

## ICAS 12 Conference Proceedings available in Open Access

The twelfth edition of the International Convention of Asia Scholars (ICAS) was held from 24 to 28 August 2021. A selection of articles presented at ICAS 12 can now be accessed online in the Amsterdam University Press Conference Proceedings Series.

ICAS is a global space where Asia scholars and social and cultural actors from all over the world engage in dialogues on Asia that transcend boundaries between academic disciplines and geographic regions.

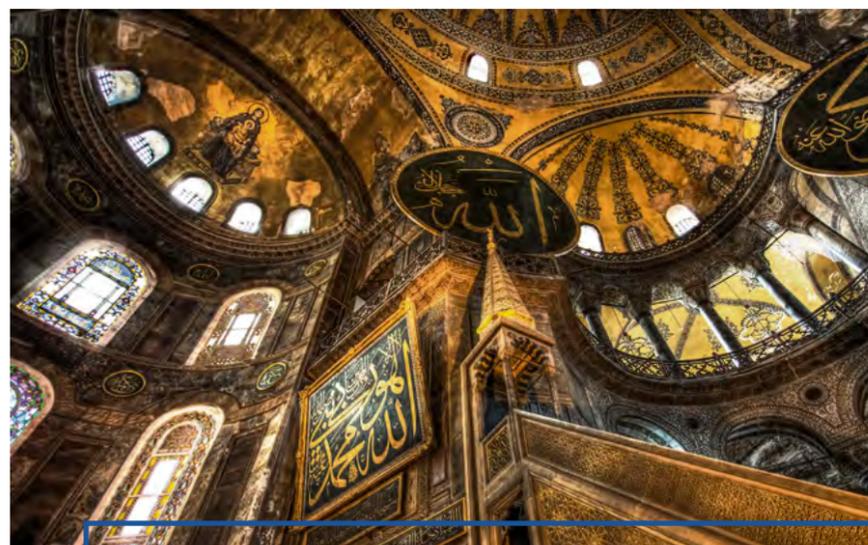
The special focus of ICAS 12 was 'Crafting a Global Future.' Presentations at the conference involved topics from all Asian Studies disciplines in the broadest possible sense. Due to the global circumstances, ICAS 12 manifested its theme in a dynamic virtual form. Unlike the previous editions, which were hosted in different countries together with local partners, ICAS 12 was organized for the first time entirely online by the ICAS Secretariat in Leiden in partnership with Kyoto Seika University, Japan.

The ICAS Conference Proceedings is doubtlessly a mere excerpt of the richness and diversity of ICAS 12. These 94 articles represent the newest advancements in the field of Asian Studies. They depict ongoing research on the themes of Arts, Economy, Development and Urbanization, Education and Knowledge, Environment and Climate Change, Gender and Diversity, Heritage and Culture, History, Language and Literature, Media and the Digital Age, Migration and Diasporas, Philosophy, Region and Beliefs, Politics and International Relations, and Society and Identity.

Check out the ICAS 12 Conference Proceedings via our website [www.icas.asia](http://www.icas.asia)



D. Grifeco on unsplash.com



## 'Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe' to include a new course on the Politics of Heritage in the Middle East

Elena Paskaleva

From 2023, the international post-graduate Dual Degree in 'Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe' will expand its focus to include the politics of heritage in the Middle East. The Dual Degree forms part of a broader ambition to decentralise the production of knowledge about Asia by establishing a platform for continuing dialogues between universities located in Asia and beyond. The present institutions involved in the Dual Degree – IIAS, Leiden University, National Taiwan University, and Yonsei University – have established a fruitful collaboration in research and teaching. Currently talks are underway with several universities in Indonesia and North Africa. This latest addition to the Leiden part of the programme is a logical next step in the discussions about the relevance of critical heritage studies.

### The Politics of Heritage in the Middle East

Heritage is always political. Originally a concept coined by the nation-state, heritage has become the object of political appropriation by national and local authorities and stakeholders. Institutional and non-institutional social actors in Asia, Europe, and the Middle East are increasingly involved in debating the legitimacy of – as well as the need to 'safeguard' – different expressions of heritage. Analysing the dynamic of the various types of public, institutional, and private actors engaged in the current negotiations on heritage practice across the Middle East will be the topic of a new course, titled 'The Politics of Heritage in The Middle East' in the Leiden master's programme in Critical Heritage Studies.

