



**June 4-5, 2009, Ninth IQSA Conference:**

**Architecture in Qajar Persia**

In co-operation with the Institut für Iranistik, Vienna, Austria  
Theatersaal Conference Room (2nd floor),  
Austrian Academy of Sciences (AAS),  
Sonnenfelsgasse 19, 1010 Vienna, Austria

*Conference Programme:*

**Thursday, June 4**

- 8.00 Registration (Coffee/Tea and Book Tables)
- 9.00 Introduction; *Dr. Bert Fagner* (Institut für Iranistik); *Dr. Manoutchehr Eskandari-Qajar* (IQSA)
- 9.30 Panel One: *Cyrus Samii*, Tehran and Trocadero: A Search through Travelogues for the European Sources of Qajar Architecture; *Jennifer Scarce*, The Role of Colour in the Techniques and Themes of Tilework in of Qajar Iran (1785-1925). Discussant: *Dr. Houchang Chehabi*.
- 11.00 Panel Two: *Bavand Behpoor*, Guiding Design Patterns in Qajarid Architecture and Decoration; *Hamid Ma'mani and Negin Sharifi*, A Glance at Ornaments in Qajar Architecture. Discussant: *Dr. Ebba Koch*.
- 12.30 Lunch: Pizza Bizi Cafe; (Visit also Cafe Moser.)
- 14.00 Panel Three: *Dr. Layla Diba*, The Lost Palatine City of Fath Ali Shah; *Dr. Ebba Koch*, Some Thoughts on Qajar Art and India. Discussant: *Dr. Manoutchehr Eskandari-Qajar*.
- 16.00 Docent Lecture at the Belvedere Palace / Schloss Belevedere, Nordwest-Oktogon, Prinz Eugen-Strasse 27.

**Friday, June 5**

- 8.00 Registration (Coffee/Tea and Book Tables).
- 8.55 Announcements.
- 9.00 Panel Four: *Dr. Talinn Grigor*, The Aesthetics of Nostalgia; *Mohammad Reza Shirazi*, Narrative of Deformation in Old Tabriz Houses: From Qajar to Pahlavi. Discussant: *Ferydoun Barjesteh van Waalwijk van Doorn*.
- 10.30 Panel Five: *Dr. Joanna de Groot*, Innovation, Adaptation and Hybridity: Some Approaches to Qajar Architectural Style c.1850-1914; *Dr. Vahid Ghobadian*, Eclectic and Neo-Classic Architecture in Tehran During the Rule of the Qajar Dynasty. Discussant: *Dr. Markus Ritter*.
- 12.00 Lunch, Pizza Bizi Cafe.
- 13.30 Panel Six: *Dr. Markus Ritter*, Religious Architecture in Early Qajar Iran: Traditions Defined; *Dr. Pedram Khosronejad*, Tekiyeh Mir: A Qajar Home with a Unique Heritage. Discussant: *Prof. Dr. Bert Fagner*.
- 15.00 Panel Seven: *Dr. Heidi Walcher*, About Urban Corporealities, Power, and Self-Image – Qajar Buildings in Esfahan; *Fatema Soudavar*, The Twin Gardens of Darband. Discussant: *Hans Timmermans*.
- 16.15 Coffee/Tea Break
- 16.30 Panel Eight: *Farhad Roozbehi*, The Manner of Architecture of the Nasserid Era: Changes in the Old City and Urban Expansion; *Kamran Safamanesh*, Transitional Architecture in the Qajar Era. Discussant: *Prof. Dr. Touraj Atabaki*.
- 17.45 Concluding Remarks and Vote of Thanks, *Prof. Dr. Bert Fagner* (Institut für Iranistik); *Ferydoun Barjesteh van Waalwijk van Doorn* (IQSA).
- 18.00 Conclusion of Conference
- 20.00 Conference Dinner: Heuriger Hans Maly; Address: Grinzing, 1190 Wien, Sandgasse 8.

