

POURDAVOUD CENTER

Established in 2017 as the premier research center for the study of ancient Iran, the mission of the Pourdavoud Center for the Study of the Iranian World is to engage in transformative research on all aspects of Iranian antiquity, including its reception in the medieval and modern periods, by expanding on the traditional domains of Old Iranian Studies and promoting cross-cultural and interdisciplinary scholarship. The Pourdavoud Center intends to be a disciplinary home to stimulating intellectual encounters and exchanges for scholars working on ancient Iran and the ancient world, and will contribute to the development of collaborative research projects in such diverse areas as Assyriology, Biblical Studies, Central Asian Studies, Classics, Egyptology, ancient History, Indology, Sinology, and the Study of Religion.

PROGRAM OF IRANIAN STUDIES

The program of Iranian Studies at UCLA, established over half a century ago, in 1963, is the largest and most comprehensive doctoral program of its kind in the Americas. It covers the entire spectrum of Iranian studies across disciplines, linguistic boundaries, and periods. Among its distinctive strengths is the focus on Old and Middle Iranian philology, ancient Iranian history and religions, archaeology, as well as the study of classical and modern Persian literature. In addition, courses in Judeo-Persian literature and Baha'i history and religion are regularly read in the program.

THE EHSAN YARSHATER LECTURE SERIES

The Ehsan Yarshater Lectures are delivered by an outstanding scholar whose work has distinctively impacted the study of the Iranian Civilization. Each biennial lecture series consists of four to five lectures on a single theme that is subsequently elaborated and amplified into a monograph. The lectures represent original research and synthesis in all aspects of Iranian Studies, including archaeology and art history, as well as history, literature, the study of religions, and philosophy.

Event Details

This hybrid event is free and open to the public, but pre-registration is requested. In-person seating is limited and will be available on a first-come, first-served basis. Alternatively, guests unable to attend in person will be able to watch a live stream of the lectures. This event will adhere to all COVID-19 related guidelines as set by the University of California, Los Angeles.

Registration for both in-person attendance and the live stream may be found at:
<https://pourdavoud.ucla.edu/events/>

UCLA Parking: All-day parking on campus is \$14. Parking structures 2 or 4 are recommended.

For more information, please email info@pourdavoud.ucla.edu

Pourdavoud Center for the Study of the Iranian World

358 & 360 Royce Hall
Los Angeles, CA 90095

UCLA



Pourdavoud Center
for the Study of the Iranian World

UCLA | April 11–20, 2022 | Royce Hall 314

The Achaemenid Persian World Empire

**The Biennial Ehsan Yarshater
Lecture Series**



A series of four lectures by

Robert Rollinger

Professor of Ancient History and Ancient Near Eastern Studies
University of Innsbruck

ABOUT THE SPEAKER



Robert Rollinger

Robert Rollinger is Professor of Ancient History and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the University of Innsbruck, Austria, where he has held since 2005 the Chair for “Cultural Interactions between the ancient Near East and the Mediterranean” in the Department of Ancient History and Ancient Near Eastern Studies.

Dr. Rollinger’s scholarly interests are wide-ranging and encompass the cultural expanse between the Aegean world and the ancient Near East, with a special focus on ancient historiography, the comparative history of empires, and the Achaemenid Empire.

In addition to his tenure at the University of Innsbruck, he has held a number of prestigious chairs and fellowships worldwide: from 2010 to 2015, he was the Finland Distinguished Professor at the University of Helsinki in the Department of World Cultures, heading the research project “Intellectual Heritage of the Ancient Near East”; in 2020, he was a Getty Scholar at the Getty Villa; since 2020, he has been the NAWA Chair at the University of Wrocław, Poland, where he heads the international project “From the Achaemenid to the Roman Rule.”

Dr. Rollinger is also known for his numerous publications and important editorial work: he has been (co-)editing among others the prestigious series: *Oriens et Occidens* (Franz Steiner Verlag); *Classica et Orientalia* (Harrassowitz); *Studies in Universal and Cultural History* (Springer); *Philippika* (Harrassowitz); (The Proceedings of the) *Melammu Symposia* (Austrian Academy of Sciences); and *Empires Through the Ages in Global Perspective* (de Gruyter). More recently, he published together with Bruno Jacobs the *Blackwell Companion to the Achaemenid Empire* (Wiley-Blackwell, 2021), which shall serve as the new work of reference in the field.

