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## Viewpoint\ Editorial

# Sarfarāz's Legacy of Iranistics

Historically, continuity and discontinuity of socio-cultural processes of the Iranian culture and civilization and its Iranian descents has always been one of the essential problems which should be approached in both Oriental studies and Iranistics. For instance, if one takes a look at the works of some pioneers in Iranistics, such as T. Nöldeke, E. G. Browne, B. G. Fragner and M. Qazwini, Iranistics has been left for linguistics and literary approaches, rather than historical one. The academic methodology of Iranistics, however, should be more supported by diverse disciplines. Of these, the archaeology of historic millennia of Iran should be marked. In this field, the innovative works of the late Ali Akbar Sarfarāz (1926-2024) seems noticeable as the archaeological reflection of the continuous lineage in the historical existence of Iran:

Ali Akbar Kārgar Sarafīrāz, nicknamed Sarfarāz, the pioneer Iranian field archaeologist, passed away on February 20, 2024. The years 1961-2001 should be noted as his flourishing years of career including the archaeological expeditions, management and academic activities in the Iranian ministry of art and culture, National Museum of Iran, Universities of Tehran and Tarbiatmodarres and finally the institutes of SAMT and NAZAR. Review of his professional career presents that the idea of Iran and enquiry on the historical processes relevant to the two millennia of Iranian heritage, from the Medes to the Ilkhanates, has been the main theme of his archaeological expeditions. The excavations of archaeological sites that each of them, in any way, present not only the name of Iran and its history-makers but indicate the continuity of historical and socio-cultural processes of Iranian culture and civilization as well as its people of Iranian descent: The fire temple of Nushijān Tepe in Malāyer, the Achaemenid palace of Cyrus the great in Borāzjān, the Achaemenid remnants in the Island of Khārk, Persian Gulf, the Mithraeum in Masjid-e Soleymān, the Sassanid bas-reliefs from Tang-e Chogān, the temple of Anahita in Bishāpur, the Seljukid Friday Mosque of Ardabil, the Ilkhanate observatory of Maragheh, Rab'-e Rashidi, the Arch of Alishah in Tabriz and the Grand Fire Temple of Āzargoshnasp in Azerbaijan and its Sassanid iwan of Khosrow which were rebuilt as the Ilkhanate palace of Ābāghā Khān. According to himself, the result of his 7000 days of work and life in deserts was the excavation of 16 archaeological sites, exploration of 32 others and finally registration of 430 heritage sites in the National List of Iranian Heritage; all of them from the Medes to the Ilkhanates.

Additionally, Sarfarāz should be regarded as the pioneer of Ilkhanid archaeology of Iran (Ajourloo, 2009): Although the historical approach to the Ilkhanid period, which is the renaissance Age of Iranian culture, has been commenced by the master works of some academic figures, e.g. "The Problems of Ilkhanid Period" by the late M. Mortazavi (1962, 1979) the former head of Iranian studies in the University of Azerbaijan (today: Tabriz), but the archaeological excavations to the Ilkhanid key sites in Iran have been directed by A. A. Sarfarāz:

Takht-e Soleymān (Kiāni & Sarfarāz, 1968), the Ilkhanid Observatory of Maragheh- by the order and financial support of University of Azerbaijan and contribution of the late P. Varjāvand (1987)- the southern Iwan of the Arch of Tabriz (Ajourloo & Mazhari, 2023) and finally Rab'-e Rashidi, 1979. These are four of six Ilkhanate key sites of Iran which include the archaeological materials from two problematic centuries of Iranian sioco-cultural and political developments: the Age of Khwāja Nair al-Din and the Age of Khwāja Rashid al-Din. During these two centuries Tabriz turned into the renaissance capital of Iranian art, culture and civilization. Meanwhile, "IRAN" is the most frequent word in historical and literary sources of this period.

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