Light and Shadows

The Story of Iranian Jews

At the Fowler Museum at UCLA, 2012

Wall carpet with symbols of the Twelve Tribes of Israel.
Kashan, Iran, early 20th century. Woven silk.
Ben Ephraim Family Collection, Tel Aviv

The Book of Esther and the Forging of a Persian Jewish Identity

Reproduction of Cyrus cylinder. Babylon, clay. Date of original: 559-530 BCE.
Original in the collection of the British Museum, London.

Tomb of Cyrus, Pasargadae, Iran, 1979. Photograph by Leni Sonnenfeld.
Sonnenfeld Collection Beit Hatfutsot Photo Archive.

Reproduction of wall painting depicting an image from the Book of Esther in the Dura Europos Synagogue. Dura Europos (modern-day Syria). Original: 245 CE. Beit Hatfutsot Photo Archive.

Jewish pilgrims visit the tomb of Esther and Mordechai, Hamadan, Iran, 2008

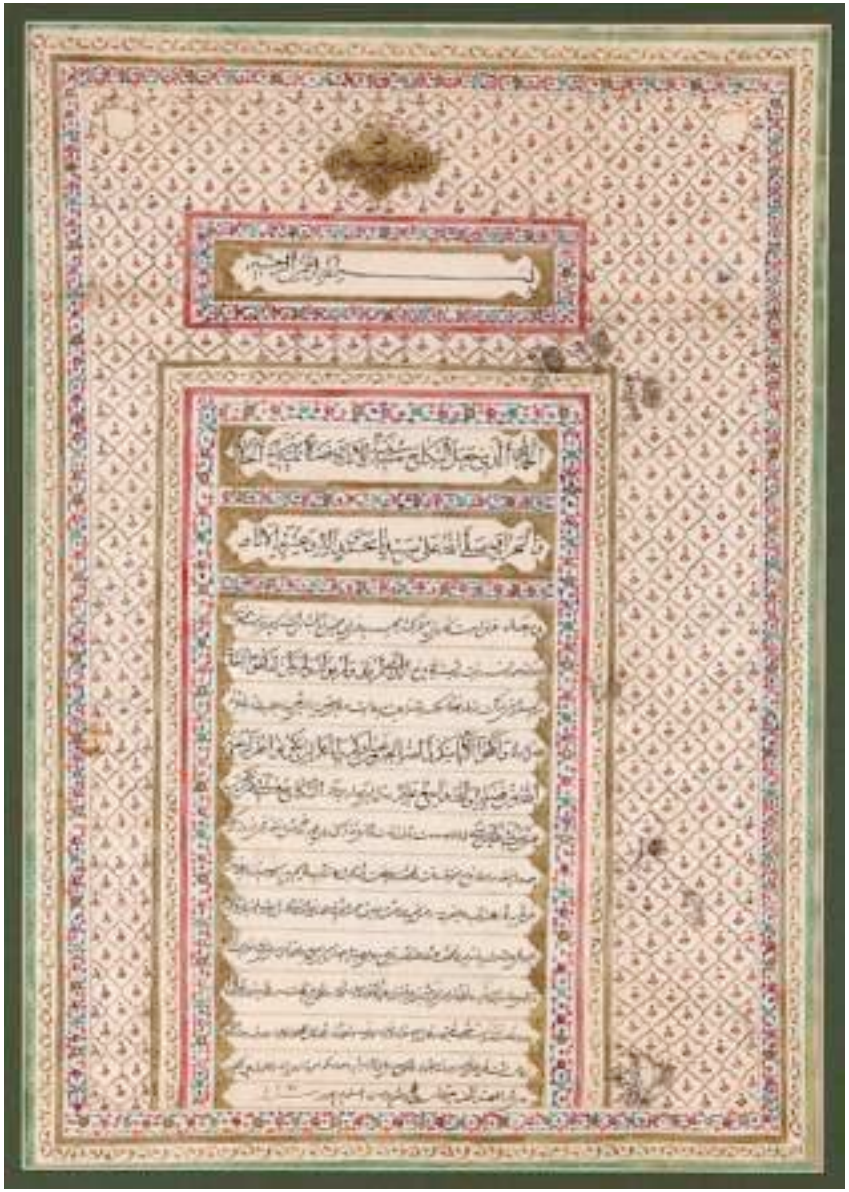
Photograph by Hasan Sarbakhshian. Collection of the artist, USA

Tnu Shira, blessings recited before the reading of the Book of Esther. Iranian Kurdistan, 1864. Ink and gouache on paper.
Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv

Life in the *Mahale*

A street in the *mahale* (Jewish quarter). Isfahan, Iran. Leni Sonnefeld, 1973. Sonnenfeld Collection. Beit Hatsutsot Photo Archive

The Jews of Mashhad

Eternal light (Ner Tamid). Mashhad, Iran, 1886.
Raised, engraved, cut and sawed copper, paper, adhesive.
Collection of Rohangiz Zaghirnejad & family

Jewish marriage contract (*ketubah*) (left) and Muslim marriage agreement (right). Mashhad, 1853. Ink and gouache on paper. Owner: Matthew and Robert Mordecai, courtesy of Global Mashhadi Jewish Federation, New York

A child-bride in Iran, 1875. Photograph by Antoin Sevruguin. Collection of Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C., gift of Joseph Apton

Above: Leaf necklace talisman. Iran, circa 1920. Silver. Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv

Left: Amulet for protecting mothers and babies. Iran, first half of 20th century. Cut and engraved silver. Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv

Ceremonies and Rituals

Torah case. Western Iran, 1861. Wood coated with metal, oil paint, cotton cloth. Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv

Torah finials, Yazd, 1933. Silver, ink and paint on paper, and glass. Collection of the Yazdi Tiferet Yerushalayim Synagogue, Jerusalem.

Torah finial. Yazd, Iran, 1966. Cut and engraved silver. Courtesy of the Yazdi Tiferet Yerushalayim Synagogue, Jerusalem

Torah finials. Central or western Iran, early 20th century.
Cut and engraved silver. Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv

Kabalistic scroll amulet. Isfahan, late 19th century. Ink on paper. Private collection

Jewish marriage contract (*ketubah*).
Golpayegan, Iran, 1838. Ink and paint on paper.
Gross Family Collection, Tel Aviv

The Modern History of Iranian Jews

The Shah with leaders of the Iranian Jewish community. Iran. 1970s.
Collection of Meir Ezri, Givat Shmuel.

David and Leora Nissan in Purim costumes. Tehran, 1964. Photograph, courtesy of David Nissan.

Iran and Zionism

Iranian Jews carrying Torah scrolls as they depart for Israel. Tehran, circa 1950

Photograph. Beit Hatfutsot Photo Archive

Chief Rabbi Yedidia Shofet (right) and his son Rabbi David Shofet (center) participating in the general demonstrations leading up to the Islamic Revolution in Iran, Tehran, 1979.

Photograph by Shimon Rahimian. From *Esther's Children: A Portrait of Iranian Jews*, 2002, edited by Houman Sarshar. Courtesy of CIJOH Publications, Los Angeles

Hasan Sarbakhshian (b. 1968, Iran). February 22, 2008. Shiraz, Iran
Photograph. Collection of the artist

Hasan Sarbakhshian (b. 1968). March 25, 2008.

Iran. Photograph. Collection of the artist

Hasan Sarbakhshian (b. 1968). April 9, 2009. Tehran, Iran.
Photograph. Collection of the artist.