

Dr Hirmand Hassas Seddighi

Historian of Political Knowledge, Intellectual History, and the Nineteenth-Century Persianate World

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YouTube: History in Some Minutes (77 educational lectures)

Academic Profile

I am a historian of nineteenth-century Iran specialising in political knowledge, intellectual history, and the history of political modernity across the Persianate world. My research examines how political concepts were negotiated, translated, and transformed through encounters between Persian intellectual traditions and European imperial expansion during the Qajar period (1796–1925). Combining extensive experience with Persian archival collections and manuscript sources with approaches drawn from Global Intellectual History, Conceptual History, and the Cambridge School of Intellectual History, I seek to integrate Iranian historical experience into broader debates concerning the making of modern political thought.

My current research argues that modern political knowledge was not produced exclusively within Europe and subsequently exported elsewhere. Rather, it emerged through processes of negotiation, translation, and conceptual transformation across imperial frontiers. Using Qajar Iran as a historically rich case study, I investigate how Persian political actors reinterpreted ideas of sovereignty, statehood, constitutionalism, law, and reform within their own linguistic and intellectual traditions.

My long-term research agenda aims to reconstruct the intellectual history of the nineteenth-century Persianate world through extensive archival research in Persian and British collections. By bringing Persian primary sources into dialogue with contemporary debates in intellectual history, I seek to contribute to a more genuinely global history of political knowledge while demonstrating the central place of Persian intellectual traditions within the wider history of political modernity.

Alongside my academic research, I am committed to public engagement with history. Through my educational YouTube channel, *History in Some Minutes*, I produce scholarly lectures on Iranian, Middle Eastern, and global history, making academic research accessible to wider audiences beyond the university.

Research Agenda

Current Research Project

Political Knowledge across Imperial Frontiers: Statecraft and the Making of Modernity in Qajar Iran (1796–1925)

This project investigates how political knowledge was negotiated, translated, and reformulated through encounters between Persian intellectual traditions and British and Russian imperial expansion. Rather than treating Iran as a passive recipient of European political ideas, it reconstructs the conceptual history of political language in Qajar Iran and argues for a more interconnected understanding of the making of modern political thought.

Current Book Project

Qajar Dilemma: Balancing Modernization and Colonial Pressures (1796–1925) (*Book manuscript in preparation*)

A comprehensive study of the political, diplomatic, and intellectual responses of the Qajar state and Iranian reformers to the challenges of imperial expansion, administrative modernization, and constitutional transformation.

Future Research Programme

Political Knowledge in the Persianate World

A long-term comparative research programme examining the circulation, translation, and transformation of political concepts across Iran, the Caucasus, the Ottoman Empire, Central Asia, and South Asia during the nineteenth century, contributing to Global Intellectual History and the history of political thought.

Research Interests

- Political Knowledge
- Intellectual History
- Global Intellectual History
- Conceptual History (*Begriffsgeschichte*)
- Cambridge School of Intellectual History

- Persianate World
- Qajar Iran (1796–1925)
- Comparative Empire Studies
- State Formation and Political Modernity
- Persian Archival Research
- Nineteenth-Century Diplomatic History
- Translation and Political Language

Education

Ph.D. in History (Modern Iran)

Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

Awarded: September 2022

Dissertation

The Confrontation of the Political and Intellectual Elites of Qajar Iran with Colonialism (1796–1925): A Historical Analysis

Supervisor: Professor Fayyaz Zahed and Professor Hossein Abadian

The dissertation examined the political thought, reform movements, diplomatic strategies, and intellectual responses of Qajar political elites to British and Russian imperial expansion. It combined extensive archival research with intellectual history to analyse the transformation of political language during the nineteenth century.

M.A. in History

Islamic Azad University, Iran

Dissertation focused on nineteenth-century Iranian political history.

B.A. in History

Islamic Azad University, Iran

Academic Appointments

Vice President and Head of the Department of Advanced Methodology

Methodologica Governance University (MGU), France

Futurale College, Canada

Responsible for the development of advanced research methodology programmes, postgraduate supervision, curriculum development, and international academic collaboration.

