



July 2-3, 2006, Sixth IQSA Conference:

Entertainment in Qajar Persia

In co-operation with CNRS-Mondes Iranien et Indien
Institut National d'Histoire de l'Art,
2 rue Vivienne, 75002 Paris, France

Chair: Ferydoun Barjesteh van Waalwijk van Doorn
Co-chair: Dr. Bernard Hourcade

Conference Program for Friday July 23rd and Saturday July 24th

Conference Programme

Friday 2 June:

- 8.30 Registration, tea and coffee and book tables.
9.00 Introduction: *Dr. Philip Huyse*, CNRS/Mondes Iranien et Indien; *Ferydoun Barjesteh van Waalwijk van Doorn*, VP/IQSA.
Ferydoun Barjesteh van Waalwijk van Doorn, The Place of Entertainment in Qajar Society: An Introduction.
9:30 Panel One – Court and Official Entertainment Presenters: *Prof. Peter Chelkowski*, Nasser ed-Din Shah's Patronage of Ta'ziyeh; *Dr. Irene Natchkebia*, Entertainment of Persians During the First Russo-Persian War According to the Information of Napoleon's Envoys (1805-1809); *Dr. Jennifer Scarce*, Meetings East and West: Entertainments Between Iranians and Europeans in the Qajar Period;
Moderator/Discussion: *Prof. Jean Calmard*.
11:00 Tea & Coffee.
11:15 Panel One – Court and Official Entertainment (II) Presenters: *Dr. Vanessa Martin*, Jesters and the Shadow of God: Nasr al-Din Shah and His Fools; *Dr. Raisa Amirbekyan*, Qajar Era Dance as Reflected in Visual Arts.
12:30 Lunch.
14:00 Panel Two – Popular Entertainment Presenters: *Prof. Shireen Mahdavi*, Amusements in Qajar Iran; *Prof. Ulrich Marzolph*, The Art of Naqqali in Iran: Past and Present; *Prof. Hourcade* and *Dr. Rigaud*, The Beginnings of Moutaineering in Iran in the Qajar Era; *Dr. Philippe Rochard*, Zurkhaneh: Le Ganjineh-ye Koshti [tresor de la lutte] d'Ali-Akbar ebn-e Mehdi al-Kashani.
16:00 Tea, Coffee and Sweets.
16:30 Friday Keynote: *Dr. Rudi Mathee*: Drugs and Stimulants in the Qajar Period: Themes and Connections.
17:30 Close.
17:30 IQSA Membership meeting.
20.00 Conference Dinner.

Saturday 3 June:

- 9.00 Registration, Tea & Coffee.
9.30 Saturday Keynote: *Dr. Homa Katouzian*, The Most Humorous Poet of the Constitutional era;
10.15 Tea & Coffee.



Organising committee IQSA 2006 conference, from left to right: Dr. Manoutchehr M. Eskandari-Qajar, L.A. Ferydoun Barjesteh van Waalwijk van Doorn and Farhad Diba.

- 10.30 Panel Three – The Written Word Presenters: *Prof. Ali Gheissari*, Textual Pleasures in Qajar Iran: Notes on Satire and Historical Novels; *Dr. Manoutchehr Eskandari-Qajar*, Morality Novellas in the Newspapers of the late Qajar Period: Yahya Mirza Eskandari's 'Eshgh-e Doroughi' and 'Aroussi-e Mehrangiz'; *Dr. Mansoureh Ettehadieh*, The Beginnings of Illustrated Journals during the Reign of Nasser ed-Din Shah and the Work of Sani ol-Molk.
- 12.00 Lunch.
- 13.30 Panel Four – The Arts Presenters: *Dr. Irina Koshoridze*, The Hunt as Entertainment and Symbol: Depictions of Hunting Scenes from the Qajar Era in the Collections of the Georgian National Museum; *Dr. Eden Naby*, Theater, Language and Inter-Ethnic Exchange: Assyrian Performance in Persia before WWI; *Dr. Nader Nasiri-Moghaddam*, Art and Archeology as an Entertainment in the Qajar Era; *Dr. Ameneh Youssefzadeh*, Music at the Qajar Court.
- 15.30 Vote of Thanks and Close of Conference.

