bringing longevity to their programmes with the aim of making them ultimately self-sustaining. IHF added two new partners to the IPP in 2011 - the British Library and SOAS - bringing the total number of partner institutions to eight. Partnership discussions are in progress with the Tate Modern for the appointment of a first curator focused mainly on modern and contemporary art of Iran.

IHF has been at the forefront of digitising Iran’s cultural heritage over the past few years. IHF has continued to support Cambridge University’s Shahnama Project with the aim of digitising a comprehensive collection of the manuscripts of Ferdowsi’s Shahnameh – the 1000 year-old Epic of the Persian Kings. This year IHF spearheaded the launch of the Persian Manuscripts Project at the British Library and raised funding for the creation of a new post, the Persian Manuscripts Project Curator. The process of documenting and cataloguing online of most of the eleven thousand manuscripts in the collection began in August 2011. The project also aims to digitise some of the most important manuscripts in this collection, making them freely available to researchers and enthusiasts worldwide.

IHF has begun to collaborate in developing joint programmes with its new sister charity, IHF America, which was founded in 2011. The two charters will work together in 2012 to support the International Society for Iranian Studies (ISIS) biennial conference, to be held in Istanbul in August 2012. IHF, in conjunction with IHF America, continues to provide oversight to 14 institutional grants made by the PARSA Foundation to major American universities and museums, some of which are expected to form the basis of eventual Institutional Partnerships for IHF America.

IHF’s programme of cultural events for 2011 included a wide array of exhibitions, lectures, festivals and workshops. The IHF Academic Council was substantially expanded by the addition of senior academics from Edinburgh, Manchester, Yale and Cambridge universities. The Council has now formed various committees to vet and supervise the many requests IHF receives for grants, publications and conferences – continuing to build on best practice in the Foundation’s governance.

I join the Trustees in extending our gratitude to IHF’s staff, supporters, volunteers and partners for another year of remarkable dedication and commitment. IHF’s work would not be possible without the support of all its constituents.

Farad Azima
Acting CEO

In 2011, the Iran Heritage Foundation saw another successful year of growth in funding and programme support. A significant portion of our funds comprises multi-year contributions by members of our Board of Trustees and a select number of corporations and institutions. We are grateful to Bank Julius Baer and Balli Group Plc for their continued support. Similar to previous years, a significant portion of our overhead costs were covered through donations from Trustees, enabling us to apply other incoming funds directly to programme support.

The Parsa Community Foundation’s grant received in 2010 in support of our institutional partnership (IPP) and digitization programmes has allowed us to launch new partnerships. We are grateful for Parsa’s generosity and recognition of IHF’s work.

Our programme costs increased by 14% compared to 2010. This year, IHF supported the conference ‘Shahdad and the Bronze Age in Southeast Iran’ and the very successful exhibition ‘Heroic Ages – thousand Years Persian Book of Kings’ at the Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin. Moreover, we have expanded our core IPP and digitisation programmes to include the British Library and the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), leading to a 33% increase in our IPP costs.

While we have been working towards appointing a full time Executive Director, our administrative costs have decreased by 28%. We expect this to resume to the 2010 levels once the position is filled.

We look forward to yet another successful year of partnerships with all our stakeholders. Our heartfelt gratitude goes to our loyal, generous and expanding supporters who share IHF’s vision and help us transform that vision into reality.

Copies of IHF’s audited accounts are available on request from Foundation’s secretary.
Institutional Partnership Programme (IPP)

The Freer Gallery of Art and the Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C.

The Iran Heritage Foundation Curatorial Fellow for the Arts of Iran, a two-year post-doctoral fellowship devoted to the arts and cultures of Iran.

The University of St. Andrews, Institute for Iranian Studies: The Iran Heritage Foundation Persian Language Lecturer, a three-year post in Persian language and culture combined with development of the extensive Persian Language Library at St. Andrews

The University of Edinburgh: The Iran Heritage Foundation Persian Language Instructor, a three-year post in the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies

The University of Cambridge: The Iran Heritage Foundation Persian Language Instructor, a three-year post in the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies

The British Library: The fellow for 2011 was Dr. Shahrokh Razmjoo, who worked as a full-time curator on different aspects of ancient Iranian civilization. During his tenure, he was able to produce a full translation of the Cyrus Cylinder in Persian as well as organizing tours and gallery talks in the Ancient Iran Gallery.

The British Museum:

The British Library: IHF is funding a curatorial position in Persian manuscripts, a two-year post, dedicated to the creation of an online catalogue and partial digital reproduction of the Persian manuscript collection at the British Library.

IHF aims to expand this programme further in the coming years, and working in collaboration with its sister charity IHF America, hopes to further extend the reach of this initiative into North America. IHF is delighted to acknowledge the support of the PARS Foundation Community, which has committed to contribute very substantially in support of this project through 2012.

APPOINTMENTS

Curator of Iranian Art at the V&A

In 2011, Dr. Moya Carey continued the second year of her work as Iran Heritage Foundation Curator of Iranian art at the V&A, focusing her work on the collection of Iranian art from the Islamic period. It is hoped that through research, conservation, and improved storage and display programmes, the Museum’s large collection of Iranian textiles and carpets will be accessible in a new study facility from 2013 with a catalogue of the 497 Iranian carpets to follow. Progress has also been made on the online catalogue of the V&A’s Iranian ceramics, which in some areas, such as ‘Gomroon’ware, is now the leading source of information worldwide. Dr. Carey has also organised Iran-related gallery talks and events at the Museum and given academic papers and public lectures at venues in the UK and Ireland.