Independent Researcher

Specialising in:

- Political Knowledge
- Intellectual History
- Qajar Iran
- Persianate World

Conducting independent archival research on nineteenth-century Iranian political thought, diplomacy, colonial encounters, and conceptual history.

Research Experience

More than two decades of archival and historical research on nineteenth-century Iran with particular emphasis on political thought, diplomacy, intellectual history, and state formation.

Research has involved extensive use of:

- Persian governmental archives
- Ministry of Foreign Affairs collections
- Qajar diplomatic correspondence
- Constitutional-era newspapers
- Persian manuscripts
- Political treatises
- Memoirs
- Archival collections relating to Anglo-Iranian and Russo-Iranian relations

Current research extends this documentary foundation into comparative studies of political knowledge and intellectual exchange across imperial frontiers.

Editorial Experience

Editor-in-Chief

Iranica Analytica Magazine

Responsible for the editorial management of a bilingual academic magazine focusing on Iranian history, politics, international relations, and intellectual history.

Led the relaunch of the publication following the COVID-19 pandemic and coordinated contributions from international scholars.

Academic Leadership

Academic programme development

Research methodology

Graduate supervision

International academic cooperation

Historical research design

Curriculum development

Editorial management

Interdisciplinary research coordination

Selected Primary Source Expertise

Extensive experience working with:

- Persian governmental documents
- Qajar administrative records
- Foreign Ministry archives
- Diplomatic correspondence

- Constitutional documents
- Persian political treatises
- Persian manuscript collections
- Nineteenth-century newspapers
- Memoirs and travel accounts
- British diplomatic documentation relating to Iran

This documentary expertise forms the foundation of my current research programme on political knowledge, conceptual change, and intellectual history across the nineteenth-century Persianate world.

Publications

Books (Scholarly Critical Editions)

Travel Diary from Tabriz to Maku (Ruznāmeḥ-ye Safar az Tabriz tā Mākū)

Critical edition of a nineteenth-century Persian manuscript preserved in the Archives of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran. The volume includes a scholarly introduction, extensive historical annotations, identification of historical figures and geographical locations, and an edited transcription of the original text.

Centre for Documents and Diplomatic History, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tehran, 2005. (*In Persian*).

Ma'āthir-i Mahdīyah

Scholarly critical edition of a nineteenth-century Persian translation by Mumtahan al-Dowleh Shafaqi of a French work on the history of diplomacy. Based on archival materials preserved in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran, the edition includes a substantial scholarly introduction, extensive annotations, and a critically edited text.

Centre for Documents and Diplomatic History, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Tehran, 2000. (*In Persian*).

Book in Progress

Qajar Dilemma: Balancing Modernization and Colonial Pressures (1796–1925).

Book manuscript in preparation.

This monograph examines the political, diplomatic, and intellectual responses of Qajar statesmen and reformers to British and Russian imperial expansion. Drawing extensively upon Persian archival sources, the book investigates how modernization, statecraft, and political reform evolved under conditions of sustained imperial pressure.

Peer-Reviewed Journal Articles

Gobineau, Iranian Intellectuals, Aryanism, and the Theory of Degeneration.

Historical Civilization Studies (2021).

DOI: 10.30465/hcs.2021.6841

The Enlightenment, Colonialism, and the Iranian Question in the 19th Century

Journal of Contemporary Studies (2022).

DOI: 10.22034/jcsc.2022.549344.2542

Additional publications available upon request and through ORCID.

Current Research Projects

Political Knowledge across Imperial Frontiers: Statecraft and the Making of Modernity in Qajar Iran (1796–1925)

Current postdoctoral research project investigating how political concepts were translated, negotiated, and transformed within Persian political discourse during the nineteenth century.

The project integrates Persian archival materials with British diplomatic sources to contribute to Global Intellectual History and the history of political thought.

