

# INDIRAN

*The newsletter of the Ancient India & Iran Trust*

Issue 16: Winter 2022



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## Editor's letter

### *News from the Ancient India & Iran Trust*

Welcome to the sixteenth edition of *Indiran*. As you will see in these pages, it has been a busy year in which we have been delighted to welcome a number of visitors and host in-person events again. We continue, however, to offer at least one hybrid lecture a term, so that those unable to attend in person are not excluded. We also plan to keep making the recordings of some talks available on YouTube.

As well as our lectures, we were happy to be able to arrange a guided tour for our Friends of the fascinating Gold of Great Steppe exhibition at the Fitzwilliam Museum in January 2021 (p. 4). We are grateful to Dr Rebecca Roberts who conducted the tour and added so much valuable detail to what was on show. It was also a pleasure to revive our Garden Party after an enforced break of two years, as well as to introduce the Trust to the stream of visitors who dropped in to our Open Cambridge event (p. 4). It is always gratifying to see how newcomers to Trust are instantly charmed by the house and garden as well as being impressed by all we have to offer.

There have been some more singular events, too, for which the Trust has provided the perfect setting: the celebration of Assyriologist James Kinnier Wilson's 100th birthday in November 2021 (p. 5) and a special visit by the Patriarch of the Church of the East in October 2022 (pp. 10–11). At the former, a tamarisk tree was planted in the garden, and at the latter, an antique carpet returned to its home in Iraq.

The Trust was also a fitting a venue for the South Asia Archive and Library Group's Summer Conference (p. 7) where delegates were given insights into the Trust's collections and how a small charitable organisation like ours manages to accommodate and make available the large specialist libraries and

archives it receives. With several projects on the go at once, the serenity of our reading rooms masks a great deal of library activity that is much aided by our volunteers (p. 6).

The value of our collections is always brought home when people travel here to use them. Among other visitors, we were pleased to award Trust Bursaries to two postgraduates from Durham University for them to come and use our library (pp. 8–9). One of these bursary recipients was able to combine this with training provided by Cambridge University's MAHSA project, led by our trustee Cameron Petrie who tells us about here (p. 8).

Sadly, there is rarely an issue of *Indiran* in which we do not pay tribute to a close associate who has passed away. We are sorry to report in this issue the loss of two of our honorary fellows, Minoru Hara and Gérard Fussman (p. 12). On a happier note, we are pleased to introduce our new trustee, Piers Baker (p. 13), who has had a connection with the Trust since its foundation and will no doubt make a valuable contribution to its future development. We would also like to congratulate our trustees Almut Hintze and Sam Lieu, who were both presented with *Festschriften* this year (p. 5).

While we're on the subject of expertise, nobody can dispute the inside knowledge of the house and garden that our Custodian James Cormick has acquired by living here for the last 30 years. In this issue, he enlightens us on another item of interest at the Trust: a carpet presented by Shahbanou Farah Pahlavi to founding trustee Sir Harold Bailey in 1975 (p. 14). And finally, James introduces us to a new resident in the garden, which has always provided a haven for local wildlife in our otherwise busy city surroundings.

Munizha Ahmad-Cooke is the Administrator of the Ancient India and Iran Trust.

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## Events calendar 2021–22

### Michaelmas Term 2021

**29 October:** Roda Ahluwalia (independent scholar) and Ursula Sims-Williams (British Library; Ancient India & Iran Trust): Insights on Mughal art and culture: the imperial library of the Mughals

**17 December: Harold Bailey Memorial Lecture.** Nicholas Sims-Williams (SOAS University of London; Ancient India & Iran Trust): 'Miserable scraps': the joy of decoding unconsidered trifles.

### Lent Term 2022

**11 March:** Priyanka Jha (Banaras Hindu University): Negotiating thresholds: Cornelia Sorabjee's contributions to shaping gendered intellectual history in modern India

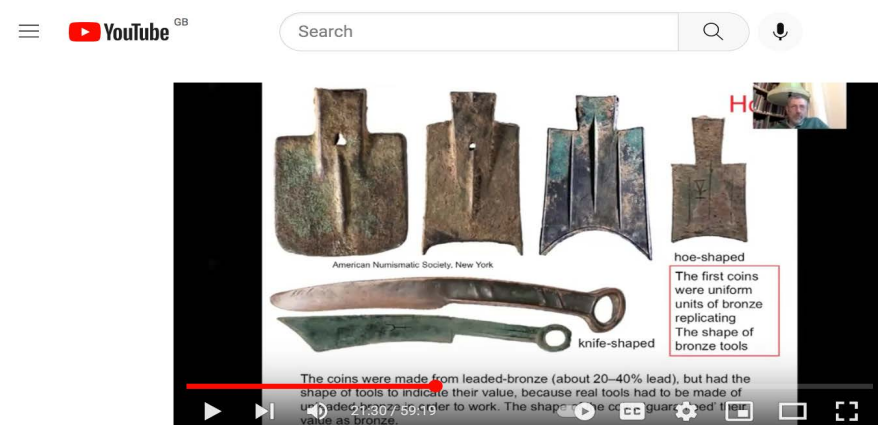
**18 March:** Yousef Moradi (SOAS University of London): The Zoroastrian sanctuary of Takht-e Solayman in the light of newly discovered Sasanian bullae and seal impressions

