

IIS Update

March 2001

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The Institute of Ismaili Studies



Library Exhibition in North America

Message from the Director



Dear Donors
and Friends
of The Institute of
Ismaili Studies,

The year 2000 was a ground breaking year for the Institute. The IIS began the first part of its global “Worlds of Learning” campaign in North America. Its remarkable success was due largely to the overwhelming generosity, participation, hospitality and engagement of the *jamat* and thousands of volunteers in the field. Together, we have begun the journey to link every individual to a rich and diverse heritage and to emphasise its importance and the need to sustain it for present and future generations. Our truly heartfelt gratitude to all who contributed in every way: of time, energy, ideas as well as financial and other resources. We look forward to the next phase of the campaign in Europe, with eager anticipation.

The IIS’ website (www.iis.ac.uk), launched on 11th July 2000, has helped to create an international presence for the Institute. The website is designed to give the general public, students and scholars virtual access to the Institute’s resources. We hope that this evolving medium, accessible twenty-four hours a day, will become in time like a portal, linking people to the Institute’s resources.

Last year, in addition to five new books, The Institute of Ismaili Studies contributed over thirty-five articles in encyclopaedias, journals, and other reference works. We are planning several new publications in 2001. The Institute’s reputation for sound scholarship has been further reinforced by our active presence at key international conferences and events. The IIS was involved in providing strategic advice to the “Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders” and was also

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Visitors to the Library's exhibition view artefacts and manuscripts

Library Tours North America

Members of the *jamat* in the USA and Canada had an opportunity in the last quarter of 2000 to see some of the treasures from the collection of the Institute's Library. As part of an attempt to widen awareness of the Library and its role as a custodian of Ismaili heritage, a series of exhibitions was organised by the Institute at seventeen different locations across North America.

The exhibition contained a range of rare books, manuscripts and artefacts, selected to provide an insight into the geographical breadth as well as different media represented in the Institute's collections.

Manuscripts on display included a part of a late 13th century copy of the *Rasa'il Ikhwan al-Safa'* from Syria, an exquisite early 16th century Safavid album page with the Surat al-Fatiha and a 19th century Khojki manuscript containing various *ginans*.

One case included a *Farman* of His Highness Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah, Aga Khan III, dated 1939, addressed to the *jamat* of Rushan, and a copy of *Ismaili Weekly* from India published in 1927. The *Ismaili Weekly* comes from an important collection of

magazines and manuscripts donated by Mr Sherali Alidina of Karachi. Another item, which generated much interest, was a medallion which was displayed in a case with a mirror. The mirror enabled visitors to view both sides of the medallion; a portrait of His Highness Sir Sultan Muhammad Shah, Aga Khan III, on one side of the medallion and the young Prince Aly Khan with his mother on the reverse.

A number of coins were also shown, including a very rare gold dinar from Egypt dated 1035, an example of the last coinage type from the time of Imam al-Nizar,

as well as a fractional gold dinar minted at Alamut and dated 1152.

The more recent role of the Library in collecting artefacts relevant to Ismaili history was also illustrated with items ranging from *tiraz* (textile fragments) to jewellery, seals and amulets. The central panel of one of the amulets displayed detailed workmanship with an inscription in the form of a mosque including the names of the *Ahl al-Bayt* and the *Nad-i 'Ali* in the outer border.

The exhibition was curated throughout by Ms Shellina Karmali and accompanied at various stages by Dr. Duncan Haldane (Head Librarian) and Mr. Alnoor Merchant (Senior Assistant Librarian) who made accompanying presentations. The cities visited by the exhibition were Houston, Dallas, Atlanta, Austin, Orlando, Miami, Los Angeles, San Jose, Chicago, New York, Ottawa, Montreal, Toronto, Edmonton, Red Deer, Calgary and Vancouver.

Audiences for presentations ranged in size from fifty to three hundred, and additional talks were organised for students from Bayt al-'Ilm classes. There was a universally enthusiastic response to the travelling exhibition, and it is intended to build on this experience by taking the display panels and some items to the *jamats* in Europe in the near future.

