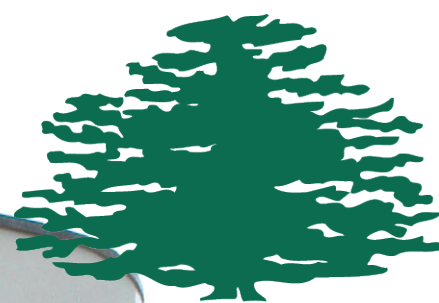


A Reason to Celebrate



THE BRITISH MUSEUM



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ZOROASTRIAN CENTRE

Conference to celebrate 150th anniversary of Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe

150 years of Zoroastrian Studies

Saturday 22nd – Sunday 23rd October 2011

Zartoshty Brothers Hall, Zoroastrian Centre for Europe

440 Alexandra Avenue, Harrow HA2 9TL



**ZOROASTRIAN TRUST FUNDS OF EUROPE INCORPORATED
PRESIDENTS
WHO SERVED THE ASSOCIATION
FROM DAY OF ITS ESTABLISHMENT TO DATE**

1.	22 September	1861 - 1863	Seth Muncherji Hormasji Cama
2.		1863 - 22February 1908	Dr Dadabhai Naoroji
3.	11 March	1908 - 14 November 1933	Sir Mancherjee M Bhownaggee KCIE
4.	14 November	1933 - 12 August 1934	Dr M N Anklesaria
5.	12 August	1934 - 12 September 1937	Mr Khushru P Mehta
6.	12 September	1937 - September 1939	Dr Jal S Vakil
7.	September	1939 - 25 September 1949	Dr Pestonji Sorabji Patuck
8.	25 September	1949 - 26 August 1951	Mr Spittama K R Cama
9.	26 August	1951 - 25 October 1953	Dr H M Sethna
10.	25 October	1953 - 10 October 1954	Dr R M Post
11.	10 October	1954 - 20 October 1955	Dr Sohrab B Warden
12.	20 October	1955 - 15 December 1961	Mr Jehangirji D Moos
13.	15 December	1961 - 14 December 1962	Mr K R Mehrabi
14.	14 December	1962 - 09 November 1963	Dr S B Karani
15.	09 November	1963 - 06 December 1970	Mr Jehangirji D Moos
16.	06 December	1970 - 30 October 1977	Dr (Mrs) Shirinbanoo S Kutar
17.	30 October	1977 - 22 June 1986	Mr Shahpur F Captain
18.	09 July	1986 - 30 November 1986	Mr Shahrokh Shahrokh
19.	30 November	1986 - 27 November 1988	Mr Bailey R Irani
20.	27 November	1988 - 19 November 1989	Mrs Beroze M Mody
21.	19 November	1989 - 22 November 1992	Ervad Zal N Sethna
22.	22 November	1992 - 14 November 1993	Mr Kersey J Jasavala
23.	14 November	1993 - 16 November 1997	Mr Rusi K Dalal
24.	16 November	1997 - 27 November 2005	Mr Dorab E Mistry
25.	27 November	2005 - 15 th November 2009	Mr Paurushasp B Jila
26.	15 th November	2009 - Present	Mr Malcolm M Deboo

Association's Name Changes

22 September 1861	Established: Religious Funds of The Zarathushtrians of Europe
25 September 1889	Amalgamated: Charitable Fund of The Zoroastrians of Europe
14 August 1909	Incorporated: The Incorporated Parsee Association of Europe
08 August 1971	Zoroastrian Association of Europe (Incorporated)
01 February 1979	Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (Incorporated)

Compiled by Malcolm M Deboo
Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (Incorporated)



**Professor Mary Boyce
Honoured Friend of
the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe**





The President, Trustees, Managing Committee Members, Office Bearers and the Staff at the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe Incorporated are truly indebted to the Zartoshty Brothers and members of their families for their relentless support to the Association. Their continued interest in the welfare of the Zoroastrian Community in the United Kingdom and Europe and indeed Zoroastrian communities throughout the World is most admirable. Their generosity and munificent donations have surpassed the normal duty of a Zoroastrian for Charity.

The continuous support and benevolence of the Zartoshty Brothers and their families are exemplary in the history of the Association. Their munificent donations to the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) of the University of London has been acknowledged and honoured by them with the inclusion of the names of the Zartoshty Brothers on the Donor Board displayed in the foyer-entrance of the SOAS building. The recent confirmation of £1 million bequest from the MHBKHF Trust Funds connected to the late Prof. Mary Boyce, have ensured the continuity of the advancement of the study and understanding of Zoroastrianism at SOAS in perpetuity. These endowments have been designed “the Zartoshty Professorship” in Zoroastrianism in the Department of the Study of Religions at SOAS.