Qajar Era Dance as Reflected in Visual Art

Raisa Amirbekyan, Yerevan State University, Yerevan, Armenia

National self-expression for Iranians is closely connected with poetry, recitation and dance, which are considered the highest arts. The art of Persian classical dance is dainty, subtle, and full of symbolism and meaning. Traditional Persian values continued to be the predominant art style in the Qajar Era (1798-1906). The dance as an art form acquired new expression, significance, and value in the Qajar era. Yet, creative components of new styles of dance were also introduced through historical turbulence, principal changes in royal court life, and through correctives shaking the social norms and ethics of Qajar society. These changes co-existed side by side with traditional elements of Iranian aesthetics rooted deeply in Persian history.

In the Qajar era dance corresponds to the new social and cultural context, and for this reason dance gained popularity both among the people and the court. Information about Qajar era dance as an important aspect of the development of Persian society and culture is found in many historical documents, written sources, travel accounts, diaries, and periodicals. A rich body of art objects of Qajar and 'Orientalistic' art illustrating dancing and dancers has also survived. It includes oil paintings, miniatures, lacquerworks, extravagant decorative objects, drawings, engravings, lithographs, cartoons, and photographs. Historical sources of the Qajar period mention several famous female and male dancers like Arous, Akhtar-Zangi, Zahra-ye-Ahad, Galin, Gohar, Mounes, Ghazal and Maral, and Ghamar-e-Saleki... Undoubtedly some of these great masters became the models or sources of inspiration in the creation process of both the well-known artists of the royal naqqashkhaneh, students of Art Academy, European travelers, and unknown artisans from karkhanehs of the bazaars.

Preserved art objects supplement historical sources both through representations of actual persons and situations, and by mirroring the imaginations and stereotypes connected with dance that characterized the Qajar era. It seems that Persian dance of this time period as reflected in visual arts one can regard as a perfect historical document and appropriate material for Qajar cultural history scholarship.

Nasser ed-Din Shah's Patronage of Ta'ziyeh

Peter Chelkowski, New York University

The Shi'ite passion play called ta'ziyeh, reached its zenith during the Qajar period. During this time, the enthusiastic support of the Qajar shahs, especially Nasser ed-Din Shah (1848-1896), led to a renewal of interest in ta'ziyeh play writing, acting, staging, and architecture. Although the patronage of the wealthy and those of high rank helped stimulate the rapid development of the ta'ziyeh in the mid-19th century, this growth owed its genesis to popular religious devotion and entertainment preferences. For the devout Shi'ite, participation in the ta'ziyeh is an act of expiation, which takes the believer a step closer on the journey to salvation. In addition, the ta'ziyeh may also be performed as an act of gratitude or to fulfill a solemn vow; for example, at the end of a pilgrimage or to give thanks for restored health. Thus, the traditional period for the performance of ta'ziyeh was extended over time: once confined to the first ten days of the month of Moharram, ta'ziyehs were eventually staged throughout the following month of Safar, and then year round. Although ta'ziyeh is primarily performed and viewed as a religious ritual, it may also be staged as pure entertainment.

