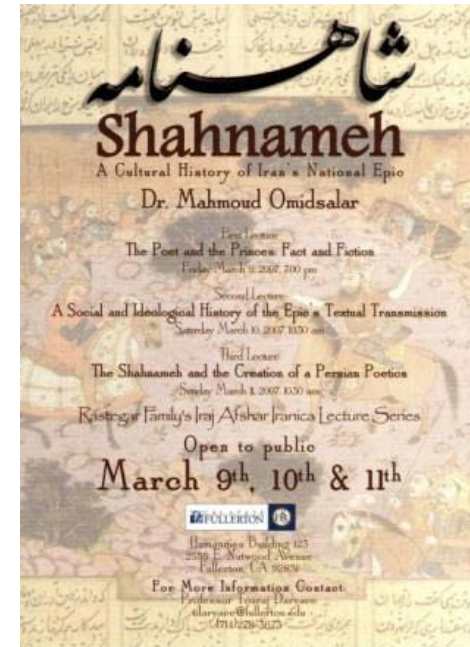


Shahnameh A Cultural History of Iran's National Epic



Report

Dr. Mahmoud Omidasalar gave three lectures on the *Shahnameh* of Ferdowsi from March 9th to 11th. This was the first series of talks sponsored by Nader Rastegar entitled *Rastegar Family's Iraj Afshar Iranica Lecture Series*, in honor of the great Iranian savant, Iraj Afshar. Each year, with the support of the Rastegar Family Foundation, a leading scholar in the field of Iranian Studies will give three lectures. The selection of the lectures and the publication will be organized by Dr. Touraj Daryaei. First, Dr. Thomas Klammer, the Dean of Humanities and Social Sciences at California State University Fullerton, welcomed about 80 guests and then Dr. Touraj Daryaei, the Chair of the History Department at California State University Fullerton, introduced Dr. Omidasalar. Together Dr. Daryaei and Dr. Klammer presented the speaker with a gift.



Daryae, Omidasalar and Klammer

Dr. Omidasalar began his first lecture entitled “The Poet and the Princes: Fact and Fiction” which focused on Ferdowsi’s life, character, religion, and the historical context of his art. His relationship with King Mahmud of Ghaznah, to whom he dedicated the *Shahnameh*, was considered and a number of incongruities between the legendary accounts of the poet’s relationship with the Sultan were analyzed. This lecture also addressed the historical link between Iranians’ epic traditions and their national and ethnic identities. The three sons of Iraj Afshar were also present and had dinner with the speaker and a small group of invitees at the Marriot Hotel in Fullerton.



Omidasalar, Klammer, Arash Afshar, Kooshyar Afshar, Daryae and Bahram Afshar

The next day at 10:30am Dr. OmidSalar presented his second lecture entitled “A Social and Ideological History of Epic’s Textual Transmission,” which was a review of the history of the text of the *Shahnameh*. Its background, the man who commissioned the prose work from which Ferdowsi fashioned his epic poem, and the evidence of Persian and Arabic sources concerning Iran’s literary epic tradition were the focuses of this lecture. The question of whether the *Shahnameh* was influenced by oral tradition was investigated and the various schools of thought about this aspect of *Shahnameh* studies were evaluated. The ideological motivations of these schools were also discussed and analyzed.



OmidSalar at California State University, Fullerton

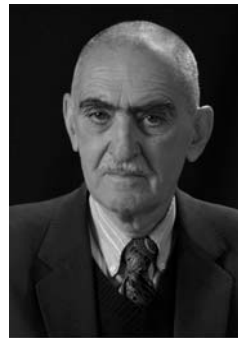
On Sunday at 10:30am Dr. OmidSalar presented his final lecture entitled “The *Shahnameh* and the Creation of a Persian Poetics” This lecture was devoted to the *Shahnameh* as a work of art. The epic’s narrative structure and poetic features were discussed in some detail and several stories from the epic were analyzed. This lecture suggested that Ferdowsi’s poem had a logical structure and a narrative unity, which are often missed by critics who are overwhelmed by the epic’s size.