The Zartoshty Brothers and their family members’ patronage of the 8th World Zoroastrian Congress that was held in 2005 at the Zoroastrian Centre and the Zartoshty Brothers Hall and their overall benevolence and support to ZTFE is indeed commendable.

Their generosity and munificent donations have surpassed the normal duty of a Zoroastrian for charity, for which the President, Trustees, Managing Committee Members, Office bearers and the staff and indeed all members are indebted to the Zartoshty Brothers and their families.

On behalf of all Zoroastrians of UK and Europe, we salute the Zartoshty Brothers for the munificent benevolence at all times.

May Ahura Mazda bless them and their families with all good fortune, health, wealth, long lives and prosperity. Amen.

Birth of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe

Monday 15th August 2011 is the 150th Anniversary of Seth Muncherji Hormusji Cama's letter to establish an Anjuman. A small hand-written letter in Gujarati, 9 inches by 7 inches in size, dated 15th August 1861 is the oldest document in the archives of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe.

To the Zoroastrians of England

Sirs,

Our people go abroad to several countries for business. When there, each person could give according to his means for religious and charitable purposes. This would enable them not only to perform good deeds but also to live in harmony with one another in good and bad times. Currently by the grace of God, we are about 50 including students who come here for higher studies and our number is likely to increase year by year. For this reason, it is essential to consider this matter urgently.

If this idea appeals to you, we can arrange to meet at some place, listen to one another's views and reach a satisfactory conclusion".

Signed
Muncherji Hormusji Cama

This letter was delivered to Dr Dadabhai Naoroji
who replied dated 17th August:

The proposal as contained in Mr Muncherji's letter is very good. If others are agreeable, we can meet at a place and discuss the matter further."

Signed
Dadabhai Naoroji

Dastur Dr. Firoze M Kotwal

An Overview of the History and Development of the Parsi Priesthood in India up to the Nineteenth Century

Abstract:

This talk traces the history and development of Parsi priesthood in India with references to the role played by the Zoroastrian priests of Iran in preserving the Zoroastrian tradition. The difficulties arising in detailing the history, the scant resources available, the fragility of important manuscripts and the confusion over dates forms part of the problem.

The evolution of the Sanjana – Bhagaria priestly groups in India and the establishment of the city of Navsari as a stronghold of the Zoroastrian faith in India followed by the establishment of Udvada as the home of the Iranshah Atash Behram is detailed.

The latter part of this paper includes the importance of the Persian Rivayats, and the manner in which Irani and Parsi scribe-priests ensured the transmission of the manuscripts. Finally a brief history of the eight Atash Behrams have been included as well in order to complete and connect the priests through the ages with two of the most important aspects of priesthood, the priceless Zoroastrian manuscripts and the revered Atash Behrams and Dar-I Mihrs of the Parsi community.



Dastur Dr. Firoze M. Kotwal

Zoroastrian High Priest, Mumbai, India

Education:

- Seminary Degree, M.F. Cama Athornan Institute, Mumbai.
- M.A. with Distinction, University of Bombay, 1961.
- Ph.D., University of Bombay, 1966.
- Thesis: The Supplementary Texts to the Shāyest Nē- shāyest, text with English translation and notes, Danish Academy of Sciences and Letter, Copenhagen, 1969.
- Post-doctoral Research with Professor Mary Boyce on the History of the Parsi Priestly Class from Parsi Prakash and 16th Century Gujarati Manuscript, 1973.
- Life-long research on the Hērbedestān and Nērangestān, volumes for the last 40 years.
- Dasturji Kotwal was the Principal of the M.F. Cama Athornan Institute, Mumbai, 1970 – 1977 and was appointed High Priest of H.B. Wadia Atash Behram, Mumbai 1977 – 1998 for his scholarship and learning.
- He is Chairman of the Athravan Educational Trust, Mumbai, since 1985 – present.
- He has been invited as a visiting scholar to lecture at SOAS, Harvard University, Colorado State University and Universität Heidelberg and at several other universities. In 2001 he was a visiting Fellow, at Clare Hall College, University of Cambridge.

