

INDIRAN

The newsletter of the Ancient India and Iran Trust

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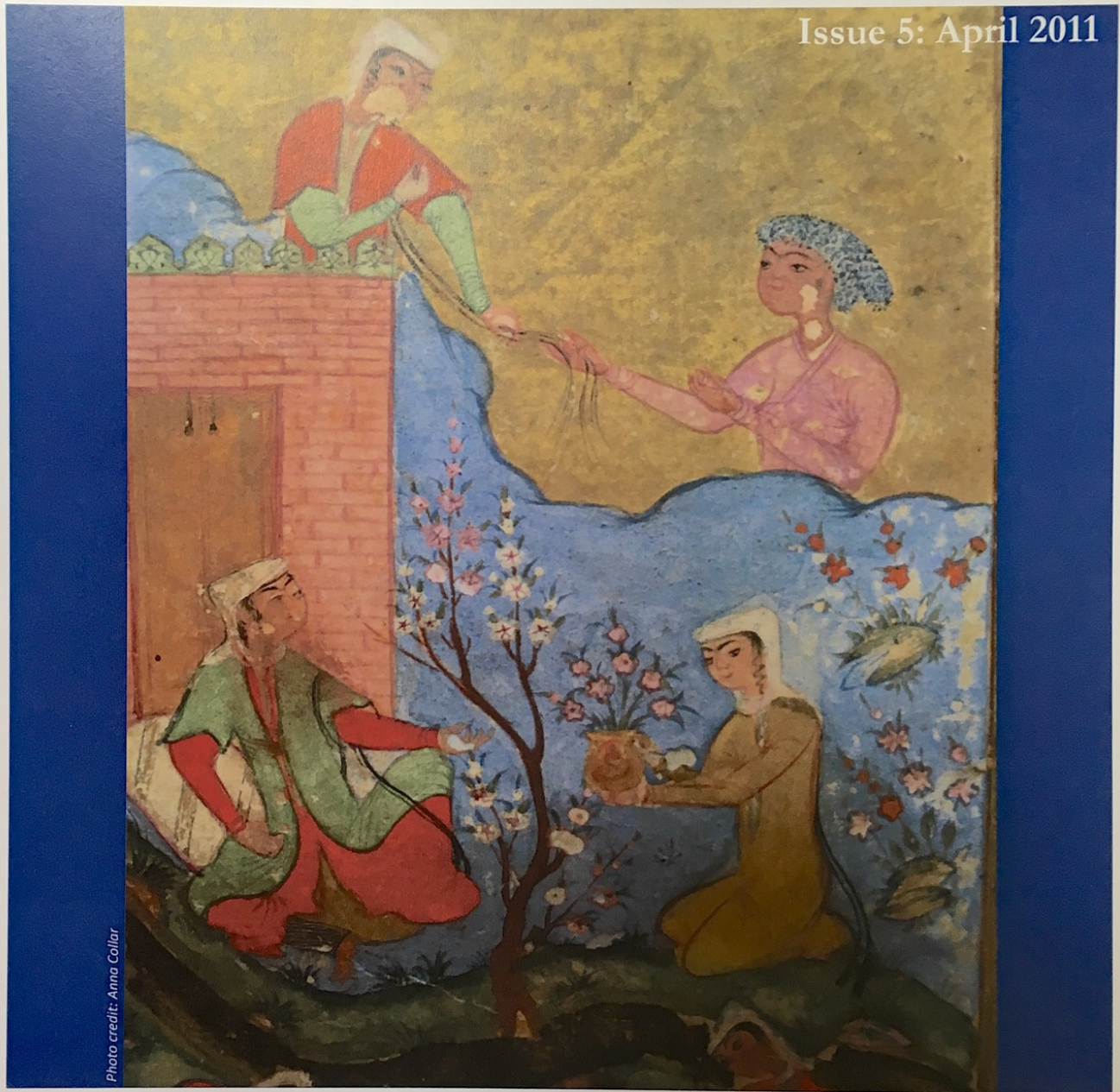


Photo credit: Anna Collar

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Editor's Letter

News from the Ancient India & Iran Trust

Sogdian in China:

Bi Bo, Lecturer in Ancient Chinese History at the Renmin University of China, Beijing, talks about her work to Anna Collar

WELCOME to the second edition of the Ancient India and Iran Trust's new-look newsletter, *Indiran*. You will have noticed a change in the style of the newsletter and we hope you approve!

