



AIIT NEWS

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ANCIENT INDIA & IRAN TRUST

(REG. CHARITY NO. 276295)

NO. 2: SPRING/SUMMER 2007

NEW TRUSTEE & HONORARY FELLOWS

We are delighted to announce the recent appointment of a new Trustee, T. Richard Blurton, and two new Honorary Fellows, Professor Werner Sundermann and Ralph Pinder-Wilson.



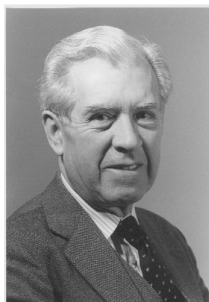
Richard Blurton is Assistant Keeper in the Department of Asia at the British Museum, where he is responsible for the South Asia collections. He organised the

Museum's recent 'Voices of Bengal' season and his book, *Bengali Myths* (see back page), was published to coincide with this. We look forward to welcoming him officially on Friday 25th May when he will be lecturing at the Trust. The title of his talk is 'On the History of Bengali Orally-Transmitted Narrative and the Visual Accompaniments'.

Another date for the diary is Friday 4th May, when our new Honorary Fellow, Professor Werner Sundermann, will be lecturing at the Trust on 'Zoroastrian tales in Non-Zoroastrian Transmission and Transformation.' Prof. Sundermann is Honorary Professor of Iranian Studies at the Freie Universität, Berlin and a member of the Berlin Akademie der Wissenschaften. He is a distinguished scholar of Iranian languages and religions, particularly



Manichaeism and Zoroastrianism. We look forward to seeing you at both these special events.



The second of our new Honorary Fellows, Ralph Pinder-Wilson, is an art historian, specialising in Islamic Art. He is also associated with the British

Museum, where he was first Assistant then Deputy Keeper in the Department of Oriental Antiquities from 1949-76. He then became Director of the British Institute for Afghan Studies in Kabul.

MARY BOYCE LIBRARY

Professor Mary Boyce, who died last year and was an Honorary Fellow of the Trust, very generously left her library to us. As a result of this bequest, our library now has an unparalleled collection of works on Zoroastrianism, Iranian studies in general, comparative religion, and classical and Near Eastern archaeology, in addition to works of a more general historical and literary nature. Our Assistant Librarian, Jose John, has listed all 2654 books, which are now being catalogued.

Included in the Boyce collection are a large number of offprints, which our longstanding volunteer, James Rankin, is currently adding to our offprint database. We also have Professor Boyce's notebooks from the year she spent in Iran in 1963-64, and about 400 colour slides and 1000 black and white prints and negatives from the same period. The slides are currently being digitised and catalogued.

THE YEAR SO FAR...

has been busy at the Trust. Our Friday lectures have continued to be well-attended and varied, ranging from 'New Light on the Epistles of Mani' and 'DNA based histories of Indian Caste and Tribal Communities' to 'Female Sufism in Central Asian Music' and 'The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam: it's publication and illustration in the West'. One particular highlight was the travel writer Jason Elliot's beautifully illustrated talk on 'The History and Art of Iran, with Pictures'.

Our Pakistan Visiting Fellowship Scheme got off to a successful start with the visit of our first Fellow, Muhammad Zahir. His presentations to the Trust, the Pakistan High Commission and Pakistan Society in London, the Pakistani business community in Bradford and the Universities of Bradford and Cambridge were all extremely well received. We hope to select our second Visiting Fellow soon.

We would like to welcome our new volunteers, Shashi Sen, Clemente Beghi, Bill Martin and Sandra Mason. It is a pleasure to see the Trust 'family' continuing to grow. Speaking of which, if you call the office and hear an odd yet determined babble in the background, that is our Administrator Munizha's baby daughter Rubi, who was born last August. She likes to come into work with her Mum now and again to brush up on her Sanskrit.

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WHAT HAVE OUR TRUSTEES BEEN UP TO?

There is never a idle moment for our Trustees and it is quite a job keeping track of their movements. But we have managed to gather here a few recent highlights from their busy lives.