His recent publications include: *Imperien und Reiche in der Weltgeschichte: Epochenübergreifende und globalhistorische Vergleiche* (coedited; Harrassowitz, 2014); *Mesopotamia in the Ancient World: Impact, Continuities, Parallels* (coedited; Ugarit-Verlag, 2015); *Alexander und die großen Ströme: Die Flussüberquerungen im Lichte altorientalischer Pioniertechniken* (Harrassowitz, 2013); *Short-term Empires in World History* (coedited; Springer, 2020); *A Companion to the Achaemenid Persian Empire, 2 volumes* (Blackwell Companions to the Ancient World) (coedited; Wiley-Blackwell, 2021); *Empires to be Remembered* (Studies in Universal and Cultural History) (coedited; Springer, 2022); *Decline, Erosion and Implosion of Empires* (Studies in Universal and Cultural History) (coedited; Springer, forthcoming).

He is a member of numerous academic organizations and research groups, among them: the Austrian Academy of Sciences (ÖAW); the German Archaeological Institute (DAI); and the Academia Europaea.

The Achaemenid Persian World Empire

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Synopsis

The series of lectures offers a novel and fresh perspective on one of the largest and most successful empires in world history, namely, the Achaemenid Persian World Empire (sixth to fourth century BCE), the central power of a (proto-)globalized world, and the driving force behind many cultural developments, whose manifold repercussions we may observe from Gibraltar to the Taklamakan Desert, from the Aegean and Scythian lands to the sub-Saharan worlds, and from the Bay of Bengal to eastern Africa. Our sources, both written and archaeological, are but a faint palimpsest bearing witness to the grandeur of the Achaemenid civilization, and its impress on the antique world. The present Yarshater Lectures are an attempt at deducing, from among the many ideological layers still cluttering our (narrative) sources, including the many biases, old and new, that still guide modern scholarship, the unique identity, sense of purpose, and political awareness that distinguished the Achaemenids, eventually enabling them to forge a capacious vision of the world. In these lectures, the Achaemenid Persian World Empire will be presented as a political formation that not only profoundly impacted its immediate and more distant surroundings, but also served as an imperial model that most lastingly transformed its posterity.

An Afro-Eurasian “Hyperpower” and Its Ancient Near Eastern Roots (First Millennium BCE)

The lecture focuses on the structure, genesis, and historical setting of the Achaemenid Empire. It discusses major aspects of the royal ideology, the position of the Great King, and the Empire’s resilience in periods of crisis.

Whither the Achaemenid Empire? Towards a New Connected History of Afro-Eurasia in Antiquity

In this lecture, the history of the Achaemenid Empire as a powerful engine of trans-regional connectivity, affecting all of Afro-Eurasia, is explored. Of import is not only the Empire’s capacity to boost dynamic developments, which may be qualified as an early example of globalization, but also its ability to sustain cultural individuation processes and tolerate autonomous political formations.

Space and Universality: The Long Life of the Achaemenid Mental Map (Sixth Century BCE – Sixth Century CE)

The Achaemenid Empire ushered a new world order, based on a novel conception of political geography, which, combined with an innovative language of power, served to legitimize Achaemenid imperial/universalist claims. The longevity and impact of the Achaemenid imperial “model” and its language of power constitute the themes of the third lecture.

Empire and Borderlands at Interplay: A Structural Approach (First Millennium BCE – First Millennium CE)

The Achaemenid Empire represents a major evolutionary step in the *longue durée* of Afro-Asian state formations. The fourth lecture aims at illustrating the indebtedness of the Achaemenid polity to ancient Near Eastern and Afro-Asian precedents, while exploring its unicity in light of the interplay between the imperial center and the borderlands.

An Afro-Eurasian “Hyperpower” and Its Ancient Near Eastern Roots (First Millennium BCE)

Introductory Remarks

M. Rahim Shayegan
Director, Pourdavoud Center, UCLA

Monday, April 11, 2022 | 4:00 pm
Royce Hall 314

Whither the Achaemenid Empire? Towards a New Connected History of Afro-Eurasia in Antiquity

Wednesday, April 13, 2022 | 4:00 pm
Royce Hall 314

Space and Universality: The Long Life of the Achaemenid Mental Map (Sixth Century BCE – Sixth Century CE)

Monday, April 18, 2022 | 4:00 pm
Royce Hall 314

Empire and Borderlands at Interplay: A Structural Approach (First Millennium BCE – First Millennium CE)

Wednesday, April 20, 2022 | 4:00 pm
Royce Hall 314

Closing Remarks

Reception to follow lecture on April 20, 2022
on the Fowler Terrace.