

## **Project Report: Digitisation and publication of the Muhammad Juki Shahnamah RAS ms.239**

The Royal Asiatic Society thanks TIMA for the grant towards digitising the images of the Muhammad Juki Shah Shahnamah, in preparation for the publication of a monograph on the manuscript by Dr. Barbara Brend accompanied by a commentary by A.H.Morton, a renowned scholar of the Persian language, on the notes and seals contained within. The publication will present the manuscript in its historical and art-historical context and all the miniatures will be published for the first time. Also, a page of hidden notes which has just been revealed after conservation is discussed.

The Shahnamah is one of the finest Persian manuscripts of the fifteenth century and it bears the seals of the Mughal Emperors Babur, Humayun, Jahangir and Shah Jehan. Its 31 miniatures and illumination have never been fully published and the available literature on the manuscript is very limited. The most recent works include a short article (10 pages) in the history of the Society (1979) and a description in the *Catalogue of Persian Paintings in the Royal Asiatic Society* (1998) both by Basil Robinson. There is also a brief entry in the exhibition catalogue of *Timur and the Princely Vision* (1989).

The miniatures were digitised successfully at the British Library in January 2009 and the publication is now (July 2009) in the final stages of preparation. A CD including all the images accompanies this report and two further CDs were sent to the TIMA mentors of the project, Professor Charles Melville and Dr.Mohsin Farid. It is hoped that now the images are available, the Royal Asiatic Society will be able to include them in the website with a specific page devoted to the manuscript.

The publication will coincide with an exhibition of the Shahnamah manuscripts held in British collections at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge in 2010 of which the Muhammad Juki Shahnamah will also be a part. We also hope to hold a study day at the Society to celebrate its publication.

The Society is very grateful to TIMA for this grant which will of course be fully acknowledged in the publication and in any further projects.

Alison Ohta  
RAS, July, 2009