

## Research and Training Workshop

### *Reading Sources in Area Studies*

*Contribution of biographical data for the social and cultural history  
of Turko-Iranian societies (9th-18th c.)*

### *Lire les sources en études aréales*

*L'apport des données biographiques pour l'histoire sociale et culturelle  
du monde turko-iranien (IX<sup>e</sup>-XVIII<sup>e</sup> s.)*

## A B S T R A C T S

Panel 2 : 20 April 2021

*Epigraphy and craftsmanship in the Iranian world*

*/ L'épigraphie et l'artisanat du monde iranien*

14:00 – 18:00 (+1:00 GMT, Paris time)

*To register to get the Zoom link / inscription à la visioconférence*

<http://www.inalco.fr/webform/ateliers-sources-etudes-areales>



Convenors/Responsables : Maria Szuppe (CNRS / CeRMI), Camille Rhoné-Quer (Université Aix-Marseille / IREMAM), Sacha Alsancakli (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle / CeRMI)

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***Studying the Turco-Iranian world in France: methodology, courses, and resources***

Sacha Alsancakli (Université Sorbonne Nouvelle / CeRMI)

From the Ghaznavids to the Safavids, Turco-Mongol military elites have always relied on Iranian literati to govern the lands they conquered, and these men of letters consistently strived to use Persianate literary traditions in order to legitimate the rule of their foreign overlords. This process of cultural synthesis stands at the core of what we call the “Turco-Iranian world”, defined as a diversified yet continuous linguistic and cultural space extending from Istanbul to Delhi. In this brief presentation, I will outline the courses and resources available in France for the study of the Turco-Iranian societies, history, and culture.



***Epitaphs of Muslim scholars from Samarkand (10<sup>th</sup> to 14<sup>th</sup> centuries)***

Ashirbek K. Muminov (IRCICA–Research Centre for Islamic History, Art and Culture, Istanbul)

The paucity of written sources creates difficulties for a full-blooded study of the history during the reign of the Karakhanids (999-1211), a Central Asian dynasty of Turkic origin that replaced the Samanids in Transoxiana. Recently, unique sources have been discovered and introduced into scientific circulation – 155 inscriptions on the gravestones of figures of this period – mostly officials, personalities of the Islamic religion. However, tombstones due to their light weight and with the connivance of the authorities in the imperial and Soviet periods were pulled apart in different directions, as a result of which they were transferred into different collections and even were taken to other cities and countries. On the other hand, archaeological excavations were carried out only on ¼ of the territory of the cemetery. According to experts, 75% of the gravestones remain under the ground.

On the basis of the newly identified inscriptions, we will attempt to study such aspects of the religious policy of the Karakhanids as inviting nonresident scholars to spiritual positions in their capital city Samarkand, the revival of the teachings of Maturidiyya, the reasons for activating scholars to create classical works in the Hanafiyya *madhhab*, as well as adjustments to this policy that were made by the Seljukids, the Kara-Kitai rulers, and the Khorezmshahs.



***Royal lineage in epigraphic sources from pre-Mongol Iran. Some observations on dedicatory inscriptions and their possible misinterpretations.***

Viola Allegranzi (Institute of Iranian Studies, Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna)

Monumental epigraphy has seldom been regarded as a source for the history of the Medieval Persianate world, although it provides first-hand information on major historical figures, their political and religious orientations. This is due to the poor state of preservation of many inscriptions, as well as to a general tendency to disconnect archaeological and art historical research from a broader historical perspective.

In order to highlight both the benefits and the limitations of the study of epigraphic sources, some Arabic and Persian dedicatory inscriptions ascribed to the Ghaznavid dynasty (Afghanistan, 11<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> c.) will be presented. These texts consist in fragmented chains of honorifics and genealogies, and can be pieced together and correctly interpreted only when carefully replaced in their original context, and cross-checked with sources of different natures (epigraphs, manuscripts, coins).



***What woodworks divulge about woodworkers: Some remarks on families of craftsmen through the lens of monumental sources (Iran – Mazandaran province, 15<sup>th</sup> century)***

Sandra Aube (CNRS, CeRMI)

This paper aims to introduce a remarkable group of wooden doors and cenotaphs, originating from the province of Mazandaran (Iran) and dated to the 15<sup>th</sup> century. These woodworks are generally ornamented with inscriptions, among which appear signatures of craftsmen — mostly woodworkers (*najjār*).

The number of craftsmen's signatures is very limited in 15<sup>th</sup>-century Iranian monuments. Thus, the signatures found in Mazandarani woodworks represent a significant resource for studying the organization and the circulation of regional workshops. They even lead to the identification of families of woodworkers.



**Further readings / Orientation bibliographique**

- Allegranzi, Viola, « Vers un réexamen des inscriptions historiques du monde iranien pré-mongol : Étude des cas des mausolées de Tim et de Termez en Ouzbékistan », in *Texts and contexts. Ongoing Researches on the Eastern Iranian World (Tenth-Fifteen C.)*, V. Allegranzi and V. Laviola (eds.), Roma: Istituto per l'Oriente C.A. Nallino, 2020: 103-134.
- Aube, Sandra, « Skills and Style in Heritage: The Woodworker Fahr al-Dīn and his Son 'Alī in the Mazandaran (Iran, ca. 1440-1500), » in *Channels of Transmission: Family and Professional Lineages in the Early Modern Middle East*, S. Aube and M. Szuppe (eds.), with the collaboration of A. Quickel, special issue *Eurasian Studies* 15/2 (2017): 283-303.
- Babadjanov B.M.; Dodkhudoeva, Lola; Muminov, A.K.; and Ulrich, R. (eds). *Epitaphs of Muslim Scholars in Samarkand (10<sup>th</sup>-14<sup>th</sup> Centuries)*, Istanbul: IRCICA, 2019.
- Blair, Sheila S., *Islamic Inscriptions*, Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1998.
- Blair, Sheila; and Bloom, Jonathan, « Signatures on Works of Islamic Art and Architecture, » *Damaszener Mitteilungen* XI (1999): 49-66.
- *Études karakhanides*, V. Fourniau (ed.), special issue of *Cahiers d'Asie Centrale* 9 (2001) <https://journals.openedition.org/asiacentrale/514>
- Ghazni, presentation of the archeological site and photographic documentation, <https://ghazni.bdus.cloud/islamic>
- Muminov, A.K.; Ziyodov, Sh.Yu.; and Muhammadiev, O.B., “Kairaki: novye otkrytiia” [Qayraks: New Discoveries], in *Proceedings of the International Workshop on Islamic Studies in Uzbekistan: Achievements and Perspectives, June 2020, Tashkent*, Halit Eren and Ashirbek Muminov (eds.), Istanbul: IRCICA, 2020: 321-360.