There are two main categories of ta'ziyehs – those that belong to the Moharram repertory and those that fall outside of it. The former group nevertheless forms the core of the latter collection. Yet, the non-Moharram plays are never performed during the mourning days of Moharram. Although the word ta'ziyeh means "condolence" or "expression of sympathy," some of the non-Moharram ta'ziyehs are comedies. Even so, each play must be connected directly or indirectly to the events at Karbala. This relationship is accomplished by means of a digression known as goriz, which usually occurs at the end of the play. The digression may be a dramatic staging of the Karbala tragedy or simply an oral recitation of the events surrounding Hossein's martyrdom and death. Since the concepts of time and space are elastic in ta'ziyeh, events occurring at anytime from the Day of Creation to the Last Judgment may be incorporated into a play's action and do not necessarily follow chronological order. Nasser ed-Din Shah was a great devotee of the passion play of Hossein and his financial and moral support of this dramatic form ushered in the golden age of ta'ziyeh in Iran. During his reign, the great ta'ziyeh theatre, the Takiyeh Dolat, was built. The actors, musicians, and producers employed by the Takiyeh Dolat were paid out of the royal treasury. Additionally, though relations between the Qajars and the Ulema were precarious at this time, the royal sponsoring of the ta'ziyeh helped to secure popular support for Nasser ed-Din Shah among the faithful who appreciated his patronage of Shi'i rituals. Thus, when the Shah was suddenly assassinated, it was not surprising that a commemorative ta'ziyeh was composed in his honor. This ta'ziyeh, *Majles-e Shahenshah-e Iran* Nasser ed-Din Shah, is a non-Moharram play (*majles*) and may be divided into three parts. Its first section depicts Nasser ed-Din Shah suffering from an unalleviated depression. His melancholy is resistant to all distractions offered by his ministers. In the midst of this hopeless situation, he is visited by a veiled apparition (*naqadar*) who comes to him in a dream. This common ta'ziyeh device is usually staged at the center of the acting area to indicate that the following scene is the enactment of the dream. While dreaming, the Shah carries on a conversation with the veiled figure who is revealed to be the first Iman Ali. This recalls the scene in the 'Ashura ta'ziyeh, The Martyrdom of Hossein, in which Hossein's veiled father, Ali, appears on the stage and predicts that Hossein is soon going to join him and his mother Fatemeh. The Imam Ali foretells the Shah's impending assassination and the scene ends. The prediction of the hero's future is also a commonly used dramatic device in ta'ziyeh.

In the second part of the *majles*, the Shah takes the advice given to him in the dream and makes a pilgrimage to Shah Abd ol-Azim, where he is assassinated. Afraid of an outbreak of civil disturbances, the prime minister tries to conceal the Shah's death from the public. This historical fact is acknowledged in the text of the ta'ziyeh. The deep and real concern of the Shah for his people is emphasized in this section of the play and presented as being the result of religious influence. The final section of the ta'ziyeh is the fundamental core of the drama and may be considered to contain the essential action of the play (with the first and second segments of the *majles* being mere preludes to this last part). The *goriz* is presented in the form of *rozeh-khani*, which may consist of spoken words only or which may be spoken in front of a tableau of actors re-enacting the events at Karbala. In this instance, the narrator is the Imam Jomeh who addresses the spectators from the minbar, thus transforming the audience into the congregation of the mosque. He is both preacher and narrator, and, indeed, at several points in the ta'ziyeh, prayers are said. The analogy of the martyrdom of Hussein with that of Nasser ed-Din Shah is of great significance as it elevates the dead Shah to the level of sainthood.

Morality Novellas in the Newspapers of the late Qajar Period: Yahya Mirza Eskandari's *Eshgh-e Dorooghi* and *Aroossi-e Mehrangiz*

Manoutchehr M. Eskandari-Qajar, Department of Political Science, SBCC

The literary genre known as *daastan-e ebrat* (morality tale or play) had already gained currency before the turn of the century and the awakening that preceded the Constitutional Revolution. It was, however, in the context of that revolution and the impulses that the revolution brought forth, that this form of writing achieved greater popularity. Through the new medium of newspapers available now to a mass audience, the mode of delivery of the traditional morality tale in daily or weekly installments also took on the new role of entertainment while retaining the old role of socio-political commentary. Combining the tradition of his grand father, Mohammad Taher Mirza Eskandari, who as translator brought the romantic novels of Alexandre Dumas to the attention of the court and the Persian public, and that of his father and uncle who were pioneers and founders of the early humanist societies (*anjoman*) in the late Qajar era, Yahya Mirza Eskandari used literature as a means of conveying the progressive social and political views he and his family stood for. The two works of *eshgh-e dorooghi* and *aroossi-e mehrangiz* in particular, capture the genre and the message of the *daastan-e ebrat* well, while taking it further to a level of political and social critique particularly directed at the autocratic foundations of the government of the time. This paper, while focusing on the political critiques of tradition and traditionalism that these works include, will also try to highlight the entertainment value of these works achieved through process of serialization and publishing by installment that the paper *Iraan-e No* pioneered for these works.

