



The Library of Congress African and Middle Eastern Division Alborz High School - U.S. Alumni

Invite You to the Symposium

From Oxus to Euphrates: The Sasanian Empire

The Sasanian Empire

The Sasanians ruled a large empire in Central and West Asia, stretching from the Oxus to Euphrates and from the Hindukush to Eastern Arabia, for over 400 years (224-651 CE). Known as Iranshahr (the Domain of Iran), it was a powerful empire that engendered much of what came to be known as the Iranian culture in the mediaeval and modern periods. During this long rule, the Sasanian world emerged as the cradle of significant cultural and artistic innovation, from impressive architecture and metal work to Middle Persian literature. It was also home to numerous languages and religions, including Zoroastrianism, Manichaeism, Eastern Christianity, Judaism, and a number of gnostic beliefs. Perhaps the most lasting contribution of the Sasanians, however, was their implementation of the concept of Iranshahr from a mythical concept to a geographical one. As a result, the integrity of their empire as the Domain of Iran became the building block of the socio-cultural concept of Iran in later periods and has remained as their legacy until today.

About the Symposium

This symposium features experts and scholars in the fields of ancient and classical history, Persian studies, and Central Asian and Near Eastern religious and confessional traditions. They will examine the history and culture of the Sasanians, through their literature, inscriptions and art, while also discussing new research on the interaction of the Sasanian Empire with the various cultures and civilizations on its periphery, in Central and South Asia, the Caucasus, and the Arabian frontier. They will also analyze the complexity and cosmopolitanism of the Sasanian epoch, examining the interaction between the Zoroastrian and the Christian Syriac, Armenian and Greek Orthodox traditions as well as with the Jewish, Buddhist, Manichean and later Islamic traditions that flourished during the various centuries of the Sasanian dynasty.

9:15 – 10:45 am: Panel 1: The History of Iranshahr

The Sasanian King, Iranshahr and the Walls of his Garden

Touraj Daryaee, Director, Samuel Jordan Center for Persian Studies & Culture, University of California, Irvine

Caucasia in Late Antiquity: Between the Byzantine and Iranian Worlds?

Stephen H. Rapp, Jr., Professor of Eurasian and World History, Sam Houston State University

The End of the Sasanian Rule: the Center and the Periphery of Eranshahr in the Seventh Century

Khodadad Rezakhani, Associate Research Scholar, the Sharmin and Bijan Mossavar-Rahmani Center for Iran and Persian Gulf Studies

11:00 am – 12:30 pm: Panel 2: Peoples and Religions of the Sasanian Realm

The Death of Mani: Zoroastrian Hermeneutics as Sasanian Historiography

Yuhan Sohrab-Dinshaw Vevaina, Yarshater Assistant Professor of Avestan and Pahlavi Languages, University of Toronto

Queen Shirin and the Churches of the East: Christianity in Sasanian Iran

Scott McDonough, Associate Professor of History, William Paterson University

Kings or Slaves? Babylonian Jewish Claims of Royal Genealogy in their Sasanian Context

Simcha Gross, Assistant Professor of History in Late Antique Judaism, University of California Irvine

1:45 – 3:15 pm: Panel 3: Art and Culture in the Sasanian Period and Beyond

Mythical and Political Narrations in Sasanian Era: Middle Persian Texts and Literature in Context

Samra E. Azarnouche, Maître de Conférences, L'École Pratique des Hautes Études ((EPHE)

Knowledge and Revival of Rock Relief Sculpture in Post-Sasanian Persia: The Qajars' Use of an Ancient Iranian Art Form and of Sasanian Imagery

Judith A. Lerner, Co-editor, Journal of Inner Asian Art and Archaeology, Research Associate; Institute for the Study of the Ancient World (ISAW)

Sasanian Reflections on the Modern Stage

Ida Meftahi, Visiting Assistant Professor in Contemporary Iranian Culture and Society, Roshan Institute for Persian Studies, University of Maryland, College Park (UMD)

June 7, 2017
8:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.

Jefferson Building, Northeast Pavilion
10 First St. SE ♦ Washington DC

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