

Kingship in Ancient Iran - An interdisciplinary workshop: 12–13 June 2014, University of St Andrews

Report compiled by Workshop Organiser, Dr Paul Churchill (Institute of Iranian Studies, School of History, University of St Andrews), 8 Dec. 2014.

The organiser and academic committee of the workshop 'Kingship in Ancient Iran' are most grateful to the *St Andrews Institute of Mediaeval Studies* (SAIMS) for providing the sum of £250 which was used in support of travel for the keynote speaker, Professor Shaul Shaked (Hebrew University, Israel). Shaked, as a retired (emeritus) Professor, was unable to draw on Hebrew University to assist in funding his visit to St Andrews. Owing to several other funding applications being declined for the workshop or a lesser amount provided, the SAIMS contribution became essential to ensure that Professor Shaked could attend.

Professor Shaked has published widely on the general topic of Ancient kingship and is a respected authority in this field, so was the natural choice to start the workshop with a keynote lecture. His keynote lecture was entitled: 'Iranian kingship, priesthood and religion according to the written records'. Professor Shaked stayed for the full duration of the workshop and provided valuable insights and contributions in response to papers given by other speakers.

Workshop speakers were drawn from Institutions in the UK as well as overseas, including United States, France and Israel. Speakers were also drawn from the University, including Professor Jon Coulston and Mr Miles Lester-Pearson from the School of Classics, and Professor Ansari, Dr Arash Zeini and Mr David Bagot from the School of History.

Delegates were mostly drawn from the University, but there were also a modest number of external attendees from a variety of Institutions, such as the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), Kings College London, Durham University and Trinity College Dublin.

Preparations are currently underway for the publication of the proceedings of this workshop.

The following pages contain:

- 1) Intellectual rationale;
- 2) Academic committee members;
- 3) List of Speakers;
- 4) Workshop poster;
- 5) Programme;
- 6) Photographs from workshop.

Intellectual rationale:

“This interdisciplinary workshop seeks to investigate and re-examine intersections between religious ideology and sovereignty in pre-Islamic Iran. Its ultimate aim will be to offer invited experts from a wide range of disciplines a venue to exchange perspectives, exploring how recent developments in Iranian Studies and neighbouring disciplines may reshape our understanding of ancient Iranian forms of sovereignty. Although the Sasanian kings’ attempts to define themselves as the heirs of the Achaemenid dynasty and the rivalries with the Roman Empire offer a rich backdrop against which the idea of kingship and religious authority can be examined, our discussions will extend beyond this era and will be organized thematically to examine the cultural memory of ancient Iranian kingship in the Islamic era; political as well as art historical perspectives; court culture; shifts of gravity between sovereignty and religious authority; the interactions of religious minority communities with the image of the Sasanian kings and finally the reflections of imperial aspirations in the Middle Persian tradition, including exegetical literature.”

Academic Committee:

Prof. Ali Ansari (School of History)

Dr Jonathan Coulston (School of Classics)

Dr Tim Greenwood (School of History)

Dr Arash Zeini (School of History)

Speakers:

- Prof. Ali Ansari
- Mr David Bagot
- Dr Matthew Canepa
- Dr Jon Coulston
- Prof. Touraj Daryaee
- Prof. François de Blois
- Mr Miles Lester-Pearson
- Dr Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones
- Prof. Lynette Mitchell
- Dr Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis
- Dr Shai Secunda
- Dr Dan Sheffield [via conference call]
- Prof. Shaul Shaked
- Dr Michael Shenkar
- Dr Arash Zeini

Advertising poster (designed by Dr Paul Churchill, printed by University of St Andrews Print Unit)

Kingship in Ancient Iran

St Andrews • 12th & 13th June 2014



**An academic workshop organised and sponsored by the
Institute of Iranian Studies, University of St Andrews &
with the support of the British Institute of Persian Studies**



University of
St Andrews

600
YEARS

Additional support provided by the School of History, University of St Andrews
and the St Andrews Institute of Mediaeval Studies (SAIMS)



BIPS

For details: <http://kingship.wp.st-andrews.ac.uk>

Programme:

12 June 2014

8:45–09:00 Opening remarks: Ali Ansari

09:00–09:45 | KEYNOTE LECTURE

Prof. Shaked – ‘Iranian kingship, priesthood and religion according to the written records’

09:45–10:00 Short break

10:00–11:30 | SESSION I : THE ANCIENT WORLD

Lynette Mitchell – ‘Greco-Achaemenid ideologies of kingship’

Lloyd Llewellyn-Jones – ‘Khilat and the king: The royal robe in Achaemenid Iran’

Miles Lester-Pearson – ‘Religious authority and cultural memory in early Achaemenid Babylon’

Chair: Ali Ansari

11:30–12:00 Tea/Coffee break

12:00–13:30 | SESSION II : THE AESTHETICS OF KINGSHIP

Matthew Canepa – ‘Space, place and Iranian royal cosmologies: the natural, urban and built environments of Iranian kingship’

Vesta Sarkhosh Curtis – ‘The ancient Iranian twins: the divine and the royal’

Michael Shenkar – ‘Royal regalia and “Divine Kingship” in pre-Islamic Central Asia’

Chair: Robert Hillenbrand

13:30 – 14:30 Lunch break

14:30 – 16:00 | SESSION III : CONFLICT AND COEXISTENCE

Jonathan Coulston – ‘Triumphal iconography and the Sassanid art of war’

Shai Secunda – ‘All lost objects go to the king: Talmudic perceptions of Sasanian sovereignty in ‘Finder’s Keepers’ and beyond’

David Bagot – ‘Armenian P’ark: Armenian cultural perceptions for understanding Farr in the Sasanian Period’

Chair: Carole Hillenbrand

16:00 – 16:30 Tea/Coffee break

16:30 – 17:30 | SESSION IV: REIMAGINING SOVEREIGNTY IN POST-ISLAMIC IRAN

Dan Sheffield – ‘The lord of the planetary court: The sovereignty of the ancients in the thought of Āzar Kayvān and his associates’

Ali Ansari – ‘Iranian kingship: Ancient and modern’

Chair: Jonathan Coulston

13 June 2014

09:30 – 11:00 | SESSION I : ZOROASTRIANISM AND POLITICAL IDEOLOGY

Touraj Daryaee – ‘From majesty to glory: The changing nature of Sasanian kingship’

François de Blois – ‘Sasanian royalist ideology and Zoroastrian millennialism’

Arash Zeini – ‘The king in the mirror of the Zand’

Chair: Tim Greenwood

11:00 – 11:30 Tea/Coffee break

DISCUSSIONS

Photographs from Workshop:

