



## Richard Nelson Frye: An Appreciation

A. S. H. S H A H B A Z I

To write about Professor Richard Nelson Frye is not an easy task. His experience in the fields of linguistics, history, and art is so vast and diverse that even an outline is bound to overawe students of Iranian, Islamic, and Turkish disciplines. His scholarly career spans half a century and has influenced so many disciples in so many lands that one would not be exaggerating to say that his vita constitutes a major chapter of the history of oriental studies—Iranistic and Turkology, as well as Islamic and Central Asian learning—in the past fifty years. His achievements are difficult to measure in words. They include influential and enduring books and illuminating articles; founding, directing, or assisting with professional journals and institutions; creating or supporting chairs and courses in various Asian fields; forging cultural ties between institutions and peoples; and, above all, training researchers of rank in diverse fields who continue his works, striving toward his goals. He is indeed no ordinary scholar. He is a famed humanist of a learned and caring world.

I first met Richard Frye in Shiraz in 1968. Having just returned from London, I was teaching Iranian history, art, and archaeology there, and he was on a visit in order to oversee the setting up of the Asia Institute in Shiraz. His tall, imposing, and dashing handsome figure was a perfect reflection of his impressively documented and charmingly written book *The Heritage of Persia* which I had used as a guide and companion since 1964. On hearing that I was engaged in preparing a biography of Cyrus the Great, he jumped with characteristic enthusiasm and offered to help me secure a number of references not available in Shiraz. When I told him of my needs, he fulfilled his words gracefully and generously. That was the beginning of a cooperation which continues to this day. We traversed dusty roads, climbed dangerous rocks, and shared meagre meals on many

an "archaeological tour" in various parts of Iran. We fought the pre-revolutionary Iranian bureaucracy in order to save historic monuments or to institute true centres for Iranian studies in Iran itself. And we discussed, in person or by correspondence, different aspects of Iranistics. He made such an impression on me that when I graced the preface to *Cyrus the Great* (Shiraz, 1970) with the names of the teachers to whom I owed debts of gratitude, his could not be left out. Although divergence of opinions has not been lacking, he has never ceased to amaze me with the diversity of his experiences and expertise. The following sketch of his scholarly activities I owe to the enlightening discussions we have had over the past twenty years.

Richard Frye was born on January 10, 1920, in Birmingham, Alabama, to a Swedish family that moved in 1923 to Danville, Illinois, where he graduated from secondary school with high honours in 1935. Historical novels, particularly those of Harold Lamb, evoked in him a deep interest in history and the oriental world, and when in 1935 he went to Urbana to read philosophy at the University of Illinois, he pursued historical studies and was fortunate enough to have as his advisor Albert Howe Lybyer, professor of Ottoman and Near Eastern history, the author of the classic volume *The Government of the Ottoman Empire in the Time of Suleiman the Magnificent*. Lybyer had served on the King-Crane Commission to the Near East (1919) and was a model teacher. He started Frye, then sixteen, on the road to oriental history and also made him study Far Eastern, Armenian, and Eastern European history, thereby insuring for him a good background in historical method and historiography.

In the summer of 1938, young Frye attended the second Princeton summer school where he studied Arabic under Philip Hitti and Nabih Faris,

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**Richard N. Frye**  
1920-2014



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RICHARD N. FRYE WAS AN ACADEMIC ADVENTURER. HIS MEMOIR, *GREATER IRAN: A 20<sup>th</sup>-Century Odyssey*, begins with his OSS years in Afghanistan and dwells far more on flat tires in the desert, washed-out mountain roads, and wretched sleeping accommodations than on the inscription he copied or the ruin he visited at the end of his journeys through remote parts of the Iranian world. It also details his warm acquaintance with hundreds of Iran scholars in a score of countries, along with his remarkable ability to speak with almost all of them in their native languages. The title Irandoost, "Friend of Iran," bestowed on him by Iran's most eminent scholars, was well warranted. At a field station for Iranian archaeology students in 1977 I heard him introduced with just that one word. It was enough.

Frye began and ended his scholarly career at Harvard, but he gave serious thought to relocating to Hamburg or Shiraz. He was not a conscientious teacher, and after serving as jack-of-all-lectures during the fledgling years of Harvard's Center for Middle East Studies, he "retired" from the Center when H.A.R. Gibb, whom he did not harmonize with, became its director in 1955. As Agha Khan Professor of Iranian Studies, Frye thenceforward restricted his Harvard teaching to pre-Islamic Iranian languages and thus had comparatively few students. *The Heritage of Persia* (1963) reflects his deep learning about Iran's early history and basically contains the lectures that Harvard students never heard him give. That being said, his doctoral work on the history of Bukhara, and later *The Golden Age of Persia* (1988) about Iran after the Arab conquest, gained a greater readership than his more technical works on the pre-Islamic period.

