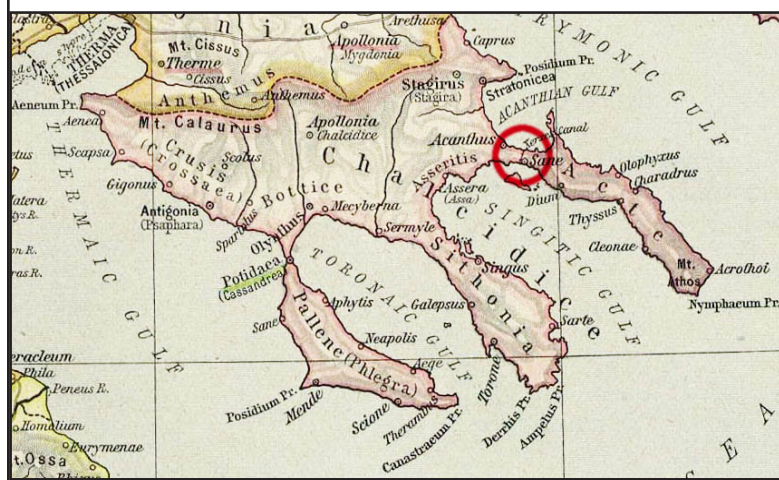


Persian Marvel Lost for Millennia (III)



Map of the base of the Athos peninsula, with the course of the canal marked.

ATHENS (National Geographic) -- Virtually all the documentary evidence for the canal of Xerxes is found in book seven of Herodotus' Histories. Writing approximately 50 years after the canal was built, the Greek historian records that "all sorts of men in the army were compelled by whippings to dig a canal" in operations that lasted three years. The canal was sited at "Athos, a great and famous mountain, running out into the sea and inhabited by men. At the mountain's landward end, it is in the form of a peninsula, and there is an isthmus about twelve stadia wide; here is a place of level ground or little hills, from the sea by Acanthus to the sea opposite Torone."

and some were pressed into digging the canal. Herodotus noted that in order to provide food for the workers, a market was set up nearby (close to the modern town of Néa Roda) and "much ground grain frequently came to them from Asia." When Xerxes' army arrived, the regular contingents set up camps, while the monarch and his escort, including his elite corps, known as the Ten Thousand Immortals, stayed in more comfortable accommodations.

After Xerxes arrived in Acanthus, the Persian nobleman Artachaies, who had codirected the canal excavation, died. Artachaies was related to the Achaemenid clan. Clearly an imposing figure, he was described by Herodotus as "the tallest man in Persia ... and his voice was the loudest on earth."

Xerxes ordered a magnificent funeral in his honor, and the army erected his burial mound right next to the canal he had built. Herodotus described how the army poured out libations for Artachaies while the Acanthians "sacrifice to him, calling upon his name." If this burial mound exists, it has not yet been discovered, but its presence would be key evidence in confirming the canal's site.

U.S. Festival Awards Iranian Actor



TEHRAN -- The Transparent Film Festival in the U.S. has awarded Iranian actor Alireza Mehran for his role in 'Starvation'.

He received the best actor award for portraying a father who is unable to cope with life's problems and takes it out on his family in the Iranian short flick. "All my pains come from one more chromosome..." a synopsis for the film reads.

Directed by Meysam Muhammad-Khani, the other stars of the flick are Nasim Adabi, Shiva Veysi, and Muhammad Mousavi.

The winners of the Transparent Film Festival, which is among the top 100 best-reviewed festivals, were announced last week as 'Flash/Crash' by Dutch director Angelo Perez Lebbink won the

award for best foreign film.

The award for best short film was given to 'Chinese Laundry' by Giorgio Arcelli from Italy.

The American movie 'Stranger in the Woods' by Adam Newacheck won the best feature film award. Its writer Holly Kenney, who also stars in the movie, was selected as best actress.

Sabine Crossen from France was named best director for her film 'Welcome to Candy's'.

'Starvation' has already gone on screen at a number of global events, including the Other Movie Lugano Film Festival in Switzerland and the Liff India Filmotsav-World Cine Fest, where it brought Alireza Mehran the Best Actor award and Muhammad Mousavi the Best Supporting Actor award.

Foreign Publishers Seek Stronger Cultural Exchanges With Iran

TEHRAN -- Chairman of India's National Book Trust Professor Govind Sharma says 150 titles of books have been put on display at the 34th Tehran Book Fair (TIBF) currently underway in the Iranian capital.

Sharma told IBNA that the books covering a variety of subjects have received warm welcome so far, especially by the youth.

The works presented by India's National Book Trust to Iranian book fans include children's books, young adult literature, and a biography of Mahatma Gandhi.

Some of the books are in Hindi, while others are in English. Sharma said Indian publishers are pleased with cultural relations between India and Iran.

He said Iran and India have many common cultural grounds on which they can collaborate. The book fair, he said, provides a great opportunity for publishers from both countries to connect and work together.

