

3 Day International Conference on

Indo-Persian Manuscripts
Issues and Challenges in the Modern Time
(6-8 March 2020)



The English and Foreign Languages University
Hyderabad, India



Department of Asian Languages

in collaboration with

British Institute of Persian Studies, London, UK

organises

3 Day International Conference on

Indo-Persian Manuscripts

Issues and Challenges in the Modern Time
(6-8 March 2020)

Inauguration
by

Prof. E. Suresh Kumar

Hon'ble Vice Chancellor, EFL University

Friday 6th March 2020, 5:00 pm

Room no. 1, Ground Floor, New Academic Block
EFL University, Hyderabad

Concept Note:

India and Persia have had close contact in the realm of language, literature and culture through the ages. Since the 12th century many parts of the subcontinent became the hub of Persian learning and played a vital role in promoting and propagating Indo-Persian literary heritage. The Mughals, the Nizams of Hyderabad, the Nawabs of Bengal, the Officials of the British Raj, the great Orientalists and the Indian scholars have collected Persian manuscripts, documents, miniatures and artifacts which are now in the treasure trove of libraries and museums of India and abroad.

Persian language started enjoying the status of administrative language of India since 13th century and continued till 1837 when it was finally abolished as the official language. During this vast period of six centuries, thousands of books were written in Persian, and tens and hundreds of poets composed their poems in this language. Copies of their rare works have been preserved in different libraries in the subcontinent in the form of manuscripts. The libraries and museums of India are full of with these rare documents. "It is estimated that in 2003, India possesses nearly one hundred thousand manuscripts in Arabic script spread over a number of libraries in various parts of the country", noted Omar Khallidi¹. These manuscripts and documents are not only the national heritage but also constitute an authentic source of socio-cultural and historical studies of the Persian Civilization or Indo Persian Culture.

The Mughals were the successors of the Delhi Sultans and they too were great patrons of Persian language and literature. They even patronized the local poets, scholars and nobles besides extending patronage to a large number of poets, historians and artists from Iran and Central Asia who visited their courts or settled in Delhi, Bengal, Hyderabad and many other Indian cities. During this period, Persian language and literature reached the highest stage of development which resulted in a huge proliferation of Persian manuscripts, documents, miniature paintings and socio cultural artifacts. This Persian heritage includes theological texts, prayer-books, commentaries on the *Qur'an*, works on Sufism, the lives of saints and prophets and poets; literary and poetic texts dealing with romances, chronicles and fables; manuals of writing, books on grammar, dictionaries; volumes of books on the history of India and the local history; diaries and works on philosophy, medicine, general history, geography, astronomy and astrology, records and history of British Raj etc. These manuscripts are looked upon as the national heritage in our country and are authentic sources for research in the fields of history, culture, language, literature etc. A great number of Indian, Persian, and Central Asian scholars were engaged by Emperor Akbar to

¹ Khalidi Omar, *A Guide to Arabic, Persian, Turkish and Urdu Manuscript Libraries in India*, p-1

translate Indian Classics from Sanskrit in to Persian in order to broaden the domain of knowledge in the subcontinent.

Increasing British interests in India in the latter half of the 18th century brought a change of attitude towards learning. It provided a vital impetus to the study of Persian language, history, and culture for merchants, administrators, and diplomats. A host of scholars in Calcutta, Madras and Bombay having proficiency in Persian translated judicial and revenue regulations for the East India Company. They also showed interest in Persian classics and initiated the study of the Orient in the modern times. The proper coordination between Indian scholars and British officials produced a significant number of translations and edited versions of Persian and Indo-Persian works. These works definitely help us to understand the South Asian society. The tradition of book production and patronage to the collection of manuscripts continued until the 19th century when modern printing press replaced manuscript production.

The British, who took upon themselves to advance the cause of education and traditional knowledge systems in India, paid heed to the preservation of Oriental manuscripts. Since the foundation of the Asiatic Society in Calcutta in 1784, the systematic search, survey, collection and documentation of manuscripts had started. Evidently, Persian language was so common until a century ago that scholars were perfectly capable of editing difficult texts of Persian literature. Important projects of editing and publishing existing manuscripts were undertaken by institutions like the Asiatic Society of Bengal. The Society under its *Bibliotheca Indica Series Publications* printed valuable texts of the Persian manuscripts which contributed to the research of Persian studies in universities and research institutions throughout the world.