**1 April: Cambridge Festival.** Joe Cribb (Hebei Normal University; British Museum; Ancient India & Iran Trust): The origins of coinage: China and Turkey c. 600 BC

### Easter Term 2022

**20 May:** Antonio Panaino (University of Bologna): The souls of women in the Zoroastrian afterlife

**10 June:** John MacGinnis (British Museum): Clash of empires: excavating a Parthian outpost in the mountains of Kurdistan

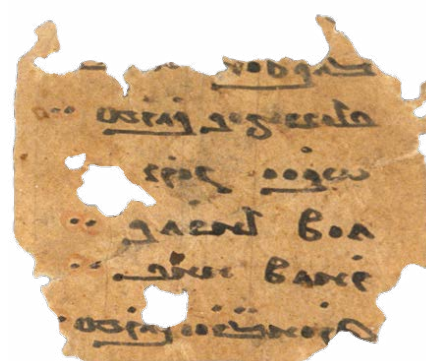


*Joe Cribb's talk 'The Origins of Coinage', a popular hybrid event at the Cambridge Festival 2021, is available to view on the Ancient India & Iran Trust YouTube channel.*

The Origins of Coinage: China and Turkey c. 600 BC

### Bailey Memorial Lecture 2021

Originally planned as a hybrid event, the biennial Harold Bailey Memorial Lecture on 17 December 2021 had to be held as an online event only due to the resurgence in Covid cases. Nonetheless, 80 people joined us on Zoom to listen to our Chair, Nicholas Sims-Williams give a richly illustrated talk entitled "'Miserable scraps': the joy of decoding unconsidered trifles'. Like Sir Harold, Professor Sims-Williams has spent many years deciphering fragmentary manuscripts in the mediaeval Iranian languages of Central Asia. The title of his lecture alluded to the satisfaction that he finds in unlocking the meaning of what may at first appear to be an insignificant and incomprehensible scrap of paper. Through examples taken from his own research, he showed that there is profit as well as pleasure to be gained from such work, as the decoding of these 'miserable scraps' fills important gaps in our knowledge of the culture and beliefs of those who wrote them.



*Fragment of a text explaining how the 'element' presiding over a particular year influences the character of an individual born in that year. (M2006, Berlin Turfan collection, published by N. Sims-Williams and Bi Bo in the Festschrift for Almut Hintze.)*



## Special events

### Friends Tour: Gold of the Great Steppe at the Fitzwilliam Museum

*Janet Pope & Peter Jackson*

The Trust arranged two guided tours of this exhibition for its Friends on Friday 14 and Saturday 15 January, and we went along to the second. We had previously made an independent visit, so knew what was on display, but knew little of the background that our guide, Dr Rebecca Roberts, a curator of the exhibition, so helpfully filled in.

Dr Roberts explained that these finds from came from burial tombs, called kurgans, which have been excavated very recently. The artefacts on display were the product of the Saka people who lived in the east of Kazakhstan, itself a vast country whose area can comfortably contain western Europe. The pieces have been dated to a period within 300 years either side of 500 BCE.

One very interesting display was



*A hippogriff, 500–300 BCE.*

of the objects, mostly gold, buried with a young warrior. The flesh and soft organic matter have decayed, so the exhibition showed the gold adornments and a dagger with its leather sheath to mark the position of the body. These were laid out roughly as found, the dagger broken, almost certainly deliberately, and with ironwork on its handle, showing that the Saka were starting to move from bronze to iron. Small gold plaques were stitched to clothing by means of loops on the back: the wearer would have dazzled onlookers in the sunlight.

The Saka, in common with other Steppe peoples, made beautiful gold

images of deer, sheep and large cats in motion – or ‘animal style’ – with amazing detail. Larger pieces made us smile – is that a cat? The delicacy of the work left us amazed: what tools did they have to shape the metal? There were piles of tiny beads, scarcely a millimetre across which would have been sewn onto clothing.

Janet Pope and Peter Jackson are Friends of the Trust. They also volunteer in our library on a regular basis.

### The welcome return to in-person events

In addition to returning to in-person lectures, it was a delight to be able to host our annual Garden Party again, after a break of two years. The weather was pleasant, and the cava and conversation flowed.

Our participation in the Cambridge Festival in April took the form of a hybrid talk on ‘The Origins of Coinage’ by our trustee Joe Cribb. We had a full house at the Trust, as well as many people joining us online.

Finally, we welcomed a steady stream of people through our doors in September for the open day we held as part of Open Cambridge. As well as taking a great interest in our



*Guests at our Garden Party, June 2022.*

lovely house and garden, visitors enjoyed learning about the objects on display from our library and archive. There was an overwhelming

consensus that the Trust is indeed the ‘hidden gem in the heart of Cambridge’ that we billed it as in the programme.