Honours:

- A Festschrift in Honour of Dastur Dr. Firoze M. Kotwal, is to be published and will contain contributions on Zoroastrian studies by scholars such as Boyd, Choksy, Frye, Hintze, Hinnells, Humbach, JamaspAsa, Kreyenbroek, Mistree, Panaino, Schwartz, Skjaervø, Stausberg and others. This singular honour has rarely been awarded to a Zoroastrian.
- He is an Honorary Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland again an honour few Zoroastrians (Parsis) have received.
- He has been awarded 6 Gold Medals by the Government of Iran, for Outstanding Scholarship and Research in Iranian Studies for work done on the Hērbedestān and Nērangestān volumes, 2003.

Publications:

- He has authored several books: Five Avestan Gāhs, transcribed and translated with complete glossary and footnotes as a complete study, co-authored with Almut Hintze, (to be published).
- The Hērbedestān and Nērangestān Vol III-IV, co-edited and co-translated, Philip G. Kreyenbroek.
- The Hērbedestān and Nērangestān Vol. I- II: Nērangestān, Fragard, co-edited and co-translated, Philip G. Kreyenbroek with contributions from James R. Russell
- The Khorda Avesta and Yašt Codex E1
- Facsimile Edition, co-author, Almut Hintze.
- A Persian Offering, The Yasna: A Zoroastrian High Liturgy, co-author James W. Boyd.
- A Guide to The Zoroastrian Religion, co-author, James W. Boyd.
- Ērbadistān ud Nīrangistān: a Facsimile Edition of the Ms. TD, co-editor James W. Boyd.
- The Supplementary Texts to the Shāyest Nē-shāyest, text with English translation and notes.
- Editio Princeps of the Vaethā with transcription of the Pahlavi version.
- Jarthoshti Dharma Ane Kriyao Vishe Lakano (Writings on Zoroastrian Religion and Rituals).
- He has also published several articles which have been published in prestigious journals dealing with Zoroastrian studies and has contributed articles to Encyclopaedia Iranica.

Media:

- He has been interviewed by the press media, radio and television and is consulted for movies and videos on the Zoroastrian faith and its people.
- He has recorded Zoroastrian prayers and a demonstration of the Yasna ceremony”, co-author, James W. Boyd, for Harvard University and Colorado State University (DVD format).

Dastur Dr. Firoze M. Kotwal is married and has three children and two grandchildren.

Programme: Day 1

Saturday 22nd October 2011

10:00am Coffee & Registration

11:00am

Welcome Remarks

Malcolm M. Deboo – President, Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe, London

Professor Almut Hintze – Zartoshty Brothers Professor of Zoroastrianism, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

Karen Armstrong – Trustee, British Museum, London

11:30am

On the concept of creation in Zoroastrianism

Professor Almut Hintze – Zartoshty Brothers Professor of Zoroastrianism, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

12:15pm

Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe: A history of 150 years

Professor John R. Hinnells – Honorary Research Professor, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London

1:00pm

Lunch & Networking

2:00pm

Select English and European scholars and their study of Zoroastrianism:

A narrative and a journey

Mr. Khojeste P. Mistree – Co-founder and Trustee, Zoroastrian Studies, Mumbai

3:00pm

The Magic of Ancient Persia: Nineteenth century travellers and discoveries

Dr. Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis – Curator of Middle Eastern Coins, British Museum, London

3:45pm

Break

4:00pm

Agents of change: Dynamic encounters between Parsis and New Englanders in the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries

Dr. Jenny Rose – Lecturer on Zoroastrian tradition, School of Religion, Claremont Graduate University, California