In April 2007, three of our Trustees attended a workshop on 'Current Research in Iranian Studies', which was hosted by our Honorary Fellow, Professor Gherardo Gnoli, at his country home in Cagli, a small town in the Marche region of Italy. Dr Almut Hintze presented a paper on the Avestan concept of 'The Cow That Came from the Moon' and Ursula Sims-Williams described collections of Zoroastrian manuscripts in India. Professor Nicholas Sims-Williams talked about the newly-discovered Sogdian inscriptions on clay bricks from Kazakhstan, brought to light by

texts in Sogdian, the Iranian language of ancient Samarkand. On a packed two-day trip to Almaty last year he not only had



the opportunity to examine the bricks for himself, but also participated in a press conference, was interviewed by all the Kazakh TV stations and was granted an audience with the mayor of Almaty, who is now funding further excavations.

Professor Gregory Possehl plans to retire on July 1, 2007 and will become Curator Emeritus of the University of Pennsylvania Museum's Asia Section, and Emeritus Professor of Anthropology. Greg arrived at Penn in the Fall of 1973, and has spent virtually his entire career there. He has done most of his archaeological research in India, especially in Gujarat and southern Rajasthan. Since field archaeology is his first love he has begun a new five year project at the UNESCO World Heritage Site of Bat in the Sultanate of Oman. Bat is a Bronze Age town, contemporary with the Indus civilization of the Subcontinent. Greg will give an illustrated lecture at the Trust on this first season at Bat on Friday 11 May.

In 2006 Professor Robin Coningham was appointed to the Chair in Early Mediaeval Archaeology at Durham University and will be taking over as Head of Durham's Department of Archaeology this summer. Robin continues to direct the Anuradhapura (Sri Lanka) project with Dr Prishanta Gunawardhana of the University of Kelaniya. Strengthening the Trust's Iranian links, Robin was elected Honorary Secretary of the British Institute of Persian Studies in 2006 and has

just returned from an Easter field season in the Tehran Plain. Excavating the site of Tepe Pardis with Dr Hassan Fazeli (Director of the Iranian Centre of Archaeological Research), they have revealed the presence of a ceramic production centre dating to the fifth millennium BC.

Dr Michael Petraglia has received a number of recent awards for prehistoric research in India, including a Larger Research award from the British Academy and a grant from the Leverhulme Trust. These are both for research on the impact of the 74,000 year old Toba volcanic super-eruption on human populations

The Evolution of fathers: Mike Petraglia in his office with daughter Eva, born in August 2006.



in South Asia. A major UKIERI grant has also been recently announced for examining the initial occupation of the subcontinent by modern humans through archaeological, morphological and genetic studies. Mike and his colleagues at the Leverhulme Centre for Human Evolutionary Studies, Dr. Marta M. Lahr, Dr. Nicole Boivin, and Dr. Toomas Kivisild, are part of the UK team for this project.

Dr Bridget Allchin and Mike Petraglia's book, *The Evolution and History of Human Populations in South Asia*, has now been published (see back page). This is the outcome of the 'Crossroads of Asia' conference held at the Trust in 2004 and includes concluding remarks by Gregory Possehl. Drs Bridget and Raymond Allchin are currently working on their memoirs.

Finally, Sir Nicholas Barrington has recently given a number of talks on Afghanistan past and present, most notably to a full house at the Royal Society of Asian Affairs on 21 February 2007.



Prof. Gherardo Gnoli (top left) will be giving the Sir Harold Bailey Memorial Lecture in December 2008. Bottom right is William, the newly adopted son of Almut Hintze and her husband, Eugenio Biagini. William is a keen member of the Trust's Gardening Club.

excavations there over the last decade. Nick was able to identify the inscriptions as the oldest known

AIIT FRIDAY LECTURES

Easter Term, 2007

**5pm, 23 Brooklands Avenue
Cambridge**

**27 April: Professor Nicholas
Sims-Williams (SOAS)**

‘The Sasanians in the East:
a Bactrian archive from
Afghanistan’

**4 May: Professor Werner
Sundermann (Akademie
der Wissenschaften, Berlin);
Honorary Fellow of the AIIT**

‘Zoroastrian Tales in Non-
Zoroastrian Transmission and
Transformation’

**11 May: Professor Gregory
Possehl (University of
Pennsylvania)**

‘Magan and Meluhha: new
insights from Bat in the
Sultanate of Oman’

**25 May: T. Richard Blurton
(British Museum)**

‘On the History of Bengali
Orally-Transmitted Narrative
and the Visual Accompaniments’