We've had a very busy autumn. On the 12th November 2010 we held a fantastic event celebrating the work of **Bridget Allchin** and the late **Raymond Allchin** at Churchill College, where Professors Robin Coningham (Durham) and Robin Dennell (Sheffield) gave fascinating lectures detailing the groundbreaking work and the lasting legacies of these legends of 20th century Indian archaeology.

We hosted a beautiful travelling photographic exhibition, on loan from the British Library and British Museum, which explored the world of **Islamic Seals**. The exhibit was complemented by an excellent lecture by the exhibition's curators, Drs. Annabel Gallop and Venetia Porter - a report of the event is on **page 4**.

This issue we also have a detailed report of the lecture given by **Professor Frantz Grenet** for **December's Harold Bailey Memorial Lecture** on Qarakhanid Uzbekistan. Read more on **page 7**.

The autumn saw the whole of Cambridge hit by **Shahnama Fever** - marking the 1000-year celebrations of the composition of Ferdowsi's epic poem. Trustee Christine van Ruymbeke gives us a retrospective of the celebratory events on **page 6**. The image on the front cover is a detail from the Trust's own *Shahnama* manuscript, showing Rudaba letting down her hair for the approaching Zal to climb up, while her ladies picnic in the foreground.

Finally, on **page 8**, you'll find pictures, 'news in brief' and details of upcoming events at the Trust. Many of you will be very sorry to hear that our custodian James Cormick's beloved dog, Tilly, had to be put down in November. She is buried in the rose garden, and we all miss her a great deal.

We hope you enjoy the issue - and please get in touch with me if you have a story of your own or information you'd like to share.

Anna Collar, Editor

DR BI BO IS A GRADUATE of Chinese history, but her interest in the people and culture of Sogdiana and their complex relationship with the dynasties of China brought her all the way to the UK to study the ancient language of Sogdian.

She visited first in 2007, but was thwarted in her efforts - as the leading expert on the languages of Sogdiana and Bactria Professor Nicholas Sims-Williams had by this point retired. Instead, she studied the related languages of Middle Persian and Bactrian with Professor Almut Hintze and Mr François de Blois at SOAS. She returned in 2008 to learn Sogdian itself, and, following issues with visa arrangements and teaching commitments, in 2010-11 she came to the UK as a bursary recipient at the Trust. With the help of Nicholas Sims-Williams, Wang Tao at SOAS and Frances Wood at the British Library, Bi Bo spent six months here studying some newly discovered documents from Khotan with Nicholas Sims-Williams.

Her university museum acquired a collection of paper documents in summer 2009, but they only arrived in spring 2010. In the whole collection, roughly twelve are in Sogdian - the rest being in Khotanese, Chinese and Old Tibetan. The Sogdian documents seem to date from



-Photo Credit: Anna Collar

and fertile thanks to the snow runoff from the Pamir mountains, the western part of the Himalaya range.

It is not known precisely when Sogdian began to be spoken as a separate

language, but mention is made in Old Persian inscriptions of the area of Sogdiana - meaning that

"the reward for me is deepening my knowledge about Sogdiana"

about the 8th-9th centuries AD, and they appear to be secular, comprising letters and economic documents. The entire collection will be made public at some point later this year.

Sogdian was spoken and used in the eastern valley areas of modern-day Uzbekistan and Tajikistan, with chief cities at Samarqand, Bukhara and Kish - the region known in antiquity as Sogdiana. Located between the Oxus and the Jaxartes, the modern Amu and Syr Darya rivers, the region was well-watered

it certainly existed as a recognised region from the Achaemenid Persian era onwards. The earliest known Sogdian texts are now thought to be the recently-discovered Kultobe inscriptions (from the excavations of Kultobe in southern Kazakhstan), which date from not later than the first half of the third century AD. The language had its heyday however during the first millennium AD, when it was the *lingua franca* of the Silk Road in the period of the Chinese Tang dynasty, who ruled between 618-907 AD.

Focus on: Uzbekistan's remarkable Qarakhanid heritage

Bailey Memorial Lecture 2010 by Frantz Grenet

all this was overturned in the year 2000 and the excavation seasons following. Under the careful eye of Dr Yuri Karev, the French-Uzbek mission's Russian collaborator, some extraordinary discoveries were made. Built on top of the ruins of an early Islamic palace, Karev recognised the shape of a pavilion, dated by the ceramics it contained to the late Qarakhanid period. Amongst the rubble of the destroyed building were crushed fragments of figural wall paintings. Over five years, some 600 fragments were discovered - and although the restoration work, conducted by the Samarqand Institute of Archaeology, continues, the team have reconstructed about 30% of the whole composition.