Fellowship at the British Museum

This fellowship brings scholars and museum curators specialising in the fields of Iranian art, archaeology and numismatics from Iran to the British Museum, enabling them to use the facilities of the Museum and other institutions in the United Kingdom to further their academic research as well as to study and receive training in various aspects of museum management.

The University of St. Andrews: Professor Wilfred Lambert. The collection amassed over a period of sixty years totals around 3000 individual pieces and includes pieces from areas to the east of the ‘Mesopotamian heartlands’ that form the backbone of the British Museum’s collections.

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In this period Dr. Gareth Bierlow was appointed to digitise the available notes and to create a searchable record of the collection.

The Iran Heritage Foundation Persian Language Tutor at the University of St. Andrews

Over the last year Miss Maryam Chorbabinikani has been teaching Persian to Postgraduate students eager to pursue research in Iranian studies and has also continued with the cataloguing of the Iranian Studies collection in the University library, work that is now reaching the conclusion of its first phase with some 4000 title catalogued online representing over 6000 volumes.[www.st-andrews.ac.uk/~iranian/iis.html] Furthermore as of the current academic year Miss Chorbabinikani has launched the first Persian language course for Undergraduates, a development which marks a significant shift in gear for Iranian Studies at the University of St. Andrews.

The Persian Language Lecturer at the University of Edinburgh

In line with the development of Iranian Studies at the University of Edinburgh, Miss Golnaz Nambakhsh was appointed as Persian Tutor in the School of Modern Languages. She was also to work in the Library, cataloguing the Persian language collection which continues to grow. The post became vacant in August 2011. Teaching nevertheless continues under the supervision of the head of the Department of Islamic and Middle Eastern Studies, Dr. Marylin Booth while the search for a new Persian Tutor continues.

The Victoria and Albert Museum: The Iran Heritage Foundation Curator of the Iranian Collections, a three-year post dedicated exclusively to the arts of Iran.

The British Museum: A rotating fellowship in the Department of the Middle East for scholars and museum curators from Iran.
Lecturer in Persian Language and Culture at the University of Cambridge

In 2011, Dr. Saeed Talajboy became the Iran Heritage Lecturer in Persian Language and Culture at the University of Cambridge. While continuing with the customary practices of teaching language in Cambridge, concentrating on grammar, he has also used short stories, simple songs and comic anecdotes in a bid to improve students’ writing and speaking skills, and to enhance the cultural element within language teaching. His second year students further benefit from the added element of literature in the programme, reading from the poetic works of such luminaries as Ahmad Shamlou, Nima Rushij, Sohrab Sepehri and the likes, as well as reading a number of short stories, a play and a novella by Sadeq Hedayat, Jalal-e Al-e Ahmad, and Hassan Moqaddam.

Curator of Persian Manuscript at the British Library

In August 2011 Dr. Bruno De Nicola joined the Persian manuscript curators at the British Library, with the task of making the British Library’s Persian manuscript collections freely accessible worldwide via the Internet, by constructing reliable and consistent metadata describing each of the eleven thousand manuscripts in the collection. The online catalogue is being created simultaneously in Persian andromanised script with descriptions in English. This means that for the first time, from anywhere in the world, people will be able to search and access details about Persian manuscripts in the British Library by doing a simple author or title in Farsi or English. So far, details of over four hundred manuscripts have been prepared which will be ready to go online very soon, accessible through ‘HRIRST’ (www.fhirst.org.uk). The project also seeks to digitise some of the most important manuscripts in the collection, providing access in perpetuity to these works and contributing to their future preservation. British Library has recently digitised the entire text of Shah Tahmasb’s copy of Nizami’s Khamsah, which now can shortly be viewed from cover to cover on their website. A digital version of Iskandar Sultan’s Miscellany of 813-14/1410-11 will be among other digitised manuscripts to be created in the coming year.

Encyclopaedia Iranica

Encyclopaedia Iranica is a Columbia University project prepared by the Centre for Iranian Studies. It is a historic undertaking as the most extensive compendium ever conceived on the past and present culture of the people who speak the language of Iran as well as their contribution to the broader history of human civilization. In fact, it is the only precise and reliable work on the lands, life, culture and history of all Iranian peoples and their interactions with other societies. The project was conceived in 1973 and began at Columbia University in 1974. It is envisioned to take up 25-30 volumes. To ensure the completion of this monumental work, the Encyclopaedia Iranica Foundation was established in 1989. Iran Heritage Foundation has been a consistent supporter of the Encyclopaedia Iranica Foundation since its inception.

Schools & Community

The Foundation has always provided support to schools and community organizations engaged in the promotion of Iranian languages, culture and education.

Rustam Iranian School

This school was established in 1981 in London with the main aim of providing Persian language courses for second generation Iranians in the United Kingdom. After many years of devoted service, the school has developed into what is now a centre for educational and cultural activities for the Iranian community in the UK. Rustam School provides courses for children. It is managed by a team of twenty-five professional teachers and administrators and is unique amongst all schools due to the facilities it provides for pupils and their parents.