## Special events

### Two trustees honoured

This summer two of our trustees were presented with Festschriften, collections of academic papers written and dedicated to them by their colleagues. Professor Almut Hintze's Festschrift, entitled *The Reward of the Righteous*, was presented to her in Berlin on 23 May at a surprise party attended by contributors and members of her family. Professor Sam Lieu's Festschrift, *Byzantium to China: Religion, History and Culture on the Silk Roads*, edited by his Macquarie colleagues Gunner Mikkelsen and Ken Parry, was presented to him in August at the Manichaean Studies conference in Aarhus, Denmark. Each volume contains well over 500 pages of fascinating reading. Copies are available for consultation in the Trust's Library, shelf-marks AIIT.a.2476 and AIIT.a.2485 respectively.



*Almut Hintze with her husband Eugenio Biagini and the three editors of her Festschrift, Berlin, 23 May 2022. Left to right: Nicholas Sims-Williams, Alberto Cantera, Almut Hintze, Eugenio Biagini, Maria Macuch.*



*Sam Lieu at the AIIT with his Festschrift and the Trust's Chair, Nicholas Sims-Williams.*

### Celebrating James Kinnier Wilson's 100th birthday

#### *Nicholas Postgate*

On the evening of 26 November 2021 the Trust hosted an unusual event, to celebrate the 100th birthday of James V. Kinnier Wilson, a frequent attendee at the Friday Lectures. At Exeter College Oxford, after wartime service on the North-West Frontier and in Burma, James studied Akkadian and Hebrew at the feet of Oliver Gurney and Godfrey Driver, with an MLitt in 1950, and his path then took him via Durham, Chicago and Toronto to the Akkadian teaching post at Cambridge in 1955. Here, in partnership with Margaret Munn-Rankin, he established and developed the Assyriology course until his eventual retirement in 1989. Thanks to his participation in the work of the Chicago Assyrian Dictionary, during which he edited the botanical series *Uruanna : mashtakal*, his students benefited not only from his own innate abilities, but also from the insights he brought from the likes of Leo Oppenheim, Benno Landsberger and Thorkild Jacobsen. Like the faculty, which replaced 'oriental languages' with 'oriental studies', his enquiring mind embraced a range of fascinating topics, from the menus of the kitchens at the Assyrian palace at Nimrud, to the story of Etana and the eagle, the legendary accounts of the flood and connections between Mesopotamia and the Indus Valley.

Among our 25 guests were numbered several generations of his students from the 1950s to the 1980s, colleagues from the Oriental Faculty staff and library, and all James' successors in the Akkadian teaching post down to the present day. Throughout his time in Cambridge one of his closest colleagues and friends was Sir Harold Bailey, a founding trustee of the Trust, and by torchlight as part of the celebration we planted a young tamarisk at the west side of the front garden, with this inscription:

'This tamarisk was planted here on 27th November 2021 to mark the 100th birthday of James V Kinnier Wilson, mainstay of Assyriology in the University of Cambridge and long-time friend of Sir Harold Bailey'.



*James Kinnier Wilson being presented with the tamarisk tree planted at the Trust to commemorate his 100th birthday*

Nicholas Postgate is former Professor of Assyriology, University of Cambridge, and is a Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge.



## News from the Library

### The latest news on Library activities, visitors, donations and continuing work on the collections

*Joanna Salisbury*

With a welcome return to full use of the reading rooms and collections, the Trust and library have seen a surge in readers, in-house work on the collections and events.

Following generous donations from our honorary fellow Anna Dallapiccola (latterly, Honorary Professor, Department of Fine Art at Edinburgh University) of over 250 books on Indian art history in January 2020 and the digitising of her extensive archive of over 10,000 photographs, negatives and slides, work is currently being undertaken to compile all of the data for the digitised slides, including full descriptions. Once this work has been completed, the entire photographic archive will be available on the Cambridge University Digital Library (CUDL).

Our volunteers have been busy: Charlotte Pippard's skilled work continues, rebinding and repairing books from our existing and newly acquired collections; Janet Pope and Peter Jackson have relocated our collection of Mary Boyce offprints and continue their work on our substantial John Hinnells bequest. Having completed sorting, accessioning and listing all books to be catalogued or duplicates to be added to our sale list, they have begun work on Professor Hinnells' extensive offprints collection. Our sincerest thanks go to Charlotte, Janet and Peter for their valuable work and contribution to the Trust.

Our existing Howard Wilson Sri Lankan photographic archive, which was digitised by his wife Marti, has migrated from its original archive database (previously only accessible via the Trust website) and is now available on the Trust's page on CUDL: <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/collections/aiit/1>.

As this issue goes to print, preparations are underway for the library office to be fitted with new bookcases. In keeping with the design of those in the India and Iran reading rooms, the new fitted shelves will increase capacity and provide improved storage and access to the collections housed there.