The pavilion from which the paintings originate was the largest of six, built in the area of the previous Abbasid palace - probably in a garden and reserved for the use of kinsmen and courtiers of the Qarakhanid ruler. The painted pavilion was apparently a space for the ruler himself to receive guests and visitors. The paintings were arranged in separate compositions running along the walls and set in frames, which in some cases allow the reconstruction of the layout. The main subject, covering the largest surface area, celebrates the 'good life'. Pheasants peep out of floral decorations, fantastical birds engage in combat, and hunting dogs are painted with affection (**below left**). Dancers appear regularly, some with moustaches and some without, making it hard to discern whether they represent young men or women. The message is clear - confirmed by an inscription in Persian, reading 'the day of the heart's desire has come'.

We also see larger than life figures, including an archer with the plaits and cap of a Central Asian Turk - who probably symbolises one of the ruler's official dignitaries. The specific symbol of the *silah - dar*, the armour-bearer, is a bow, which corresponds to the Turkish archer in this painting. Space for three other officials can be reconstructed on this eastern wall, surrounding a space for the ruler to sit enthroned.

A mythological image was shown on the northern wall, flanking the image of the ruler. Showing a gigantic eagle on a mountain, with a fantastical beast with a

human face and a green scaly hump in the foreground, the team suspect this may be a previously unknown image of the giant bird from Persian legend, the Simorgh, with an unidentified mythical creature. However, the most important painting is of the ruler himself (**right**). He sits cross-legged in the centre, larger than the other figures, wearing his hair in long plaits and holding an arrow. His throne is flanked by two dignitaries, assumed to be the chief vizier and a military officer; behind the throne stand other attendants. These are less solemn figures, engaged in more frivolous activities such as offering a pomegranate to a lady, who strokes a cat.

Who is this ruler? Evidence, epigraphic, stylistic, and contextual, point to the last half century of Qarakhanid rule. A damaged inscription contains the letters *sin*, *'ayn*, *waw* and *dal*, a sequence with a limited number of corresponding words in Arabic and Persian: one of the most likely is the name Mas'ud. Only two Qarakhanid rulers have this component in their name: Mas'ud ibn Hasan and his son Muhammad ibn Mas'ud. Taken together, their reigns occupied the 1160s and 1170s. However, stylistically, the ruler's face presents a very young man - a rounded, youthful 'moon-face' with a hint of fluff for a moustache - we know that a moon-face and a juvenile charm were characteristics of Uthman ibn Ibrahim, the last Qarakhanid ruler of Samarqand. Finally, the mutilation of the image is important: his eyes were scratched out, and his throat cut twice. This was not a religious zealot who 'killed' the image of this man, for it is only he who has his throat cut, although the dignitaries too have had their eyes put out.

The suggestion is that the events in Samarqand in 1212 provide the most suitable context for the image and its destruction. In this year Uthman, the young ruler whose beauty was widely hailed, was executed by Muhammad ibn Tekesh, king of Khwarazm, who had captured the city.

Photo Credit: MAFOUZ de Sogdiane



Inevitably, love and betrayal are at the heart of the story: Uthman was married to Muhammad ibn Tekesh's daughter, Khan-Sultan, a politically motivated union with the rulers to Uthman's west. Uthman's eastern neighbours, the Qara-Khitay, were famed for the beauty of their women, however. Uthman fell in love with a Qara-Khitay princess, a moon-faced girl who captured Uthman's heart 'like a rose that has blown' - but of course, his slighted wife Khan-Sultan did not take well to this new rival. She wrote to her father, informing him that Uthman was engaged in subterfuge, turning against him and allying himself with the Qara-Khitay to the east. Uthman's father-in-law the Shah of Khwarazm took Samarqand after a fierce siege in 1212, and it was Khan-Sultan herself who insisted on her husband's execution. Is it also her jealous hand we see in the vicious mutilation of this portrait? Or was this man a predecessor of Uthman? Whoever he was, we know one thing: that the Qarakhanids were no uncivilised barbarians, but rather, patrons of a remarkable school of painting - an extraordinary and beautiful heritage for Uzbekistan and for the world more generally.

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Y. Karev, 'Qarākhānīd wall paintings in the citadel of Samarqand. First report and preliminary observations', *Muqarnas*, 22, 2005, pp. 45-84.