Library of Iranian Studies

The Library of Iranian Studies was officially opened in London in 1991. At present, the library houses over 30,000 cultural and political books as well as other publications for public use. Although these include mainly Persian and other Iranian language publications, the library also houses a growing collection of foreign language books and publications about Iran. For those interested in academic research, particularly in Iran’s contemporary history, the library’s archives provide a wealth of political and cultural publications, documents, reports and statistical information. As well as being both a lending and a reference library, the Library of Iranian Studies

Kanoon Iran

Kanoon Iran, a community organisation with a very active schedule of lectures and other educational programmes on the history and culture of Iran, was established in 1982. Its audience consists predominantly of the Iranian community in London. The organisation also offers Persian language classes for children ages six and up.

Research and Travel Grants

Research or travel grants were awarded to the following individuals in 2011:

1. Irina Koshoridze – research grant for creating a database on Shahnameh images and related materials held in Georgian collections. The images will be made available to the Cambridge Shahname Project for publication on their website.
2. Sanaz Eji – travel grant for presentation of a paper at the 9th ISIS Biennial Conference in Istanbul (Turkey) - August 2012, on the topic of what videos like “Persian Dad” mean emotionally and politically for a generation of internet users who have parents from Iran.
3. Agnieszka Fulinska of the Institute of Archaeology, Jagiellonian University, to present a paper on the iconography of Hellenistic kings with attributes or in the guise of oriental deities. The paper was presented at the conference “Iran and the Classical World: political, cultural and economic contacts of two civilizations”, at Kazan (Russia) in September 2011.

In 2011 we continued our efforts to support worthy projects related to various aspects of Iranian culture undertaken by individuals and organisations. These included:

- Support of Encyclopaedia Iranica, a monumental endurance which the Foundation has supported since its inception;
- Support of three London-based community organisations, which are active in promoting Iranian culture and the teaching of Persian language;
- Subsidies for the preparation and/or publication of six scholarly works;
- Travel or research grants for four scholars for the purpose of research in aspects of Iranian art and culture or to present papers at conferences in this subject area;
- Support towards convention of three Conferences.

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In 2011, grants were awarded to the following individuals in support of conferences/workshops:

- Alexander Lubotsky of Leiden University, Netherlands, for organising a two-week summer school in language and linguistics incorporating a programme on the languages of the Persisanate world, including an introduction to the Sogdian texts used by Christians in the Turfan oasis of eastern Central Asia in the 9th-11th centuries as well as an introduction to ‘Khwarezmian’, the last of the Middle Iranian languages to become known;
- Zuzanna Olszewska of the University of Oxford for a workshop on the early Complex Societies of Iran in the 5th Millennium BC;
- Helen Taylor of the University of Cambridge for a workshop on the early Complex Societies of Iran in the 5th Millennium BC.

The Golha Project

The Golha Project is a programme creating a free online database containing the complete archive of all 1,616 Golha radio programmes produced between 1956 and 1979, a veritable encyclopaedia of classical Persian poetry and music. This fully searchable database will be made freely accessible to the public on the Internet – at the click of a mouse. The archive is searchable by eighteen different rubrics, including performer (singer, soloist, etc.), lyricist, poet declaimed, and type of avaz, dastgah, gusheh, etc. The database also includes the biographies of all the poets and performers mentioned in the programmes as well as the texts of the poems sung and declaimed and the musical notes for the songs. This musical archive will be available in perpetuity to a worldwide audience and will provide music lovers, and particularly students and scholars of classical Persian poetry and music, with a valuable research tool and learning resource, which will have a lasting impact on Iranian studies.

IHIF is delighted to acknowledge the support of PARSA Community Foundation, which has made a significant contribution to the cost of this programme. The project is expected to become fully operational in the spring of 2012.

The Golha Website has generated a completely new understanding of the (Persian) musical tradition. It represents a model for future generations of musicians, composers, vocalists, critics and researchers in the field of Persian music, as well as for those involved in composing music or in the preparation and performance of musical programmes.” Prof. Shahin Farhad, Iranian composer and Professor of Music and Head of the Department of Music at the University of Tehran.

“A comprehensive encyclopaedia of music, of classical Persian music – as represented by the Golha programmes. A truly great service [to the field of Persian music.]” Humayun Khurram

“A great service to Persian culture … exposing many different aspects of the relationship between music and poetry, so that the way will be opened up for the next generation, who, I hope, will devote more attention to this aspect of Persian culture than today’s generation presently does, and thus, approach this aspect of the culture of Iran with greater consideration.” Hushang Ibtihaj (“Sayeh,” b. 1928)

Forough Farrokhzad, poet of Modern Iran, edited by Dominic Parviz Brookshaw and Nasrin Rahimieh. This book examines the unique place Farrokhzad occupies in Iran, both among modern Persian poets in general and as an Iranian woman writer in particular. It further explores Farrokhzad’s appeal outside Iran in the imagination of the Iranian diaspora and through the numerous translations of her poetry into English.

- The Art and Material Culture of Iranian Shi’ism, edited by Pedram Khosronejad. The Shi’i world experience has provided a rich artistic tradition, encompassing painting, sculpture and the production of artefacts and performance, which has helped to embed Shi’i identity in Iran as part of its national narrative. The book explores the areas of material culture through which Iranian Shi’ism has manifested itself, examining the extent to which the art and architecture of Iran from the Safavid period onwards is identifiably Shi’i and what this says about the relationship of nation, state and faith in Iran.