The Beginnings of Illustrated Journals during the Reign of Nasser ed-Din Shah and the Work of Sani ol-Molk

Mansoureh Ettehadieh (*Nezam-Mafi*), Editor, *Nashr-e Tarikh-e Iran*

Abdolhassan Ghaffari (1229HQ/1814-1283/1867), Naqqashbashi at the court of Mohammad Shah Qajar, descended from a long line of artists and painters. He left Persia in 1261 (1845) to study art in Italy. While there, he acquainted himself with western art and was particularly interested in the old masters. He also learned lithography and printing. Upon his return to Persia in 1266 (1850), he was

commissioned among other things to illustrate a manuscript of the One Thousand and One Nights and to paint the Nezamiyeh Palace. In 1277 (1860) Sani ol-Molk was also made director of the state printing press and was put in charge of teaching modern painting and drawing at the Dar ol-Fonoun (Polytechnic College) founded in 1267 (1851). Maryam Ekhtiyar points out that: "the establishment of the Dar-ol-Fonoun in 1851 was the driving force in the later dissemination of art training and production in the European mode."

As Sani ol-Molk had studied and copied the old masters in Italy, so his pupils were taught to copy the models he had brought with him. In fact, just as modern European science and medicine were considered superior, so was European art, and it was considered sufficient to copy western knowledge, so in art too, it was probably deemed sufficient to imitate western masters. Apart from the class he taught in the Dar ol-Fonoun, Sani ol-Molk founded a school of painting in 1277 (1861), where he taught once a week. A long and impressive advertisement was published in the *Rouznameh-ye Dolat-e Aliyeh* announcing that the school accepted students who would be taught European style painting and described that these classes would consist of copying models he had brought from Europe. Four lithograph printing presses were in use in the workshop, and people could have their portrait lithographed over one thousand times if they so wished. The painting exhibitions in the school were open to the public. The school enjoyed the Shah's patronage, and he visited it as he did the Dar ol-Fonoun, and Sani ol-Molk went to great lengths to welcome him and his entourage.

Textual Pleasures in Qajar Iran: Notes on Satire and Historical Novels

Ali Gheissari, Department of History, San Diego University

As with most modern social and political upheavals, the literature of the Iranian constitutional movement of the early twentieth century contains a rich and varied range of textual creativity from novels, plays, and poems to political tracts and press articles as satire. By referring to a select range of lesser known material, this paper will analyze the production of satire together with that of early historical novels in a decade which proclaimed new beginnings as well as simultaneously conveying the sense of an ending. It will be noted that the Iranian constitutional movement contributed significantly to the development of political journalism and to the popularity of historical novels with strong underlying themes such as political and cultural criticism and romantic nationalism. It will further be argued that these types of texts were often considered as new venues for communication and education as well as entertainment.

The Beginnings of Mountaineering in Iran in the Qajar Era

Bernard Hourcade, Mondes Iranien et Indien, CNRS, Paris; Suzanne Rigaud, Universite Paris III, Sorbonne Nouvelle

Modern mountaineering appeared in Iran in the year 1836, when W.T. Thomson became the first westerner to reach the summit of Mt Damavand. This first ascent provoked much enthusiasm and a considerable number of ascents of this peak – which remained, almost exclusively, the centre of mountaineering in Iran at that period – were undertaken, first for scientific purpose. Later in the Qajar period mountaineering came to be seen as a sports and pure entertainment. It is not only the extent of this phenomenon, but also its precocity and technicality, when compared to the developments of mountaineering elsewhere in the world, that make mountaineering in Iran in the Qajar period a remarkable phenomenon. The Iranians of all origins used to go and enjoy the mountain areas for hunting or as a yeqlaq, a summer residence. That may explain why mountaineering *stricto sensu* was essentially practised by Europeans, however Iranians themselves were not indifferent to this new entertainment: at least two large-scale Iranian expeditions were organized in the Qajar period, which foretold of the popularity that this sporting activity would acquire for Iranians in the course of the 20th century. The paper will describe the beginnings of this sport by the Europeans and the Iranian. Photos and pictures will be displayed.

Iraj Mirza: The Most Humorous Poet of the Constitutional Era

Homa Katouzian, St. Antony's College, Oxford University

Iraj Mirza Jalal ol-Mamalek popularly known as Iraj, the name and title which he himself preferred, was a leading poet of the Qajar period and by far the greatest of the poets who descended from Fath Ali Shah. Two things in particular distinguish Iraj's poetry: eloquence and humour. His eloquence is comparable with Sa'di in particular as he uses the technique of 'sahl o momtane' or 'easy and impossible' in a manner unrivaled since the classical master himself. His humour is quite comparable to Obeid-e Zakani in its effect; at times even surpassing him, although in Iraj's poetry satire is normally incidental and a natural result of his unique humour when he discusses almost any subject. His best works are *Aref-Nameh*, *Enqelab-e Adabi* and *Zohreh o Manouchehr*, although there is hardly any piece by him which is less than delightful, especially those which he wrote during the Constitutional era.