The travelling exhibition attracted members of the *jamat* of all ages



“Worlds of Learning”

The year 2000 saw the launch of the first ever, global fundraising and awareness campaign by The Institute of Ismaili Studies. The campaign entitled “Worlds of Learning” began in North America. In 2001, members of the Board of Governors, management and staff of the Institute will share the mandate, achievements and future direction of the IIS with *jamats* in Europe.

The aim of the campaign is to create awareness within the *jamat* about the history and evolution of the Institute as well as its current projects and initiatives. This, in turn, will ensure that the Institute’s diverse constituencies will be made aware of the Institute’s resources so that they can make effective use of them. At the same time, we look to the *jamat* to pledge their support to the Institute and thereby assist in the development of its growing endowment fund to sustain the work of the IIS in perpetuity. Finally, it is our hope that each and every family within the *jamat* will participate in this campaign, so that we can all have a link to this important institution.

In June 2000, the newly appointed “National Fundraising and Awareness Teams” of Canada

and the United States visited the IIS and underwent a rigorous training programme. Delegates were immersed in the work of the Institute and shared their own experience and knowledge with the Institute’s Governors, management and staff. These local teams, in turn, trained hundreds of volunteers in the field whose untiring dedication and support of the campaign were vital to its overall success in North America.

W O R L D S *f* L E A R N I N G

Eighteen IIS representatives including Governors, the Director, Professor Azim Nanji, a number of scholars, librarians and staff visited North America. More than one hundred and eighty speeches and presentations in multiple languages (including English, Urdu, Gujarati, Farsi and French) were made across North America during a three month period. Pledges received from the *jamat* indicate a participation rate of about eighty percent.



Dr Hunsberger signing copies of her new book “Nasir Khusraw, The Ruby of Badakhshan”

Special events were organised by local IIS teams and volunteers to appeal to students, young professionals, senior adults and other groups. Stories from Ta’lim materials were performed in traditional Indian Kathak dance, to the music of ‘Teen-Tal’ which wowed audiences in Ontario, Canada. Examples of locally organised events included a Gujarati skit on the work of the IIS, essay competitions and projects which considered material from the IIS Website, as well as presentations on the work of the IIS by students at various religious education centres.

Events which were attended by the North American *jamat* included a travelling exhibition of manuscripts and artefacts from the Institute’s Library, as well as talks on recent publications by Dr Alice Hunsberger, author of *Nasir Khusraw, The Ruby of Badakhshan* and Dr Arzina Lalani, author of *Early Shi’i Thought: The Teachings of Imam Muhammad al-Baqir*. An interactive CD-ROM, *Facets of Learning*, and mobile exhibit panels toured *jamats* and a specially commissioned video, featuring IIS staff and faculty was also screened. It is envisaged that through regular *IIS Updates*, the IIS Website and future lecture tours, the Institute will continue to keep the *jamats* informed of its current initiatives and future plans.

The Institute looks forward to meeting with the *jamats* under the jurisdiction of the Councils for France, Portugal and the United Kingdom from March to June 2001.

Traditional ‘Kathak’ dance performances depict stories from Ta’lim



The Department of Academic Research and Publications continues to undertake research in a wide variety of areas in the field of Islamic Studies, concentrating primarily on Shi'i Islam and Ismailism.

IIS publications fall into several categories such as occasional papers, monographs, editions, translations, conference proceedings and bibliographical works, and are intended for specialists in the field as well as the general public. The Institute's publications are authored by our own faculty as well as numerous external scholars. Last year, the Institute launched five new books (in association with the publishers I.B. Tauris) including:



Nasir Khusraw, the Ruby of Badakhshan: A Portrait of the Persian Poet, Traveller and Philosopher, Alice C. Hunsberger, London:

I.B. Tauris in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2000. pp 288. ISBN: 1 850439192 (HB)

One of the foremost Ismaili intellectuals and a major poet of the Persian language, for nearly a thousand years Nasir Khusraw has attracted attention from admirers and critics alike. As a writer celebrated for poetry which combines art with philosophy, a travelogue relied on for its details of the Middle East in medieval times, and theological texts revered by his admirers and criticised by his detractors, Nasir Khusraw remains one of the most fascinating figures in Muslim history and literature.