*Fresco of celestial maidens at Sigiriya or Lion Rock in the Matale district of central Sri Lanka, 5th–6th century CE, Howard Wilson Archive, CUDL: <https://cudl.lib.cam.ac.uk/view/PH-AIIT-HWA/15>.*



## News from the Library

### South Asia Archive and Library Group (SAALG) Summer Conference/AGM

Joanna Salisbury



*The Trust's Honorary Librarian Ursula Sims-Williams (centre right) showing SAALG members items from the Trust's collections.*

On 8 September 2022, the Trust and library hosted the annual summer conference for members of the South Asia Archive and Library Group (SAALG). The day included talks, lunch, a tour of the library and the group's AGM. We also presented a display of items from the Trust collections for the delegates to view (above).

Speakers included Assistant Librarian Jo Salisbury, who spoke about the recent bequest of Professor John Hinnells' library and archive and the expansion of the existing Zoroastrian collections at the Trust. This included specific reference to the Mary Boyce collection of books, notebooks and photographs that focus on Zoroastrianism in Iran, compared with the John Hinnells collection, which includes a large number of books on the Parsees of Bombay.

Our trustee Ursula Sims-Williams, Lead Curator of Persian Collections at the British Library, then spoke on 'Alexander the Great in South Asia'. This illustrated talk introduced some of the artefacts and background to the current British Library exhibition Alexander the Great: The Making of a Myth, which brings together 2,000 years of reimagining Alexander's life and legacy through the exploration of stories and legends.

After lunch, the final talk of the day was by Hedley Sutton, Librarian and Reference Team Leader in the Asian and African Studies Reading Room at the British Library. Hedley gave an overview of the British Library service that enables people to trace their military ancestry in India. He explained the procedures for accessing the sources, including published texts, recruitment registers and the vast array of British and Indian Army records in the British Library, the India Office Records, The National Archives and beyond.

It is always a pleasure to welcome the members of SAALG to the Trust and we hope to do so again in the future.

Joanna Salisbury is Assistant Librarian at the Ancient India and Iran Trust.

If you wish to enquire about the library or make a booking to use items in our collections, please email [library@indiran.org](mailto:library@indiran.org), or call 01223 702095.

## Trust Bursaries

### Research analysing and evaluating the settlement mounds in the Kanpur district, India, using remote sensing methods

*Mou Sarmah*

I had the honour of visiting the Ancient India and Iran Trust for a week in late March 2022 to look at its collection on the early historical period in the Gangetic Valley of India, which I was researching for my master's dissertation. This period occupies a significant position in Indian archaeology and the North Indian cultural tradition as it saw the beginning of the process of the Second Urbanisation around the 6th century BCE.

Although it has not received as much attention from researchers as the Harappan civilization, this time period saw 'an overall development in the realms of material culture, religion, philosophy, and the ascent of political authority in early India.' Three types of sources make up the majority of information available about this time period. The first category consists of normative and narrative texts which describe spaces such as woods, deep jungles, village settlements and pastoral settlements that make up janapadas. Contrarily, cities and towns are typically considered the only significant kind of habitation. The second category includes a number of 1900s-era excavations. Archaeological research primarily undertaken through field surveys is included in the third category.

My project was primarily concerned with analysing the outcomes of these field-surveying techniques utilising historical maps of India and spatial analytical techniques. Two



such significant surveys were carried out in the Gangetic Doab: one by Makhan Lal in the Kanpur District in 1979 and another by George Erdosy in the Allahabad District in 1985. The objectives of both surveys were to record and identify the settlement mounds in the surveyed areas. Apart from recording, they helped provide a settlement history, site development and hierarchy in the Gangetic Doab. These two works provided the foundation for my research, and their findings and conclusions served as legacy information.

The Trust library was crucial to my research because it houses the sole copy of Makhan Lal's book. Additionally, it contains a number of other publications by authors like George Erdosy and Raymond and Bridget Allchin that were crucial to providing a background for the research and literature study. A large variety of books about South Asian civilisations, cultures and traditions is also available in the library. I had the fortune to get a bursary from the Trust, which enabled me to visit Cambridge and acquire training from the MAHSA Project (see below) at Cambridge University in the remote sensing methodology for evaluating the outcomes and findings from legacy data and historical maps.

Overall, the desk-based research I did

for my dissertation study at the Trust library was useful. People who work there enliven the environment. Jo was of great assistance in helping me locate crucial books and reference resources. Munizha assisted me in locating a budget-friendly place to stay in Cambridge, and James's daily coffee break was the cherry on top. I used to look forward to the regular coffee-time talks during which the topics covered could be anything from Easter celebrations to historical movies. I am incredibly appreciative that the Trust gave me this chance.

Mou Sarmah completed her MA in Archaeology at Durham University in 2022.

### Introducing the Mapping Archaeological Heritage in South Asia (MAHSA) project

*Cameron Petrie*

Commencing in late 2020, the Mapping Archaeological Heritage in South Asia (MAHSA) project is documenting the endangered archaeology and cultural heritage of the Indus River Basin and the surrounding areas.