4:45pm

The Zoroastrians of colonial Ceylon and independent Sri Lanka

Professor Jamsheed K. Choksy – Professor of Iranian Studies, Indiana University

5:30pm

Close Day 1

Programme: Day 2

Sunday 23rd October 2011

- 11:00am Coffee
- 11:30am Diaspora then and now in the mirror of the Qesse – ye - Sanjān
Professor Alan Williams – Professor of Iranian Studies and Comparative Religion,
University of Manchester
- 12:15pm Zoroastrian funerary art in Sogdiana and China
Professor Frantz Grenet – Chair, Religions of the ancient Iranian world and Director
d'études, École Pratique des Hautes Études, Sorbonne, Paris
- 1:00pm Bestowing Honorary Life Membership of Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe on
Dastur Dr. Kaikhusroo M. JamaspAsa & Dastur Dr. Firoze M. Kotwal
- 1:30pm Lunch & Networking
- 2:30pm Negotiating Transition: From *dakhmeh* to *ārāmgāh*
Dr. Sarah Stewart – Lecturer in Zoroastrianism, School of Oriental and African
Studies and Deputy Director of the London Middle East Institute at SOAS
- 3:15pm The role of education: Keeping the Zoroastrian heritage alive
Dr. Rashna Writer – Senior Teaching Fellow in the Department of Religious Studies,
School of Oriental and African Studies, London University
- 4:00pm Closing Remarks
- 4:15pm Tea
- 5:00pm Educational visit to the Prayer Room, Zoroastrian Centre
- Close

Abstracts & Speaker's Profile

The Zoroastrians of Colonial Ceylon and Independent Sri Lanka - Jamsheed K. Choksy

Abstract

Sri Lanka, the “resplendent land,” formerly known as Ceylon, the “island of jewels,” is located off the Indian subcontinent’s southern tip. Maritime trade brought Zoroastrians from the Parsi community of India and also from Iran to the island’s shores as merchants. Other Zoroastrians came as bankers, attorneys, and skilled and unskilled workers. Their descendents still live in Sri Lanka, worship at a fire temple staffed by a priest from India, perform navjote or initiation, wedding, jashan or prayer, and other ceremonies, and bury their dead in an aramgah or place of repose. This presentation examines their history and society from 1600 to the present. It also looks at the challenges they face and the adaptations they have made to modernity and to minority status.



Professor Jamsheed K. Choksy is Professor of Iranian Studies at Indiana University. He was nominated by the President of the USA and confirmed by the US Senate to the National Council on the Humanities (2008–14). His BA degree was from Columbia University (1985). His PhD was from Harvard University (1991). At Harvard University, Choksy was elected a Junior Fellow (1988–91). He taught in the Department of History at Stanford University as a Visiting Assistant Professor (1991–93). Choksy was a NEH Fellow at the Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton (1993–94), a Guggenheim Foundation Fellow (1996–97), a Mellon Fellow at the Centre for Advanced Study in the Behavioural Sciences, Stanford (2001–02), and an American Philosophical Society Fellow (2006–07). At present he is a Crapa Fellow of the US Commission on International Religious Freedom (2011–12). Choksy is an elected Fellow of the Royal Asiatic Society and of the American Numismatic Society. He is the author of three books: *Evil, Good, and Gender* (New York, 2002); *Conflict and Cooperation* (New York, 1997); and *Purity and Pollution* (Austin, 1989). He is a consulting editor of the *Encyclopedia Iranica*.

York, 2002); *Conflict and Cooperation* (New York, 1997); and *Purity and Pollution* (Austin, 1989). He is a consulting editor of the *Encyclopedia Iranica*.

The Magic of Ancient Persia: Nineteenth century travellers and discoveries - Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis

Abstract

One of the earliest descriptions of Persepolis goes back to the early fourteenth century. By the beginning of the nineteenth century a number of travellers had visited Persia leaving behind detailed descriptions of sites and ancient monuments. By now a certain amount of information was accessible to these travellers through Greek and Latin sources, the Old Testament, and travelogues of earlier explorers. From the 1830s onwards the Epic of the Shahnameh, the Iranian Book of Kings, was translated into French by Jules Mohl, with the last of the seven volumes published posthumously in 1878.

James Morrier visited Pasargadae in 1809, made a sketch of the tomb, and identified it correctly as the tomb of Cyrus the Great. In 1821 Claudius James Rich stood in front of the same tomb describing it as that of “the most illustrious, and the most interesting of Oriental sovereigns”.

This lecture will present the views of some nineteenth century European explorers about ancient Persia, its history and archaeology, and it will deal with the discovery of important ancient Persian objects, including the iconic Cyrus Cylinder.



Dr. Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis is Curator of Middle Eastern Coins at the British Museum and Co-Director of the International Parthian Coin Project. She studied Near Eastern Archaeology and Ancient Iranian Languages as an undergraduate at the University of Göttingen Germany, obtained PhD on Parthian art from the Institute of Archaeology, University College London. Joint Editor of *IRAN*, Journal of the British Institute of Persian Studies (BIPS) from 1983-2005, Secretary of the British Institute of Persian Studies from 1998-2003, and President of the British Institute of Persian Studies from 2006-2011.