His travelogue, the *Safar Nama*, details a series of journeys across the Muslim world. While in Cairo, then under the rule of the Fatimid Caliph-Imams, he was appointed *hujjat* or head of the Ismaili *da'wa* for Khurasan, his birthplace in eastern Iran. Persecuted after his return there, Nasir Khusraw sought refuge in a remote part of the Pamir mountains in Badakhshan, where he composed most of his works that we know today.

Structured around Nasir Khusraw's own writings, many of which are translated for the first time, Dr Hunsberger has provided a highly readable and insightful account of a great scholar, sage and traveller - a man of intense emotion and deep faith, whose social awareness and unstinting pursuit of excellence form the

human backdrop to what was also a literary genius and a brilliant mind.

This book is written for a general audience and will appeal to students and scholars of Ismaili studies and Persian literature, as well as those interested in Islamic thought and culture, world religions, literature, medieval history and travel.

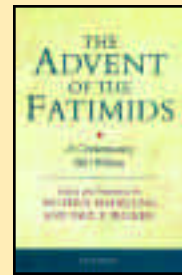


Early Shi'i Thought: The Teachings of Imam Muhammad al-Baqir, Arzina R. Lalani, London: I.B. Tauris in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2000. pp 256. ISBN: 860644341 (HB)

Using hitherto largely ignored Shi'i sources, both in published as well as manuscript form, Dr Arzina Lalani reveals in this study the pivotal contribution of Imam Muhammad al-Baqir to the formative period of Islamic thought. The author analyses Imam al-Baqir's role in the development of early Shi'i thought and evaluates his articulation of Shi'i law and theology. This is the first work to focus primarily on Imam al-Baqir's decisive role in the exposition of key Shi'i doctrines, especially the nature of the Imamate and the transmission of knowledge, together with the application of these doctrines in Muslim religious, theological, juridical and ethical domains.

This book makes an important contribution to the study of early Islam by demonstrating the role of Imam al-Baqir as one of the earliest and pre-eminent exponents of Shi'i doctrines. From the prominence of his traditions in Shi'i scholarly literature and the profoundly inspiring contributions

they represent, we perceive a truly remarkable personality, one that deserves recognition as an outstanding figure in the history of the Shi'a and a major force in the development of early Muslim thought in general. This work, it is hoped, will be of benefit to students of Islamic law, history and theology and will also be of interest to modern Shi'i communities of all persuasions.



The Advent of the Fatimids: A Contemporary Shi'i Witness, Madelung W. and Walker P. E. ed. and tr. An edition and English translation of

Ibn al-Haytham's *Kitab al-Munazarat*. Ismaili Text and Translations Series, 1. London: I.B. Tauris in association with The Institute of Ismaili Studies, 2000. pp. xiv, 192, 134. ISBN: 1 86064 551 8 (HB)

This volume presents to the modern world a new source for the history of the rise of the Fatimid caliphate in North Africa. That work is a personal memoir composed by a scholar from Qayrawan named Abu 'Abdallah Ja'far b. Ahmad b. Muhammad b. al-Aswad b. al-Haytham. He called it the *Kitab al-Munazarat* ("The Book of Discussions") and he included in it a record of his own conversations with the leaders of the Ismaili *da'wa* in Qayrawan in its crucial first few months there. As a document of this kind for a period of that remoteness, it is unique; and it surely deserves a special place in the literature of Muslim revolutionary movements almost as much as it belongs among the most valuable sources for the history of mediaeval North Africa.

This book is the first monograph in the Ismaili Texts and Translations Series of publications by the Institute which aims to produce critical editions together with their English translations and contextualising introductions of recently recovered Ismaili texts, written in Arabic, Persian and Indic Languages, that are preserved in the collections of the Institute's Library.

Further information and synopses of these publications are available on the IIS Website.

Forthcoming Publications

The Institute continues to promote original, informative and mature thought, scholarship and analysis of relevant issues through its publications. The following are anticipated to be published in the near future:

al-Shahrastani, Muhammad b. 'Abd al-Karim. 'Struggling with the Philosopher', a critical edition and translation of Kitab al-Musara'at al-falasifa, W. Madelung and T. Mayer, Ismaili Texts and Translations Series.

Modern scholarship has revealed that the famous theologian of the twelfth century, al-Shahrastani, was greatly influenced by Ismaili teachings. In this work, al-Shahrastani challenges the metaphysics of *Ibn Sina* (Avicenna).