Publications

The publication of specialized monographs or other works on Iranian studies is becoming less and less commercially viable. The Foundation therefore regularly subsidizes the publication of books that demonstrate sufficient merit. Titles and projects that received subsidies in previous periods, either for publication or preparation of publication, and which were published in 2011 included the following:

- Portugal. The Persian Gulf and Safavid Persia, edited by Prof. Rudi Matthee and Prof. Jorge Flores. The book commemorates the 500 year anniversary of the arrival of the Portuguese in the Persian Gulf, and offers an array of fresh research on the activities of the Portuguese on the Island of Hormuz and beyond. It examines these activities from a variety of angles, with special attention to the wider context involving the adjacent Safavid, Ottoman and Mughal states.
- The Art and Material Culture of Iranian Shi’ism, edited by Pedram Khosronejad. This book explores the areas of material culture through which Iranian Shi’ism has manifested itself, examining the extent to which the art and architecture of Iran from the Safavid period onwards is identifiably Shi’i and what this says about the relationship of nation, state and faith in Iran.

All publications are proceedings of the conferences of the same name organized by the Foundation in previous periods.
Exhibitions

Heroic Ages – Thousand Years Persian Book of the Kings
Exhibition - Berlin

The Iranian national epic Shahnameh by the poet Ferdowsi is one of the great works of world literature. In nearly 50,000 verses, it recounts a partly mythical, partly historical past of the Iranian people right up to the Islamic conquest of Persia. In preserving the memory and the spirit of a heroic past, Shahnameh has continued to inspire Iranians in all areas of life and art, in various forms of social organisation and popular entertainment, as well as influencing generations of poets, historians and the ruling elites. It is also amongst the earliest of the Persian literary works to be illustrated, with the first of such copies known dating to around 1300.

The exhibition at the Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin brought together around 50 manuscripts and folios from various collections such as the Keir collection, the Berlin National Library, and the Museum of Islamic Art. Other lenders to the exhibition were the Berlin Museum of Asian Arts, the Berlin Museum of Ethnology and the Deutsche Historische Museum (DHM) and two German private collections. Besides manuscripts and folios, the exhibits also included medieval ceramics, textile, metalwork and weapons plus artefacts from the Sasanian collection of the Museum of Islamic Art. This helped confronting the archaeology of these periods with the stories of the historical and heroic; and sometimes mythical figures in the Shahnameh.

Aside from the exhibits, the exhibition offered an array of peripheral activities. An installation of close to life-sized figurines from the ‘Shahnameh’ introduced the visitor to the mythical world of Persia as well as that of theatre. A silhouette film of timeless beauty with delicate figurines and imaginative decors complemented the literary theme. Six media terminals provided opportunity for collecting fascinating material on the ‘Shahnameh’ and its stories to be listened to at home on personal computers. A little computer game ‘The seven adventures of Rostam’ provided a fun time for the whole family and rounded out the multifaceted offering.

In conjunction with the above exhibition, the department of visitor services of the National Museums in Berlin also hosted a series of colourful programmes. These included performances, guided tours and workshops for children and adults, chants, traditional dance, an opera, fairy tales and an interactive museum rally; the comprehensive program had something to offer to everyone.

The exhibition was organized by the Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin (SMB) and the National Library, Berlin (SPK) and supported by the Bahari Family Foundation, Total, the Friends of the Museum of Islamic Art, Berlin and the Iran Heritage Foundation.

1 Opening of the exhibition
2 Exhibits of ceramics of Minai type
3 Rustam and Div, installation from the Technical University, Stage Design Department
4 Christoph Rauch, Julia Gonnella & Stefan Weber
Persian Postal History Across Two Centuries
Exhibition and Lecture - London

The exhibition provided a rare opportunity to view an award winning collection of Persia’s Postal history during the Qajar period. Persian postal history has not yet been fully documented, with scant literature on the subject. The exhibition attempted to improve understanding of Persian postal history during the period.

The exhibits came from the collection of Mr. Bijorn Sohrne and spanned from early 19th century through the end of the Qajar period. The items selected for the exhibition demonstrated the significance of Persian postal history in its geopolitical setting in Middle Asia. Included in the exhibition were early 19th century desert mail, British military campaigns mail of 1839 and 1857, and Russian pre-UPU consular mail from Persia. The exhibition also covered the development of Persia’s own postal system and its reorganisation by Austrian administrators beginning in 1875.

The exhibits were among the rarest of their kinds and included many of “the earliest” and “the highest rate recorded”, such as the much sought after Lion issues, 1875–1879.

The exhibition was followed by a lecture during which Mr. Sohrne took the audience through the development of Persia’s postal system in a chronological order starting from early 19th century. He also discussed the development of routes and new postal services, rate changes, the 1902 takeover of the postal administration by the Belgian administrators, some rare censors used during WWI, and rebel issues of Lar and of Mirza Kachek Khan.

Both exhibition and lecture provided fascinating insight into an as yet understudied and unexplored area of Persian history. The audience included enthusiastic collectors of Persian postal history as well as students interested in the subject. Included in the audience were a number of Chinese students with interest in Sino-Persian history.

