



OMARIANA

Bulletin of the Dutch Omar Khayyám Society

Volume 9, nr. 1-2, Fall 2009

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Whitley Stokes and the Madras edition

The year 2009 does not only mark the 150th anniversary of the first edition of the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám*, and the 200th birthday of its translator. It is also one hundred years ago that Whitley Stokes, the notable Irish philologist and Anglo-Indian jurist, died. Stokes is often remembered as the man who, early in July 1861, salvaged a copy of the *Rubáiyát* from Quaritch's pennybox and passed it on to the Pre-Raphaelite circle and thus paving the way to its international fame.



Whitley Stokes (1830-1909) was one of Ireland's greatest scholars, pioneer of Celtic studies and lawyer at the same time, spending much of his life in India, where he worked on the codification of Anglo-Indian Law. In England however, he was better known as a man of letters, translator of poetry from eastern and northern Europe.

The story of the *Rubáiyát*'s discovery is often told but the role that Stokes played in its rise to fame is far more important than being the accidental passer-by whose attention to the little pamphlet-like booklet might have been drawn because of its unusual title. As a man of literature he must have acknowledged its importance immediately, reason why he gave copies to poets as Samuel Ferguson and Dante Gabriel Rossetti. In 1862, Stokes left for India, looking for better fortune, and as soon as he arrived he started to seed the seeds of the *Rubáiyát*'s future fame.

In Potter's bibliography we find only one reference to Whitley Stokes, in number 376, apparently a reprint of the first London edition, issued in Madras, 1862. There is no obvious link to reference number 166, which describes the same Madras edition in full detail, strangely enough without mentioning Stokes' name. Until recently little attention has been paid to Whitley Stokes' part in the *Rubáiyát* history. It was only at the recent Leiden & Cambridge conference of July 2009, that John Drew of Cambridge told its story in more detail in a paper called 'The dog and the mongoose'. Drew unraveled the, at first sight, rather complex history of misunderstanding and false assumptions, a play in which a number of known and unknown players are introduced such as Edward Bylles Cowell, Garcin de Tassy and a major Evans Bell. And though he is not the first to do so, Drew points to the fact that Edward FitzGerald was identified as the translator of the 1859 and subsequent editions, as early as 1864, in an article in the 'Madras Journal of Literature and Science.' It is Whitley Stokes to whom "goes the credit for recognizing, acclaiming and tirelessly promoting the *Rubáiyát*", to quote John Drew. The full text version of his paper can be downloaded from:

<http://www.omarkhayyamnederland.com/downloads/whitleystokesbyjohn drew.pdf>

A full account of this intriguing story is published by Cambridge Poetry Workshop, 2009.



Ill. by Ronald Balfour

The Great Omar

Iranian filmmaker Mohammad-Ali Farsi has recently completed production of a documentary, which scrutinizes the disappearance of "The Great Omar", a jeweled binding of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam.

See: Tehran Times, December 10, 2009.

See: http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=209625



THE GREAT OMAR

THE OMAR YEAR 2009

The year 2009 marks the publication, 150 years ago, of Edward FitzGerald's translation of the *Rubáiyát*, and the 200th anniversary of FitzGerald's birthday, in 1809. A number of events have already taken place, some are still running at this moment and some new events will take place later this year. Forthcoming events are listed below. For a more detailed programme also see the events page (past and running events) on: <http://www.omarkhayyamrubaiyat.com>



Netherlands

Omar Khayyám in Deventer

Until December 31, 2009, an exhibition will be held at the 'Stadsarchief en Athenaeumbibliotheek' in Deventer in The Netherlands. The exhibition will focus on 'Omariana' in relation Edward FitzGerald, the Dutch poets J.H. Leopold and P.C. Boutens, Dutch translations, publications by Omar Khayyám clubs, foreign and Iranian editions, and parodies. Opening ceremonies took place October 31. A little catalogue is available at the 'Stadsarchief en Athenaeumbibliotheek'.