Vesta is closely involved in the negotiations and preparations of two major British Museum exhibitions on Iran, “The Forgotten Empire- the World of Ancient Persia” and “Shah Abbas – the Remaking of Iran”; also part of the team that took the Cyrus Cylinder to Iran and prepared the exhibition at the National Museum in Tehran from September 2010-April 2011. Publications include *Persian Myths* (1993), *From Persepolis to the Punjab* (2007, 2010); *Persian Love Poetry* (2005); *A Sylloge of Sasanian Coins in the National Museum of Iran. Volume I: Ardashir I- Hormizd IV* (2010); *Volume II. Khusrau I- Yazdgird III* (in press); Edited with Sarah Stewart *The Idea of Iran Series, Vols. I-IV*.

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Zoroastrian funerary art in Sogdiana and China - Frantz Grenet

Abstract

Until recently, specialists of the Zoroastrianism religion considered that it had never been able to produce an original nor imaginative religious art, partly because of a structural tendency to aniconism (or even, to quote Mary Boyce, « iconoclasm »). It is true that in Sasanian Iran very few images of gods are known, and most of them are just reused Greek types, or mirror reflection of the king. Since the nineteenth century modern Zoroastrian communities have used practically only the image of the winged disk (an Achaemenid symbol of Ahura Mazda) and a Sasanian image of « Zoroaster » (in fact of Mithra).

The picture is, however, very different in the ancient Zoroastrian countries of Bactria and Sogdiana, from where a rich repertoire is known and is being constantly enriched by new archaeological finds. The following categories will be examined in the paper:

- Kushan coins (mainly a borrowing of Greek types with a few reinterpreted Indian models and original creations);
- Sogdian mural painting (with a higher proportion of Indian models and original creations);
- Sogdian ossuaries (showing not only deities but also eschatological myths and images);
- Sogdian funerary art from China (with more elaborate images of the hereafter).



Professor Frantz Grenet was born in 1952. Studied at the École Normale Supérieure (Paris). From 1977 to 1981, Deputy Director of the DAFA (Délégation Archéologique Française en Afghanistan), taking part in the excavations of the Hellenistic city Ai Khanum under the direction of Professor Paul Bernard. Since 1981, researcher at the CNRS (Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique). Since 1989, director of the French-Uzbek Archaeological Mission in Sogdiana, excavating at Samarkand and other sites. Since 1999, Director d'études at the École Pratique des Hautes Études (Sorbonne, Paris), chair Religions of the ancient Iranian world. Editor of 140 articles, mainly on the history of Zoroastrianism and the history and archaeology of Central Asia. Editor of three volumes, author or co-author of four books, including: *Les pratiques funéraires dans l'Asie centrale préislamique* (1984); *Le Livre de la Geste d'Ardashir fils de Pâbag* (2003); *A History of Zoroastrianism*, vol. III: Zoroastrianism under Macedonian and Roman Rule (in collaboration with Mary

Boyce) (1991). Member of the board of the Corpus Inscriptionum Iranicarum.

Personal Website : <http://frantz.grenet.free.fr>

Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe: A history of 150 years - John R Hinnells

Abstract

This paper will look at the history of the Zoroastrian Trust Funds of Europe (ZTFE) from their inception down into the third millennium. It will look at key moments and the major figures who have shaped it. As well as the founders and modern figures it will also look at the three Members of the British Parliament who were members of the then ZTFE. It will also look ZTFE as part of the modern Zoroastrian diaspora and its place among other religious minorities in Britain.



Born in 1941, Professor John Hinnells pursued his undergraduate studies at Kings College, London and his postgraduate work under Professor Mary Boyce at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). Most of his academic career was spent at Manchester University before moving to SOAS as the founding Head of the new Department for the Study of Religion. The main focus of his research has been on Zoroastrianism, in particular the Parsis in India and the Diaspora. Three of his main writings are: *Zoroastrians in Britain* (OUP 1996), *Zoroastrian and Parsi Studies*, Select works of John R. Hinnells (Ashgate, 2000) and *The Zoroastrian Diaspora* (OUP 2005). He is currently writing a long term project with Dastur Dr K. M. JamaspAsa, *The Parsis in Colonial India: their history and religion*. He has also edited more widely, especially with Penguin Books: *Penguin Dictionary of Religions*; *Penguin Handbook of Living Religions* (3rd edition, 2010); *Penguin Handbook of Ancient Religions* (2009) and with Routledge, *Parsis in India and the Diaspora*, joint editor with Alan Williams, 2007 and *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion* (2nd revised edition 2010)

Alan Williams, 2007 and *The Routledge Companion to the Study of Religion* (2nd revised edition 2010)

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On the concept of creation in Zoroastrianism - Almut Hintze

Abstract

The Zoroastrian religious texts in both Avestan and Middle Persian distinguish between two types of existence, the mental, or spiritual on the one hand, and the physical or material, on the other. This talk explores the question how the two types of existence came about. The texts are very clear that Ahura Mazdā is the creator of both, how exactly did he do it?