With the motto "The future is readable", the 34th Tehran International Book Fair opened on May 10 and will continue until May 20.

A representative of Iraq's Muhmmadiya Institute at the book fair said books on the Arabic language and religion have received wider reception by the youth.



Chairman of India's National Book Trust Professor Govind Sharma, second left, poses with a book at the 34th Tehran Book Fair (TIBF) in Tehran.

Speaking to IBNA, Montader Altaani said that the cultural ambience of the fair is very good and many young people show interest in the Iraqi stand.

He called on Iran and Iraq to strengthen their cultural relations and provide more opportunities for

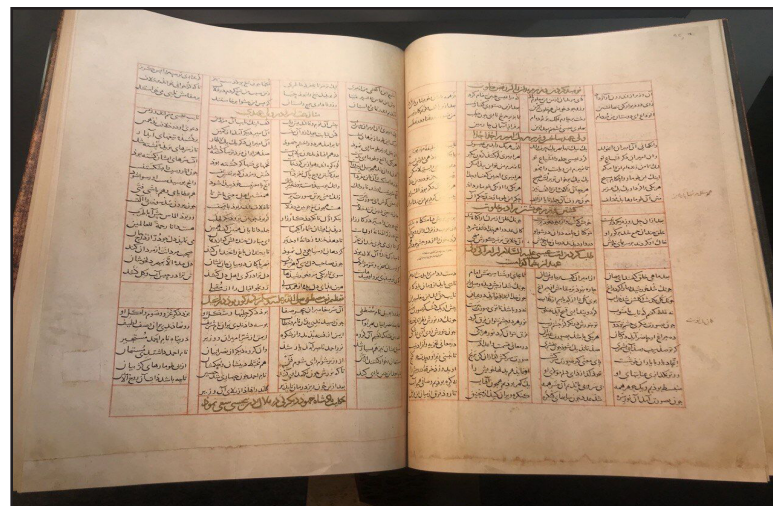
cultural exchange.

The Muhmmadiya Institute was established in 2018 in Basra to confront a soft warfare and promote Islamic culture. Six months later, it opened its branch in Sanaa, Yemen.

Turkish Publisher Displays Masnavi Manuscript

TEHRAN -- A Turkish publisher has unveiled a facsimile of a rare Masnavi manuscript for the first time at the 34th Tehran International Book Fair which is being held from May 10-20.

Abdulsattar Yazar, who serves as director of the Organization of Libraries and Publications of Konya Province of Turkiye, said on Saturday that the facsimile unveiled in Tehran is a copy of a rare Masnavi of Rumi which is being kept



in Konya Museum.

Yazar described Rumi as an outstanding human being throughout the entire history and said his works are universal, he said.

Stating that some 1,000 copies of the facsimile have been printed on the occasion of the 750th anniversary of the death of Rumi, he underlined that the published has done its best to preserve the authenticity of the original manuscript in the copy.

Embassy in Tehran Marks South African Freedom Day

TEHRAN -- The South African embassy in Tehran has marked the 29th anniversary of the country's Freedom Day with the participation of its Ambassador to Iran Vika Mazwi Khumalo and heads of diplomatic missions and Iran's Deputy Foreign Minister for Economic Diplomacy Mahdi Safari.

Freedom Day is the commemoration of the first democratic elections held in South Africa on April 27, 1994. The elections were the first in post-apartheid South Africa where anyone could vote regardless of race.

On the first commemoration of the holiday, Nelson Mandela whose successful struggle against South Africa's apartheid system of racial segregation and discrimination made him a global symbol for the cause of human rights and earned him the Nobel Prize, addressed the parliament.

The South African ambassador called Freedom Day the most important day in the country's calendar.

"It marks the liberation of our country and its people from the vicious shackles of colonialism and apartheid," he said.

Khumalo pointed to the support of Iran for the liberation movements in South Africa, saying the Islamic Republic played a pivotal role by severing all diplomatic and economic relations with apartheid South Africa and supporting the various South African liberation movements between 1979 and 1994.

Safari also addressed the event, saying the anniversary "reminds

us of the efforts and sacrifices of the people of South Africa as well as the support they received from their friendly countries in the world".

After the victory of the Islamic Revolution in 1979, Iran immediately cut relations with the apartheid regime with a view to supporting the oppressed people of South Africa, he said.

"Immediately after the victo-

ry over the Apartheid regime, Iran re-established diplomatic relations with South Africa. The relationship has been since maintained, strengthened and upgraded," he added.

Safari further pointed to the bilateral relations between the two countries, saying, during 29 years of friendly relations with South Africa, they have organized 14 joint commissions between the

two countries, where excellent agreements and cooperation arrangements have been concluded in economic, cultural, political, scientific, health, agricultural, and other fields.

"We hope to hold the 15th session of the Joint Commission in the very near future in Pretoria which will certainly cement further development in our relations."

Picture of the Day



For generations, Iranian women have played a central role in the rice cultivation of Gilan's famous paddy fields. Photo by Tasnim