See also *SAB eert Omar Khayyam met expositie* at: <http://www.sabinfo.nl/>

See also <http://www.destentor.nl/regio/deventer/5749308/Deventer-eert-Perzische-dichter-Omar-Khayyam.ece>

United Kingdom

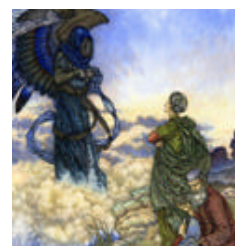
British Library, London, 14 December 2009 - 21 February 2010

Exhibition to mark the 150th anniversary of Edward FitzGerald's publication of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*.

Mon 14 Dec 2009 - Sun 21 Feb 2010. Folio Society Gallery, British Library.

More details at: http://www.bl.uk/whatson/exhibitions/Omar_Khayyam/omarkhayyam.html

See also: <http://www.iranheritage.org/khayyam-fitzgerald/default.htm>



United States

The Persian Sensation - Austin (Texas)

Though the exhibition itself has ended, there is a video recording available at the Harry Ransom Center website, telling the story of the "Great Omar", the famous jewelled edition of the *Rubáiyát*, that went down with the Titanic. *The curse of the Great Omar* is available at: <http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/multimedia/video/2009/omar/video.html>

Also available is a slide show *Displaying the Rubáiyát in Miniature*.

Exhibition Services staff member Sonja Reid and Curator of British and American Literature and exhibition co-curator Molly Schwartzburg discuss their collaborative project to create an effective display for these compelling artifacts. Available at:

<http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/multimedia/slideshows/2009/minibooks/slideshow.html>



Miniature editions of *The Rubáiyát*



The collaborative "Rubáiyát" is an online version of Edward FitzGerald's five editions of the *Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyam*, designed as an online tool to help you experience the poem as fully as possible and share your observations with other readers.

Available at: <http://scholar.hrc.utexas.edu/rubaiyat/>

Iran

An exhibition of calligraphy works will open on December 14 in Tehran's Niavaran Cultural Historical Complex celebrating the 150th anniversary of the translation of Khayyam's *Rubaiyat* into English by Edward FitzGerald.

More information in Tehran Times, December 14, 2009

Website: http://www.tehrantimes.com/index_View.asp?code=209532

THE PERSIAN SENSATION - IMPRESSIONS OF AN EXHIBITION



Co-curator Michelle Kaiserlian

The Persian Sensation refers to the sensation that 'The Rubáiyát of Omar Khayyám' caused in the United States and Great Britain, a century ago. The exhibition explores the question why and how the translation of a Persian poem went from obscurity to celebrity in British and American culture.

The Harry Ransom Center, a humanities research library and museum at the Uni-

versity of Texas at Austin (U.S.A.) holds one of the largest collections of *Rubáiyát* materials in the world (1), and the range of materials exhibited here, offer a broad perspective on this remarkable history. The exhibition tells this story in four sections. 'The Poets' Rubáiyát' contains material on Omar Khayyám and Edward FitzGerald, the history of the British imperial activities in Persia and the Middle East and the publication of the translation, its poetics and its early reception. 'The Cult of Omar' explores the aesthetic trends that established the *Rubáiyát* as a precious 'Oriental' object. 'Everybody's 'Rubáiyát'' illustrates the place of the 'Rubáiyát' through the 1950s, from pirate editions and popular entertainment to further translations and Modernist literary responses. Finally, 'In Search of Khayyám' addresses the question of how people in Iran today experience and interpret the 'Rubáiyát.' (2)

The checklist, or the 'Exhibition labels' (3), lists more than 200 items, including introductions to each section. The exhibited items however, are only briefly listed. Among these we find some extraordinary and rare manuscripts, books, illustrated material, pirate editions and all kinds of *Rubáiyát* related documents. To name only a few: the first pirated edition, the so called Madras edition of 1862; Meigs' miniature edition (1900); four miniature editions by the Rosemary Press (1916); the 'Reveries of Omar', illustrated by Cecil Gwendolin Trew, (Los Angeles, 1929); four cards from 'Omar: A Game of the Rubáiyát' (Monroe, N.C.: Clark W. Walton, 1936), offering four versions of 13 stanzas in the translations by FitzGerald, Whinfield, Garner and Kerney; and from the same publisher 'An Omarian Alphabet' (Monroe, NC: Clark W. Walton at Sunnyside Press, 1935.