## Some abstracts

### Guiding Design Patterns in Qajarid Architecture and Decoration

*Bavand Behpoor is lecturer on architecture at Shiraz University, Iran*

This paper provided proof for Prof. Gulru Nacipoglu's hypothesis and findings in her book, *The Topkapi Scroll—Geometry and Ornament in Islamic Architecture* (1995). It took up its claim that architectural ornaments have by no means been secondary to the construction of buildings, conceived in a later stage and hence applied as an addition. But on the contrary that ornaments were preconceived in their own systematic and influenced the design itself and were, to a certain degree, independent of the material to which they are applied and the geographical or historical place of their application. While Necipoglu was pursuing this argument on the basis of the analysis of architectural scrolls, the article approached the question from the other side, showing that these systematics can be found in actual buildings of the Qajarid period in Iran. On the other hand, most studies on Persian architecture believe that improvisation played a considerable role in Persian architecture. This is manifested in the fact that Iranian architects would not draw plans prior to the construction phase and buildings were developed and formed according to traditional patterns allowing improvisations on site by architects and craftsmen. Nacipoglu's discovery and study of the Topkapi scroll and Qajarid drawings ascribed to Persian architects subverted this presupposition. She has also shown that the design of ornamentation of buildings were by large done by the architect himself. The paper tried to support this hypothesis by showing how the studied Qajarid buildings fit into the patterns of the scrolls studied by Nacipoglu. The paper was the outcome of a Masters thesis in architecture at Shiraz University which engaged with a comparative aesthetic analysis of a number of major Qajarid buildings in Shiraz and Isfahan.

### The Negarestan Palace and Gardens at the Time of Fath Ali Shah

*Manoutchehr M. Eskandari-Qajar is Professor of Political Science at Santa Barbara City College (SBCC); Founder and Director of the Middle East Studies Program, SBCC and Founder and President of the International Qajar Studies Association, (IQSA)*

The palace and gardens known later as the Negarestan, were originally designed by Agha Mohammad Khan Qajar at the beginning of his reign as a refuge from the heat of the old city. At the beginning of Fath Ali Shah's reign, the palace is named the Negarestan due to the famous portrait galleries he commissioned for its walls. Fath Ali Shah also turned the simple lodgings of Agha Mohammad Khan into the famed royal retreat and gardens commented upon by visitors, foreign and domestic alike. This talk focussed on the architectural layout of the palace and its ancillary buildings as well as its famed gardens and traced the development of the palace complex from private residence under Fath Ali Shah Qajar to its current state under the Islamic Republic of Iran.

### Eclectic and Neo-Classic Architecture in Tehran During the Rule of the Qajar Dynasty

*Vahid Ghobadian is Assistant Professor in Department of Architecture at the Islamic Azad University, UAE Branch*

Contemporary Iranian architecture, like the architecture of many other third world countries, is very much under the influence of western architecture. This is true of both the technology of construction as well as style and concept of buildings design. The purpose of this presentation was to find out in what time and in which way, this tendency toward western architecture occurred in the capital of Iran, Tehran. Architecture is one of the marked achievements of the Iranian civilization. Many significant building types such as temples, palaces and mosques have remained to date from ancient times. Iranian architecture had developed along traditional lines throughout these years. In each period, architects and builders followed the concepts and methods of the preceding period. They tried to make better designs and construction within the framework of past practices. But from the times of the Qajar rule (1779-1925), in Iran, the architecture of Tehran began to witness fundamental change. The architecture of Tehran during Qajar era can be divided into three periods. The design and construction methods of buildings in Tehran, like before, developed according to the traditional Iranian architecture during the first period (1786-1852). This period covers the first half Qajar rule in Iran. But with the completion of Dar-ol-fonoon in the year 1852, the first western type university in Iran, we see the influence of western architecture in Tehran. This was at the beginning of Nasser-ed-Din Shah's rule in Iran and it had a lasting effect on the architecture of Tehran for many years to come. It should be noted that the tendency toward western architecture in Tehran during the Qajar period was basically for the design of buildings for the aristocracy. The buildings for regular people were constructed according to the traditional Iranian architecture throughout the Qajar period of rule in Iran. Therefore there were two important turning points in Qajar Architecture toward Western Architecture. First a combination of Iranian Traditional and Western Neo-classic architecture, and second a completely neo-classic architecture were chosen for the design of buildings for the aristocracy.

### The Aesthetics of Nostalgia

*Talinn Grigor is Assistant Professor of modern and contemporary architecture in the Department of Fine Arts at Brandeis University*

Artistic appropriation of forms and icons as a mode of identity formation has been a deep-rooted tradition in the politics of Iranian kingship. Rulers from antique, Islamic, and modern periods were keen on borrowing artistic vocabulary from the past in order to convey an expressly Iranian cultural and political distinctiveness. This espousal involved a highly self-aware process of adoption and synthesis that produced a renewed definition of not only forms and images, but also that of kingship and Persianness as constantly changing categories of meanings. By focusing on the period that stretches from the reign of Fath Ali Shah to the fall of the Qajar monarchy and formation of the Pahlavi state, this paper reveals a fundamental ideological change in the use of architecture as signifier of royal legitimacy. Qajar visual adoption of the pre-Islamic past was primarily iconographic, but highly self-conscious and selective in term of colonial politics. Under the Pahlavis a comprehensive adoption of morphology and iconography was put into practice, often by eliminating the structures and the very history of that kind of adoption. Qajar kings and aristocrats invested on a nostalgic grandeur of Iran's monarchical (art) history in order to promote the opulence of the Qajar court and the prosperity of the empire under their rule; while Reza Shah secularized the very domain of kingship in order to claim the Persian throne.