Professor Almut Hintze is Zartoshty Brothers Professor of Zoroastrianism at the School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. Holding degrees from the universities of Heidelberg, Oxford, Erlangen and Berlin, her field is Indo-Iranian Studies with special emphasis on the Zoroastrian Literature. Her major publications include commentaries and annotated editions of the Avestan Zamyād Yašt (1994) and the Yasna Haptanghaiti (2007) and a study of the semantics of words for ‘reward’ in Vedic and Avestan (2000). She has also collaborated with Dastur Dr. Firoze M. Kotwal and with Dastur Dr. Kaikhusroo M. JamaspAsa on facsimile editions of Zoroastrian manuscripts.

Select English and European Scholars and their Study of Zoroastrianism: A Narrative and a Journey - Khojeste P Mistree

Abstract

This review spans a period of three hundred years of European scholarship from the seventeenth to the twentieth century, with regard to the Parsis of India, their sacred texts, languages and practices. Early European travellers visiting India, noted the existence of the Parsis, and their reports aroused the attention of European orientalists, particularly, of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries.

Thomas Hyde and Anquetil du Perron were among the first European scholars to unravel the complexities of the Avestan and Pahlavi manuscripts. This eventually led to French and German scholars working extensively in Avestan and Middle Persian studies, stemming from their primary interest in Indology and Sanskrit.

The inclusion of select scholars as sign posts, is to show the development of Zoroastrian scholarship in Europe and the omission of their contemporaries and of the present generation of scholars in this paper, is due to the constraints of time, and it in no way reduces their scholarship, as the religion has only been made richer by their dedication to the study of Zoroastrianism and its people.



Khojeste P. Mistree M.A. (Oxon.), F.C.A, went to Bishop’s School in Poona, India. He is a Fellow of the Institute of Chartered Accountants of England and Wales and has an Honours Degree in Oriental Studies from the University of Oxford. He is the co-founder and trustee of Zoroastrian Studies, The Athravan Educational Trust and the World Alliance of Parsi Irani Zarthoshtis. In October 2008, he was elected as a Trustee of the Bombay Parsi Punchayet (BPP), the apex body of the Zoroastrian community. He takes classes and Seminars on Zoroastrianism across the globe. Zoroastrian Studies the organization he co-founded, runs a Poor People’s Project since 1979 in India and in Iran for the last ten years. He is the recipient of two Humanitarian awards for his work. He has authored “Zoroastrianism – An Ethnic Perspective” and co-authored, “The Zarathushti Religion – A Basic Text”.



Agents of Change: Dynamic Encounters between Parsis and New Englanders in the late Eighteenth and early Nineteenth Centuries - Jenny Rose

Abstract

This illustrated presentation describes the earliest encounters between representatives from the newly independent American states and Parsis of India. Such interaction involved cross-cultural exchanges of ideas as well as merchandise, and occurred against a backdrop of political development that brought colonial expansion for some countries, and revolution and redefinition for others. This paper discusses the Parsi contribution to the changing cultures of America and Europe at this time.



Dr Jenny Rose currently teaches classes on the Zoroastrian tradition at the School of Religion, Claremont Graduate University, USA. She also lectures extensively at other academic institutions, museums, and Zoroastrian Association events throughout North America. In recent years, Jenny has led study-tours of some of the most important archaeological, cultural and devotional sites in Iran and Central Asia.

Jenny holds a doctorate in Ancient Iranian Studies from Columbia University. Her dissertation was published in book form as *The Image of Zoroaster: The Persian Mage Through European Eyes* (Bibliotheca Persica Press, 2000). She continues to write educational materials about the Zoroastrian religion for British school curricula. This year, she has published two textbooks: *Zoroastrianism: An Introduction*, I.B. Tauris; and *Zoroastrianism: A Guide for the Perplexed*, Continuum.

