

Curriculum Vitae John “Jake” Benson

741 W. 2nd St.
Elmira, NY, 14905-2239, USA

j.w.benson@hum.leidenuniv.nl
+1 (301) 980-9279

Education

Leiden University, Leiden. *May 2016–Completion Expected May 2020*

Ph.D. Candidate, Persian Studies

Supervisors: Prof. Dr. Gabrielle van den Berg; Prof. Dr. Petra Sijpesteijn

Dissertation Topic: *The Art of Abī: Paper Marbling in the Early Modern Islamic World.*

University of Maryland, College Park. College Park, Maryland. *Fall 2007–Summer 2012*

Graduate Persian Flagship Scholar

Graduate certificate awarded by the Graduate Persian Flagship Program, August 2012.

Undergraduate Persian Flagship Scholar, Persian Studies major, with Art History and Middle East Studies minors.

Bachelor of Arts degree awarded by the College of Arts & Humanities, December 2010.

North Bennet Street School. Boston, Massachusetts. *Fall 1993–Spring 1995*

A two-year program in hand bookbinding, restoration, and conservation, primarily focused on bench work.

Certificate awarded June 1995.

Arabic Language Unit, American University in Cairo. Cairo, Egypt *Spring 1987–Spring 1988*

Studied elementary and intermediate-level Modern Standard Arabic, as well as Egyptian colloquial dialect.

Academic Awards & Scholarships

Eleanor M. Garvey Fellow in Printing and Graphic Arts *Fall, 2017*

Awarded for one month's research on marbled papers at Houghton Library, Harvard University, Cambridge.

American Institute for Iranian Studies (AIIRs) Pre-Doctoral Dissertation Fellowship *Fall, 2017*

Travel grant awarded for dissertation research on marbled manuscripts in Uzbekistan, Turkey, and Iran.

American Institute for Iranian Studies (AIIRs) Conference Travel Grant (declined) *March, 2017*

Awarded to present a paper “*Symposia Iranica*, Cambridge, UK but arrived too late to afford a plane ticket.

American Institute for Iranian Studies (AIIRs) Persian Language Fellowship (declined) *July, 2016*

Awarded to attend a Persian course at the Sa'di Institute in Tehran, but my visa request was not approved.

Professional Experience

Thesaurus Islamicus Foundation & Dar al-Kutub Manuscript Project (TIF-DAK). Cairo, Egypt

Curator & Senior Conservator

March 2012–March 2016

- Responsible for exhibitions: researched, assessed, and selected manuscripts, prepared rotations, wrote descriptive materials, and oversaw installation and de-installation of all items.
- Provided emergency response after a bomb attack on January 24th, 2014.
- Cleaned, rehoused, measured, identified, and cataloged more than 2,200 detached bookbindings, fragments, and slipcases among them significant examples from the Ilkhanid and Mamluk periods.

Benson's Hand Bindery. Columbia, SC and Takoma Park, MD

Sole Proprietor

October 2000–March 2012

- Self-employed conservator treating rare books, documents and objects made of leather, cloth and paper.

McKeldin Library, University of Maryland, College Park. College Park, MD

Library Technician II, Metadata Services Department (MSD)

February–October 2011

- Copy cataloguing and provisional original cataloging of Persian-language monographs.
- Cataloged the Iranian Political History Collection; wrote a preliminary bilingual finding aid.

The Walters Art Museum. Baltimore, MD

Manuscript Conservation Internship

September–December 2009

- Advanced training in Islamic manuscript conservation techniques under Abigail Quandt.

Etherington Conservation Center (Now ECS Conservation). Greensboro, NC

Assistant Conservator, promoted to Conservator

April 1996–August 2000

- Treated books and paper items of significant value for private and institutional collections nationwide.
- Trained library staff treating of the Hassan Fathy collection at the American University in Cairo.

Conservation Office, Library of Congress. Washington, DC

Advanced Rare Book Conservation Intern

September 1995–April 1996

- Treated several 18th century books from the Thomas Jefferson Collection and one incunabulum.

Langdell Library, Harvard Law School. Cambridge, MA

Special Collections Intern

October 1993–June 1995

- Completed a preservation survey and constructed boxes for the Rare Book and Manuscript divisions.

Publications

Book Chapters:

“The *Qīṭa ‘āt-i Khūsh Khaṭṭ* Album (University of Edinburgh Or. Ms. 373): Originality and Provenance,” in *Iran and the Deccan: Persianate Art, Culture, and Talent in Circulation, ca. 1400–1700*. Ed. Keelan Overton. (submitted for review, Indiana University Press, 2018).

Co-authored with Keelan Hall Overton. “Deccani Seals and Notations: Sources for the Study of Indo-Persian Book Arts and Collecting, c. 1400-1680,” in *Empires of the Near East and India: Sources for the Study of the Safavid, Ottoman, and Mughal Societies*. Ed. Hani Khafipour. (submitted for publication, Columbia University Press, 2018).

“The Art of *Abri*: Marbled Album leaves, Drawings and Paintings of the Deccan,” in *Sultans of Deccan India, 1500–1700: Opulence and Fantasy*. Ed. Navina Haidar and Marika Sardar. New York: Metropolitan Museum of Art, 2015. 157–59.

“Satisfying an Appetite for Books: Innovation, Production, & Modernization in Later Islamic Bookbinding,” in *Persian Languages, Literatures, and Cultures: New Leaves, Fresh Looks*. Ed. Kamran Talatoff. London: Routledge, 2015. 365–394.