The large-scale acquisition of manuscripts by Indians and British officials gave birth to rich library collections that could sustain academic research in Persian Studies globally. The cataloguing of these collections has preserved to an extent the fruits of knowledge Persian literature. Though these collections have been documented to an extent by their cataloguers, many of them still need proper documentation. Their fruition lies in their preservation and conservation for cultural and historical studies, their cataloguing, digitization, editing and publication. It is rightly said that the proof of the pudding lies in the eating.

Today, the manuscripts are in a deplorable state of negligence, inaccessibility and oblivion. There are many issues and challenges related to them. Their importance in the age of commerce, science and engineering has been blatantly marginalized. They also have negligible readership. The students of humanities, social sciences and arts and aesthetics glance pass them and avail secondary sources. The attitude of heritage institutions is highly

unfriendly towards academia. The entire gamut of prospects, issues and challenges of the manuscripts can be taken up in the 3 Day International Conference. The following are the sub-themes of the conference:

Sub Themes:

1. Indo Persian Manuscripts: Their Significance.
2. Deccan Manuscripts.
3. Role of institutions in collecting and preserving Persian manuscripts in modern times.
4. Persian manuscripts in the Private Collections: Boon or Bane.
5. Mughal Atelier and Concept of *Kitābkhāna*.
6. Miniatures in Manuscripts.
7. Illustrated manuscripts.
8. The Libraries and their role in manuscript preservation.
9. Translation of Indian classics into Persian: Interdisciplinary Study.
10. Editing and Publishing Indo Persian Manuscripts: A Step to the World of Learning.
11. The Relevance of Persian Manuscripts to the World.
12. Any topic relevant to the theme of the Conference.

Mahmood Alam

Director of the conference

Day 1

Friday 6th March 2020, 5.00 PM

Venue: Room no. 1, Ground Floor, New Academic Block

Inaugural Programme

5.00 – 5.10

Welcome Address

Prof. Syed Jahangir

Dean, School of Arab and Asian Studies
EFL University

5.10 – 5.15

Introduction to the theme of the conference

Dr. Mahmood Alam

Director of the Conference
Asst. Professor in Persian
EFL University

5.15- 5.25

Inaugural Address by the Guest of Honour

Prof. Charles Melville

President, British Institute of Persian Studies, UK

5.25-5.35

Keynote Address

Prof. Syed Akhtar Husain

Centre of Persian and Central Asian Studies
Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi

5.35-5.45

Address by the Chief Guest

Prof. E. Suresh Kumar

Hon'ble Vice Chancellor,
EFL University

5.45-5.55

Presidential Remarks by the Special Invitee

Prof. Nuzhat Kazmi

Dean, Department of Art History & Art
Appreciation, Faculty of Fine Art,
Jamia Millia Islamia, New Delhi

5.55 – 6.00

Vote of Thanks

Mr. Nissim Bedekar

Co ordinator, Department of Asian Languages,
EFL University

4.30 PM High tea

Academic Sessions

Day 2

7th March 2020

Venue: Conference Room, 1st Floor, EMMRC, EFLU Campus

Session I

Time: 9.30 am – 11.30 am

❖ **In Chair: Syed Akhtar Husain and Hadi Jorati**

- **Ursula Sims-Williams:** Evaluating Tipu Sultan's Library: Collections within Collections.
- **Emily Shovelton:** Revisiting a royal sultanate manuscript from Bengal: the *Sharafnāmāh* of Nusrat Shah.
- **James White:** From Anthologies to Commonplaces: Manuscript Sources for Reconstructing Indo-Persian Literary Networks of the Seventeenth Century.
- **Mahmood Alam:** Persian Manuscripts in Victoria Memorial, Kolkata: Boon or Bane.

Tea 11.30- 11.45 am

Session II

Time: 11.45 am – 1.15 pm

❖ **In Chair: Ursula Sims-Williams and Ipshita Chanda**

- **Charles Melville:** Epic and history in Indo-Persian manuscripts: A visual approach.
- **Yihao Qiu :** *A Fanciful Image of the Mongol Palace? Some Primary Remarks on the Rampur Manuscript Jāmi' al-tavārikh.*
- **Deepanwati Donde:** Diffusion and Assimilation of Images and Ideas between Central Asia and Mughal India, 14th - 16th centuries.
- **Valentina Bruccoleri:** Chinese porcelain and Persian pottery represented in Indo-Persian miniatures.
- **Arshadul Quadri:** Illustrated Manuscript of the Shahnameh of Firdausi in Allama Shibli Nomani Library.