Negotiating Transition: From dakhmeh to ārāmgāh - Sarah Stewart

Abstract

This paper is based on information gathered from interviews conducted with Zoroastrians in Iran over the past four years and from documents held in Iran that date from the early twentieth century. The transition from dakhmeh to ārāmgāh is usually viewed as having been part of a reformist agenda aimed at modernising the religious community. It will be discussed here with reference to the establishment of the Tehran ārāmgāh, and its preservation and management by the Tehran Zoroastrian Anjoman under three successive governments in Iran. It will be seen that the change from exposure to burial of the dead involved members of the elite in negotiations both inside and outside the community. The ramifications of this transition are still working themselves out and have had consequences for Zoroastrian communities in different Iranian contexts – the burial procedures for Jadīd ol Islam being one example – down to the present day.



Dr Sarah Stewart is a lecturer in Zoroastrianism in the Department of the Study of Religions at School of Oriental Studies (SOAS) and Deputy Director of the London Middle East Institute at SOAS. Her research is focused on Zoroastrianism as a living faith in Iran and India and its oral traditions.

Diaspora then and now in the mirror of the Qesse-ye Sanjān - Alan Williams

Abstract

For a diaspora community such as the British Zoroastrians the past is not singular but multiple. The past of arrival and establishment in Britain, arrival and experience in lands such as Uganda and Kenya, and a past of origin in India and Pakistan, and in Iran – these pasts are reflected in collective memory. One of the mirrors or – better perhaps – lenses of these reflections is, as I call it, the famous but-little-known Qesse-ye Sanjān. It is the story of the Persian Zoroastrian emigration from Iran after the Arab conquest, written down by a Zoroastrian priest over 400 years ago in 1600 CE about events stretching back 1400 years and further back to the beginnings of the tradition with Zarathushtra himself. The finding of a homeland has been the story of many cultures and more than ever today the Qesse-ye Sanjān has great significance for Iranian and Parsi Zoroastrians in Britain. It reaffirms the values of their past and speaks of the compromises and commitments that have had to be made, comforted by the central symbols that unite this community – the holy fire and the identification with Iran.



Professor Alan Williams MA (Oxon.), PhD. (Lond.) is Professor of Iranian Studies and Comparative Religion at the University of Manchester. He is the author of several books on Zoroastrian and Muslim literature in Iranian languages and is one of the few scholars of Middle Iranian languages who also works on Classical Persian texts. His books include the Pahlavi Rivāyat Accompanying the Dādestān ī Dēnīg, Rumi Spiritual Verses Masnavi-ye Ma'navi I, The Zoroastrian Myth of Migration from Iran... Qesse-ye Sanjān, In the Mirror of the Stream (ed.) and Parsi Settlement in India and The Diaspora (ed. with John R. Hinnells). He is currently on twelve months research leave from University teaching and is working on a study of the poetry of Jalāloddin Rumi's Masnavi and is continuing to translate texts from Persian and Pahlavi.

The Role of Education: Keeping the Zoroastrian Heritage Alive - Rashna Writer

Abstract

The paper deals with education as a tool for the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of the Zoroastrian heritage. Addressing the question of educating or re-educating ourselves in Zoroastrian studies has gained a level of urgency today. The generation of British-born Zoroastrians must reconcile their environment which is Anglo-Saxon, with their inheritance, which is Zoroastrian. The young Zoroastrians of Britain are being nurtured in a “greenhouse” atmosphere; if these youth are to pass on to their own progeny a Zoroastrian persona they need further assistance. The techniques now urgently called for are the various tools used by educationists today to transmit knowledge. Equally, it is important that the parents and grandparents of the Zoroastrian youth are re-educated in the basics of their heritage, to enable them to answer the searching questions their children and grandchildren put to them. Greater awareness of our heritage will help consolidate a sense of community among successive generations.



Dr Rashna Writer is the author of *Contemporary Zoroastrians: An Unstructured Nation*, and co-author, with Shahrokh Shahrokh of *The Memoirs of Keikhosrow Shahrokh*. She has lectured on ancient Iranian history at Birkbeck College, University of London and Richmond College (London); was a Research Assistant at Manchester University where she undertook work on the Zoroastrian community in the United Kingdom. Since 2008, Dr Writer is Senior Teaching Fellow in the Department of Religious Studies, School of Oriental and African Studies, London University, where she lectures on Zoroastrianism in Ancient and Modern Worlds. She has participated at international conferences and lectured in the UK, USA and the Indian sub-continent. Dr Writer has pursued a parallel career as a political scientist. She is an equity partner at ROK Asset Management where she also serves as Senior Consultant. She specialises in advising insurance underwriters and multinational corporations on political risk, war and terrorism, with clients in the UK and Europe. She

was a member of the National Employment Panel: 2006-2007, commissioned by Britain's then Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, before his elevation to the office of Prime Minister.