The Hunt as Entertainment and Symbol: Depictions of Hunting Scenes from the Qajar Era in the Collections of the Georgian National Museum

Irina Koshoridze, Department of Oriental Arts, Georgian National Museum

The main activities of Fath Ali Shah's court life and entertainment were receptions, feasting, and hunting. The whole royal court, invited guests and members of Diplomatic missions participated in these events. The magnificence and splendor of the Persian court impressed the foreign missions, which were reflected in their narrative accounts about this period. Alongside with narrative descriptions, we have depictions of various entertainment scenes in visual art of the same period. The artifacts were created in the different fields of Persian art. The Department of Oriental Arts at the Georgian National Museum holds many art objects with these scenes of entertainment, where we can trace the development of the iconographic schemes, ideological and stylistic features of the art. According to Iranians' beliefs, which originated from Achaemenid and Sassanid art period and continued in the Islamic art period, the main activities of sovereigns were drinking, hunting, polo games and military campaigns. These scenes had both secular and symbolic meaning and were seen as a manifestation of power, fertility, and the divine royal charisma of rulers; that is why royal and high rank officials' palaces were decorated with these visual images (wall painting, easel painting, rock carvings, miniatures, lacquers using different techniques). Fath Ali Shah continued this tradition and these scenes were very popular in the visual art of Qajar Iran but they had more anecdotal, narrative and entertainment features. The Department holds the oil paintings with dancing and performing girls and musicians, which are the integral personages of feasting and audience scenes from Safavid time (Mural paintings of Chehel Sotoun).

There are entertainment scenes with performing, feasting and drinking personages executed in miniatures, lacquers, tiles, and clay technique. One of the main entertainments of Qajar Iran was hunting. There are many artifacts depicting royal hunting, the main personages sometimes are literature or legendary kings of other dynasties, (Bahram-e Gour, Shah Tahmasp, Shah Abbas), but mostly the items in the collection depict Fath Ali Shah or his sons. Tiles, clay vessels, lacquer boxes, miniatures, textiles, Queshquils are decorated with royal hunting scenes. From the second half of 19th c. entertainment scenes became less popular. They had been replaced by portraits of nobles, pastoral narrative scenes, and floral decorations.

After the study of visual monuments of Qajar period kept in the Oriental Arts Department of Georgian National Museum, we can conclude, that the depiction of entertainment scenes (drinking, hunting, audience i.e.) were more popular in the Early Qajar period (Fath Ali Shah's period). It is interesting to note, that in the beginning the historical and literature heroes such as Bahram-e Gour or Shah Abbas were very popular but gradually they were replaced by the images of Fath Ali Shah and his sons. And even in the manuscript of the *Shahnameh* and other monuments, the personages had the iconographic features of Fath Ali Shah (his long black beard, the Taj-e-Kiani or the style of dress).

Amusements in Qajar Iran

Shireen Mahdavi, Department of History, University of Utah

Social life in Qajar Iran was segregated by both gender and class. Parallel to social life were social pastimes and amusements which were generally segregated in the same manner. Foreign travellers to Iran, in true Orientalist fashion, frequently mention that people had few amusements. This paper will discuss various amusements and diversions, ranging from outdoor activities such as hunting and shooting to physical and intellectual games, to high drama such as passion plays (*ta'ziya*) and folk performances as well as street performers, puppeteers and mimicry, dancers and musicians and to activities promoting leisure and enjoyment. It attempts to cover as many activities as possible but it will also show that there was such a wide choice of amusements that it is in fact difficult to discuss them all.