Lunch: 1.15-2.00 pm

Session III
Time: 2.00 pm – 3.45 pm

❖ **In Chair: James White and Aleem Ashraf Khan**

- **Hadi Jorati** : The Ambivalent Heritage of the Persian Manuscript Tradition.
- **Muzaffar Alam**: Role of Indo Persian Manuscripts in the preservation of Islamic Culture.
- **K. Kokila**: Mahabharata in Persian: a quest of knowledge and harmony.
- **Faranak Jahangard**: Waarista Siyaal Koti Mal and Poetic Criticism.
- **Mohammad Reza Mehrandish**: Important Manuscripts in Deccani painting schools: (From Late Fifteenth to Seventeenth Century).

Tea 3.45-4.00 pm

Session IV
Time: 4.00 pm – 5.30 pm

❖ **In Chair: Charles Melville and Muzaffar Alam**

- **Andrew Peacock**: Iyani, forgotten poet and historian of the Bahmanids.
- **Philip Bockholt**: *The history of India as told by a Persian historian: The Lost Pages of Khvāndamīr's Ḥabīb al-siyar.*
- **Syed Akhtar Husain**: A survey of Persian Manuscripts at Urdu Ghar, Delhi.
- **Vivek Gupta**: Seeing the World from the Deccan: The Journey of a Persian Cosmography (ca. 1441-1650).

5.30-6.00 pm

**Visit to Telangana Government Oriental Manuscripts Library,
Osmania University, Campus.**

Day 3

8th March 2020

Venue: Conference Room, 1st Floor, EMMRC, EFLU Campus

Session V

Time: 9.30 am – 11.30 am

❖ **In Chair: Emily Shovelton and Oudesh Rani Bawa**

- **Aleem Ashraf Khan:** Spread of Sufism in India: An Ideal Biographical Dictionary (Tazkirah) of Indian Sufis with reference to *Akhbarul Akhyar*.
- **Ilyas Hashmi:** *Kaunain e Musaffa* by Francis Gottlieb Cohen: A bibliographical work of Indo Persian literature.
- **Asieh Zabihnia Emran:** A Manuscript of Shakaristan of Mir Mohammad Momin Arshi.
- **Parul Singh:** Staging Power: Visual Strategies of Kingship in the Windsor castle *Ishqnama* Illustrative Manuscript.

Tea 11.30- 11.45 am

Session VI

Time: 11.45 am – 1.15 pm

❖ **In Chair: Andrew Peacock and Arshadul Quadri**

- **Ata Khursheed:** Cataloguing of Persian manuscripts in India: History, Issues and Suggestions.
- **Christy Femila:** Contribution of Aligarh Muslim University in Collecting, Conserving and Critical Edition of Persian Manuscripts.
- **Md. Abul Kalam Sarker:** Present State of Persian Manuscripts in Bangladesh.
- **Jawaid Alam:** Persian Manuscripts in the National Library Kolkata (Its Sources and Present Status/ Preservation).

Lunch: 1.15-2.00 pm

2.00 – 6.00pm

Visit to Chowmohalla Palace and Salar Jung Museum

Valedictory Function
Venue: Eastern Block, Lecture Hall, Salar Jung Museum

6.00 – 6.10

Address of the Chief Guest

HE Mohammad Haghbin Ghomi
The Consul General,
Iranian Consulate General in Hyderabad

6.10 – 6.25

Remarks of the Participants

1. Dr. Ursula Sims-William
2. Dr. Philip Bockholt
3. Dr. Deepanwati Donde
4. Dr. Hadi Jorati

6.25-6.35

Valedictory Address

Prof. Andrew Peacock
Director of the Medieval Research programme of
British Institute of Persian Studies.

6.35 – 6.40

Vote of Thanks

Dr. Mehshar Kamal

High tea:

6.45pm

R.S.V.P

Mobile: +91 9550 167 433

Email: mahmood_jnu@yahoo.com/ malam@efluniversity.ac.in