Y. Karev, 'Un cycle de peintures murales d'époque Qarākhānīde (XIIe - XIIIe siècles) à la citadelle de Samarkand: le souverain et le peintre', *Comptes Rendus de l'Académie des Inscriptions et Belles-lettres*, 2003 2005, pp. 1685-1731.

A Rare Find

Dr Ian Proudfoot, of the Australian National University, shares his exciting findings of Malay books

As the language of trade and commerce in the region, Sogdian survived for a while beyond the Islamic conquest of the area, but seems to have been largely extinct by the 11th century. However, the Sogdian script had a strong influence on Turkic and is the direct ancestor of Uyghur, itself the antecedent of modern Mongolian. A dialect of Sogdian evolved into Yaghnobi - spoken today by a handful of people in the Yaghnob valley in Tajikistan - an endangered language that is supported for preservation by the Tajik Academy of Science.

Why should a Chinese historian be interested in this group of people and this dead language that existed on the far western edge of China? It seems that Sogdian people, as renowned businessmen, moved east and settled in China, establishing communities and eventually becoming important players in Chinese affairs of government and the military, as well as music and the arts - meaning they played a central role in medieval Chinese history. It was An Lushan, a half-Sogdian, half-Turkic military general in the mid 700s who led a rebellion against the Tang dynasty, which was only put down by the Tang with help from the Uyghurs. After this insurrection, Tang China viewed the Sogdians with suspicion; this, along with the rise of assimilation through marriage, probably hastened the disappearance of the language.

Bi Bo has just finished one article with Nicholas Sims-Williams about the newly-acquired Sogdian documents - and, following her return to China in the spring, will be one of the very few people in China whose research is focused on this extraordinary part of Central Asian history. It's quite a responsibility - but one that Bi Bo shoulders lightly. For her, the prestige of being in this position is not important - she says, if you work hard, and try your best, you will be rewarded - and for her, that reward is the deepening of her knowledge about Sogdiana.

Dr. Bi Bo was a 2010-2011 bursary recipient at the Trust.

Above left: Bi Bo at work in the India Room at the Ancient India & Iran Trust

IT WAS A DELIGHTFUL surprise to find a small but valuable collection of early Malay printed books in the AIIT library. This was quite unexpected. In the course of making a comprehensive catalogue of early Malay printed books, I had surveyed the Cambridge libraries in 1983. I had not thought to look into the Ancient India and Iran Trust library; but then I was not aware of Professor Bailey's wide-ranging interests, nor of his eclectic book-buying practices.

Printing came late to the Malay world. As with other Muslim societies, it was only when the invention of lithography allowed faithful reproduction of Arabic script that printing gained any popular audience or was widely used. With lithography there was a very rapid expansion of book production for Malay audiences. The first books to be printed were copies of the Quran and religious classics, quickly followed by more accessible mass-marketed books. From about 1860 to 1920, Singapore was the centre of this new printing industry. Its cheap books sold throughout Southeast Asia.

There are 26 of these popular titles in the AIIT library. One is a prose epic, printed in 1863, while the rest are all in verse, the

favoured medium of the day, printed between 1893 and 1918. The verse books cover a range of topics, from romance to moral teachings, from current affairs to fortune telling. In the AIIT collection they are bound together in three composite volumes.

This may appear to be a small collection of not very prepossessing books, but it is peculiarly valuable in two ways. First, 23 of its 26 books are unique editions not found in any other library. This is impressive: no other library I have surveyed comes even close to having this proportion of unique editions. No doubt it has something to do with the way the books were collected in Singapore, long before they were obtained by Professor Bailey; but what the circumstances were remains unclear for now. Even more impressive is the fact that three of the unique editions are also unique titles. Without the AIIT collection, these texts would have been lost to us.

Second is its connection with R.O. Winstedt. In 1935, Winstedt retired from a long career in the colonial service in Singapore and Malaya to pioneer Malay studies in the School of Oriental and African Studies, also serving several terms as president of the Royal Asiatic Society. In 1940 he published *A History of Malay Literature*, which remained the standard work in the field for sixty years. His history concludes with a chapter on "Malay Poetry", furnished with a bibliography of some 60 works, of which 44 are mass-marketed books lithographed in Singapore. Of these, no less than 23 are precisely the books found in the AIIT library. Moreover they are listed in the order in which they are found in the AIIT volumes. Did Winstedt borrow the volumes from Professor Bailey when writing his history; or - perhaps more likely - did Professor Bailey acquire them after Winstedt's collection was dispersed? In either case, this part of the AIIT collection fills a longstanding gap in the standard history of Malay literature.