Jesters and the Shadow of God: Nasser ed-Din Shah and His Fools

Vanessa Martin, Reader in Middle Eastern History at Royal Holloway, University of London

This paper discussed the role of the jesters at the court of Nasser ed-Din Shah, with more particular reference to Karim Shire'i, whose humour gained a lasting place in popular memory. It looked at the jesters in the context of their essential role, to remind the king that he was human. This poses a number of questions with regard to who the jester was and how he carried out his function. Firstly, there is the question of the relationship between the Shah and jester, the degree it could become personal and why. Secondly, the paper looked at the jester's identity and the way it is defined by his relationship with the Shah. Thirdly, it considered the jester's relationship with the court as a whole, and his function within a strictly related hierarchical environment. All of these required that the jester constantly maintain a delicate and sometimes dangerous balance, which could only be carried out by one who inherently possessed a particular kind of wit. Consideration was given as to what the jester represented both to the court and to the public, specifically with reference to the widely held concept of the wise fool, and its religious implications. This relates to the issue of 'innocence', ('the mad have cast upon their tongues words from the unseen') whether natural or assumed, and its purpose in allowing freedom to the jester to draw the ruler's attention to unpalatable truths. Further points explored were the relationship between the jester and chaos in an ordered environment, and how far the jester pressed the boundaries, or even exerted political influence, and how far his function was in fact conservative and destined to help preserve the existing order. Lastly, the paper looked at the origins of the court jesters as far as they are known, and considered their implications for the rise of these individuals. It attempted to establish if each was characterised by a particular kind of buffoonery, by comparing and contrasting them. In particular, the jokes attributed to Karim Shire'i was discussed both in terms of how far it is possible to identify him as their author with any certainty, and how far they may be considered as constituting a genre of humour. Finally, the legacy of this humour within the popular memory was assessed.

The Art of Naqqali in Iran: Past and Present

Ulrich Marzolph is Professor of Professor of Islamic Studies at the Georg-August-University in Goettingen, Germany

The art of storytelling in Iran relies on a long tradition. While fables and didactic tales are mainly relegated to literature, folktales and fairy tales were usually told orally, albeit in the limited public of family circles. The Persian art of *naqqali* is posited somewhere in between these two strands of tradition. *Naqqali* to a certain extent relies on written sources, often connected with or resulting from elite literature. At the same time, it is an oral performance taking place in a semi-public atmosphere. Talented naqqals of the past, such as Nasser ed-Din Shah's storyteller Naqib al-mamalek, to whose performance we owe the popular romance of Amir Arsalan, would perform in the secluded atmosphere of the royal court. In modern times, naqqali was often practiced publicly. The texts performed most often relate to heroic adventures, whether of secular or religious heroes. The storytellers would to a certain extent rely on popular written versions of texts, laid down in the specific literary form of *tumar*, and would then mostly narrate from memory, interspersed with passages in poetry from the original work which they would quote verbatim.

While secular naqqali is almost exclusively restricted to the performance of episodes from Ferdousi's *Shahnameh*, religious *naqqali* relates to early Islamic, and particular early Shiite history, predominantly the legendary adventures of 'Ali and the tragic experience of Hossein and his followers at Kerbela. In addition to their recitation, the storytellers would often accompany their performance by referring to large paintings on canvas, the so-called "coffee-house paintings", thus adding a visual experience to their captivating stories. Until the middle of the twentieth century, *naqqali* continued to be a live tradition, and storytellers were still entertaining their audience in the open spaces of bazaar areas. Since then, only very few gifted *naqqals* have remained, and the traditional verbal art is threatened by extinction. In recent years, it has to some extent been revived with official support and is nowadays practiced again in numerous traditional coffee-houses as a pleasant entertainment for the urban public. The paper, after sketching the historical development, focussed on traditional storytelling in contemporary Iran, taking into account the aural as well as the visual components of *naqqali*.

Drugs and Stimulants in the Qajar Period: Themes and Connections

Rudi Matthee, Department of History, University of Delaware

This presentation addressed the consumption of five drugs and stimulants in the Qajar period: opium, alcoholic drinks, tobacco and tea. It looked at these consumables in a twofold context: The first one concerns Iran as a country in interaction with the outside world. Too often, Iran is seen and discussed in isolation, as a unique country and culture that, as a civilization, was only marginally affected by the world around it until the encroachment of the West in the course of the 19th century. The said substances were used as a prism through which transformative outside influence was discerned in interaction with domestic patterns of taste and adaptation. The second one centered on the theme of transition, process and change over time. The four drugs and stimulants were examined to document long-term changes in patterns of social life, including sociability, as well as in conceptions and manifestations of kingship.

