

PROGRAMME: 1:30-5:30pm

1:30 – 1:45pm

Welcome & Introduction

Masoud Rowshan, President, Association of Iranica in Australasia

1:45 – 2:25pm

(MC: Dr Milád Miláni)

Emeritus Professor Garry Trompf:

“The Influence of Zoroastrianism on other religions, both old and new”

Professor Trompf will first visit some old questions, as to whether Zoroastrian texts influenced Jewish (and therefore Christian and Islamic) beliefs about the End of the World and a general resurrection, whether Zoroastrian insights affected the course of Greek and Roman life (philosophy, military cohesion through Mithraism), and whether Zoroastrian ethical dualism had it effects on dualistic approaches in later Judaism (Dead Sea Scrolls). Early Christianity (John's Gospel) and the Gnostic trajectory (of cosmic dualism in classical Gnosticism, and in Manichaeism, where Zarathushtra appears as the same soul as the Buddha and Jesus). Professor Trompf will then go on to ask questions about whether Zoroastrianism was the first "Salvation Religion," and also purveyor of the teaching of "loving kindness," and whether this betokens influence on other great traditions. If time his story would **continue through Mazdakism, Islam, Sufism to Bahai'ism, and the 'Jedi' religion in our highly complex times.**

2:25 – 3:05pm

(MC: Shima Shabazi)

Dr Zahrá Táheri, Lecturer in Persian Language & Iranian Studies, ANU.

“Women in Persian Sufi Literature”

In the history of Sufism, the presence of mystic women has been ignored and they have largely remained invisible. A long list of Sufi treatises has recorded the life and works of Sufis, with almost no remarks on mystic females. Through a careful investigation of mystical texts, we can find traces of lives and doctrine of Sufi women who have been left unknown, unrecognized, anonymous, and even nameless. Most of the male authorities on Sufism believed that women are unable to attain the higher stages of spirituality, therefore ignored or concealed women's presence and their teachings under a veil of obscurity. In Persian Sufi literature, however, Attar (d. 1221), Rumi (d. 1273), and Jami (d.1492) have opened a broader space for the feminine, used feminine images and metaphors with a great significance, and related women's spiritual experiences in their Sufi tales, anecdotes, verses of poetry, and sacred biographies (tazkerah).

3:05 – 3:45pm

(MC: Assoc. Professor Lilly Rahim ?)

Dr Naser Ghobádzádeh: Australian Catholic University:

“Theological foundation of secularity in post-revolutionary Iran”

The resurgence of religion over the last few decades of the 20th century posed a formative challenge to the secularisation thesis. In direct conflict with the secularism, it led to the aspiration to establish an Islamic state in many parts of the Muslim world. However, in the light of the lived experiences of the Islamic state, one may argue that an Islamic state is detrimental to religion, necessitating an alternative conceptualisation of state-religion relations. In order to characterise an alternative politico-religious discourse, the seemingly oxymoronic term "religious secularity" is offered, by which I mean the Islamic quest for the emancipation of religion from state. Religious stimulation is the distinguishing feature of this discourse. Rather than being political theorists, advocates of this secularity are religious scholars. Their articulation is not only engendered by religious concerns: religious methods and sources are also employed to argue for secularity. In this conceptualisation, the religion-secularity relationship is not antithetical that proposes a theoretical shifting away from the religion-secularism dichotomy.

3:45 – 4:15pm

Afternoon Tea Break

4:15 – 4:40pm

Musical performance

Dastgáh Homáyun

Ardalán Esfandiári: Santur

Sahand Mehrkhávari: Tombak

Dastgáh (in Persian: دستگاه) is a musical modal system in traditional Persian art music. "Homayun" is one of the main 12 dastgahs consists of several parts known as "gushehs" such as: Chakavak, Bidad, Raz-o-Niaz, Shushtari, Oshshaq, etc. and ranging from free flowing rhythmless to rhythmic melodies. Ruhollah Khaleqi, the renowned Persian Music Scholar describes "Homayun as an avaz full of panache, glory and pageantry, affecting as well as gallant. It is a mixture of broad emotional and spiritual range." Both Santur and Tombak or Zarb are very old authentic Persian instruments. Some trace the origin of invention of Santur to Persian Philosopher, al-Fārābī (Alpharbius c.872 d.950). It is a trapezoid-shaped case with 72 strings from 18 quadruple sets of 2 types of strings, 9 bronze in low register and 9 steel in the middle register. They are struck with 2 light wooden mallets (Mezrābs).

4:40 – 5:10pm **Panel discussion Q & A**

Moderator: Dr Omid Tofighian
Panellists: Professor Trompf,
Dr Táheri, Dr Ghobádzádeh

5:10 – 5:15pm **Closing remarks**

Masoud Rowshan

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**SATURDAY
10th October 2015
1.30 – 5.30pm**