The exhibition was organized by Iran Heritage Foundation in association with the Royal Philatelic Society and held at the Royal Philatelic Society Slavs and Tatars - Again, A Time Machine
Exhibition and Talk - Birmingham

Slavs and Tatars is a collective of polemics and intimacies devoted to Eurasia. Their work spans several media, disciplines and a broad spectrum of cultural registers that focus on an oft-forgotten sphere of influence between Slavs, Caucasians and Central Asians. Based between Moscow and Brussels, the collective excavates stories and legacies which are at risk of being forgotten and trodden under the guise of progress-cum-westernization.

At an exhibition based on their book ‘Kidnapping Mountains’, the possibilities of solidarity between Poland and Iran was explored. Through the medium of a billboard poster, newspaper and an archival installation, the project looked at the multiplicity of languages, cultural affinities, and identities found between the two countries showing that Slavs and Tatars are scattered throughout Eurasia. The exhibition included a talk on the role of books and printed matter in their practice, with a particular emphasis on Friendship of Nations: Polish Shi’ite Showbiz.

Organized by the Eastside Projects and supported by Iran Heritage Foundation
Shahdad and The Bronze Age in Southeast Iran
Conference and Workshop - Cambridge

Prehistoric Shahdad is a major Bronze age centre that was discovered at the edge of Kavir-e-Lut in 1968. During the late 1960s and early 1970s, the late Professor Ali Hakemi of the Archaeological Institute of Iran commenced investigation at Shahdad and supervised intensive excavations for seven consecutive seasons at the site. There he found extensive evidence of a sophisticated civilization which used a range of elite artefacts, elaborate metalwork technology, complex burial practices and archaic pictographs. Four decades after its discovery, Shahdad remains the subject of ongoing investigations into the archaeology of south-eastern Iran in the 3rd and 2nd millennia bc.

To situate the critical research questions for south-east Iranian archaeology into a broader context for the future, a two-day workshop was organized at the University of Cambridge. Seventeen papers were presented by prominent archaeologists and linguists of international standing, concentrating on excavations in Shahdad, Shahr-I Sokhta and Tepe Yahya, as well as on 40 years of excavations in South East Iran. One of the highlights of the workshop was the paper on ‘Shahdad, the use of symbols in Iran, and the non-linear evolution of writing’ delivered by Jacob Dahl of the University of Oxford.

The conference was very well attended, with participants from as far afield as Japan and the USA. The conference closed with a reception hosted by Mr. Hassan-Ali Hakemi.

The conference was convened by Dr. Cameron Petrie, Research Councils UK Fellow in South Asian and Iranian Archaeology, Dr. Jacob Dahl, Lecturer in Assyriology at the University of Oxford and Mr. Hassan-Ali Hakemi and organized by the Universities of Cambridge and Oxford and the Hakemi family, supported by the British Institute of Persian Studies (BIPS), Amir Mohtashemi Islamici, Indian Winds of Art and the Iran Heritage Foundation. The conference took place at the McDonald Institute for Archaeological Research of the University of Cambridge.

Festival of Music in Middle Eastern Cinema
Conference - London

The intersection between music and cinema in the Middle East formed the focus of a festival of film screenings and a two-day conference in May this year.

An extraordinary number of films from the region engage with music, either as the topic of documentaries, or alternatively as feature films in which music forms the central focus of the narrative. The festival started with a screening of the thought-provoking and poignant film Santoori (2008), by award-winning Iranian director Dariush Mehrjui at the Tricycle Theatre in Kilburn. The remaining 12 screenings – held over two days at the Khalili Lecture Theatre and hosted by the Centre for Iranian Studies at SOAS – consisted of several films on popular music in the region as well as a number of documentaries.

Alongside the screenings, a two-day conference was held on 17th and 18th May at the Institute of Musical Research in Senate House and included several papers on music in Iranian, Moroccan, Syrian and Turkish cinema; as well as further films screenings - followed by Q&A sessions with the filmmakers. Highlight of the conference was the talk by Kamran Rastegar (Tufts University) who talked about his composition work for several Palestinian films.
Coercion or Empowerment: Official Anti-Veiling campaigns in the Middle East and Central Asia
Conference - Oxford

"Coercion or Empowerment: Official Anti-Veiling Campaigns in the Middle East and Central Asia", took place at St Anthony’s College, University of Oxford, on 23 September 2011. The conference looked at anti-veiling campaigns in the Turco-Persian world in the 1920s and 1930s, and panels were held on Iran, Afghanistan and Central Asia, and on Turkey. Speakers came from far afield, including Japan and the USA, as well as Turkey and Europe. Each of the papers stimulated a lively discussion, with significant contributions from the floor as well as from the members of panels. A high point of the morning session on Iran was the presentation by Anna Fahr which included clips of early Iranian films, most notably fragments of the 1933 Iranian film, Dokhtar-e Lor.

The conference was well-attended, with participants coming from several UK universities, and a particularly large number of Oxford postgraduate students. Some of the papers presented on the day are now being prepared for publication as a collection, to be edited by Stephanie Cronin.

The conference was convened by Stephanie Cronin and funded by the Iran Heritage Foundation and the Faculty of Oriental Studies, University of Oxford and was held at St Anthony’s College, University of Oxford.