When the Iranian Revolution limited his opportunities to visit Iran, he renewed his interest in Afghanistan, where his second wife, Eden Naby, had served in the Peace Corps. He also took advantage of the waning of Soviet power to make numerous visits to Central Asia. His book *The Heritage of Central Asia* (1996) testifies to his conviction that Iran should be conceived of not just as a country bounded by the frontiers of the Islamic Republic of Iran, but as a

great civilization that at one time spread over a vastly broader area reaching through and beyond Afghanistan and Central Asia.

Frye was a good épée fencer, a competent horseman, and a superb raconteur. Well I remember inviting him to tell an informal gathering of graduate students about the countries in which he had been arrested. He held them spellbound. ✽

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**Pierre Oberling**  
1929-2014

PIERRE OBERLING, DISTINGUISHED HISTORIAN, ETHNOLOGIST, AND POET, DIED on 22 March 2014 at his home in Reston, VA following a brief illness. Oberling was born in Strasbourg, Alsace (France) in 1929 to the distinguished French pathologist Charles Oberling and his wife Martha. In his youth he traveled widely with his family throughout Europe and the Middle East. He spent two years in Tehran, Iran, during World War II before immigrating to the United States in 1942. He earned a master's degree in French literature from Cornell University (1951), a master's degree in international affairs (1953), and a PhD in Middle East languages and cultures (1960) from Columbia University. Following brief stints teaching in Athens and Istanbul, he taught European and Middle Eastern history at Hunter College (City University of New York), from 1963 to 1998. He also served as director and treasurer of the American Research Institute in Turkey, co-editor of *Near and Middle East Monographs*, and contributing editor to the *Encyclopedia Iranica*.

Oberling's early research focused on Turkic tribes in Iran, resulting in the publication of *The Qashqa'i Nomads of Fars* (1974). He was an outspoken advocate of human rights and became involved in documenting the political and cultural history of Turkish Northern Cyprus through two seminal works: *The Road to Bellapais: The Turkish Cypriot Exodus to Northern Cyprus* (1982) and *The Heart of a Nation: A History of Turkish Cypriot Culture 1571-2001* (2007). In 2001, Oberling was awarded the Distinguished Service Award of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Republic of Turkey, for this work.

نسخ خطی و چاپی. از فرائد غیائی، در روزگار ما، حدائق شش نسخه خطی شناخته شده است که عبارت‌اند از: ۱. نسخه دانشگاه تهران به شماره ۴۷۵۶؛ ۲. نسخه ایاصوفیه به شماره ۴۱۵۵، نسخ محمد بن بدرالدین استادی، مورخ ذیقعدة ۸۶۱ق؛ ۳. نسخه اسعد افندی، به شماره ۳۳۲۹؛ ۴. نسخه پاریس به شماره 1825 s.p.؛ ۵. نسخه برلین، به شماره 1951 or.qu.؛ ۶. نسخه توپینگن به شماره 110 or foll، مورخ جمادی الاولی ۸۶۱ق (نک: دانش‌پژوه، فهرست نسخه‌های خطی کتابخانه مرکزی و مرکز اسناد دانشگاه تهران، ج ۱۴، ص ۳۷۱-۳۸۰؛ همو، فهرست میکروفیلیمهای کتابخانه مرکزی دانشگاه تهران، ج ۱، ص ۱۴۵-۱۴۶؛ ج ۳، ص ۲۲۷؛ درایتی، ج ۷، ص ۸۹۸). باهای اول تا پنجم این کتاب جمعاً شامل ۳۱۹ (با احتساب نامه شماره ۱۷۴ ب) نامه است که در سالهای ۱۳۵۶ و ۱۳۵۸ش، به اهتمام حشمت مؤید سندجی تصحیح و در دو جلد منتشر شده است و باهای ششم تا دهم آن تاکنون به طبع نرسیده است.

منابع: دانش‌پژوه، محمد تقی، فهرست میکروفیلیمهای کتابخانه مرکزی دانشگاه تهران، تهران، ۱۳۴۸-۱۳۶۳ش؛ همو، فهرست نسخه‌های خطی کتابخانه مرکزی و مرکز اسناد دانشگاه تهران، جلد چهاردهم، تهران، ۱۳۴۰ش؛ درایتی، مصطفی، فهرستواره دست‌نوشته‌های ایران (دنا)، تهران، ۱۳۸۹ش؛ غزالی، محمد، فضائل الانام من رسائل حجة الاسلام، به کوشش عباس اقبال، تهران، ۱۳۳۳ش؛ قطب‌الدین جامی، ابوالفتح محمد بن مطهر، حدیقة الحقیقة، به کوشش حسن نصیری جامی، تهران، ۱۳۹۰ش؛ مؤید، حشمت، «پیشگفتار»، نک: یوسف اهل، و صاف‌الحضرة شیرازی، تاریخ و صاف، تهران، ۱۳۳۸ق؛ یوسف اهل، فرائد غیائی، به کوشش حشمت مؤید، جلد اول، تهران، ۱۳۵۶ش؛ جلد دوم، تهران، ۱۳۵۸ش.

