

HOST

IFI – Institute of Iranian Studies
Austrian Academy of Sciences
Postsparkasse, 4th floor
Dominikanerbastei 16
1010 Vienna, Austria

Cluster of Excellence *Eurasian Transformations*

CONVENORS

Robert Steele, Institute of Iranian Studies of the Austrian Academy of Sciences
Florian Schwarz, Institute of Iranian Studies of the Austrian Academy of Sciences

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With the support of ÖFG – Österreichische Forschungsgemeinschaft

ÖAW

AUSTRIAN
ACADEMY OF
SCIENCES

14 – 16 APRIL 2026
INSTITUTE OF IRANIAN STUDIES

OTTO WAGNER POSTSPARKASSE
SEMINAR ROOM 6, 4TH FLOOR
GEORG COCH-PLATZ 2, 1010 VIENNA



Reza Shah reading his oath to the Majles, 15 December 1925. Source: mashruteh.org/wiki.

INTERNATIONAL WORKSHOP

IRAN UNDER REZA SHAH

**POLITICS, CULTURE AND STATE
BUILDING IN THE EARLY PAHLAVI
PERIOD (1925–1941)**

PROGRAM

TUESDAY, 14TH APRIL 2026

Austrian Academy of Sciences, Theatersaal
Sonnenfelsgasse 19
1010 Vienna

18.00–19.30 **ROUNDTABLE**

Moderation: Robert Steele | Austrian Academy of Sciences

The Pahlavi Dynasty: A Conversation on the History and Legacy of a Contested Period in Modern Iranian History

Houchang Chehabi | Boston University
Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet | University of Pennsylvania
Lior Sternfeld | Pennsylvania State University

WEDNESDAY, 15TH APRIL 2026

Austrian Academy of Sciences
Postsparkasse, Seminar room 6 (4th floor)
Georg-Coch-Platz 2
1010 Vienna

9.00–9.15 **Florian Schwarz** | Austrian Academy of Sciences
Robert Steele | Austrian Academy of Sciences
Introductions

9.15–11.00 **PANEL ONE – EDUCATION AND PROPAGANDA**
Chair: Houchang Chehabi | Boston University

Bianca Devos | Marburg University
Tehran 1924: Political Uncertainty, Republican Debate, and Literary Experiment

Yasamin Alkhansa | University of Sussex
Writing Historically for Pupils: Constitutional Revolution in Mohammad Ali Foroughi's Textbooks (1908 and 1929)

Bitá Nienhaus-Naghashian | British Museum and University of St Andrews
Numismatics and Mythical Revival: Return to the Past to Imagine the Future in Early Pahlavi Iran

11.00–11.15 **COFFEE BREAK**

11.15–13.00 **PANEL TWO – GLOBAL HISTORY**
Chair: Cyrus Schayegh | Geneva Graduate Institute

Khosrow Tousi | SOAS, University of London
Master and Mandarin: Mohammad Ali Foroughi and the Internationalisation of the Iranian State

Sara Zanotta | University of Turin
Iranians in Egypt in the Early Pahlavi Times: Politics, Society, and Evolving Gender Norms

Thomas Bédérède | Sorbonne Nouvelle University
The Saadabad Pact: A Commercial Treaty?

13.00–14.30 **LUNCH BREAK**

14.30–15.45 **PANEL THREE – SECURING THE STATE**
Chair: Bianca Devos | Marburg University

Walter Posch | Austrian Defence Academy
Military Education in Early Pahlavi Iran

Elyas Pirasteh | Marburg University
Reading Order: Police, Pedagogy, and Ideology in Reza Shah's Iran

THURSDAY, 16TH APRIL 2026

9.00–10.45 **PANEL FOUR – INTELLECTUALS AND INTELLECTUAL HISTORY**
Chair: Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet | University of Pennsylvania

Ali Ansari | University of St Andrews
Mohammad Ali Foroughi and the Idea of Iran

Behzad Zerehdaran | Marburg University
Ahmad Kasravi and the Triad of Authority: God, King, and Homeland in the Early Pahlavi Context

Robert Steele | Austrian Academy of Sciences
Gustave Le Bon and Civilisational Discourses in Interwar Iran

10.45–11.00 **COFFEE BREAK**

11.00–12.45 **PANEL FIVE – POLITICS AND BUREAUCRACY**
Chair: Ali Ansari | University of St Andrews

Firoozeh Kashani-Sabet | University of Pennsylvania
Diplomacy and Doctrine: Sovereignty and International Law in the Early Pahlavi Period

Hannah Hassani | University of St Andrews
Managing the Transition: Bureaucratic Centralization in Interwar Iran

Eirik Kvindesland | Austrian Academy of Sciences
A Jew in the Majles: Iran's Jewish Member of Parliament under Reza Shah

12.45–14.15 **LUNCH BREAK**

14.15–16.00 **PANEL SIX – NATIONALISM AND NARRATIVES OF THE NATION**
Chair: Ariane Sadjed | Austrian Academy of Sciences

Lior Sternfeld | Pennsylvania State University
Iranian Jews between Iranian Nationalism and Zionism during Reza Shah's Period

Khodadad Rezakhani | Austrian Academy of Sciences
Failed Modernities: Late Qajar & Early Pahlavi Claims to the Ancient Past

Anna Heller | Marburg University
The Opera Mādar-e Vatan: Performing the Politics of Nationhood under Reza Shah