Dr Ian Proudfoot, Australian National University

Left: Malay Books at the Trust

Photo Credit: Nicholas Proudfoot



Lasting Impressions: the world of Islamic seals

A report on an exhibition and accompanying lecture

THIS AUTUMN, the Trust hosted a travelling photographic exhibition, 'Lasting Impressions: Seals from the Islamic World'. We were also treated to an accompanying lecture by the two curators.

Venetia Porter (British Museum) took us through the seals themselves - including bullae (seal impressions, usually preserved in baked clay), rare bronze seals, seals with geometric designs, magical properties, and double-sided rock-crystal seals apparently influenced by Jewish angelic mysticism. The seals are small objects, worn often as a personal adornment, and so are highly mobile artefacts. Because objects are not inhumed with the dead in the Islamic tradition, seals are often found without a positive dating context. However, the name and phrase can reveal when and where a person lived, their social status, aspirations, and religious beliefs. Carnelian was the favoured choice for seals, the stone best-loved by Mohammed. The religious aspect of seals was highlighted by the fact that many carried a text from the Qu'ran - such as 'his trust is in God', or 'as God wills, there is no power except in God, ask forgiveness of God'. The amuletic power of carrying a seal inscribed with the sacred Arabic text was such that it caused the 9th century litterateur, al-Jahiz, to comment that he 'feels bereft without it'.

The engraver himself was a master craftsman: expected to be skilled in calligraphy, astrology, the science of numbers and geometry, familiar with poetry, and pious. The skill is reflected in the workmanship - which began simply, usually decorated only with a star or a crescent moon, but developing into flowers, scrolls and vines. Later on, the shape of the stone itself became part of this decoration: Persian seals were sometimes in the shape of the mihrab, Malay seals reflecting pre-Islamic heritage through their lotus-flower form. So valuable were they, that royal seals were usually destroyed after the ruler's death to prevent forgery, and, to keep their seals safe, kings often locked them away in the women's quarters. Those that survived sometimes had strange afterlives, for example, the Ballycottin

Brooch (**below**): an early black glass seal, reading 'tubna lillah - we have repented to God' in a Carolingian cross-shaped setting, found in an Irish peat-bog. This extraordinary object can only be explained with reference to the Vikings - but pre-Islamic seals were also reused, for example, a Roman seal with two people holding hands is over-cut with the name 'al-Hasan bin Ja'far'. Figural designs are extremely rare, excepting the case of the abstracted figure of 'Ali on horseback, created by combining the names of the twelve Shi'a imams.

Annabel Gallop (British Library) took over to explain more about the end product - the impressions. Hundreds of thousands survive, usually stamped in black ink on paper, the standard from its introduction from China until the 19th century. Dating the impressions is easier than dating the seal from which they come because of the manuscript context. However, this all-important context has led to the impressions themselves being overlooked - as the text and pictures of the manuscript itself are usually the focus of study. All kinds of papers bear seal impressions: from ordinary letters, books and documents to treaties and diplomatic and royal correspondence. Where the seal was stamped on a royal letter mattered a great deal - too high and the person was considered arrogant, too low, and they were thought subservient. In South East Asia great pains were taken to ensure the seal was exactly level with the first line of the document, and Jahangir the Mughal emperor of India was so anxious about

this subtle matter of etiquette that he avoided it entirely - by stamping a separate piece of paper to include with his letter to James I.

The Great Seal of the Mughals was particularly famous: so proud were the Mughals of their Timurid heritage, that they detailed their ancestry in a series of circles surrounding their own name in the centre. As generations wore on, the seals became larger - by the time of the last Mughal emperor, 16 concentric circles surrounded his name! The design was influential, and was copied by other Islamic kingdoms across Asia including Ajaigarh, and most famously by the kingdom of Aceh in Sumatra. However, here, the circles were limited to eight, the number of central importance in Hindu-Buddhist cosmology, showing again the continuation of pre-Islamic traditions. The British too adopted Persian seals on their introduction to Mughal India. Because the British traders and company officials were considered the emperor's servants, they had seals made with their pledge of allegiance and bearing their names in Arabic and Persian, sometimes with 'The Unit[ed] English East India Company' in English.

Anna Collar



Photo Credit: British Museum

Encounters between modernity and the Hindu temple

Deborah Sutton

WITH A BURSARY from the Ancient India and Iran Trust, I carried out research at the Trust's library in July 2010.