محمود ندیمی هرتدی

عناوین ابواب آن عبارت‌اند از: الباب الاول فی رسائل السلاطین مع الملوک والامراء (۱۴۴ نامه: ۱-۱۴۴)؛ الباب الثانی فی رسائل الصواحب والوزراء (۸۱ نامه: ۱۴۵-۲۲۴) با احتساب نامه شماره ۱۷۴ ب؛ الباب الثالث فی رسائل السادات والتقیبا (۱۱ نامه: ۲۲۵-۲۳۵)؛ الباب الرابع فی رسائل القضاة و ولاية (۱۶ نامه: ۲۳۶-۲۵۱)؛ الباب الخامس فی رسائل الموالی العظام والاهالی الکرام (۶۷ نامه: ۲۵۲-۳۱۸)؛ الباب السادس فی رسائل المشایخ العظام (۲۳۸ نامه: ۳۱۹-۵۵۶)؛ الباب السابع فی رسائل المناشیر والامثال (۲۱ نامه: ۵۵۷-۵۷۷)؛ الباب الثامن فی رسائل فتح القلاع و البقاع (۷ نامه: ۵۷۸-۵۸۴)؛ الباب التاسع فی رسائل المصائب والواقعات (۹ نامه: ۵۸۵-۵۹۳)؛ الباب العاشر فی رسائل المتفرقة (۶۱ نامه: ۵۹۴-۶۵۴).

باب اول، مشتمل بر ۱۴۴ نامه، از جهت حجم مطالب نامه‌ها، مفضل‌ترین باب فرائد غیائی است (مؤید، ج ۲، ص یازده)، ولی باب ششم، با ۲۳۸ نامه از جهت تعداد نامه‌ها، از همه مفضل‌تر است.

سیک فرائد غیائی. سبک نوشتاری غالب نامه‌های فرائد غیائی نثر فنی است و، به همین سبب، متن آنها مشحون از آیات، احادیث، ابیات فارسی و عربی است و انواع صنایع زبانی مانند سجع و جناس و تکرار در متن فراوان به کار رفته است. بسامد واژه‌های عربی نیز، مانند دیگر متون آن عصر، در این متن فراوان است. اما مؤلف کتاب، به تصریح خود او، در متن اصلی نامه‌ها دخل و تصرفی کرده است و متن آنها را به ذوق خود تغییر داده است، تا آنجا که حتی اگر اول و آخر بعضی افتاده بوده، برای آنها اول و آخری ساخته و اگر مکتوبی به زبان ساده بوده، آن را با صنایع لفظی آراسته است و گویا به همین منظور واژه‌هایی را تبدیل کرده است: «چون عروسی بود عاری از لباس / حله‌هایش ساخت نیکو خاطر / یافتم مکتوب چند از سروران / هم به خطهاشان کزیشان مخبرم / اول و آخر ز بعضی گمشده / نو در آوردم به فکر فاترم / ناتمامان را همه کردم تمام / چون در این صنعت نکو مستحضرم» (یوسف اهل، ج ۱، ص ۸). ظاهراً به همین سبب است که مراسلات این مجموعه، با وجود اینکه از قلم نزدیک به دویست نویسنده بیرون آمده است از حیث سبک به یکدیگر شبیه‌اند؛ چنان‌که بسیاری از آیات قرآن و احادیث و اشعار و امثال و حتی ترکیبات و تشبیهات بارها در این نامه‌ها تکرار شده است و اوائل و اواخر آنها چه بسیار که شبیه به یکدیگر و گاه عیناً یکی است (نک: مؤید، ج ۱، ص بیست‌وهشت).

فرای، ریچارد نلسون<sup>۱</sup>. خاورشناس و ایران‌شناس سوئدی تبار امریکایی و از محققان نام‌آور و نستوه مطالعات ایرانی با بیش از نیم قرن پیشینه پژوهشی در حوزه‌های تاریخ، جغرافیای تاریخی، زبان‌شناسی، هنر و باستان‌شناسی، سکه‌شناسی<sup>۲</sup> و مهرشناسی<sup>۳</sup>. در ۱۰ ژانویه ۱۹۲۰م / ۲۱ دی ۱۲۹۸ش در شهر بیرمنگهام<sup>۴</sup> در ایالت آلاباما<sup>۵</sup> در امریکا متولد شد (ماهیار نوایی، ص ۲ شاپور شهبازی، ص ۹۹) و در ۲۷ مارس ۲۰۱۴م / ۷ فروردین ۱۳۹۳ش در سن نود و چهار سالگی در بوستون<sup>۶</sup> ماساچوست<sup>۷</sup> درگذشت (خبرنامه رسمی هاروارد<sup>۸</sup>، ۴ آوریل ۲۰۱۴م). خانواده فرای در سال ۱۹۲۳م به شهر دنویل<sup>۹</sup> در ایلینویز<sup>۱۰</sup> نقل مکان کرد و او در همان جا در سال