## **Adaptation, Innovation, and Hybridity: Some Approaches to Qajar Architectural Style c.1850-1914**

*Joanna de Groot is Senior Lecturer in History at the University of York, UK*

This paper considered the meanings and significance of the inclusion in the structures and design of various buildings constructed during the 'Qajar' era of forms and images derived from external rather than local sources. This phenomenon is often described in terms of 'borrowing' or 'imitating' 'foreign' examples, but this paper suggested that there are other terms which might be more useful for understanding the cultural and political processes at work. It drew on De Groot's experience working on Iranian cultural history to argue that the cultural contacts which allowed Iranians to select and incorporate new architectural elements involved creative adaptation of 'foreign' design or images, and that these contacts produced an interestingly complex 'hybrid' results. A number of buildings was examined which demonstrated these processes in order to show how categories like hybridity and adaptation can be used to make sense of both the buildings and the context in which they were produced. This opened up a critique of simplistic binary oppositions of 'old'/indigenous to 'new' European aspects of Iranian architecture, and the possibility of understanding that architecture as an expression of how Iranians operated within their own distinctive 'modern' culture.

### **Some thoughts on Qajar art and India**

*Ebba Koch is professor of Art History at the Institute for Art History of the University of Vienna, Austria*

Among the little known Qajar objects in Viennese museums is a Mughal jade plate which enframes an enamel portrait of Fath Ali Shah, dated 1233 A. H./ 1817 A. D. and signed by the artist Gholam Khanazad Ali. This paper discussed the work and took it as an opportunity to look at Qajar interest in Mughal art and architecture of which we have distinct evidence after Nadir Shah's conquest of Delhi in 1739.

### **A Glance at Ornaments in Qajar Architecture**

*Hamid Ma'mani and Negin Sharifi are Lecturers in the Architecture Department – Islamic Azad University, Hamedan branch, Iran*

Ornaments are an inseparable part of Iranian architecture. Covering internal and external views and facades in buildings with ornamental elements is the outstanding feature of Iranian architecture influenced especially by native culture and patterns, and also by religious beliefs. There are three recognizable ornaments in the traditional architecture of Iran based on form: flower and bush figures, geometrical figures, and scripture tablets. Pictorial figures can be considered as the fourth kind which has been neglected in most periods in Iran. The ornaments were viewed from different aspects in the Qajar period for covering the facades and internal views, while the architecture and its appendages underwent great changes. Architectural structures of the Qajar period are classified into two categories. First, religious buildings built on the basis of traditional patterns which can be observed in ornaments more considerably. Scripture tablets and flower figures were applied in schools and mosques, similar to those of the Safavid period, while geometrical figures having declined in the Safavid period found a renewed and prominent status in Qajar architecture and emerged as characteristic of this era. Second, non-religious structures, such as palaces and splendid buildings, displayed a different arrangement which was mostly influenced by western ideas. Using naturalistic views and flower figures, semi-circle arcs and drawings are amongst the most significant decorations of this second kind. This paper, while looking at traditional ornaments, attempted to also highlight the influence of western architecture on Qajar ornamentation.

### **Religious Architecture in Early Qajar Iran: Traditions Defined**

*Markus Ritter is Researcher in the History of Islamic Art and Deputy Director of the Institute of Iranian Studies of the Austrian Academy of Sciences*

Architecture of the Qajar period is no more considered the poor Cinderella of Iranian architectural history. While it has been characterized as an "idiosyncratic blend of tradition and innovation" with a conscious "conservatism" (Hillenbrand 1983), more attention has been paid to the second half of the 19th century and the question of interaction with European concepts. Architecture and context in the earlier period have remained much less explored. Drawing from a recent analysis, the paper emphasised the active and innovative aspects. In religious architecture, the rule of the second Qajar ruler, Fath Ali Shah (1212-1250/1797-1834) is remarkable for a new boost of building activity all over Iran. Formal groups related to different patron circles can be distinguished. In buildings of the Qajar ruling elite, specific mosque and madrasa types are re-defined and spread as a standard all over Iran. Alternatives and variants are constituted by buildings of patrons from the urban elite of merchants and religious-legal scholars. While the process can be discussed with regard to different contextual frameworks, such differences may be interpreted as defining diverging traditions of identity.