**1 June: Dr Cameron Petrie
(University of Cambridge)**

‘Perspectives on the 4th
Millenium BC in South West Iran’

**8 June: Dr Nandini Sinha
Kapur (University of Delhi)**

‘Historiography of State in Pre-
Mughal India and State
Formation in Mewar
(7th-15th Centuries AD)’

**ALL WELCOME
ADMISSION FREE
LIGHT REFRESHMENTS
WILL BE SERVED**

THANK YOU

**To everyone who has recently
made a donation or become a
Friend of the Trust**

Dr Bridget Allchin
Dr Raymond Allchin
Mr Robert Balyuzi
Sir Nicholas Barrington
Dr Eugenio Biagini
Prof. A.D.H. Bivar
Mr T. Richard Blurton
B.H.M.W. Bohingamuwa
Prof. D.K. Chakrabarti
Dr Matteo Compareti
Mr James Cormick
Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum
Mr Rusi Dalal
Prof. Josef and Mrs Heide Elfenbein
Dr Stephen Fennell
Prof. Gérard Fussman
Mrs Elizabeth Gershevitch
Mrs Betty Harle
Dr Almut Hintze
Prof. Kenneth R. Kennedy
Prof. Geoffrey Khan
Dr Agnes Korn
Mr Neil Kreitman
Prof. Sam Lieu
Prof. Mauro Maggi
Mr W.H. Martin
Mr Cyrus Mehta
Dr Raymond P. Mercier
Mrs Mary Painter
Prof. Gregory Possehl
Dr Joan Reed
Mr John Sheldon
Prof. Nicholas Sims-Williams
Mrs Ursula Sims-Williams
Dr Robert Skelton
Dr S. Suresh
Dr Rakesh Tewari
Dr Elizabeth Tucker
Mr Michael Watson
Prof. Y. Yoshida

AIIT STUDY BURSARIES

Bursaries have recently been
awarded to Dr Matteo Compareti
(Italy), Mr B.H.M.W. Bohingamuwa
(University of Ruhana, Sri Lanka)

and Dr Nandini Sinha Kapur
(University of Delhi). We would like
to thank Professor Sam Lieu and
John Sheldon for their generous
donations, in memory of Mary
Boyce, to be used as bursaries for
scholars working in the field of
Iranian Studies.

TREASURES OF THE TRUST

**MONDAY 11TH JUNE, 5PM
A special event for Friends of
the Ancient India & Iran Trust.**

As more people become Friends
of the Trust, either through an
annual subscription of £30 or a life
subscription of £400, we hope to
hold more special events exclusively
for them. The first of these,
‘Treasures of the Trust’, is a chance
for Friends to learn more about
some of our more precious and
unique possessions, including books
and manuscripts which are not



*Silver Drachm of the Sasanian King
Khusrau I (AD 531-579). From Sir
Harold Bailey's Coin Collection.*

normally on display. Friends will be
able to take a close look at these
items, and our Trustees will speak
briefly about some of their
favourites.

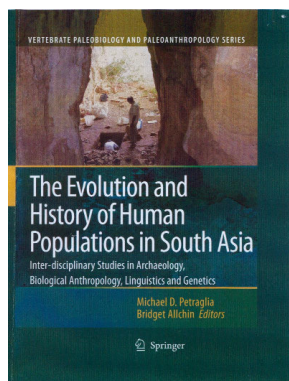
As the Trust receives no public
money but depends entirely on its
own resources, becoming a Friend is
one of the most helpful ways in
which people can support our work
and development. Friends are
always welcome to visit the Trust
and contribute ideas and advice.

**If you would like to become a
Friend, please contact our
Administrator on 01223 3568451 or
info@indiran.org for an
application form.**

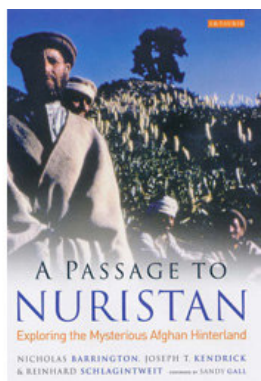
RECENT PUBLICATIONS OF INTEREST BY TRUSTEES, FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES OF THE TRUST



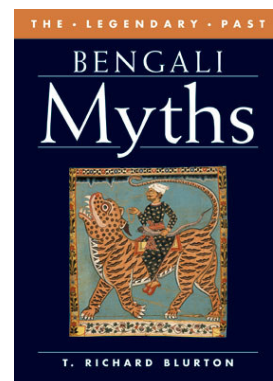
François de Blois in Tehran last year receiving the 'Book of the Year' award from President Ahmadinejad. Persian Literature (Vol. V): Poetry of the Pre-Mongol Period (London & New York: RoutledgeCurzon, 2004).



