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Pourdavoud Center
for the Study of the Iranian World

BETWEEN GRAVEN IMAGES AND ZOROASTRIAN TEXTS:
HOW TO STUDY ANCIENT IRANIAN RELIGIOUS ICONOGRAPHY?

FEBRUARY 21, 2018 | 4:00 P.M. | 306 ROYCE HALL

MICHAEL SHENKAR (THE HEBREW UNIVERSITY OF JERUSALEM)

The study of the Iranian religious iconography has been traditionally bound to the Zoroastrian texts. Deities, animals and symbols have all been usually interpreted based on the descriptions found in the Avesta and in the Middle Persian literature. However, to treat these problematic texts as a source of Iranian imagery comparable with the Bible for the Byzantine art or with the Buddhist sacred texts for the Buddhist art, is certainly misleading. The potential and the relevance of the Zoroastrian texts even for the interpretation of the Sasanian religious iconography is quite limited, and we should be careful applying their contents to the artistic traditions of other Iranians in different historical periods. Instead, priority should be given to the iconographic analysis in context of Mesopotamian, Hellenistic and Indian religious imagery.

SPEAKER

Michael Shenkar is a Senior Lecturer in Pre-Islamic Iranian Studies at the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. His research interests include the Archaeology, Art, and Religions of the pre-Islamic Iranian world and the History of Jews in the pre-Islamic Iran and Central Asia, with a particular focus on religious iconography and the Sogdian civilization. He is a co-director of the excavations of the Sogdian town of Sanjar-Shah in northern Tajikistan.

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 inter-disciplinary scholarship.

This event is co-sponsored by the UCLA Asia Pacific Center.

Advanced registration is requested. For more information and to RSVP: http://pourdavoud.ucla.edu/events/graven-images-zoroastrian-texts-study-ancient-iranian-religious-iconography/

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