Digitally reproduced), and finally a digitally reproduced copy of the special Mardi Gras edition of the 'New Orleans Picayune', with lithographs of parade

floats decorated to represent stanzas of the 'Rubáiyát' (T. Fitzwilliam & Co. Ltd., 6 March, 1905). From the Center's collection a considerable number of parodies is exhibited, as well as quite a few examples of advertising commercial products that were connected the new 'the joy of life' mantra to the *Rubáiyát*. The wide and varied range of material relating to Khayyám, the *Rubáiyát* and to FitzGerald, that is exhibited, certainly meets the expectations that I had. For some items, that might normally be difficult to display, a very acceptable technical solution was found by digitally reproducing separate pages or parts of an item, such as the New Orleans Mardi Grass edition. This allows the spectator to see every illus-



tration in stead of only one or two. Menu cards of meetings of the American Omar Khayyám Club, though not on display but

present in the center's library, suggest that the American Club lasted at least until 1936, more than a decade longer than often assumed. Two points however, need to be mentioned. One is a small but important error in the accompanying text of the copy of FitzGerald's first translation, where it says that the second edition was published in 1867. The second is that, in my view, more attention would be welcome regarding the ongoing discussion on Omar Khayyám being the author of the quatrains that are generally ascribed to him. If the final conclusion on Khayyám is, as some modern scholars put it, that he never existed the way we know him, than the Persian sensation would be complete. Nevertheless, this is an excellent exhibition that everyone who is interested in Khayyám should visit. The website on 'The Persian Sensation' however, provides enough information and examples to get an impression of what the exhibition is all about.

Jos Coumans, July 2009

(1) The *Rubáiyát* collection of the Harry Ransom Center consists mainly of three acquisitions, made in 1961, 1964 and 1976.

(2) From the Harry Ransom Center news release, October 28, 2008.

(3) <http://www.hrc.utexas.edu/pressphotos/2009/rubaiyat/>

Image courtesy of The Historic New Orleans Collection, accession number 1980.192.16 i-xx

Jaarboek - Yearbook 5 : Contents

Preface

Chairman of the Dutch Omar Khayyám Society *Jos Biegstraaten*, looks back upon nearly twenty years of the Society's existence and highlights some memorable events.

Vijftien kwatrijnen

A selection of 15 quatrains, translated into Dutch by *Dirk Meursing*.

... and Thou Beside me singing in the Wilderness'

A fragment from one of FitzGerald's most famous quatrains, but who in fact is this 'Thou'? *Hans de Bruijn*.

De Islam en de wijn.

Geert Bremer compares references to wine and wine related subjects in the *Rubáiyát* with quotations in the Koran and in the Bible.

Omar Khayyam onder de loep.

Marco Goud gives some examples of Boutens' involvement with the typography of his *Rubaiyat*. *100 kwatrijnen van Omar Khayyam*, published in 1913.

Veertien kwatrijnen

Selection of 14 quatrains, translated into Dutch by *Willem Veldhuizen*.



Illustration by Theo Forrer

Omar is klaar. Over Johan van Schagen, Theo Forrer en Omar Khayyám.

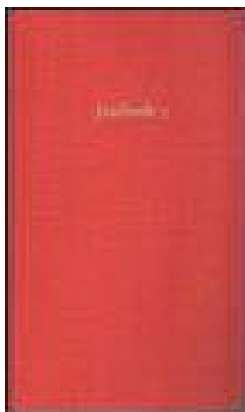
Since his youth, translator and poet Johan van Schagen was highly intrigued by Omar Khayyám and his *Rubáiyát*. Many of his translated quatrains were illustrated by the Dutch artist Theo Forrer and between the two a lifelong friendship developed. *Jos Biegstraaten*.