Norouz at the V&A
Study Day - London

In conjunction with celebration of the festival of Norouz, the Victoria and Albert Museum hosted a study day dedicated to art, music and poetry from Iran with a special connection to the customs and history of Norouz. The lectures included an introduction to Norouz by Moya Carey, the Iran Heritage Foundation Curator, Iran Collections, followed by Norouz in Classical Persian Music and Poetry delivered by Jane Lewisohn, IHF Lead Researcher of the Golha Project, Dept of Music, SOAS. Margaret Graves, Research Associate, Aga Khan Museum looked into Norouz festivities and the house models of medieval Iran, with Hossein Elahi-Ghomshei discussing The Mythology of Norouz in Persian Literature. During the interval, Peyam Heydarian performed on Santur and a Haft-Seen set the scene.
Special Maps of Persia
Lecture - London

Iran or Persia has been extensively mapped since ancient times. Persian geographers, like Bakhti, Estakhri, Zakarya Qazwini and others, were the main contributors to the thriving field of cartography throughout the early Islamic period (eighth to fourteenth centuries). Ptolemy’s fifth map of Asia, which depicts Persia, appeared in all the 59 editions of Geographia, published between 1477 and 1759. Castaldi’s produced the first post-Ptolemaic map of Persia in 1599 in Venice, which served as the basis of many later maps for about a century. The first notable innovation in this field came to light when Cleonus, in his New Map of Persia (1646), changed the Ptolemaic oval shape of the Caspian Sea to an upright rectangle, correcting the latitude of the Northern provinces. His map influenced the cartography of Persia for seven decades, until a full Russian survey of the Caspian was carried out in 1790. Dutch, French and German cartographers were all active in mapping Persia. However, it was their British counterparts who succeeded during the nineteenth century to improve the mapping of Persia considerably, based on new surveys, including those carried out by the Survey of India. Some of these maps were politically motivated, showing Bahkistan as a separate state until 1873, when the Goldsmid Commission settled the eastern boundaries of the country. The Pahlavis established several new cartographic institutions in Iran, as a result of which numerous modern maps of the country and its provinces were produced locally from 1930 until the present time.

At a lecture in the Brunei Gallery of the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), Dr. Cyrus Alai focused on the political maps of Iran, closely examining the ambitions and intrigues of their subtle and complex world view. Some 200 people attended the lecture. These included a host of enthusiastic collectors of Persian maps, as well as students interested in the subject who had come to listen to an as yet unexplored area of Persian history. The lecture was followed by a reception.

The event was organized by the Iran Heritage Foundation in collaboration with British Institute of Persian Studies (BIPS) and took place at the Wolfson Auditorium of the British Academy.

Sadegh Hedayat: A life in words and pictures
Lecture, Film screening and Q&A – London

No other modern Iranian writer has been favoured by his countrymen more than Sadegh Hedayat. Born in Tehran in 1903 and living in Paris until 1951 when he committed suicide, Hedayat is the father of modern fiction in Iran. Hedayat had a wide range – he wrote nationalist plays, satire, and both realist and surrealist fiction. He is best known for his novel The Blind Owl, published in 1937.

At a lecture given by Dr. Homa Katouzian, the life and predicament of the Iranian nation, highlighting all the values and his social rebelliousness towards virtually every established order in society were analyzed. The lecture was followed by the film ‘From No. 37,’ by Sam Kalantari and Mohsen Shahrnazdar, which covered Hedayat’s life from his childhood in Iran and his later life in France, ending finally with his suicide in Paris. The film used dialogues alongside documents and photos, providing an absorbing look at the Kafka-like characteristics of this most individual literary figure. The screening was followed by a Q&A with the producers.

Sadegh Hedayat: A life in words and pictures

Sadegh Hedayat

The event was organized by the Iran Heritage Foundation in collaboration with British Institute of Persian Studies (BIPS) and held at the Lecture Theatre of the British Academy.
**A Separation**

Film screening - London

“A Separation” was the standout film of the 2011 Berlin Film Festival and winner of the Golden Bear Award. This suspenseful and intelligent drama detailing the fractures and tensions at the heart of Iranian society won the 2012 Oscar for Best Foreign Film.

Written and directed by Asghar Farhadi, the film boasted a range of superb performances from the ensemble cast who collectively received the Silver Bears for both Best Actor and Best Actress at the Berlinale.

The compelling narrative was driven by a taut and finely written script rooted in the particular of Iranian society, but which transcended its setting to create a stunning morality play with universal resonance.

The film premiered at the Curzon Cinema on the 28th of June and was on general release from the 1st of July.

Organized by the Artificial Eye and supported by Iran Heritage Foundation

**Rainy Seasons** (*Fasl-E Baran-Haye Moosemi*)

Film screening & Q&A - London

As part of the third Pan-Asia Film Festival, showcasing new cinema from across Asia, Majid Barzegar’s “Rainy Seasons” received its UK premiere in March 2011.

A compelling coming-of-age tale, set in the rarely seen world of Iranian middle class youth, the film is a gritty urban drama of modern teenage life in Tehran today, telling the story of Sina, a teenage boy trapped in the middle of his parents’ divorce and his own teenage troubles. Shaking off the veiled political criticism or the tendency to symbolism characteristic of Iranian films, Barzegar skilfully paints the picture of bored youths and inquisitive teenagers as they can be found all over the world. This universal feeling for life is captured beautifully with a hand-held camera.

The screening was followed by Q&A with the director.

