



From Oxus to Euphrates: The Sasanian Empire

Speaker Profiles



Dr. Samra Elodie Azarnouche, is Associate Professor at the École Pratique des Hautes Études in Paris (PSL Research University Paris) where she teaches the history of Zoroastrianism. Her research focuses on Late Antiquity, Sasanian culture and religion, Iranian mythology and Middle Persian literature. Among her publications are an edition of a Middle Persian text on Sasanian reali (Khosrow fils de Kawād et un page, 2013) and several articles on rituals, priestly institutions, technical vocabulary, and Zoroastrian myths.



Dr. Touraj Daryae, is a historian of ancient Iran, specializing on the Sasanian Empire. He is the author of a number of books, including Sasanian Persia: The Rise and Fall of an Empire, IB Tauris 2009; and The Oxford Handbook of Iranian History, OUP, 2012. He has also translated Middle Persian texts on the history of the

games of Chess & back-gammon from the Sasanian period and the role of Khosrow Anushirvan in the 6th century CE, the only surviving geographical text on ancient Iran. Most recently he has edited The Parthian and Early Sasanian Empires: adaptation and expansion, Oxbow Books, 2016. Dr. Daryae's presentation: "The Sasanian King, Iranshahr and the Walls of His Garden" will discuss the idea of Iranshahr as created by the Sasanians. It will also discuss the projection of the idea of an empire as a garden, where there is beauty and justice within is as juxtaposed with the outside world which is desolate and lawless. The talk explores the ideological and mythical aspects of the idea of Iranshahr and the image and responsibility of its king in Late Antiquity.



Dr. Simcha Gross, Assistant Professor of History of Late Antique Judaism at the University of California, Irvine. He completed a Ph.D. at Yale University in the Department of Religious Studies. His area of specialization is the social, cultural and religious histories of Jews and Syriac Christians in the Sasanian and early Islamic Empires, with a primary

interest in producing an integrative account of three elements – Jews, Syriac Christians, and the larger Sasanian or Islamic imperial context – in order to show how Jews and Christians, and their cultural productions, are responses to, formations of, and structured by generative interactions with larger historical forces in the Iranian and Arab worlds. Simcha recently co-authored a work entitled The History of the 'Slave of Christ': From Jewish Child to Christian Martyr.



Dr. Judith A. Lerner is an art historian, specializing the history and visual culture of Iran and Central Asia, from the Achaemenid to the early Islamic periods. She is especially interested in and has published widely on the glyptic art of Iran, Bactria and Sogdiana; the art and culture of the Silk Road, specifically that of the Sogdian and other

Central Asians who lived in China; and the artistic and political uses of Iran's pre-Islamic visual past in the 19th and early 20th centuries. A Research Associate at the Institute for the Study of the Ancient World, she is co-editor of the Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology. She has a MA degree from Columbia University and a PhD from Harvard University.



Dr. Scott McDonough is an Associate Professor of History at William Paterson University in New Jersey. His research interests lie in the social, institutional and religious history of late ancient west Asia, especially pre-Islamic Iran and Caucasias. He is currently working on a monograph, Sasanian Iran: Power, Patronage and Piety, to be published in 2018.



Dr. Ida Meftahi currently holds a Visiting Assistant Professorship in contemporary Iranian culture and society at the Roshan Institute for Persian Studies, University of Maryland. She completed her doctoral studies at the University of Toronto's Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations and was a postdoctoral fellow at the Institute for the Arts and

Humanities at Pennsylvania State University. Her first book, Gender and Dance in Modern Iran: Biopolitics on Stage was released in May 2016 (Routledge Iranian Studies Series). In addition to teaching interdisciplinary courses on Modern Iran, she is the director of the Lalehzar Digital Project, a component of the Roshan Initiative for Digital Humanities, as well as faculty advisor for Roshangar: Roshan Undergraduate Journal for Persian Studies.



Dr. Stephen H. Rapp Jr., is Professor of Eurasian and World History at Sam Houston State University. He received his PhD from the University of Michigan in Byzantine history with a focus on late antique and medieval Caucasias. His research investigates cross-cultural and cosmopolitan fabric of Caucasias as well as the region's membership in

the overlapping Romano-Byzantine, Islamic, and especially Iranian worlds. His latest monograph, The Sasanian World through Georgian Eyes: Caucasias and the Byzantine Commonwealth in Late Antique Georgian Literature, was published by Ashgate in 2014. Dr. Rapp has conducted archival and fieldwork in all three republics of post-Soviet Caucasias (Armenia, Azerbaijan, and Georgia) as well as the Russian Federation, Turkey, Jordan, Egypt, Ethiopia, and Yemen. Among his research fellowships are awards from Fulbright-Hayes, IREX, National Council for Eurasian and East European Research (NCEEER), and the Social Science Research Council (SSRC).



Dr. Khodadad Rezakhan is a historian of late antiquity and global history. He earned his PhD from UCLA in 2010 and is currently a Research Associate at Princeton University, researching the economic history of Central and West Asia in the sixth and seventh centuries. He is the author of ReOrienting the Sasanians: East Iran in Late

Antiquity (Edinburgh University Press, 2017) as well as a number of articles relating to the late antique period. His translation and commentary (with Sajad Amiri) of the Anonymous Syriac Chronicle Known as the Chronicle of Khuzistan was recently published in Tehran (Hekmat/Sina 1395/2016)."



Dr. Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina is currently the Yarshater Assistant Professor of Avestan and Pahlavi Languages in the Department of Near & Middle Eastern Civilizations at the University of Toronto, Canada. He received his M.A. in 2003 and his Ph.D. in 2007 from the Department of Near

Eastern Languages and Civilizations at Harvard University. He was appointed as a Fellow of the National Endowment for the Humanities in 2010. He has taught a number of courses related to ancient and late antique Iran and has also taught courses on Zoroastrianism for both undergraduates and graduates. He is currently completing a book on Zoroastrian scriptural interpretation in Late Antiquity, and he is a co-editor of The Wiley Blackwell Companion to Zoroastrianism (2015), the largest published book-length project on Zoroastrianism.