'Thou, Oh Lord Christ, Beside me in this Wilderness of man's futile endeavour ...'

FitzGerald's *Rubáiyát* (1879) was subjected to a theosophical interpretation by an unidentified author, F.O.Y., in a series of articles in *The Path*, published by the Blavatsky Insitute (1911-1912). *Johan ter Haar*.

Schetsen van FitzGerald en Woodbridge bewaard in Arthur Benson's *Edward FitzGerald*.

A number of old newspaper cuttings, found in a copy of Arthur Benson's biography of Edward FitzGerald (1905), reveal how the famous translator lived amongst the people of Woodbridge and how they looked upon their eccentric fellow citizen. By *Gabrielle van den Berg*.



Khayyams Arabische verzen.

Remi Hauman presents a Dutch translation of Khayyám's Arabic verses.

Omar Khayyams *carpe diem* filosofie in de Perzische poëzie.

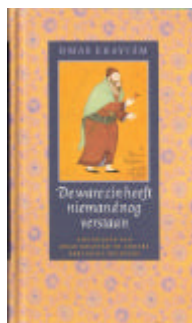
Carpe diem, *in vino veritas*, the transitoriness of life, the meaning of life, all these motives, that are often associated with Omar Khayyám, are omnipresent in early Persian poetry, as *Asghar Seyed-Gohrab* demonstrates.

Jaarboek 5 is available (in Dutch only) from Avalon Pers, Woubrugge.

<http://www.avalonpers.nl>

New editions and translations

J.T.P. DE BRUIJN



De ware zin heeft nog niemand verstaan. Kwatrijnen van Omar Khayyâm en andere Perzische dichters. In het Perzisch met een Nederlandse vertaling, toelichtingen en een nawoord door J.T.P. de Bruijn. Amsterdam, Bulaaq, 2009. [In Persian and Dutch]
ISBN: 978-90-5460-112-8, 160 p.
€19.50.

Selection of 100 quatrains, of which 68 quatrains ascribed to Omar Khayyâm, in manuscripts older than the Bodleian ms. of 1460, and 32 by contemporary poets. In the epilogue, the Persian quatrain is discussed, as well as Khayyâm's life, and the questions regarding tradition and authenticity of the quatrains, the reception of Khayyâm's verses, and the 'talking dust' as a motive in Khayyâm's verses. Published November 2009.

FOLIO SOCIETY

Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam the astronomer-poet of Persia. Translated into English verse by Edward FitzGerald. Introduced by A.S. Byatt. Illustrated by Niroot Puttapipat. London, Folio Society, 2009.

220 pages. Book size: 13" x 9¾". Presented in a cloth-bound solander box.

Limited edition of 1,000 copies. Vellum quarter-binding, spine blocked in 22-carat gold, vellum tips. New etching hand-printed, signed and numbered by the artist Niroot Puttapipat.

For more information see: <http://www.foliosociety.com/book/RKS>.

All images are available at: <http://himmapaan.livejournal.com/24073.html> and

<http://himmapaan.livejournal.com/25212.html>

Slideshows on how the book was made can be seen on the website of The Fine Book

Bindery: <http://www.finebinding.co.uk/FOLIOSOC/rubai.html>



OMAR KHAYYAM, A SCIENTIST, A POET



A documentary on DVD, on the life of Omar Khayyam, by Hassan A. Sherkat.

Produced by Shooting Stars Productions

44 West Broadway, # 501S

Salt Lake City, Utah 84101

\$3.00 for educational institutions

\$ 15.00 for general public

Website: <http://www.khayyamdocumentary.com>

AUSTIN P. TORNEY

Rubaiyat Of Omar Khayyam. Translated By Edward FitzGerald & Illustrated By Austin P. Torney. CreateSpace, 2008. ISBN: 9781438225524

114 quatrains are presented via a merge of the first four editions of the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam. The 80+ illustrations, all in color, are a mixture of ancient and modern styles.