As part of the Pan Asian Film Festival, the screening was organized by Asia House and the Iran Heritage Foundation. The UK premiere took place at the Apollo cinema, Lower Regent Street.
Norouz Gala

The festival of Norouz and the celebration of the New Year on the first day of Spring represents a major part of the Iranian peoples’ rich culture. Its origins are unknown, but references to it can be traced back to the several thousand years predating the Achaemenid era. The ancient Iranians marked the last ten days of the solar year in a solemn ceremony of mourning (‘Farvardgan’) to signify the end of life. This was followed by the festival of Norouz that celebrated rebirth and this was a great occasion for celebration and joy. One of the rock reliefs of the staircases in Persepolis depicts a procession of Median dignitaries on their way to the festival of Norouz, carrying ceremonial and symbolic offerings. The basis of the rituals have remained remarkably intact for several thousand years, observed by vast populations living in Iran, Turkey, Iraq, Afghanistan and Central Asia, as well as in the diaspora of Iran. The traditional celebration is now a London tradition, and it represents the major annual fundraising event for the Foundation. This joyous occasion provides a celebratory start to the New Year with many Iranians travelling from the USA and Europe to attend the celebration. In 2011 the Gala was held at the Grosvenor House Hotel; it was an evening of celebration with 800 guests dancing and enjoying themselves up until the early hours of the morning. The Gala was organized by the Norouz Committee.

Social Functions

1. Haft - Seen (detail)
2. Lord Lamont & Gay Huey Evans
3. Fereshteh Montakhab, Iran Ghassemieh & Mina Larizadeh
4. Urs & Wakano Schmid

In 2011 in Review

Social Functions
Edinburgh Iranian Festival 2011
Festival - Edinburgh

The Edinburgh Iranian Festival was a two-week affair, taking place in various venues across the city of Edinburgh, showcasing Iranian art and culture in its differing forms and introducing it to those living in Scotland. The festival, now in its second year, is organized by volunteers and is affiliated to the Edinburgh University Persian Society (EUPS). Through a broad range of interactive events spanning across a wide range of art forms, the festival aims to integrate the Iranian community into Scottish society. The events taking place this year included traditional music by Dunya Ensemble, comedy by Patrick Monahan and Peyvand Khorsandi, Poetry reading by Lobat Vala, and Mehri Kashani, exhibition of paintings by Maryam Hashemi and Haleh Jamali, film screenings, and a host of other events attended both by Iranian and Scottish attendees.

The festival was sponsored by Creative Scotland, the Edinburgh University Persian Society (EUPS), Filmhouse Cinema, Iran Heritage Foundation, St. John’s Edinburgh, UK Iranian Film Festival, as well as a host of other establishments in Scotland and the UK.

Spirit of Yalda
Winter Solstice Celebration - London

Yalda is an ancient Iranian celebration of the winter solstice and has great significance in the Iranian calendar. The eve of the birth of Mithra, the Sun God, who symbolised light, goodness and strength on earth, Yalda has woven around it a night that embodies the highly textured heritage of this historic land and is still enjoyed in Iranian homes worldwide. Yalda is traditionally celebrated on the night of winter solstice. This year, however, the spirit of Yalda was celebrated as part of the Nour Festival of Arts. Held at Leighton House Museum, this free entry event included music, poetry reading and divination as well as drinks and delicacies. At the start of the evening, Peyman Heydarian provided traditional music on the santour in the Arab room of the museum. It was then followed by a performance by Alamute and concluded with poetry reading and divination by Suzie Ziaie. The main objective of the event had been to reach out to the non-Iranian public and introduce them to the joys of the Iranian tradition. The majority of the audience however, turned out to be Iranian, a sure sign of the popularity of the tradition within the Iranian community.

Organized by the Leighton House Museum and supported by the Soudavar Foundation and the Iran Heritage Foundation.
Tales from the Shahnameh
Storytelling and Workshop - London

At a special session for children 5-10 years of age, storyteller extraordinaire, Xanthe Gresham, accompanied by master musician Arash Moradi, narrated stories from the treasure trove of Shahnameh, where heroes, princesses, dragons and demons and all manner of delights fit for a king awaited to be discovered. Following the performance, children were invited to join an interactive workshop led by Mishko Papic, where they created objects in the spirit of the Shahnameh.

Organized by Asia House Festival of Asian Literature in partnership with Iran Heritage Foundation

An Evening of Persian and English Poetry
Poetry reading - London

As part of the fifth annual Asia House Festival of Asian Literature, IHF organised an evening of Persian and English poetry reading. During the evening poets Mimi Khalvati and Ziba Karbassi looked at the interplay of their Iranian heritage and the influences of their lives in England and Iran. Karbassi’s poems have been translated by the poet and translator Stephen Watt, who read the English translations of her poems. Dominic Parviz Brookshaw, lecturer in Persian Studies and Iranian Literature at the University of Manchester acted as moderator. The readings were followed by a reception during which the audience had further chance to talk with the poets and engage with their poetry.

Organized by Asia House Festival of Asian Literature in partnership with Iran Heritage Foundation

Culinary Paradise: Festival of Persian Food
Book launch and Reception – London

SARABAN, meaning cameleer, is the title of a book on Persian cuisine by Greg and Lucy Malouf, a culinary journey through modern-day Persia. On the occasion of the launch of their book, an evening talk and reception was organized at ‘Made in Camden’ at the Roundhouse, where Greg and Lucy relived their journey through the kitchens and dining rooms of modern day Iran. The talk was followed by a reception where Saraban inspired light bites made by ‘Made in Camden’ Head Chef, Josh Katz and team were served.