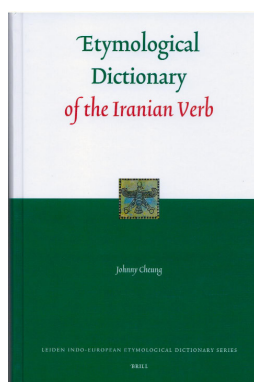
The Evolution and History of Human Populations in South Asia: Inter-disciplinary Studies in Archaeology, Biological Anthropology, Linguistics and Genetics. Michael D. Petraglia & Bridget Allchin (eds) (Netherlands: Springer, 2007) £73 (Hbk). Proceedings of the conference 'South Asia at the Crossroads' held at the Trust in 2004. Archaeologists, biological anthropologists, geneticists and linguists provide a comprehensive account of the history and evolution of human populations residing in the subcontinent.



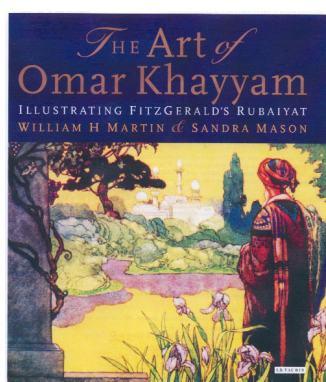
A Passage to Nuristan: Exploring the Mysterious Afghan Hinterland Nicholas Barrington, Reinhard Schlagintweit, Joseph T. Kendrick (London: I.B. Tauris, 2006) £19.50 (Hbk). This book starts with a hitherto unpublished account of an adventurous journey by young diplomats into an unknown world in 1960 and includes anthropological and historical information about the unique Nuristani people, together with an account of subsequent political developments in Afghanistan.



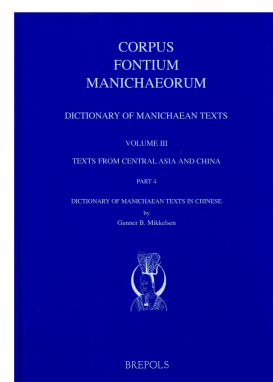
Bengali Myths T. Richard Blurton (London: British Museum Press, 2006) £8.99 (Pbk). This series of narratives from the rich tradition of Bengali story-telling draws from the substantial Bengal collections of the British Museum, which range from the courtly to the popular, and date from the 9th century to the present day. It features works from undivided Bengal and demonstrates the connections between history and myth.



Etymological Dictionary of the Iranian Verb Johnny Cheung (Leiden: Brill, 2006) €125 / US\$169 (Hbk). This work aims to bridge the apparent gap in knowledge that exists between Indo-Europeanists and scholars of Iranian languages with regard to each other's fields. It provides a critical survey of all verbs attested in Proto-Iranian based on its descendants, accompanied by a critical analysis of their morphology and provenance.



The Art of Omar Khayyam: Illustrating FitzGerald's Rubaiyat William H. Martin & Sandra Mason (London: I.B. Tauris, 2007). £39.50 (Hbk). With some 300 colour illustrations and covering the work of over 100 artists, this book tells the extraordinary story of the popularity of Edward Fitzgerald's *Rubaiyat* and surveys how different illustrators have approached the task of interpreting the themes and topics of one of the most universally known of all poems.



Dictionary of Manichaean Texts. Volume III,4: Texts from Central Asia and China (Dictionary of Manichaean Texts in Chinese) Gunner B. Mikkelsen (Turnhout: Brepols, 2007) €80 (Hbk). The fourth volume to be published as a result of the Manichaean Dictionary Project, based at the Trust from 1999-2005. It covers all extant Manichaean texts in Chinese from the Tang period and excerpts on Manichaeism and the Manichaean church from Chinese sources.