### **The Manner of Architecture of the Nasserid Era: Changes in the Old City and Urban Expansion**

*Farhad Roozbehi is an architect, urban designer and PhD candidate in the history of architecture at the Versailles University (UVSQ) in France*

When Tehran was selected as the capital, it had been a regional administrative centre for nearly 300 years. It had been a named city in the time of Shah Tahmasb, the second sovereign of the Safavid dynasty, who in 1553 built a bazaar and fortifications with 114 turrets and 4 gates around the city. At first, Tehran did not have the capacity to be a capital but during the reign of Nasser ed-Din Shah (1848-1896), new developments and buildings slowly appeared and the first development plan was implemented in the year 1867. This plan reshaped Tehran with new public spaces and new structures which were created with new uses and new activities in mind. This paper referred to the history of Tehran from 1848 to 1896, and tried to identify the process of the transformation and urban development of the capital in the Nasserid era by focusing on the great physical changes of architecture and urban spaces during that period.

## **Tehran and Trocadero, A search through travelogues for the European sources of Qajar architecture**

*Cyrus Samii is an independent scholar with research interests in the Qajar era*

During the Qajar period there emerged a new architecture, at times questionably and at other times decidedly European in flavour. Shams ol Emareh and Ghasr-e Firouzeh, Moayyer ol Mamalek and Mostowfi's villas, Dar ol Fonoun and Khabgahe Saltanati are all examples of buildings that departed significantly from the traditional Persian architecture epitomized by the Safavid period. Often built by nameless or forgotten architects, their histories largely undocumented, these buildings have prompted considerable debate as to their authorship. And when the architect was not the subject of debate, the question has persisted as to the inspiration. Buckingham Palace, the Palais de Trocadero, Dolmeh Baghcheh and Woolich are often cited conjecturally, and at times unconvincingly as sources for Qasr-e Qajar, Qasr-e Firouzeh, Khabgahe-e Saltanati or Dar ol-Fonoun. The desire to establish the sources for these and other buildings has prompted the presenter's search through countless Qajar travelogues from *Queer things about Persia* to *Trois Ans dans la Cour de Perse*, seeking for insights into the architecture of the Qajar era. This presentation followed the search for the sources of European style buildings of the Qajar era. It documented the emergence of a Qajar style, and examined the sources for the development of a unique architectural flavour. The presentation interspersed quotes from the travelogues with visuals of the source buildings and the Qajar buildings themselves. The presenter also shared his own observations as to how European styles came to flavour architecture of the Qajar era.

## **The Role of Colour in the Techniques and Themes of Tilework in of Qajar Iran (1785-1925)**

*Jennifer Scarce is Honorary Lecturer in Middle Eastern Cultures at the School of Design, University of Dundee, Scotland*

Tilework has a secure role in the decoration of Islamic architecture. It is first seen in Samarra and then in the glazed terracotta elements of blue and turquoise which highlight brick structures of the 11th century, and later in the panels, friezes and borders of overglaze "cuerda seca" painted tiles which adorn the monuments of Isfahan of the 17th century. The tradition emerged with renewed vitality during the 19th century during the reigns of the Qajar Shahs when, from their new capital of Tehran and major regional centres, Fath Ali Shah (1797-1834), Nasser ed-Din Shah (1848-1896) and their courtiers built both religious and civil buildings – mosques, madrasas, palaces, baths, bazaars – whose brick structures required the enrichment of decoration through the brilliant colours of glazed tilework. Qajar tilemakers continued traditional craft techniques but experimented boldly with colour using yellow more frequently than hitherto, as well as the traditional colours of black, turquoise and white for mosaic inlay and a more adventurous palette for overglaze "cuerda seca" tiles which included purple, bright green, rose pink and chestnut brown. Fath Ali Shah's tilework features floral medallions and foliate scrolls combined with innovations such as repeated boteh (flower cone) motifs inspired by textile design. Qajar tilework, however, more fully developed under Nasser ed-Din Shah who sponsored a drastic reconstruction programme in Tehran from 1867 to 1892. Apart from mosaic and "cuerda seca" the revival of painting in underglaze colours introduced translucent washes of light greens, pinks, mauves plus the use of black and sepia to outline and shade motifs. Themes included full-scale portraits of the Shah and his court, scenes of hunting and feasting, narratives from Iranian history and literature, landscapes and buildings all inspired by contemporary lithographs and photographs which exploited all techniques and colours. A precious treatise written by the tilemaker Ali Mohammad Isfahani in 1888 records the methods and materials which he used. This paper discussed the adventurous use of colour in Qajar tilework, using data collected during fieldwork in Iran supplemented by European narrative and pictorial sources.

