



## **IRAN AT THE CROSSROADS OF CIVILIZATIONS**

Scholars and Lawyers Speaking about Iranian  
History and Cultural Heritage  
A Panel Discussion



January 27, 2020, 4:30-6 pm, Dilworth Room  
Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton

Program Cover Photos:

Top: Takht-e Jamshid (Persepolis), in the vicinity of Shiraz

Bottom: Yazd

## Program

Welcome and Introductory Remarks

*Sabine Schmidtke* (Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton NJ)



An Afterlife of Persepolitan Polychromy. What I learned from,  
and how I made friends in Iran

*Alexander Nagel* (State University of New York / Smithsonian  
Institution, Washington, DC)



The Sacred Topography of Ancient Iran

*Touraj Daryaee* (University of California, Irvine)



Lasting impact of peace and communion: Sasanian Iran and  
Christianity

*Ani Honarchiansaky* (Princeton University)



The Beautiful Faces of Persian Culture: Love and Beauty in  
Persian Poetry and Spirituality

*Matthew T. Miller* (University of Maryland, College Park)



The Safavids and Modern Iranian Identity

*Rudi Matthee* (University of Delaware)



Protecting Heritage and People: A False Choice

*Thomas G. Weiss* (The Graduate Center, City University  
of New York)



Why Heritage Matters Today

*Irina Bokova* (former Director-General of UNESCO, 2009-2017)



Discussion

## The Speakers

**Irina Bokova** was elected Director-General of UNESCO in 2009, and was successfully reelected for a second term in 2013. She was the first woman and the first Eastern European to lead the Organization. As Director-General of UNESCO, Irina Bokova actively engaged in international efforts to advance quality education for all, gender equality, the protection of the world's cultural heritage as a humanitarian imperative and security issue to strengthen the foundations for lasting peace. She actively promoted culture as a driver for development, along with science diplomacy and cooperation. She spearheaded global awareness and campaigns to counter youth radicalization and prevent violent extremism, hate speech and discrimination, starting with action through education. Irina Bokova led UNESCO as a global advocate for the safety of journalists and freedom of expression.

Having graduated from Moscow State Institute of International Relations, Irina Bokova was a Fellow at the University of Maryland (Washington) and followed an executive program at the John F. Kennedy School of Government (Harvard University). She began her career at the United Nations Department at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Bulgaria. Appointed in charge of political and legal affairs at the Permanent Mission of Bulgaria to the United Nations in New York, she was a member of the Bulgarian Delegation to the UN World Conferences on Women in Copenhagen, Nairobi and Beijing. She was elected twice as Member of Parliament and she served as the Government's first Secretary of European integration. Irina Bokova was Minister for Foreign Affairs a.i., as well as Ambassador of Bulgaria to France, Monaco and UNESCO and Personal Representative of the President of the Republic of Bulgaria to the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie.

**Touraj Daryaee** holds the Maseeh Chair in Persian Studies & Culture, History, University of California, Irvine. His research has focused on ancient and early medieval history of Iran, specifically the Sasanian Empire. He has worked on Middle Persian literature, editing and translating several texts with commentary on geography, dinner speech, chess and backgammon. He is also

interested in the history of Zoroastrianism in Late Antiquity and its encounter with Islam.

He is the editor of the *Name-ye Iran-e Bastan: The International Journal of Ancient Iranian Studies* as well as the electronic journal, DABIR: Digital Archives of Brief Notes and Iran Review and *Sasanika: Late Antique Near East Project*. His articles have appeared both in English and Persian in *Iranian Studies*, *Iran*, *Iranistik*, *Studia Iranica*, *Res Orientalis*, *Historia*, *Electrum*, *Indo-Iranian Journal*, *Journal of Indo-European Studies*, *Iranshenasi*, *Iran Nameh*, *Name-ye Baharestan*, and *Name-ye Iran-e Bastan*.

**Ani Honarchiansaky** received her MA in Iranian Studies and her Ph.D. in Armenian Studies from the Near Eastern Languages and Cultures Department at the University of California, Los Angeles. Her work has focused on the social and cultural history of the Roman Empire and Sasanian Iran with Armenia as the focal point.

In her dissertation, she applied world history methods to the study of the Late Antique Near East. She has studied how the history of the Armenian Church and the Church of the East were affected by each other and by the social, cultural, political and economic relationships between the two great empires of late antiquity. She studies the literary, hagiographic, and historiographic accounts produced by the authorities of these two Churches and the way in which these accounts constitute a Christian congruity by relating and thinking about the Roman and Sasanian authorities, about themselves, and each other.

**Rudolph (Rudi) Matthee** received his BA and MA in Near Eastern Languages and Cultures from the University of Utrecht, and a Ph.D. in Islamic Studies from the University of California, Los Angeles. Since 1993 he has been teaching at the University of Delaware, where he is the John and Dorothy Munroe Distinguished Professor of Middle Eastern History.

Matthee authored *The Politics of Trade in Safavid Iran: Silk for Silver, 1600-1730* (1999), recipient of a book prize awarded by the Iranian Ministry of Culture; honorable mention for the British-Kuwaiti Friendship Prize; *The Pursuit of Pleasure: Drugs and Stimulants in Iranian History, 1500-1900* (2005), recipient of the

Albert Hourani Book Prize and the Saidi Sirjani Prize; *Persia in Crisis: Safavid Decline and the Fall of Isfahan* (2012), recipient of the British-Kuwaiti Friendship Prize and the World Book Prize awarded by the Iranian Ministry of Culture; and, with Willem Floor and Patrick Clawson, *The Monetary History of Iran, 1500-1925* (2013), recipient of the Houchang Pourshariati Iranian Studies Book Award. He also coedited five volumes, most recently *Russians in Iran: Diplomacy and Power in Qajar Iran and beyond* (2018). He authored more than 60 articles on various aspects of early modern Iran. He is the former President of the Association for the Study of Persianate Societies, serves as coeditor of *Der Islam*, and is a consulting editor for the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. He currently serves as the President of the Persian Heritage Foundation. He is a two-time fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, 2002-03 and 2017.

