

Bactria and the transition to Islam — a workshop

Saturday 10th May – Sunday 11th May, 2014

at the Ancient India and Iran Trust, 23 Brooklands Avenue, Cambridge CB2 8BG,
in association with the Balkh Art and Cultural Heritage project, University of Oxford

During the last couple of years, researchers connected with the Oxford Balkh project (www.balkhheritage.org) have been researching the history of Balkh in the early Islamic era on the basis of archaeological and textual sources. At the same time, other scholars and teams have been studying an ever-increasing quantity of manuscripts, coins, pottery and other materials from pre-Islamic and early Islamic Bactria. These materials include texts in several languages: Arabic, Bactrian, Chinese and others. The translation of these texts and the analysis of these materials is shedding new light on the history of this important region in a period of transition. The aim of this seminar is to bring together the various groups of researchers interested in the history and culture of the period immediately before and after the Arab conquest and to discover whether their results are compatible and mutually illuminating.

Confirmed participants/speakers include: Arezou Azad, François de Blois, Joe Cribb, Frantz Grenet, Stefan Heidemann, Edmund Herzig, Hugh Kennedy, Geoffrey Khan, Shaul Shaked, Nicholas Sims-Williams.

There will be no charge for participation in the workshop, but since numbers are strictly limited, pre-booking is essential. Those who would like to take part are advised to register their interest as soon as possible by contacting Professor Nicholas Sims-Williams <ns5@soas.ac.uk>. The workshop will begin with lunch at 1 p.m. on Saturday 10th May and end after lunch on Sunday 11th May (both meals provided free of charge to all participants).

Nicholas Sims-Williams, AIIT (Cambridge)
Edmund Herzig, BACH (Oxford)