

Puisque tu ne vois pas l'arbre, comment apercevrais-tu l'oiseau (posé)
là dedans?

Alors, pourquoi devrais-je continuer à te décrire, ô (mon) âme, l'âme
de ce „Tabriz”?

Studies in Iranian Linguistics and Philology est un ouvrage publié très soigneusement. Les rédacteurs ont standardisé la transcription et la forme extérieure des textes publiés durant les derniers 35 ans, en utilisant de différentes techniques ; ils ont aussi présenté des exemples écrits en alphabets originaux. Le livre possède également des index très utiles: *Terminology and Forms* (p. 309-328) et *Onomasticon* (p. 328-336). Quand nous lisons l'index alphabétique des matières, notre attention est attirée par la richesse du *spectrum* des sujets: p.ex. après *direct object* nous trouvons *doctrine*, après *medium* – *message(s)*, après *heretic* – *heterogram(s)*. Et pourtant, nous savons que l'iranologie n'est pas le seul champ d'études scientifiques du professeur Wojciech Skalmowski.

Barbara Mękarska

le professeur Skalmowski ce n'est pas un toponyme! – p.131 et l'article *Jalāl-od-din Rumi's 'tabriz'*.

Short Note

Society, History and Culture in the Persianate World Second Biennial Conference on Iranian Studies 2-5 April 2004, Yerevan, Armenia

The Association for the Study of Persianate Societies (ASPS) was established in 1996 in the United States as a professional organization for researchers interested in the cultures and civilizations based on, or strongly influenced by the Persian language and culture. Thus, besides the mainly Iranian-populated lands it also covers the bordering areas such as the Indian subcontinent, Central Asia and Caucasus.

According to the ASPS program, its objective is to promote research in the humanities and social sciences in a broad sense, including such disciplines as anthropology, economics, ethnography, history, linguistics, political science, and sociology. But since the founders of the Association, with Said Amir Arjomand as its first president, have been chiefly the scholars involved in social sciences, this field of research is apparently dominating the range of the ASPS interests.

The Association, based in the United States and having its European and Asian branches, attempts to integrate gifted and, in particular, young scholars coming from within Persianate societies into a world-wide exchange and communication network, and to stimulate scientific activity in isolated academic centers of the Middle East and Central Asia.

The ASPS publishes its Bulletin twice a year and the first volume of its bilingual (English and Persian) annual journal, *Studies on Persianate Societies / Pažuheš dar javāme'-e fārsi-zabān* appeared in 2003. The Association's another activity is focused on organizing its biennial conventions. The first of them was held in Dushanbe, Tajikistan, in September 2002; the second one - in Yerevan (Armenia) in April 2004, the third is planned for Shiraz, 2006.

The Yerevan 2004 conference on “Society, History and Culture in the Persianate World” was hosted and perfectly organized by the Department of Iranian Studies, Yerevan State University, headed by Prof. Garnik Asatrian. Over 80 presentations by the speakers from 18 countries (Afghanistan, Armenia, Denmark, France, Georgia, Germany, Great Britain, India, Iran, Israel, Italy, Netherlands,

Poland, Russia, the United States, Tajikistan, Turkey and Uzbekistan) had been originally arranged into 24 thematic panels, two of which had to be cancelled due to the absence of Afghan, Uzbek and Kashmiri Indian speakers.

The panels which took place, covered such topics as: Urban Realities and Urban Knowledge in Contemporary Iran; Safavid and Mughal History; Georgia and Iran; Armenia and Iran; Pre-Islamic Iranian Culture and Traditions; Kurdish and Yezidi Oral and Textual Traditions; Folklore; Regional and Global Trade; Medieval History; Society and Family; Nineteenth and Twentieth-century History; Sufi Communities and Shrines; Comparative Issues in Art and Architecture; Representations in Art and Literature; Religion and Ritual; Language and Identity; Comparative Iranian Linguistics.