See also: <http://www.toequest.com/forum/general-philosophy/3755-the-rubaiyat-omar-khayyam.html>

RUMI

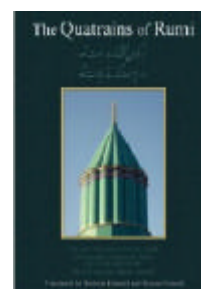
The Quatrains of Rumi / Rubâ'îyât-é Jalâluddîn Muhammad Balkhî-Rûmî. Translated by Ibrâhîm W. Gamard and A. G. Rawân Farhâdî. Sufi-Dari Books, 2009.

ISBN 978-1-59731-450-3

\$29.95, £19.50

Gamard spent 22 years working on this translation, together with an Afghan scholar whose native language is Persian and who is experienced in the translation of classical/medieval Persian sufi texts.

See also: http://dar-al-masnavi.org/about_qor.html



Recently published

William H. Martin and Sandra Mason, "Musical works based on the Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, 2009, available at http://www.iranica.com/newsite/articles/unicode/ot_grp18/ot_khayyam_x_20090715.html

William H. Martin and Sandra Mason, "Illustrations of English translations of Omar Khayyam's Rubaiyat," *Encyclopaedia Iranica Online*, 2009, available at http://www.iranica.com/newsite/articles/unicode/ot_grp18/ot_khayyam_ix_20090715.html

Miscellaneous

Legacy of Omar Khayyam

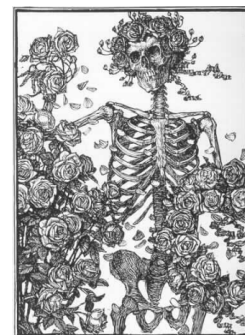
Written originally as a curtain raiser article of the conference. International Conference on the Legacy of Omar Khayyam. By A Rangarajan.

Website: <http://rangarajan-monsoonmeanders.blogspot.com/2009/10/this-was-written-originally-as-curtain.html>

Paul Liberatore: Artist's long, strange trip

A short account of the Grateful Dead's famous iconic skull and roses image, created by Stanley "Mouse" Miller and Anton Kelly in 1966.

Website: http://www.marinij.com/lifestyles/ci_13575019



Fanny and Edward

August 16, 2009, a play was performed called Fanny and Edward, by Margie Royal, directed by Janet Kelsey.

Edward Fitzgerald, poet/translator of *The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam*, and actress Fanny Kemble, born the same year (1809), these two esteemed Victorians were complete opposites and life long friends. Featuring Penelope Reed and Zoran Kovcic
The Hedgerow Theatre, 64 Rose Valley Road, Media, PA 19063, USA

<http://www.hedgerowtheatre.org/>

Omar Khayyám on YouTube

The Poet of Uncertainty

A BBC documentary, in 5 parts, by Sadeq Saba.

Part 1: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c9qum3cnoDI&feature=related>

Part 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=dTnG03I2CqE&feature=related>

Part 3: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1_PejGqItNs&feature=related

Part 4: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJOpezDXyFU&feature=related>

Part 5: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eGM2voIsC04&feature=related>

There are many other entries on Omar Khayyám on YouTube. You will find selections of quatrains, as translated by Richard le Gallienne, read by Tom O'Bedlam, music, fragments from the 1957 movie featuring Debra Paget. Also many spoken versions of FitzGerald's translation, accompanied by music or fancy images. Here are some other links:

"The Rubaiyat of Omar Khayyam" by Richard Le Gallienne. Selections read by Tom O'Bedlam, on YouTube, in two parts:

Part 1: http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8eHWU3MI_V4

Part 2: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0yb1jQ4l1zs>

Omariana

Issued once or twice a year.
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