Translations:

“Appendix: *Vaqfnama* of Ibrahim Qutb Shah (r. 1550-80) in Qur’an Manuscript no. 106 (fols. 329v-330r), Mashhad, Astan-i Quds-i Razavi Library.” in *Iran and the Deccan: Persianate Art, Culture, and Talent in Circulation, ca. 1400–1700*. Keelan Overton, ed. (submitted for review, Indiana University Press, 2017).

Hamidreza Ghelichkhani (translated with Kimia Maleki). “Khalilullah “Padishah of the Pen:” Royal Scribe and Ambassador of Shah ‘Abbas and Ibrahim ‘Adil Shah II. In *Iran and the Deccan: Persianate Art, Culture, and Talent in Circulation, ca. 1400-1700*. Ed. Keelan Overton. (submitted for review, Indiana University Press, 2017).

“Appendix: Text of a pamphlet of bookbinding resolutions dated AH 1278/1862 CE” in *Persian Languages, Literatures, and Cultures: New Leaves, Fresh Looks*. K. Talatoff, ed. London: Routledge, 2015. 384; 387–89.

Articles:

“Curious Colors of Currency: Security Marbling on Financial Instruments during the Long Eighteenth Century.” *American Journal of Numismatics*. Accepted for publication, 2019.

“An Interview with Dr. Nasrollah Pourjavady.” *Persiphony*. 3 (Summer, 2008), 14–16.

“A Brief History, and Possible Origin of the Schrotel Pattern.” *Society of Marbling Annual*, (2006), 7–10.

“Historical References to Marbling in East Asia.” *Society of Marbling Annual*. (2004), 20–27.

“Etherington Conservation Center Treats the Archives of Noted Egyptian Architect Hassan Fathy.” *New Library Binding Scene*. 19:1 (Spring, 2000).

“A Moldy Mess: Treatment of Water Damaged Books from the Collection of Pope Clement XI.” *The Title Page* (Fall, 1997).

Reviews:

“Paper Before Print: The History and Impact of Paper in the Islamic World by Jonathan Bloom.” *Hand Papermaking*. 17:2 (Winter, 2002).

Public Presentations & Lectures

- Netherlands-Flemish Institute in Cairo, Cairo, Egypt** February 7th, 2018
“*The Advent and Early Development of Paper Marbling in the Islamic World.*”
- Netherlands Institute in Turkey, Istanbul, Turkey** October 31st, 2017
“*The Advent and Early Development of Paper Marbling in the Islamic World.*”
- Regionality: looking for the local in the arts of Islam**
Historians of Islamic Art Association 5th Biennial Symposium
The Courtauld Institute of Art, University of London. October 20th–October 22nd, 2016
“*The Qiṭ‘āt-i Khūshkhaṭṭ Album (University of Edinburgh, Ms. Or. 373)*”
- The Timurid Period: Cultural Production, Exchange and Legacies**
Leiden University, the Netherlands. May 26th–27th, 2016
“*Decorated Papers & Paper Decoration Within Timurid and Subsequent Manuscript Cultures*”
- 6th International Ebru Congress**
Ümraniye Belediyesi, Istanbul, Turkey. May 7th–14th, 2016
“*Naqsh bar Āb: Marbled Paper as a Trope in Persian Poetry*”
- International Society of Iranian Studies 10th Biennial Conference**
Montréal, Canada August 6th, 2014
“*Naqsh Bar Ab: Marbled Paper as a Trope in Persian Poetry.*”
- Manuscript Cultures of the Ottoman Empire**
Orient Institut, Istanbul, Turkey. June 6th, 2014
“*Satisfying an Appetite for Books: Ottoman Çahârküşe Bindings.*”
- International Ebru History Symposium** December 6th, 2013
Istanbul University, Istanbul, Turkey
“*Naqsh bar Āb: Persian Textual Sources Concerning the Art of Marbling.*”
- Looking Widely; Looking Closely, Historians of Islamic Art Association 3rd Biennial Symposium**
Metropolitan Museum of Art, New York, NY. October 17th–19th, 2012
“*Naqsh Bar Ab: Safavid Marbled Papers of the Late 16th to Early 17th centuries.*”
- International Society of Iranian Studies 9th Biennial Conference**
Istanbul University, Istanbul, Turkey. August 1st–4th, 2012
“*Naqsh Bar Ab: The Exchange of Paper Marbling Techniques Between India, Iran, and Turkey.*”
- The Islamic Manuscript Association 7th Annual Conference**
University of Cambridge, Cambridge, UK. July 12th–14th, 2011
“*From Tahbik wa Tashbik to Piraza o Shiraza: Primary Textual Sources on Islamic Endband Sewing.*”
- Codicología e Historia del Libro Manuscritos en Caracteres Árabes**
CCHS-CSIC, Madrid, Spain May 19th–21st, 2010
“*Satisfying an Appetite for Books: Innovation, Production, & Modernization in Later Islamic Bookbinding.*”

Memberships

- Historians of Islamic Art Association (HIAA) 2008–present
- The Islamic Manuscripts Association (TIMA) 2011–present
- Association for Iranian Studies (AIS) 2011–present
- Middle East Librarians Association (MELA) 2012–present
- Royal Asiatic Society of Great Britain and Ireland (RAS) 2013–present
- Guild of Book Workers (GBW) 1993-1995; 2014–present

Foreign Languages

- Persian:** Advanced-level fluency in Modern Persian as well as Iranian and Tajik spoken dialects.
- Arabic:** Advanced-level fluency in Modern Standard Arabic and colloquial Cairene Egyptian dialect.
- Turkish:** Intermediate modern Turkish; reading knowledge of Ottoman, Chagatai, and Uzbek.
- French:** Basic reading comprehension, bibliographic knowledge, and speaking skills.