The Iranian Department of the Yerevan University proved to be a dynamic and creative research center. A series of outstanding papers was presented by a group of its young scholars, in particular: Vardan Voskanian (*A Newly-found Persian Dialect Spoken by a Turkmen Group in Turkey*), Vahe Boyajian (*Folk Beliefs in Iranian Baluchistan*), Hasmik Kirakosyan (*The Common Characteristics of the Textual Attestations of Azari Language*) and Mushegh Asatrian (*The Peacock in "Nahj ul-Balagha" and in the Near-Eastern Traditions*).

Also young linguists from Iran, such as B. Mahmudi-Bakhtiyari (*"Wind" in the (West) Iranian Languages and Dialects*); M. Rezai Baghbidi (*Linguistic Peculiarities of the Oldest Persian Texts in Non-Arabic Scripts*) and A. Bahrami (*Culture of Names among the Bakhtiyari*) showed that meticulous studies on Iranian languages ceased to be the domain of mainly Western researchers. As regards the linguistic section, it was generally of a strictly academic level, however, J. Derakhshani's attempts at proving pre-Sumerian presence of Aryans in Mesopotamia (*Earliest Traces of the Iranian People*), though sensational, lacked scientific background.

During the conference one could observe a revival of research into once neglected Tajik field. Papers on religion, language and culture of Tajikistan were presented by both foreign (e.g. J. Gross, *Shrines and Sufi Circles in 14th-15th Century Khuttalan, Chaghanian and Hisar*; A. Wendtland, *Gender-specific Differences in Pamir Languages*; M.E. Hegland, *Pirmard, Pirzan: Tajik Elderly Holding their own*) and Tajik speakers (e.g. R. Rahmonov, *Prayer in the Social Life of Tajik People*; B. Aliev, *Sogdian Toponyms and their Meaning in the Zaravshan Valley of Tajikistan*; S. Mirzoev, *"Al" in the Imagination of the Yaghnob People*).

Another circle of vital interest dealt with Kurdish and Yezidi studies represented mainly by V. Arakelova (*Sultan Ezid in the Yezidi Religion: Genesis of the Character*), P. Kreyenbroek (*History in an Oral Environment: the Concept of History in Traditional Yezidi Texts*) and Ch. Allison (*Kurdish Autobiography – Lifestories in Print from Erebe Shemo to Ahmad Bamarni*).

The conference offered an opportunity to discuss the interrelations between

Iran and its western neighbours: Transcaucasia and Asia Minor in the fields of politics, language, literature, art and religion, from the antiquity up to modern times. Two speakers dealt with Iranian presence in Arabic world: H. Mahamid, *Persians in Fatimid Egypt* and A. de Jong, *Zoroastrians in Baghdad: Some Evidence from Pahlavi and Arabic Texts*; M. Aki spoke on *Persian-speaking Jewish Communities of the Caucasus, Central Asia and China*.

One of the most picturesque and vivid presentations were that of Firuza I. Abdullaeva (*The Evolution of the Representation of the Divine in the Art of the Persian Book*) following the trail of God's image in Persian miniatures, and of J. Alavi (*The Figure of the "Urban" in Contemporary Literature*) on the image of the city in Persian literature, a part of a panel devoted to the development of modern urban society in Iran.

Apart from being offered a wide range of panels, the participants were also shown historical sites such as a Hellenistic temple and Christian monastery Geghard, a Yezidi spring camp called Wārē Žērē, and thanks to a perfect, multi-lingual translation by Dr. Vardan Voskanian, they had a possibility to talk to the head and representatives of a local Yezidi community.

Although the attribution of some papers to the panels not always precisely corresponded to their content, the range of issues approached shows the main directions of the development of Iranian studies today. Relying on both philologically-rooted and socially-oriented research, the ASPS represents a tendency which seems to become more and more dominating in Iranian studies of today: a complex approach to cultural phenomena, bedded in a precisely defined historical and regional context, combined with a solid knowledge of local languages, meticulous investigation of textual sources, and field research.

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