Dr. Omidsalar's Biography

Mahmoud Omidsalar was born in Isfahan, Iran and is one of the leading scholars in the area of *Shahnameh* and Persian epic. He is also an expert in manuscript studies and together with Iraj Afshar, has published several Persian manuscripts in a series called Persian Manuscripts in Facsimile since 2001. Afshar and Omidsalar are also joint editors of a series of Persian and Arabic Medical manuscripts called *Folia Medica Islamica*, of which the first volume is scheduled to appear shortly in Iran. He is a leading scholar of Persian folklore and serves as the folklore editor of the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, edited by Professor Ehsan Yarshater. Dr. Omidsalar received his Ph.D. in Near Eastern Studies from the University of California, Berkeley in 1984. Some of his recent books include *The Shāhnāmeḥ*, along with Dj. Khaleghi-Motlagh, Volume 6, Eisenbrauns, 2005; *The Shāhnāmeḥ: Facsimile Edition of the British Library MS Add, 21.103* along with Iraj Afshar, Tehran, 2005; and *The Spirit of Wisdom: Essays in Memory of Professor Ahmad Tafazzoli*, co-edited with and Touraj Daryaei, Mazda Publishers, 2004. Some of his articles include “[The Preface to the Facsimile Edition of Ferdowsi’s Shāhnāma: British Museum’s Manuscript] *piš-goftār-e šāhnāma-ye Ferdowsi, chāp-e `aksi: noskhe-ye khatti-ye ketābkhāna-ye britāniyā*,” in [Textual Criticism of Ferdowsi’s Shāhnāma] *Matn-shenāsi-ye Shāhnāma-ye Ferdowsi*, ed. M. Rastegar Fasai, Tehran/Shiraz: Miras-e Maktoob, 2006, pp. 139 – 172; “[Corrections to Professor Matini’s Edition of the Kušnāma] *yād-dāšt-hā-ye Shāhnāma*, “Kushnama” Farhang-e Irān Zamin. Vol. 30, 2005, pp. 312 – 337; “Of Water and Women, Maidens and Might: Notes on Transmission of Political Power in the Shāhnāma,” in *Women in Iran from the Rise of Islam to 1800*, Guity Nashat and Lois Beck, eds., Urbana: University of Illinois Press 2004, pp. 170-185; “Rostam’s Seven Trials and the Logic of Epic Narrative in the Shāhnāma,” *Asian Folklore Studies*, Vol. 60, 2002, pp. 1– 35 ;

“Orality, Mouvance, and Editorial Theory in Shāhnāma Studies,” in *Jerusalem Studies in Arabic and Islam: (Studies in Honor of Shaul Shaked*, Vol. 27, 2002, pp. 245– 283; “Notes on Some Women of the Shāhnāma,” in *Nāme-ye Irān-e Bāstān: The International Journal of Ancient Iranian Studies*, Vol.1, No.1, 2001, pp. 23– 49; and “Editing the Garshāspnāma in Light of Shakespearean Scholarship,” *Iranian Studies*, Vol.33, No.3/4, 2000, pp. 403 – 409.

Iraj Afshar’s Biography



Iraj Afshar, Tehran University (emeritus), born in Tehran, Iran (1925) is one of the leading scholars in Iranian Studies. Since the first half of the twentieth century, Iraj Afshar has endeavored to study and promote Iranian civilization in its widest sense. He has written on a variety of topics, including manuscript studies, textual editing, local histories, inscriptions and biographies. Afshar has worked with and helped the Iranists for the past seven decades and is held in highest esteem by both Iranian and non-Iranian scholars alike. Recently the International Society for Iranian Studies awarded him the Life Time Achievement Award at the University of London, School of African and Oriental Studies.

- 1925 Birth in Tehran, Iran (Father: Dr. Mahmoud Afshar, Mother: Nosrat Barazandeh)
- 1933-1945 Attended Zoroastrian Shapour Secondary School and Firouz Bahram High School in Tajrish Tehran
- 1944-1946 Manager Ayandeh Journal
- 1945 Received Diploma in Literature
- 1945 Marriage to Shayesteh Afsharieh
- 1945-1949 Attended University of Tehran majoring in Law, thesis: Minorities in Iran
- 1946-1955 Collaboration with Jahan-nu Journal (Editor in Chief: Housein Hejazi)
- 1950 Employed by Ministry of Cultur and Education as educator at Sharif High School and Gharib High School
- 1951-1960 Librarian – Law Library of University of Tehran – With encouragement from Dr. Mohsen Sabah and Mohammad Taghi Danesh-Pajou
- 1952-1953 Editor in Chief – Mehr Journal (licensee: Majeed Movaghar)
- 1952-continuing Founder and Managing Editor Farhang-e Iranzamin Journal (in association with Mohammad Taghi Danesh-Pajou, Manoucher Sotudeh, Mostafa Mogharabi, Abbas Zaryab Khoyee)
- 1963-1966 Publication of “Ketab-hayee Iran” Books of Iran (Annual bibliography)
- 1954-1956 Editor in Chief “Sokhan Journal” (licensee: Dr. Parviz Natel-Khanlari)
- 1955-1961 director “Ketab-hayee Maah” Journal - Book of the month Journal (Publication of Society of Publishers with cooperation of Franklin Publishing Corporation)
- 1956-1963 Acting Managing Director “Bongah-e Tarjomeh va Nasher-e Ketab”
- 1956-1957 Attended UNESCO Educational and Practical Library Science training in Europe
- 1957-1958 Co founder “Book Club” later named “Anjoman-e Ketab” Book Society
- 1958-1969 educator Library Science at “Daneshsar Allee” Higher Education division of University of Tehran
- 1958-1979 Managing Editor “Rahnama-e Ketab Journal” (licensee: Ehsan Yarshater)
- 1958-1979 Director “Anjoman-e Ketab” Book Society
- 1961-1979 Founder “Nashreieh Noskhehay-e Khatt-e” Central Library of University of Tehran Journal of Manuscripts (in collaboration with Mohammad Tagi Danesh-Pajou”
- 1961-1962 Director “Daneshsara-e Allee” Library
- 1962 Director National Library of Iran (founded Iranian Studies Branch – founded bibliography of Iran and indexing of library’s manuscripts with efforts of Abdolah Anvar)
- 1962 Return to teaching at “Daneshsara-e Allee)
- 1963-1964 Return to University of Tehran –Director of Center of Bibliographic research and indexing
- 1963 Indexing and Cataloging Harvard University printed Persian books