My research explores the encounter between modernity and the Hindu temple in South Asia: examining the temple as a space of political and cultural encounter during a period of tremendous change in South Asia, from the start of the nineteenth century until the mid-twentieth century. What is so fascinating about the temple is that it is a moving target - no single, worldly hierarchy of control exists to vet consecration or devotion. Temples are ultimately the abode of the deity and the domain of divine sovereign authority. Every kingly, bureaucratic or governmental power in medieval or modern South Asia has entered some relationship with that sovereignty.

In the context of modern Imperialism, and modernity, these qualities of the temple created a collision of ideas about time, history, beauty and authority. In the early nineteenth century, the administration of the temple was feared as corruptive of European authority. The architectural form of temples was interpreted as a corruption of the Buddhist forms it replaced. The sculptural art of temples was charged with obscuring both the temple itself and the human physiognomy which it (mis)-represented. By the late nineteenth century, when medieval temples came to be regarded as monuments, archaeologists saw temple managers, patrons and devotees as insensible to the importance of authenticity and antiquity.

In nineteenth-century, western popular literature, the temple was crudely reduced to a place of dark and macabre practices, an orientalist distortion which was maintained and re-told in twentieth century cinema; for example in George Steven's *Ganga Din* (1939) and Steven Spielberg's *Indiana Jones and the Temple of Doom* (1984). My research also examines finer grained literary renditions of the temple, in the work of Rudyard Kipling and E. M. Forster. Kipling fondly remembered the sound of temple bells

and an urban landscape dotted with shrines among the sensual memories of his childhood. Yet descriptions of temples in his fiction display a profound visceral unease. Forster, after his first visit to India in 1912, summarised the aesthetic shortcomings of the temple:

'the general deportment of the Temple is odious. It is unaccommodating, it rejects every human grace, its jokes are ill-bred, its fair ladies are fat, it ministers neither to a sense of beauty nor to the sense of time, and it is discontented with its own material. No one could love such a building. Yet no one can forget it.'

Forster's summation is extraordinary, as is his rejection of these sentiments after he saw an exhibition on the temple, held in London in 1940 and organised by Stella Kramrisch.

Kramrisch is the heroine of the art historical component of my research. Her opus, *The Hindu Temple*, published in 1946, remade the temple as a dynamic, living mass (though her re-made subject was no closer to the temple of popular Hindu practice). Kramrisch attributes an energy to the mass of the temple, emanating from the garbha griha and thrusting outwards, towards the circumambulating devotee. Under Kramrisch's influence, Forster saw in the temple a release from both the modernity of European fascism and the oppressive community created by the fight against it.

Books and journals in the Joan Van Lohuizen Collection allowed me to trace art historical and archaeological interpretations of the Hindu temple in the twentieth century. Art histories produced in Europe, or from within colonial institutions in India, tended to maintain the conviction that Hindu architecture was characterised by a tendency for 'profusion' and 'exuberance' which was less pleasing than the more 'restrained' style of Islamic architecture. However, newer art histories developed away from the low status afforded to the temple in European comparative schemas.

Stella Kramrisch and Mulk Raj Anand reversed the late Victorian formulations

which regarded sculpture as obscuring and corrupting structural form, to present sculpture as the perfection of temple form. If the Gupta period (4th to 6th centuries C.E.) represented a period in which the architectural form of the temple was determined, or rather enshrined, it was only later that sculpture 'triumphed' over architecture, a transition which marks the beginning of a Hindu Renaissance.

In burgeoning Indian art historical publications, a tension emerged between historical/archaeological accounts of Indian art and the study of aesthetics. For Kramrisch the study of Hindu aesthetics was inseparable from the Vedic prescriptions through which divine sovereignty was expressed and established during the inception and construction of temples. The temple was the 'house and body of God'. This reading of the temple represented a radical departure from the Victorian preoccupation with degeneration and sensuality. For Kramrisch, the divinity of the temple is invested and held within the fabric of the temple as sculpture. However, Kramrisch's claim for metaphysical continuity - through the intermeshing of sculptural form with Puranas and Upanishads - over-states the importance, and universal application, of the elaborate ritual prescriptions contained in these texts.

Of interest also are the tacit and explicit influences of European cultural history on Kramrisch's readings. Kramrisch's exhibition in London in 1940, that so impressed Forster, relied upon points of comparison and distinction with European medieval cathedral architecture to explicate the form and meaning of the Hindu temple. Elsewhere, Kramrisch combines the interpretative mediation of Vedic texts with a vocabulary of devotional experience derived from medieval Christianity. No less striking is the influence of the axioms of balletic movement in her exquisite descriptions of the balance between restraint and movement captured by figurative temple sculpture.