Organized by Spoon PR & Marketing in association with Iran Heritage Foundation

Lunch and Literature: New Persian Cooking
Talk, Demonstration and Sampling - London

Taking a fresh approach to the classic cuisine of Iran, Jila Dana-Haeri and Shahrzad Ghoshbashian have adapted traditional Persian recipes to fit the requirements of modern cooks, producing a new cookbook “New Persian Cooking.” To launch the book, the authors were joined by the chef of the ‘Silk Route Cafe’ at Asia House, to present examples of the delicious recipes from the book while sharing the history and personal memories of family, life and food in Iran, with the audience.

Organized by Asia House Festival of Asian Literature in partnership with Iran Heritage Foundation

1 Xanthe Gresham & children
2 Children at the workshop
3 Stephen Watt, Ziba Karbassi, Dominic Parviz Brookshaw & Mimi Khalvati

This page
1 & 2 Shahrzad Ghorashian & Jila Dana-Haeri
3 Chef of the Silk Road Cafe
SELECTED 2012 PROGRAMMES

Innovation and Imagination in Persian Manuscripts from Sixteenth-Century Shiraz

British Library
25 January 2012

A lecture by Dr. Marianna Shreve Simpson, looking at diversity and creativity of deluxe Persian manuscripts made in sixteenth-century Shiraz.

Organized by Iran Heritage Foundation

Patriot of Persia

Royal Geographical Society
14 February 2012

A lecture by Christopher de Bellaigue on the 1953 Anglo-American coup that overthrew Mohammad Mossadegh and restored the Shah to power.

Organized by the Iran Society and supported by the Iran Heritage Foundation

Norouz Gala

Grosvenor House
17 March 2012

Continuing a longstanding tradition, we celebrate the Iranian New Year with a Gala at the Grosvenor House Hotel. It is a celebratory start to the Persian New Year and the Foundation’s major fundraising event.

Organized by the Iran Heritage Foundation

Friday Late at the V&A

Victoria & Albert Museum
30 March 2012

To coincide with the celebration of Norouz, the V&A and the Iran Heritage Foundation celebrate the creativity of Iranian culture today, including music, poetry, workshop and food.

Organized by the Victoria and Albert Museum and sponsored by the Iran Heritage Foundation

The Beauty of Classical and Contemporary Persian Music

Short course
School of Oriental and African Studies
31 March 2012

A short course introducing the vibrant living tradition of both contemporary and classical Persian music to students, laymen and connoisseurs, accompanied by both live musical performances as well as recorded audio and video illustrations.

Organized by the School of Oriental & African Studies, London Middle East Institute (LMEI) and the Iran Heritage Foundation

Poetry from the Persianate World

Asia House
21 May 2012

As part of the Asian Literary Festival, poets Azita Chahreman from Iran and Reza Mohammadi from Afghanistan look at the interplay of their heritage and the influences of their lives with poets and translators Maura Dooley and Nick Laird reading the English translations of the Poems.

Organized by Asia House Festival of Asian Literature, the Poetry Translation Centre and the Iran Heritage Foundation

9th Biennial of Iranian Studies

Turkey
15 August 2012

This biennial conference will include contributions in all fields of Iranian studies, especially new areas of investigation and novel approaches to traditional fields. The conference takes place in Istanbul, Turkey this year, and is expected to reach record attendance levels.

Organized by the International Society for Iranian Studies and in partnership with Iran Heritage Foundation. Support for the event has been generously provided by Mr. & Mrs. Javad Kamei, Mr. & Mrs. Bijan Zamanpour and Mr. & Mrs. Mehmet Hamed amongst other generous sponsors.

Abbas Akhavan in Residence

Delfina Foundation
August – October 2012

A new commission by the artist for the solo exhibition, as part of a UK debut, to coincide with the Frieze Art Fair.

Organized by Delfina Project and supported by Iran Heritage Foundation

We are indebted to the following institutional and organisational partners with whom we have worked in the implementation and execution of projects and programmes


We are grateful to the academic and cultural experts who shared their expertise with us and provided the professional input that ensured the high quality of our programmes and events

Dr. Julia Connellia
Narguess Farzad
Hassan-Ali Hakemi
Jane Lewisohn
Parnaz Tanavoli
Roya Arab

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Yousef Daneshvar OBE 1930 – 2012

Yousef Daneshvar, our loyal friend, supporter and active Trustee, died in March 2012.

Born in Boushehr (Iran) in 1930, Mr Daneshvar was educated in Alwaz, Khorasanshahr and Tehran. A cosmopolitan entrepreneur, committed philanthropist and dedicated Iranian, he bridged cultures and crossed national divides with ease and confidence. In 1969 he left Iran to set up his businesses in Dubai. His family has since lived between Dubai and London where he married Faridah, his wife, and where his sons Koorosh and Kambiz were born.

In later years, he was instrumental in reviving the British-Iranian Chamber of Commerce (BICS), the leadership of which he dedicated much of the last decade of his life. In 2007 he was awarded an OBE for services to British business.

The IHF family will greatly miss his leadership, enthusiasm and contributions.