Dr Writer holds a doctorate from the London School of Economics in International Relations.

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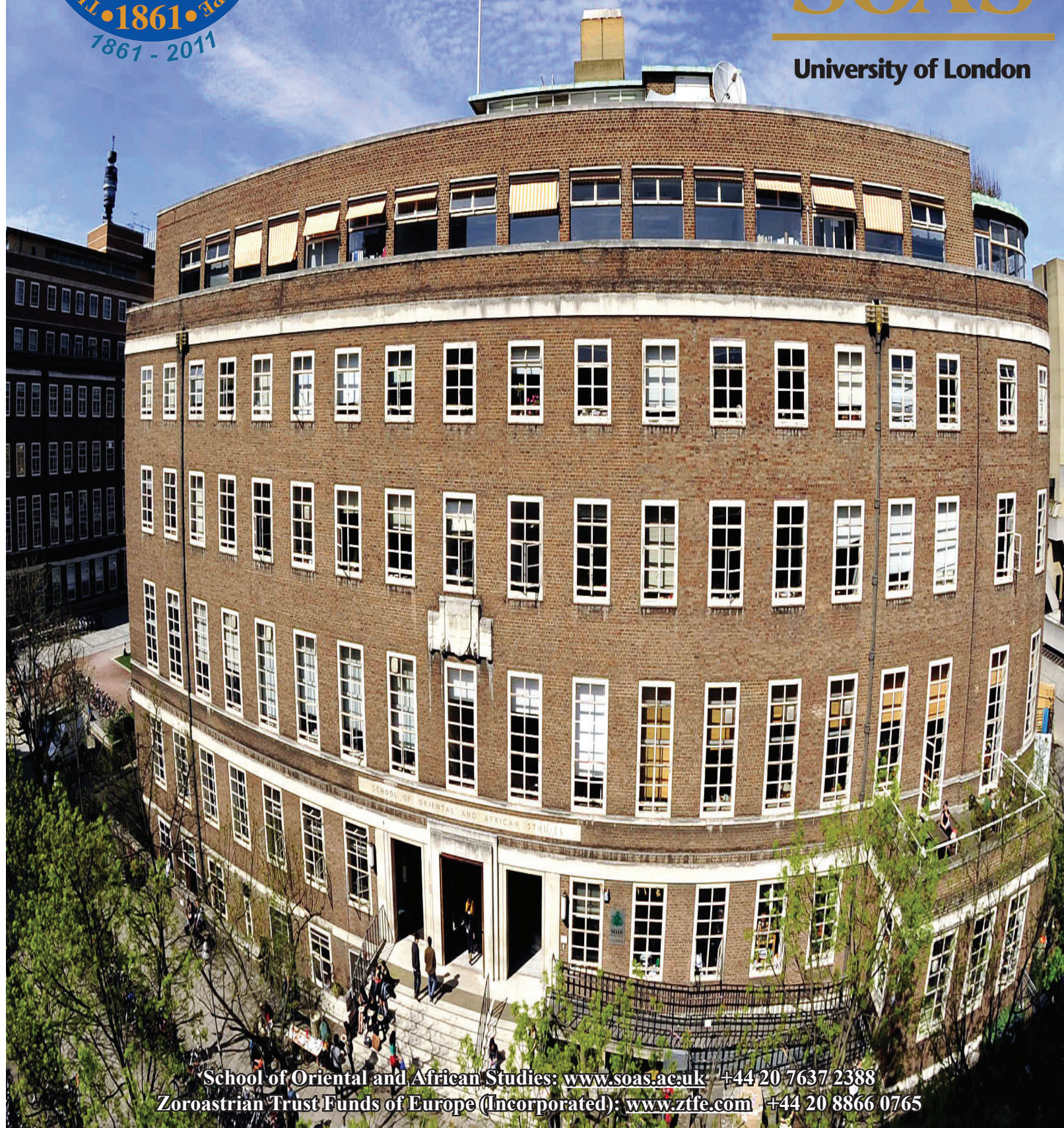
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