Persian Intellectual Networks and Political Exchange in the Nineteenth-Century Persianate World

Long-term comparative research programme examining intellectual exchanges connecting Iran, the Caucasus, the Ottoman Empire, Central Asia, and South Asia.

Research Competencies

My research combines traditional historical scholarship with interdisciplinary approaches drawn from intellectual history, conceptual history, and archival studies.

Core competencies include:

- Archival Research
- Persian Manuscript Studies
- Diplomatic History
- Intellectual History
- Conceptual History (*Begriffsgeschichte*)
- Political Language Analysis
- Comparative Empire Studies
- Historical Translation Analysis
- Cross-cultural Intellectual Exchange
- Qualitative Historical Methodology
- Nineteenth-Century Persian Documentary Analysis

Academic Contributions

My research seeks to bridge Iranian Studies and Global Intellectual History by introducing Persian archival evidence into wider debates concerning the historical formation of political knowledge.

The principal objective of my work is to demonstrate that political modernity emerged not through one-way diffusion from Europe but through continuous processes of negotiation, translation, and conceptual transformation across imperial frontiers.

Selected Invited Lectures and Academic Teaching

Graduate seminars on:

- Advanced Historical Methodology
- Modern Iranian History
- Nineteenth-Century Political Thought
- Historical Research Design
- Persian Intellectual History
- Comparative Historiography

Additional invited lectures and academic presentations available upon request.

Public History and Knowledge Exchange

Founder and Presenter

History in Some Minutes

Educational YouTube Channel

More than 77 scholarly lectures introducing Iranian, Middle Eastern, and World History to a broad international audience.

The channel seeks to communicate rigorous academic history beyond the university while maintaining high scholarly standards.

Topics include:

- Iranian History
- Political History
- Intellectual History
- Crusades
- Persian Civilization
- Comparative Civilizations
- History of Political Ideas

This public engagement reflects my commitment to making historical scholarship accessible to wider audiences and encouraging informed historical discussion beyond academic institutions.

Conference Presentations and Invited Talks

Selected presentations and lectures on Iranian history, political thought, historical methodology, and nineteenth-century intellectual history.

Research presentations have focused on:

- Qajar political thought and state formation
- Iranian responses to British and Russian imperial expansion
- Intellectual encounters between Iran and Europe
- Historical methodology and archival research
- Conceptual change in nineteenth-century Persian political language

A complete list of conference papers and invited lectures is available upon request.

Academic Service

Editorial Activities

Editor-in-Chief

Iranica Analytica Magazine

Responsible for editorial planning, peer-review coordination, thematic issue development, and communication with international contributors.

Academic Programme Development

Contributed to the design and development of postgraduate programmes in historical methodology and interdisciplinary historical research.

Graduate Education

Participation in curriculum development, research supervision, and advanced methodological training for postgraduate students.

Public Engagement and Knowledge Exchange

I strongly believe that historical scholarship should contribute not only to academic debate but also to public understanding.

To support this objective, I founded and continue to develop the educational YouTube channel:

History in Some Minutes

Website:

<https://www.youtube.com/@historyinsomeminutes>

Current content includes more than **77 educational lectures** covering:

- Iranian History
- Persian Civilization
- Intellectual History
- Political History
- Middle Eastern History
- The Crusades
- Comparative Civilizations
- History of Political Ideas

The channel seeks to communicate academically grounded historical research to wider audiences while maintaining scholarly standards and encouraging critical engagement with the past.

Languages

Persian (Native)

English (Professional Working Proficiency)

Arabic (Reading Knowledge)

Professional Experiences

Archive Specialist

Centre for Documents and Diplomatic History

Digital Research Skills

Archival research

Historical source analysis

Historical databases

Academic publishing

Research design

Digital humanities applications for historical research

Reference management software

Scholarly communication

Professional Memberships

Previous member of international scholarly associations related to Iranian Studies and Middle Eastern Studies.

(Current membership has lapsed because international financial restrictions have prevented the payment of membership fees from Iran.)

Academic References

Available upon request.

Potential referees include senior scholars familiar with my research in nineteenth-century Iranian intellectual history and political thought.