Narrative of Deformation of Old Tabriz Houses: From Qajar to Pahlavi

*Mohammad Reza Shirazi is a doctoral student in the field of theory of architecture at Brandenburgische Technische Universität Cottbus*

Architecture is not a silent entity, it speaks to us. Buildings are not mute, but speak and narrate their structural and spiritual stories. A traditional building, a house for instance, not only tells us about the 'how' it has been built (tectonics, structure, and methods of construction), but also narrates about the world inside (the relationship between the occupants, their mentalities, and private realms) and also the world outside (the social, economical, and cultural characteristics of society). A house, in any culture and region, is essentially related to the existential concepts of security, enclosure, belonging, memory, and intimacy. It is a multidimensional text written by a vast variety of concerns and considerations. Therefore, listening to the architectural words of the house may reveal its hidden and not-yet-told stories. This essay intended to be a good reader of the Old Tabriz houses. Reading implies paying attention to the structure of the buildings, penetrating into the 'world' of the buildings, and perceiving the hidden and implicit aspects of them. Studying and analyzing the structure and organization of more than 21 old houses in Tabriz from the beginning of the Qajar era to the Pahlavi era, reveals that there was a clear 'transformation' and even 'deformation' in the configuration of the traditional houses, influenced by the cultural and social transformation of society itself. This essay started with an introduction to the 'house' and its emotional and spiritual implications. A review of the 'narrative' theory and 'How' and 'What' a building narrates followed. Then four narratives of 'transparency', 'hierarchy', 'privacy' and 'axuality' were studied referring to the plans and diagrammatic drawings of different houses. This discussion showed how these concepts narrate the 'mega-narrative of deformation' in the old-traditional Tabriz houses.

## **The Twin Gardens of Darband**

*Fatema Soudavar Farmanfarmaian is an independent author and researcher specializing on Iranian history and culture*

*(The Prince of Victory and the King of Merchants)*

"The garden ran straight up the hillside: so steep it was that the parallel lines of paths were little but flights of high narrow stairs – short flights broken by terraces on which flower-beds were laid out, gay with roses and nasturtiums and petunias. Between the two staircases, from the top of the hill to the bottom, ran a slope of smooth blue tiles, over which flowed cascades, broadening out on the terraces into tiny tanks and fountains where the water rose and fell all day long with a cool, refreshing sound, and a soft splashing of spray." This is the description given by Gertrude Bell in *Persian Pictures* of one of the twin gardens on the uppermost slopes of Shemiran that formed the subject of this talk. It was delivered, not as an academic essay, but as a collage of anecdotal history, descriptive layout and

personal memories, as experienced and heard about by the present writer. The twin gardens, one of which belonged to Prince Firouz Mirza Farmanfarma and the other to Haj Kazem Malek ot-Tojjar, were uniquely blessed with a superb location and luxuriant vegetation nourished by abundant water from qanats that were fed directly by snowmelt from the towering mountains above. As such, they became the subject of a bitter dispute between the two owners, each of whom coveted his neighbour's property. The story of that dispute and its eventual resolution, as well as the description of the gardens and their respective pavilions and their special features will be discussed here by one who retains vivid memories of many a childhood summer spent in the garden described by Gertrude Bell, on the latter's first visit to the East, when she stayed with her uncle, the British ambassador, Sir Frank Lascelles, in the 1890s. Today, with only one of the pavilions still surviving and the gardens all but gone, a first-hand reminiscence of their last days becomes all the more urgent and hopefully inspirational for the future.

### **About Urban Corporealities, Power, and Self-Image – Qajar Buildings in Esfahan**

*Heidi Walcher teaches Middle Eastern and Iranian History at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London, UK*

Despite the prevailing image and self-marketing of Esfahan as the quintessential and grand Safavid city, Esfahan remained subject of continuous urban, demographic and economic development, forced to adapt to changing socio-economic realities. In the Qajar period the city underwent two major phases of economic growth – during the governorship of Hajji Mohammad Hossein Khan and his son in the 1820's and 30's as well as in the Zell os-Soltani period during the 1870s to the 1890s. Particularly in the latter period of the 19th century, driven by growing international trade and the opium boom, the city underwent fast changes in its corporeality. New wealth in the hands of the urban mercantile and clerical elite made possible the construction of private as well as the sponsorship of religious buildings. The Qajar city built on the infrastructure and matrix of the Safavid city, while at the same time it undertook large transformations, which involved the destruction of Safavid buildings and new constructions with a deliberate Qajar image, outlook and representative aspirations. Based on photographs, this paper discussed the social and economic forces, which drove the construction, decoration and images of private and religious Qajar buildings in Esfahan.