- 1963 Technical Manager Library sciences Literacy Committee (UNESCO National commission)
- 1964-1971 Director Bureau of Publications and Cultural Relations (Later named Bureau of Publications and Library Relations)
- 1965-1979 Director Central Library and Document Center University of Tehran
- 1965-1973 Teaching Iran Historical Social Divisions "Daneshkadeh Olum Echtemaee" Department of Social Sciences University of Tehran
- 1966-1979 Founded "Ketabdari" journal a publication of Tehran University Central Library
- 1969 Director National Book Center interrelated to UNESCO National Commission
- 1969-1979 Associate Professor later Professor of History (Historical Documents and Native History) Department of Literature and Human Sciences University of Tehran. (Manuscripts in Library Science) College of Educational Sciences
- 1969-1972 Director "Iran shenasi" Journal, Publication of Department of Literature and Human Sciences University of Tehran
- 1969-1979 Permanent Director of Congress of Iranian Studies
- 1979-1983 Established "Sazeman-e Ketab" (independently)
- 1979-1993 Published "Ayandeh Journal" from 5th volume for fifteen years
- 1984 Established "Namvarh-e Doctor Mahmoud Afshar" published by Doctor Mahmoud Afshar foundation. From 11th volume it was named "Pajouhesh-haye Irani"
- 1989 Teaching at Bern University, Bern Switzerland
- 1998 Cataloging Persian manuscripts at Austrian National Library (Vienna)

2001 Established "Daftar-e Tarikh" publishing small documents and thesis from Doctor Mahmoud Afshar Foundation

Memberships

1951 Society of Iranian Studies (President Ebrahim Pourdavoud and Secretary Dr. Mohammad Moien)

1955-1978 Founding Member Iranian Society of Philosophy and Human Sciences affiliated with UNESCO national committee

1958 Ministry of Foreign Relation's Library Council

1959 Committee to establish countrywide archiving representing UNESCO national committee

1962 University of Tehran Central Library council

1962 Executive Council "Institute of research in literature and Iranian languages council" (Ministry of Culture and Art)

1964-1978 Board to select book (Ministry of Culture, Ministry of Education, Ministry of Culture and Art)

1965 Executive Board (Center for Research and introduction of Iranian Civilization and Culture)

1965 Board of Founders Iranian Society of History of Science and Medicine

1972-1976 Council of Tehran Public Libraries

1972-1978 Book of the Year Award Committee

1972-1976 Iran Librarian Society

1974-1978 Executive Board "History Society" affiliated with "Language and Literature Cultural Center" Also the secretary of the Cultural Center

1974 Board of Trustees "Mojtaba Minovi Endowment Library" and Shahnameh Foundation

1976 Board of Trustees "Sayeed Mohammad-Ali Jamalzadeh Publish works" consigned to University of Tehran

1977 Selected guardian "Mohammad Fateh Endowment Dormitory" University of Tehran

1977-1978 Board of Trustees "Iran Cultural Foundation"

1977-1978 Supreme Council of "Iran National Documents"

1979-1982 Board of Founders National Monuments Society

1979 Europe Iranian Studies Society

1983 Council of Custodians Doctor Mahmud Afshar Foundation (Selected Custodian)

1989 Honorary Member Institute of Central and West Asian Studies) Karachi

1990 Board of Experts "Al-Furghan, Islamic Heritage Foundation"

1993 Consulting Editor Encyclopaedia Iranica

1993 Board of Trustees Dr. Ali-Akbar Siasi Endowment Library, University of Yazd

1997 Honorary Member Society of Iranian Studies (U.S.A)

1997 Supreme Council Center for the Great Islamic Encyclopedia (CGIE)

1998 Supreme Council National Library (Iran)
2000 Council of experts "Nameh Baharestan" Journal of
Manuscript Research and Studies
2001 Council of Guardians Eurasian Studies Journal (Italy)