Theater, Language and Inter-Ethnic Exchange: Assyrian Performance in Persia before WWI

Eden Naby, Independent Scholar

The Assyrian 'Camelot' in Iran, centered in northwest Iran, around the towns of Urmiyah and Salamas, began with a surprise championship of their community by American missionaries and ended with ethnic cleansing between 1914 and 1918. During the eighty odd years of intellectual and material progress made in this community, Assyrians not only learned a multiplicity of European languages within a generation, but adopted western genre of entertainment on a broad scale. Among these were theater performance. Assyrian plays drew on many sources including French and Azarbaijani plots. But plays became also a means of retrieving their own historical past as it was being revived in Europe in the late 19th century under the influence of archeology and related classical sources on Mesopotamian and Iranian ancient history. In addition, Assyrians drew on another source of inspiration for theatrical performance, a source buried deep within their own medieval culture. To what extent does church theater performance soften attitudes toward theater in an environment where American inspired religiosity frowned on frivolities like stage entertainment? To what extent does the Assyrian experience mirror the production of theater in Qajar culture in general? How, if at all, has the Assyrian cultural flowering, however brief, affected the encouragement of diverse entertainment in northwest Iran?

Entertainment of Persians During the First Russo-Persian war According to the Information of Napoleon's Envoys (1805-1809)

Irine Natchkebia, G. Tsereteli Institute of Oriental Studies Academy of Sciences of Georgia, Tbilisi

Diplomats and military persons dispatched by Napoleon to Persia in 1805-1809 were tasked to collect detailed information about the country. In the books of French envoys and in the manuscripts preserved in the archives of France information about the ruler of the time, Fath Ali Shah (1797-1834), about the heir to the Persian throne, Abbas Mirza, and about noble men is preserved. Information about entertainment at the Court during the years 1805-1809 which belongs to the period of the first Russo-Persian War (1804-1813) is also available. According to the information of Napoleon's envoys, court entertainment at the time of Fath Ali Shah included, lavish display of luxuries, dance performances, music, hunting, and formal recitals of poetry. In this paper available information by French envoys about the entertainment of Persian noble men was discussed. An interesting reception arranged in honour of Amedee Jaubert by Baba Khan was also discussed. A parallel was drawn between the entertainment of the second Persian ambassador in Paris, Asghar Khan, and the entertainment of Jafar Qoli Khan in Tbilisi, who was in the service of Russians. As one of the aspects of entertainment the author of this paper reviewed information about the gifts brought by the envoys of Napoleon to Persia and about the gifts received from Persians. In addition to traditional gifts, Fath Ali Shah sent to Napoleon gifts of historical value. On the basis of the information of French authors, a description was given of entertainment of Persian men and women. It was also noted that at the turn of the 19th century, items of Eastern luxury entered into the fashion of French ladies.

Art and Archeology as an Entertainment in the Qajar Era

Nader Nasiri Moghaddam, Mondes Iranien et Indien, CNRS, Paris

Contrary to the generally accepted idea, the first national archaeological Museum of Iran was not created under the Pahlavis (1925-79); it was founded during the Qajar Era (1796-1925). Here it's not the question of the Royal Museum of Nasser ed-Din Shah (1848-96), situated at the Golestan Palace, well-known by the Western travellers who visited it and, more or less, described it in their accounts of travel. It concerns a real national Museum, founded before the Museum Iran Bastan. What is the history of this creation as one of the places of public entertainment? Who is the founder and what do we know about the collections of this Museum? Which role did the French archaeological monopoly play in the process of this creation? These are questions which this presentation attempted to answer through the French and the Iranian Archives. This paper also showed the importance of this first national Museum of Archaeology in Iran as a public place of entertainment through the catalogue of this museum, which is a rare and ignored historical source.