Dr Deborah Sutton is lecturer in History at the University of Lancaster

Shahnama Fever

Celebrating 1000 years of Ferdowsi's epic poem

IN EASTERN IRAN, A

THOUSAND YEARS AGO, the poet Ferdowsi of Tus put down into verse the different mythical, religious, legendary and historical traditions on the fifty kings of Persia from times mythical to the arrival of the Arabs in Iran in the 7th century. His epic poem, the Shahnama (Book of Kings) is to this day hugely influential in Iran and the whole Persianate world. Countless manuscripts of the epic exist, some of which are exquisite and are absolute treasures, because of their faultless and elegant calligraphy, their illumination, the quality of their paper and binding, and, naturally, some of the most sophisticated examples of Persian illustrations.

In Cambridge, a millennium after its completion, autumn 2010 could have been called the "Autumn of the Epic of the Persian Kings", as throughout the term a whole series of special events were organised to accompany the Fitzwilliam Museum exhibition (curated by Dr Barbara Brend) dedicated to the priceless and splendid manuscripts of the Shahnama. There were lunchtime talks, several concerts of Persian music and a Persian menu in the Museum restaurant, while the numismatic department also opened a side-exhibition showcasing their collections of Persian coins. A number of prestigious guest speakers were invited to talk on different aspects of the great epic at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern studies, and the whole Shahnama season at Cambridge culminated with a three-day international conference on Ferdowsi and the Shahnama at Clare College.

The Trust also fell happy victim to this 'Shahnama fever'. We hosted a special Friends event, comprising a guided tour of the exhibition led by Professor Charles Melville, the exhibition organiser and director of the Cambridge Shahnama Project, followed by a reception where the Trust's very own Shahnama manuscript was on display. Professor Melville also spoke at our regular Friday lecture series, showing us a delightful array of the illustrations from the famous Oxford Bodleian Shahnama manuscript. The manuscript that the Trust has in its collections is a manuscript that is both

unusual and extremely interesting, and is still understudied with regard to its cycle of illustrations. A note on the inside cover tells us that the manuscript was looted from the Royal Palace at Delhi, subsequently rebound and sold by Quaritch to Hy. White for 30 guineas - but no date is given for this event.

However, the manuscript is an early 17th century copy produced in Samarqand by a calligrapher of Bukharan origin, and it is dated 23 Dhu'l-Qa'da 1012 (23 April 1604). It contains 486 folios, and the discolouration and staining on the outer lower corner testifies pleasingly to the book having often been thumbed. The manuscript contains 27 miniatures and is one of several Samarqandi Shahnnamas (the British Library possesses one by the same scribe!)

Christine van Ruymbeke, Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies.

Front Cover: Detail from the Ancient India & Iran Trust Shahnama Manuscript folio 38, verso: Rudaba letting down her hair for the approaching Zal to climb up, while her ladies picnic in the foreground.

THE BAILEY MEMORIAL

LECTURE 2010, entitled 'the rediscovery of the court culture of the Qarakhanids (11th - beginning of the 13th centuries)', was given by Professor Frantz Grenet (Paris), who has been running the French-Uzbek Archaeological Mission since 1989. Their main excavation site is the plateau of Afrasiab, to the north-east of the modern city of Samarqand. This was the site

of the first Samarqand, founded by the Achaemenid Persians and occupied for over 17 centuries, deserted since the Mongol invasions of 1220. The place is known as Afrasiab, or Qal'a-ye Afrasiab, after the mythical king of Turan and enemy of Iran in Ferdowsi's Shahnama: Afrasiab lived in an underground palace, which is identified with the cliffs at the site. He was so hated by the Persians that two Turkish dynasties, the Seljuks and the Qarakhanids, both claimed him as their ancestor as an act of self-affirmation. The Qarakhanids ruled in Samarqand for two centuries, until the execution of the last ruler, Uthman, in 1212.

Excavations have continued in Afrasiab for over 20 years, bringing to light many important finds, including the Achaemenid city-wall, parts of the Greek city built by the successors of Alexander, pre-Islamic residential areas, and two early Islamic palaces. Qarakhanid rule, as Grenet acknowledges, was relatively short, and for years the team did not encounter any specifically Qarakhanid monument.