At its core, the project is collaborative and international, and in addition to a team based in Cambridge, it also has project partners in Spain, and collaborators in Pakistan and India. The team started working remotely, but are now taking steps to get into the field.

Our approach combines the analysis of legacy site documentation with digitised and georeferenced versions of historic Survey of India maps and remote-sensing satellite imagery, and machine learning to document archaeological and heritage sites.



## Trust Bursaries

The data are going into an online database that has been designed using the Arches platform and is structured around resource models that are matched with documentation standards outlined in the CIDOC Conceptual Reference Model (or CRM). These are international-standards documents that are designed to be accessible to all users, and the database is also intended to be open access for researchers, policy makers and stakeholders.

Much of the work for MAHSA builds on approaches developed for the Land, Water and Settlement and TwoRains projects, which were also based in the Department of Archaeology in Cambridge, including use of a bespoke fieldwork data collection tool that has been created using Open Data Kit. The digital map scans will be geospatially searchable in Arches and linked to library holdings via the International Image Interoperability Framework (IIIF). We are also making major contributions to the Arches user community, have established a Sustainability Working Group, and regular open training workshops in partnership with MAEASaM.

Cameron Petrie is Professor of South Asian and Iranian Archaeology at the University of Cambridge, and Honorary Secretary of the Ancient India and Iran Trust.

## Researching the archaeology of Nepal's western Terai

*Jiajing Mo*

I visited the library at the Ancient India and Iran Trust from 24 June to 1 July 2022. It was a short stay but productive and delightful, particularly as I was also able to attend the Trust's Garden Party. My doctoral research focuses on the urban change in Nepal's western Terai in the first millennium CE, which, in a wider geographical and socio-economic context, is closely associated with the Central Gangetic plain, the nuclear area of early historic urbanisation.

While most of my data come from recent investigations at Tilaurakot (Nepal), the published excavations of other sites within the central Gangetic plain are no less pivotal to my research. The chronological and interpretative framework that lies at the core of my thesis is, to a large extent, built upon the reciprocal comprehension of both datasets. In this regard, I benefited remarkably from the resources in the Trust's library. It maintains an extensive collection on South Asian history and archaeology, including early excavation reports, journal articles and specific monographs that are relevant to my research but not readily at hand via my institution. At the same time, the responsive staff and their flexible arrangement of my visit enabled me to utilise the resource efficiently. Indeed, having easy access to the materials in need is of great help to a comparative analysis like mine, which involves data from various sources. Although the digitisation of early prints of essential reports has increased in recent years, it remains to be improved quantitatively and qualitatively. Physical copies,



at least for the present, are still the most accessible way to approach and reassess the ceramic forms and other archaeological details from early excavations.

With these materials, I managed to set up the framework for some crucial chapters in my thesis and revise an article (currently under review) about the excavation of Kausambi.

I am very grateful to the Trust for giving me the opportunity and support to visit the library. I would also like to express my gratitude to Munizha, Jo and James for their kindness, patience and hospitality.

Jiajing Mo is a PhD candidate at the Department of Archaeology, Durham University.

## Visitors to the Trust

### A special visit by the Patriarch of the Church of the East

*Erica C.D. Hunter and Paul McGhee*

30 October 2022, a lovely sunny Monday morning, was the occasion of a visit to the Ancient India and Iran Trust by His Holiness Mar Awa III, Patriarch of the Church of the East, at the invitation of Dr Erica C.D. Hunter, a longstanding Friend of the Trust. His Holiness, who was paying a pastoral visit to the Church of the East communities in London, had previously visited The Trust in 2012 but was delighted to make a return visit to Cambridge.

Mar Awraham Yokannis, Bishop of London for the Church of the East, accompanied His Holiness, as well as Mr Andy Darmoo, Chairman of the Assyrian Church of the East Relief Organisation (ACERO), and his son Paul. ACERO does much charitable work for the Church of the East communities, most recently in Armenia and Jordan. Elias and Judy Assad, friends of His Holiness, also travelled up from London. It was a meeting of longstanding friends and colleagues, with AIIT Chair, Professor Nicholas Sims-Williams, and trustee Professor Almut Hintze, as well as John Lawton, also joining the gathering.

Elevenes, with Fitzbillies' Chelsea Buns, was a jolly and cordial affair, as was the occasion for Paul McGhee, a local rug restorer, to present His Holiness with a tapestry of historical interest for his church. Purchased at a Cheffins auction sale in January 2017, this old kelim has a unique design, which led Paul on a five-year trail of research.

London rug expert Clive Rogers suggested that the central design was similar to Tibetan Buddhist mandalas, but the kelim's identity



*Cambridge based carpet restorer Paul McGhee presenting what he has learned about the kelim (pictured here) through his five-year research trail.*

was confirmed in discussions with Dr Hunter and AIIT trustee Professor Samuel Lieu. The distinct iconography of the crosses mounted on lotus leaves is a motif typically found in the art of the Church of the East, which had extensive dioceses in Central Asia and China. Through the AIIT, Paul was able to make contact with art historians from Sydney to San Francisco who were able to contribute to the story and place the original design in the Ilkhanate Mongol court at Maragha in the late 13th century. Several Mongol emperors (who practised shamanism) were married to Christian women from the Kerait tribe, which had been converted to the Church of the East in the 11th century.