**Matthew Thomas Miller**, Ph.D., is Assistant Professor of Persian Literature and Digital Humanities at Roshan Institute for Persian Studies at the University of Maryland, College Park and an affiliate of the Maryland Institute for Technology in the Humanities. He also serves as the Associate Director of the Roshan Initiative in Persian Digital Humanities (PersDig@UMD) and as the co-PI for the multi-institutional Open Islamicate Texts Initiative (OpenITI) (including serving as PI of the Mellon Foundation-funded Open Islamicate Texts Initiative Arabic-script OCR Catalyst Project) and the Persian Manuscript Initiative (PMI).

His research focuses on medieval Sufi literature, the history of sexuality and the body, and digital humanities. He currently is working on a book project, entitled *Embodying the Beloved: Embodiment and Mystical Modes of Meaning Creation in Medieval Persian Sufi Literature*, and a number of articles on computational or “distant reading” approaches to Persian literature and carnivalesque Sufi poetry.

**Alexander Nagel** is Assistant Professor of Art History at the State University of New York (FIT), and a Residential Research Associate with the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, DC. Nagel is actively involved in the research and publication of materials from

fieldwork in Iran (Persepolis, Susa, Pasargadae) and Greece.

Born and raised in Berlin, Germany, he studied at Humboldt Universität in Berlin, and at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor (PhD, 2010). In 2009, he arrived at the Smithsonian and began working as Assistant Curator of Ancient Near East in the Freer | Sackler, now the National Museum of Asian Art. At SUNY, he teaches also on the history of art and archaeology and legacies of ancient sites, the history and development of polychromy studies, the role of surface decorations and paint on monuments in the Achaemenid Persian Empire, ceramic containers, coroplastic industries and technologies in ancient Greece, Mesopotamia, Iran and South Arabia. He also writes about and teaches about the reception of ancient cultures in the New World.

A recipient of international awards, including research grants and fellowships from the American Philosophical Society, the DAAD, the Getty and the Smithsonian Institution, Nagel has published articles for the *Oxford Handbook of Ancient Iran*, and other prestigious publications. In Washington, D.C., Nagel curated and co-curated a number of exhibitions and research projects, many with students, focusing on the cultures and the legacies of the ancient Mediterranean, the Middle East and Central Asia in Washington, D.C., and leads “The Last of the Qataban,” a project on the transfer of materials from South Arabia to new contexts.

**Sabine Schmidtke** is a scholar of Islamic intellectual history whose pioneering research has transformed perspectives on the interrelations and connections among different strands of intellectual inquiry, across time, place, religions, and schools of thought. Schmidtke has applied rigorous study to the edition and critical analysis of manuscripts in Arabic, Judeo-Arabic, and Persian, and her work extends from Arabic-speaking countries to Iran, Russia, and Turkey. Schmidtke is currently working on the history of Islamic thought in the post-classical period, with a focus on reconstructing the textual heritage and the intellectual import of the Islamic intellectual world, from Iran and Central Asia to Turkey and Yemen. She is also engaged in a comprehensive study of the Muslim reception of the Bible, a topic on which she has published extensively over the past years.

**Thomas G. Weiss** is Presidential Professor of Political Science at The CUNY Graduate Center and Director Emeritus (2001-14) of its Ralph Bunche Institute for International Studies; he is also Co-Chair, Cultural Heritage at Risk Project, J. Paul Getty Trust; Distinguished Fellow, Global Governance, The Chicago Council on Global Affairs; and Eminent Scholar, Kyung Hee University, Seoul. Previously, he was Andrew Carnegie Fellow (2016-18), past president of the International Studies Association (2009-10) and recipient of its “IO Distinguished Scholar Award 2016”; he also directed research projects on the Future of the UN Development System, the Wartime UN, and the UN Intellectual History Project (1999-10) and was Research Professor at SOAS, University of London (2012-2015), Chair of the Academic Council on the UN System (2006-9), Editor of *Global Governance*, Research Director of the International Commission on Intervention and State Sovereignty, Research Professor at Brown University’s Watson Institute for International Studies, Executive Director of the Academic Council on the UN System and of the International Peace Academy, a member of the UN secretariat, and a consultant to public and private agencies.

He has written extensively about multilateral approaches to international peace and security, humanitarian action, and sustainable development. His recent single- or co-authored volumes include: *Rethinking Global Governance* (2019); *Would the World Be Better without the UN?* (2018); *Humanitarianism, War, and Politics: Solferino to Syria and Beyond* (2018); *The United Nations and Changing World Politics* (2017); *Humanitarianism Intervention: Ideas in Action* (2016); *What’s Wrong with the United Nations and How to Fix It* (2016); *Governing the World? Addressing “Problems without Passports”* (2014); *Global Governance: Why? What? Whither?* (2013); *Humanitarian Business* (2013); *Thinking about Global Governance, Why People and Ideas Matter* (2011); *Humanitarianism Contested: Where Angels Fear to Tread* (2011); *Global Governance and the UN: An Unfinished Journey* (2010); and *UN Ideas That Changed the World* (2009).