Our knowledge of the Qarakhanid dynasty is somewhat scanty - partly because few architectural remains from the period still remain in Central Asia - and partly because the history of the dynasty (as commissioned by Qarakhanids themselves) have perished. Surviving records are from the point of view of an enemy - and so suffer from stereotype and generalisation: for example, that Yusuf Qadir Khan, the fifth Qarakhanid ruler, drank no wine, that his gifts to Mahmud of Ghazna were rustic, raw products - furs, horses, slaves, and goatskin bottles, and that he was 'an ignorant, outlandish Turk'. This was the picture of the 'uncivilised' Qarakhanids - but

Photo Credit: MAFOUZ de Sogdiane



People at the Trust

& upcoming events

The work of Raymond and Bridget Allchin was celebrated on the 12th November 2010, with a lecture double-bill by Professors Robin Coningham (Durham) and Robin Dennell (Sheffield). Over 65 people came to Churchill College to hear the talks - entitled 'From Kabul to Kelaniya - Raymond Allchin and the Archaeology of South Asia' and 'A life in stone - a retrospective appreciation of Bridget Allchin and the South Asian Palaeolithic'. Bridget was delighted, and the event was a great success.



Above: Robin Coningham

Upcoming Events

20th May: Dr Christiane Esche-Ramshorn (Independent Scholar) - Christian Art between Europe and the Middle East (14th-15th c.) Nakhichevan and its sacred geography explored in a multi-faith context

10th June: Professor Herman Tiekens (University of Leiden) - The function of the so-called Ashoka Pillars

Keep up to date with events at the Trust at:

<http://www.indiran.org> or at
<http://indiairantrust.wordpress.com>

Our Administrator, Anna Collar, spent the summer of 2010 driving a one-litre Suzuki Swift 11,737 miles from Cambridge to Mongolia, as part of the annual Mongol Rally - to raise money for two very worthy charities: the Christina Noble Children's Foundation, which helps homeless children in Mongolia, and BirdLife International, working for birds and people across the globe. In total they raised over £3,000! Along the way, she and her husband, fellow archaeologist Stuart Eve (UCL), visited ancient sites in Turkey, the Caucasus, Iran, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan and beyond. They also got engaged (in Tajikistan), wrote an archaeological blog for leading journal *Antiquity*, and didn't get a puncture!



Photo Credit: Stuart Eve

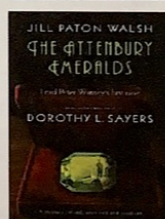
Right: In the mountains of Armenia.



Photo Credit: James Cormick

Sad news will have reached some of you: James Cormick's beloved dog Tilly died this autumn. Her friendly, quiet presence around the Trust is much missed. She is buried in the rose garden close to Daisy, with some hellebores to mark her grave.

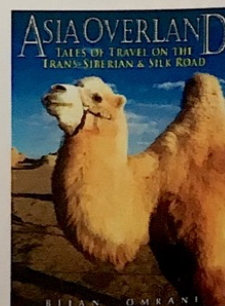
Some of you may have noticed that the Ancient India and Iran Trust has been developing its web-presence - and with the addition of a new blog we are now able to communicate all sorts of interesting snippets to our members and readers. You'll find pictures of various events, details of new books acquired for the library, and information about events outside the Trust that may be of interest. You can also read about trips that members of the Trust have been taking - such as Nicholas and Ursula Sims-Williams' journey this autumn to Turfan, China, for a conference. Have a look at: <http://indiairantrust.wordpress.com/> and send us YOUR stories or suggestions about events and information that you think people would like to hear about!



Jill Paton Walsh, the Cambridge-based author of the third new Lord Peter Wimsey novel, 'The Attenbury Emeralds' (Hodder & Stoughton, 2010) included an acknowledgement to Trustee Sir Nicholas Barrington for finding and translating at short notice the lines from Hafez that were key to the narrative.

BOOK REVIEW - Anna Collar

Having just returned from a long car journey across Asia, I only wish of Bijan Omrani's *Asia Overland: Tales of Travel on the Trans-Siberian & Silk Road* (2010) that it had been published earlier. Although it looks like a travel guide, the book is actually a collection of historical accounts of travels through Asia's enormous land-mass - from Istanbul to China. It dips into fascinating stories of building the Trans-Siberian railway, the palace of Kublai Khan at Peking, life with caravan route traders in Mongolia, and the ways of consuming parched barley meal in Xi'an, all of which engage and inspire the reader. The book is beautifully illustrated with modern-day colour photographs and satellite images, alongside historical pictures, paintings and maps, making it an ideal companion for those travelling in Asia, or those who wish to do so. *Asia Overland* is published by *Odyssey Books*.



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