Research on weaving techniques indicates that the kelim appears to have been made in the homeland

of the church, i.e. the border areas between the eastern Turkish state of Hakkari, the Iranian province of Urmia and the provinces of Dohuk and Mosul in northern Mesopotamia. Carbon dating dated its creation to the late 19th century, suggesting that the kelim was possibly a copy of a textile created in the 13th century, now lost, but which may have been once used, possibly as a hanging, in one of the many remote monasteries in the region, that sadly are no longer extant.

Somehow the kelim appears to have come to Baghdad in the 1920s where it may have belonged to Gertrude Bell. It came from the estate sale of antique dealer Eila Grahame, three of whose uncles served in Mesopotamia in World War 1. All three met Gertrude Bell and one of them became her GP in



## Visitors to the Trust

Middlesborough where her effects were sold in 1932. It is possible that 'Miss Bell' – as she was known by Iraqis – had acquired the kelim when the communities were dispossessed of their homeland in the opening decades of the 20th century. Many were resettled at Baquba, near Baghdad; the Assyrian levees were well regarded by the British authorities.

The kelim still presents many enigmas. Given its probable historic connections to the Church of the East, Paul decided to donate it so that it could be studied by people with greater knowledge of both textile production and church history within Iraq. At the presentation, His Holiness Mar Awa III declared that he would keep it in his newly constructed Patriarchal building in Erbil, the capital of the Kurdistan Regional Government administered region of Iraq and the new headquarters of the Church of the East. It is a fitting return of a venerable textile that is clearly connected with the long history of the ancient Church of Iraq.

Erica C.D. Hunter is an Affiliated Researcher at the Faculty of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies, University of Cambridge, and Senior Lecturer in Eastern Christianity, Emerita at SOAS University of London.

Paul McGhee is a Cambridge based collector and restorer of rugs.



**Top: Paul McGhee presenting the kelim to His Holiness Mar Awa III, Patriarch of the Church of the East.**

**Bottom: Back (left to right): Elias Assad, Nicholas Sims-Williams, Judy Assad, Almut Hintze. Middle: Paul McGhee and Andy Darmoo. Front: Erica Hunter, His Holiness Mar Awa III, and Mar Awraham Yokannis, Bishop of London for the Church of the East.**





## Two honorary fellows remembered

### Minoru Hara (1930–2021)

Nicholas Sims-Williams



We were sad to hear of the death of our distinguished Honorary Fellow Professor Minoru Hara (原 實) on 1 November 2021 at the age of 91. A specialist in Sanskrit and Buddhist studies, he took his PhD at Harvard and later taught at Tokyo University, becoming Professor of Sanskrit in 1975. Amongst many honours, he was an elected member of the Japanese and Swedish Academies, as well as being honoured by the Government of India with the award of the Padma Bhushan.

In earlier times Professor Hara was a frequent visitor to Cambridge. He was a Visiting or Overseas Fellow at both Clare Hall and St John's College, where he worked closely with John Brough, the successor to Sir Harold Bailey as the Professor of Sanskrit in Cambridge. Those of us who were lucky enough to know him personally will remember him as a charming person and true gentleman as well as a scholar of great distinction. I myself had many pleasant chats with him at meetings of the International Union of Academies, at which we were both representatives. The first such occasion was in Barcelona.

Learning that he and his wife were going on to Prague, I recommended that they should visit its delightfully old-fashioned opera house, which they did, and he kindly wrote to me afterwards to say how much they had enjoyed the performance.

### Gérard Fussman (1940–2022)



*Gérard Fussman at the Trust in 2007.*

We were also sorry to learn of the death of our Honorary Fellow Professor Gérard Fussman, on 14 May 2022. We are grateful to Professor Adriano Rossi, President of ISMEO (Associazione Internazionale di Studi sul Mediterraneo e l'Oriente), for permitting us to reproduce the following excerpt from ISMEO's appreciation of his work:

'Gérard Fussman studied in Paris (Classics, Sanskrit, Greek epigraphy and numismatics, linguistics) and was a member of the French Archaeological Mission in Afghanistan, working under the supervision of Prof. Daniel Schlumberger (1962–65). After a two-year stay in Cambodia, he joined the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique, received a PhD in linguistics in 1972, and was appointed Professor of Sanskrit

at Strasbourg the same year. In 1984, he became Professor of History of India and Greater India at the Collège de France, Paris. He traveled extensively in Uzbekistan, Afghanistan, Pakistan, and Northern India.