The political and power practices in the Middle East are crucial to understanding how heritage was romanticised or defined as marginalised in the colonial context. Current attitudes towards cultural heritage can be better understood if they are situated in a historical perspective. That is why the new course will offer a special focus on the ways the modern concept of cultural heritage was introduced to the Middle East during the colonial period. The first initiatives to conduct large-scale archaeological expeditions, to start collecting newly-excavated objects, and to initiate restoration campaigns led by European archaeologists, architects, and art historians set the tone for generations to come. As part of global competition among world empires for supremacy over the protection of cultural heritage, the colonial policies behind these projects can be considered an integral part of the overall restructuring of the colonised space across the Middle East.

Above: Hagia Sofia, Istanbul, Turkey.  
CC License/Courtesy Anne Dirkse/Flickr.

Political independence after the Second World War marked the postcolonial states' attempts to build specific national narratives and forge national identities based on the traces of powerful empires. Another trend was to promote popular religious traditions and folklore, considered to be the 'authentic' expression of the Arab essence which was to define these modern societies. As a counterbalance to these discourses incorporated into state heritage practice, the new course will look at the transformative nature of cultural heritage as derived from individuals and communities who attach meaningful memories to and identify feelings towards the physical traces of their own past.

Cultural heritage – especially its materialisation in objects, buildings, and sites – has become a magnet for tourists across the Middle East. While in the 19th century, tourists were fascinated by the constructed idea of an ancient cultural landscape unchanged since the Biblical times, the controversial questions of authenticity have been negotiated at present by preserving the material traces of the past and by reconstructing heritage sites that have been deliberately shattered by war conflicts or looting.

### The Dual Degree in Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe

The Dual Degree programme offers selected graduate students from the participating universities the opportunity to obtain two MA degrees – one from Leiden University and one from a partner university in Asia – and a Certificate for the Dual Degree in Critical Heritage Studies of Asia and Europe, issued by IIAS. The diploma at Leiden University is for the MA in Asian Studies, which comes with a special certificate for completing the specialisation in Critical Heritage Studies (also issued to students who complete this programme at Leiden University without opting for the Dual Degree).

### Information

Please contact Dr Elena Paskaleva (LIAS) with any questions about the Leiden programme in Critical Heritage Studies or the Dual Degree. We especially invite students from the Leiden master's programme in Middle Eastern Studies (offered at the Leiden Institute for Area Studies) to enquire about the possibility of choosing this programme.

#### Website

[www.iias.asia/programmes/critical-heritage-studies](http://www.iias.asia/programmes/critical-heritage-studies)

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## Tenth Conference of Iranian Studies ECIS 10

Conference dates  
21 - 25 August 2023

Venue  
Leiden University, Leiden, The Netherlands

Call for papers submission deadline  
1 December 2022

### Submission of papers

Please complete the submission form available on the conference website if you wish to present an individual paper or a panel. An academic committee will review all proposals. We welcome individual abstracts of no more than 1500 characters related to the conference topics. Panel proposals (with up to six participants divided into no more than two sections) should clearly outline the pre-arranged panel's title, themes, and objectives. The individual presentations of the panel must be on a related topic; please provide the full names of the confirmed panel participants and the abstracts of their papers. The submission deadline is 1 December 2022.

### PhD Thesis Award

On the occasion of ECIS 10, the fifth edition of the European Award of Iranian Studies will be awarded for an outstanding PhD dissertation, published or unpublished, in any field of Iranian Studies. The dissertation should be completed and successfully defended at any European academic institution between 1 January 2019 and 31 December 2022. The submission deadline for PhD theses is 1 January 2023. For further information on the PhD award, see the SIE website.

#### Website

[www.universiteitleiden.nl/ecis10](http://www.universiteitleiden.nl/ecis10)

#### Contact us

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The tenth edition of the European Conference of Iranian Studies ECIS 10 is organised by the Societas Iranologica Europaea (SIE), hosted by Leiden University and convened by Gabriëlle van den Berg, Albert de Jong and Elena Paskaleva of the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies.

ECIS 10 will cover a wide range of topics related to Iranian Studies, including philology, linguistics, literature, history, religious and cultural studies, art and architecture, archaeology, philosophy and anthropology.

The Societas Iranologica Europaea is an international academic society in the field of Iranian Studies with members from European and non-European countries. The SIE was founded in 1983 in Rome with the support of the European Science Foundation and the Istituto Italiano per il Medio ed Estremo Oriente (later Istituto Italiano per l'Africa e l'Oriente) on the occasion of the First European Colloquium of Iranology. The aim of the SIE is to promote, develop and support Ancient, Middle and Modern Iranian Studies in all subject areas of the field. For membership information, see [www.societasiranologicaeu.org](http://www.societasiranologicaeu.org).



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