Zourkhaneh: Le Ganjineh-ye Koshti [tresor de la lutte] d' Ali-Akbar ebn-e Mehdi al-Kashani

Philippe Rochard, Mondes Iranien et Indien, CNRS, Paris; Universite de Strasbourg

Dans le courant de l'annee 1875, le prince Etehad os-Saltaneh, ministre des sciences du commerce et des mines du roi Nasser ed-Din Shah, exprima le souhait que soit redige a l'Ecole polytechnique de Teheran un bref apercu de la situation et des regles du zourkhaneh ainsi que la facon de faire de la gymnastique et de la lutte. Son idee? Faire le point sur des pratiques physiques susceptibles d'ameliorer la sante d'une population touchee de plus en plus souvent par les epidemies. C'est ainsi que comme ça un etonnant episode de l'histoire des tentatives reformatrices de l'etat qajar. Il fallait faire montre d'une belle audace intellectuelle pour envisager d'etendre a toute la societe iranienne de l'epoque les pratiques d'une institution frequentee par les acrobates, les lutteurs professionnels, les derviches et les 'gros bras' du bazar Un secretaire de l'ecole, Ali Akbar ebn-e Mehdi ol-Kashani, contraint et force, s'attela ala tache pendant trois mois et redigea une oeuvre d'un genre totalement inedit, le premier manuel iranien d'education physique traditionnelle illustre.

Meetings East and West: Entertainments Between Iranians and Europeans in the Qajar Period

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The establishment of Qajar rule by Agha Mohammad Khan in 1786 initiated a period of relative stability in Iran which lasted through the 19th century to 1925. His two most important successors, Fath Ali Shah (1797-1834) and Nasser ed-Din Shah (1848-1896) during their long reigns saw the stabilisation of Iran's borders to their present limits and maintained a cautious balance in domestic policy with the religious, administrative and commercial authorities and in international relations with European powers. One of the main results of Qajar foreign policy was increased contact between Europeans - such as diplomats, military personnel, technical and educational experts, merchants, archaeologists and curious travellers who spent long periods of time in Iran, and the Iranians who received them. As hospitality is one of the main features of Iranian social culture, receptions and entertainment played a major role in both formal diplomacy and happily at private picnics and parties.

The accounts of European visitors often present a detailed and lively picture of entertainments which involved them with Iranians. The personnel of the Persian Telegraph Department such as the medical doctor C.J. Wills record picnics where they were entertained as honoured guests, while wives of diplomats such as Elizabeth McNeill in 1827 and Lady Sheil in 1850 describe their reception by the wife of Fath Ali Shah and the mother of Nasiruddin Shah. Iranians also were in turn entertained as they increasingly visited Europe. Mirza Abol Hassan Khan, Fath Ali Shah's ambassador to the court of George III in 1809-1810 enjoyed a dazzling success in London society which he recorded in his journal. Later Nasiruddin Shah made three visits to Europe in 1873, 1878 and 1889 which he also recorded. This presentation concentrated on a selection of the entertainments of both Europeans in Iran and of Iranians in Britain using their journals and contemporary accounts to discuss their observations and reactions. In addition to their experiences this material presents a wealth of information about social and material culture in both Qajar Iran and Britain.

Music at the Qajar Court

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Music has occupied a prominent place at the courts of Persian kings from antiquity. Sovereigns and nobles had at their disposal the best musicians, who would play exclusively for their patrons. Qajar rulers continued this tradition and under their reign, music experiences a kind of revival. In particular, during this period detailed reference to musicians and musical life at the court can be found in the documents and memoirs of the time.

Among these sources, the *Tarikh-e Azodi* stands out in particular. The *Tarikh-e Azodi* is an account of the life of the early Qajar kings written by a son of Fath Ali Shah, Ahmad Mirza Qajar 'Azod od-Doleh'. From this source one learns, for instance, that at the courts of Fath Ali Shah and Mohammad Shah, two female musician troupes existed, composed of about fifty musicians each. These troupes were housed in the harem and accompanied the shah and his entourage on their official journeys.

Doust Ali Khan 'Moayer ol-Mamalek', the nephew of Nasser ed-Din Shah, reports in turn that this sovereign had the habit of going to sleep with the sound of music played by "amaleh tarab-e khassseh" (lit.: special servants of pleasure), who would play each evening taking turns until the monarch would fall asleep.

The Qajar period is also essential to the survival of music as a recorded art form as it is during this period that musicians collect gradually the elements of a considerable repertoire that forms the basis for classical Persian music as we know it today.