Professor Fussman wrote papers on topics ranging from the Central Asiatic Bronze Age to contemporary India; and a number of books, including *Le trésor monétaire de Qunduz* (1965, with co-author Raoul Curiel), *Atlas linguistique des parlers dardes et kafirs* (1972), *Naissance et déclin d'une qasba: Chanderi du Xe au XVIIIe siècle* (2003, with co-authors Denis Matringe, Eric Ollivier and Françoise Pirot), *Aryas, aryens et Iraniens en Asie Centrale* (2005, with co-authors Jean Kellens, Henri-Paul Francfort and Xavier Tremblay), and *Monuments bouddhiques de la région de Caboul* (2008, in collaboration with Eric Ollivier and Baba Murad).

His contribution to the studies of the Indian Subcontinent, especially in the north-west areas, is enormous and is divided into a wide range of disciplines: history, philology, palaeography, epigraphy, and archaeology, the latter in particular aimed at Afghanistan. Traces remain not only in the number of his publications (<https://www.college-de-france.fr/site/gerard-fussman/bibliographie.htm>), but also in his commitment to the formation of new generations of scholars, commitment lavished so much in his activity as teacher as well as in his generous availability towards younger colleagues, who always have counted on him for direction and advice.'



### Introducing our new trustee, Piers Baker



We are delighted to announce the recent election of Piers Baker to our board of trustees.

Piers has had a connection with the Trust since its foundation, when he was a research student of founding trustee Raymond Allchin (who set him to work regularly mowing the lawn!). He was the penultimate Research Fellow at the British Institute of Afghan Studies in Kabul, in 1978–79, before returning to Cambridge to complete his thesis on the Bamiyan Valley. This was subsequently published (with Raymond Allchin, in respect of the latter's 1950s fieldwork on which it drew) as No. 1 in the AIT Series, launched with a party at the Trust. Piers took part in archaeological projects in Iran and Pakistan as well as Afghanistan, but the lack of openings for continuing work in those areas in the early-mid 1980s led to a change of career direction.

Following over 20 years in the Foreign Office, starting on the Afghanistan desk and ending as Deputy Ambassador in Vienna, Piers worked for a while in academic administration, initially as Director of the International Office at Imperial College London. He then became Clerk to one of the lesser-known City of London

Livery Companies – Tin Plate and Wire. Working part-time since leaving Imperial gave Piers time to re-engage with his earlier academic interests, particularly contributing to the British Museum's Masson Project. This recently concluded with the publication of the third volume bringing together Charles Masson's numismatic and archaeological work in Afghanistan in the 1830s – and including a few photos taken by Piers in the 1970s alongside drawings of the same sites by Masson from 140 years previously. Piers is delighted to have the opportunity to renew a closer association with the Trust, and looks forward to contributing as a trustee to its development.

### Books about Afghanistan

Those of you who enjoyed reading the articles by our trustee Sir Nicholas Barrington on his collection of books about the 19th-century history of Afghanistan, the 'Great Game' and northern India in the last two issues of *Indiran* (14 and 15) may like to know that a third article has been completed. It covers more about the western (Herat) side of Afghanistan, with pictures of some of the remarkable characters involved. This will be available on our website in the new year.

Sir Nicholas is working on a fourth article, which will include material on often-forgotten Baluchistan and the lead-up to the Second Anglo-Afghan War. He knows that some readers will have spotted an error at the end of the second article ('Books about Afghanistan 2', *Indiran* 15); Sir John Lawrence was not, of course, the first Viceroy but the first civilian, or 'commoner' Viceroy, after Lord Canning and Lord Elgin.

### Trustees

#### Piers Baker

Independent scholar

#### Sir Nicholas Barrington

Former British High Commissioner to Pakistan; Honorary Fellow, Clare College, Cambridge

#### T. Richard Blurton

Former Head, South Asia Section, British Museum

#### Joe Cribb

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### The Empress's carpet

James Cormick

The very splendid silk carpet (facing page) you can sometimes see spread out on the table in the India Room was given to founding trustee Sir Harold Bailey by the then Empress of Iran, Farah Pahlavi. Notice I am deliberately using the word 'carpet' rather than 'rug' to describe it, despite the current tendency to call any small carpet a rug. The *Oxford Modern English Dictionary* (1992) defines a rug as 'a floor-mat of shaggy material or thick pile', the absolute opposite of the carpet I am talking about here. Not only is it not shaggy but it is obviously not intended to be walked on. In fact, I made this mistake when I first discovered it rolled up in a corner of one of Sir Harold's rooms upstairs. I thought it should be exhibited so I took it down to the India Room and laid it on the floor, only to be severely criticised by one of my Persian students who came to visit me a day or two later.

The Empress gave it to Sir Harold as a thank you for acting as President of the 2nd International Congress of Mithraic Studies, held in Teheran from 1–8 September 1975, which was organised under her patronage. The proceedings of the congress were published in a fat 563-page volume of *Acta Iranica* in 1978, a copy of which is available to read in the Trust library. The volume also has in its preface a very nostalgic photo of all the congress attendees standing outside the hall, with the Shahbanou at the front and Sir Harold immediately behind her.