1. Richard Nelson Frye

2. numismatics

3. sigillography

4. Birmingham

5. Alabama

6. Boston

7. Massachusetts

8. Harvard Gazette

9. Danville

Martin and Mason also rightly put forward the notion that “the prime explanation of the continuous publication of the illustrated edition seems most likely to be the commercial instinct of publishers” (p. 234). The “commercial instinct” of the publishers and its ensuing technical innovations would appear to be recognition of the readers finding pleasure in looking at illustrated texts while reading and learning, grafting scopophilia onto epistemophilia, using the psychoanalytic terms. The commercial ramifications of such liminal and subliminal urges are evident in publishers’ frequent production of illustrated texts.

Martin and Mason show how illustrations helped the *Rubāiyāt* to become “one of the most widely illustrated books of all time” (p. 233). They show how the late 1800s, the period of dramatic emergence of FitzGerald’s *Rubāiyāt*, was also a “time of growth and change in demand for books” (p. 234). Technical developments in printing also brought book prices down and made books available to a large reading public that was gradually growing larger. The result was that the work of successful writers, especially novelists, appeared in illustrated editions and new illustrated magazines such as *Punch* and *Illustrated London News*. Illustrated texts satisfied the “public interest in the visual component of their reading matter” (p. 234).

In 1884, the famous edition of FitzGerald’s *Rubāiyāt* illustrated by Elihu Vedder appeared in the USA. Martin and Mason contend that availability of the Vedder edition and other illustrated editions in the UK and USA from the late 1880s onwards crucially influenced the popularity of the *Rubāiyāt*. The new printing techniques, the development of the mass market for books, and the willingness of publishers to commission professionals to illustrate specific works ushered in a “golden age.” Such illustrations maintained and enhanced the popularity of FitzGerald’s *Rubāiyāt* into the early decades of the twentieth century in the form of gift books and other editions, including a 1988 large size publication in Paris by Souffles with art photographs by Shahrokh Golestan.

*Edward FitzGerald’s Rubāiyāt of Omar Khayyām: A Famous Poem and its Influence* and *Edward FitzGerald’s Rubāiyāt of Omar Khayyām: Popularity and Neglect* are dual complementary works of scholarship, reflection, and academic research, in the strongest sense of the adjectives. Scholars, academics, literary critics, translators, and those who love poetry and share Khayyām’s and FitzGerald’s twofold concerns with the human lived experience of being and nonbeing will find these twin texts of much interest.

Ehsan Yarshater

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### Obituary

Professor Richard Nelson Frye (10 January 1920–27 March 2014)  
A Distinguished Scholar of Iranian Studies



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The career of Professor Richard Frye in Iranian studies spanned more than half a century, during which time he was fully occupied researching, writing, and teaching. Our field is so much richer because of his dedication to it and his indefatigable efforts to advance Iranian studies in fields as diverse as history, historical geography, linguistics, art and archeology, numismatics, and sigillography.

Professor Frye was primarily known as a scholar of Iran and Iranian Central Asia, but the scope of his studies and contributions was much wider. His research interests comprised also Byzantine, Caucasian, and Ottoman history, Eastern Turkistan, ancient and medieval Iranian art, Islamic art, Sufism, Chinese and Japanese archeology, and a variety of Iranian and non-Iranian languages including Avestan, Old Persian, Middle Persian, Parthian, Sogdian, Khotanese, Bactrian, New Persian, Arabic, Turkish, and even Chinese, besides research languages including French, German, Italian, and Russian.

Professor Frye was born on 10 January 1920 of Swedish parents who immigrated to the United States and took up residence in Birmingham, Alabama, but later moved to Danville, Illinois. He entered the University of Illinois at Urbana to study philosophy, but was gradually drawn towards history and was introduced to Ottoman and Near Eastern as well as Far Eastern, Armenian, and Eastern European history. In the summer of 1938, one year before he received his BA, he attended a summer school at Princeton University and studied Arabic under Philip Hitti and Turkish under Walter Wright and Islamic Art with Mehmet Aga-oglu. Here he met Albert Olmstead, the author of *History of the Persian Empire* (Chicago, 1948), who stirred

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