I asked Paul McGhee, our Cambridge carpet expert, to identify the carpet: its style and area of origin. And this is the reply he gave me:

'I was struck by the very unusual "double boteh" motif and its



*Sir Harold Bailey (left) and Shahbanou Farah Pahlavi. From the group photo taken at the 2nd International Congress of Mithraic Studies, Teheran, September 1975, printed in Acta Iranica, volume IV, 1978.*

similarity to fabrics at Queen Farah's wedding as well as the unusual border which had been used in a rug from the Shah's first marriage. I'm not sure where it was woven, but you can see another with a similar border in the linked article which is ascribed to Kerman': <https://www.jozan.net/carpetsof-thelastking/>.

The boteh motif (right) Paul refers to is very common in Persian carpets and is the characteristic design of Paisley textiles. Apparently it means 'bush' in Persian, or perhaps 'leaf' and is taken to symbolise a wide variety of things including a cypress tree or the eternal flame from Zoroastrianism. But in terms of shape only it is more like a comma or inverted comma, or maybe even

a tadpole. And the double boteh motif as it is displayed in this carpet is rather like two tadpoles sidling up against each other.

As an amusing coda to this story, Sir Harold told me he had some difficulty at customs when he returned to England. The customs official at Heathrow wanted to examine the carpet. And when he had done so he declared it was dutiable and that Sir Harold would have to pay £30. Sir Harold was shocked and tried to argue his way out of it. It was only a carpet after all. At which point the customs official said: 'Well, if you don't want it, I will buy it off you for £30.' That persuaded Sir Harold that it might be worth something after all and he handed over the £30 somewhat reluctantly. Given the quality of the carpet, I was also, when I first heard the story, rather like the customs officer, surprised that Sir Harold was unwilling to pay. But putting it into context, £30 in 1975 was the equivalent of £238.36 in 2022 ([www.inflationtool.com](http://www.inflationtool.com)) – rather a lot of money to pay for something you weren't particularly enamoured of.



*The double boteh motif on the carpet.*



## From the house

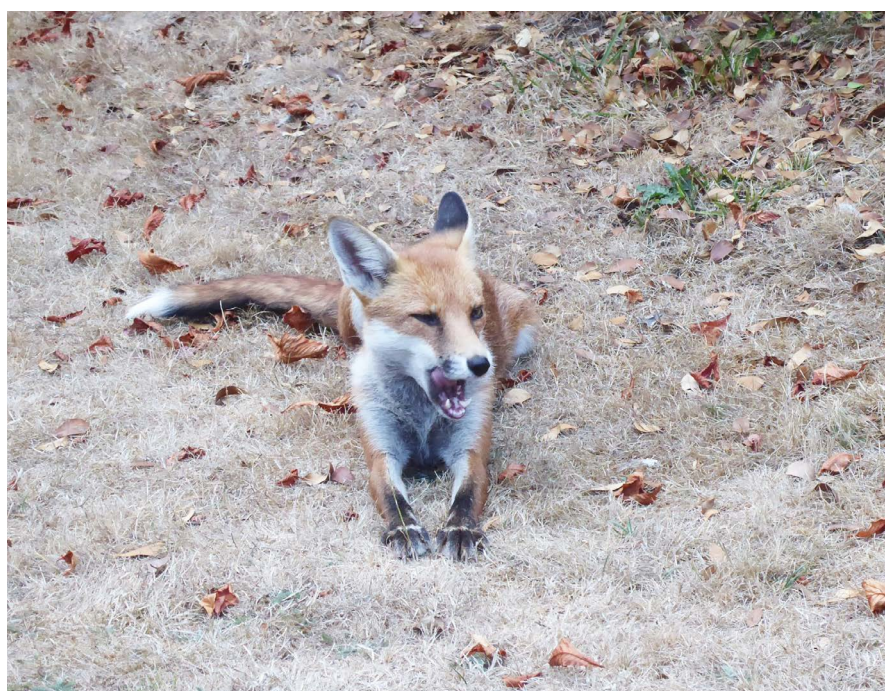


*The carpet presented by Shahbanou Farah Pahlavi to Sir Harold Bailey in Tehran, 1975.*

## The fox

*James Cormick*

Our extremely hot and dry summer this year was enlivened by the presence of a family of foxes. I saw as many as three cubs chasing each other in the orchard (before it was cleared to make space for a new development). And one of them got into the habit of coming and observing us having morning coffee on the parched lawn. Although it looked skinny and in need of a good meal it was rather fastidious about the pieces of biscuit we threw in its direction. It was perhaps even then aware of the rich pickings in the Botanic Garden next door: ducks, coots and fat wood pigeons.



*Our resident fox. Photo: Agnes Korn.*

James Cormick is the Custodian of the Ancient India and Iran Trust.





*Indiran* is the newsletter of the Ancient India and Iran Trust.

The Trust is an independent educational charity, established in 1978 to encourage the study of the early civilisations and languages of the Indian subcontinent, Iran and Central Asia.

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Registered Charity no: 1162982

Front Cover image: Joanna Salisbury  
Back cover image: Douglas Robar  
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