Beauty and Islam: Aesthetics in Islamic Art and Architecture, Valerie González.

This illustrated volume of five essays explores aspects of aesthetics in classical Islamic thought in the light of contemporary theories, offering new perspectives on Islamic art and architecture with examples ranging from the Holy Qur'an and the Alhambra to the works of present-day artists and philosophers.

Further information and synopses of these publications will be posted on the IIS Website closer to the publication date.

In 2000, IIS scholars were invited to speak at a number of academic conferences. The Institute's participation at MESA was the highlight of a very busy year for IIS Faculty and students:

MESA 2000 - The Middle Eastern Studies Association's (MESA) Annual Meeting

The MESA Annual Meeting attracts over 1,500 participants with a specialised interest in the Middle East and Islam. At this year's 34th annual meeting of MESA, the Institute sponsored a panel entitled "Representations of Ismailism" which included presentations by IIS Faculty and others engaged in Ismaili Studies. The Institute was also represented on two other panels: "Defining Orthodoxy and the Other" and "Stories and Lives: Memoirs, Narratives and Poetry."

The Institute also held a reception in conjunction with MESA to launch its two latest publications; *Nasir Khusraw, Ruby of Badakhshan*, by Dr Alice Hunsberger and *Early Shi'i Thought: The Teachings of Imam Muhammad al-Baqir*, by Dr Arzina Lalani. A short multi-media presentation highlighted the resources available on the website. Guests included scholars in various areas of Islamic and Ismaili Studies, members from other Muslim organisations attending the conference, as well as *jamati* leadership from Florida.

The Institute's website carries a full listing and abstracts of all papers presented at MESA by IIS scholars as well as video footage of IIS Scholars providing their personal insights into the papers presented.

"Civil Society in Comparative Muslim Contexts"

A new seminar series organised and hosted by The Institute of Ismaili Studies, was launched in October 2000. The inaugural seminar was entitled "Locating Civil Society: Secular and Religious Spaces", by Professor Mohammed Arkoun, a Governor of the IIS. This wide-ranging series engages leading scholars in a consideration of civil society in Muslim contexts, ranging from Iran, Central Asia, and the Maghreb to Southeast Asia and sub-Saharan Africa.

The second seminar in the series was entitled "Tajikistan: From Civil War to Civil Society?" Dr Shirin Akiner, a Central Asia specialist, explored the forces affecting the notions of Tajik identity and contemporary prospects for civil society.

The seminars address the interplay of ethics, law and culture in Muslim contexts and the range of broad issues related to civil society. Future speakers in the series will include Dr Olivier Roy on Central Asia; Dr Ziba Mir-Hosseini on gender and civic participation in Iran; Dr Iftikhar Malik on Pakistan; Professor Abdou Filali-Ansari on the Magreb; Professor Norani Othman on Malaysia and South East Asia. In addition, the Director of the Institute, Professor Azim Nanji, will discuss ethical dimensions of civil society, and Dr Aziz Esmail (IIS Governor) will explore philosophical aspects of civil society.

Professor Nanji speaking at the MESA reception





Class of 2003 with Dr Esmail and Professor Nanji

Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities

The Institute received a new class of the Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities during a Welcome Lunch held in October 2000. This year's class, numbering a record nineteen students, includes students from Canada, India, Iran, Kenya, Pakistan, Syria, Tajikistan, the United States and Western China. Professor Azim Nanji (Director of the Institute) and Dr Aziz Esmail (IIS Governor) greeted the students along with staff, faculty and the Institute's second-year students.

The current Graduate Programme accepted its first class in 1994, and today has an alumni of forty-six in addition to thirty-two

students currently enrolled on the programme. This year, thirteen students graduated from the programme. Its diverse cross-section of students are complemented by a wide range of core and visiting faculty, as well as visiting fellows

and researchers, many of whom have made significant contributions in their respective fields. The three-year Graduate Programme offers a humanistic approach to the study of Islam, and relies on methodologies from a variety of disciplines.



Graduating students from the Class of 2000 with Professor Nanji

Ta'lim - Education for a Changing World

Recent developments in the Department of Education have included the inception of an "Information and Communications Technology Unit" which is exploring the opportunities that distance-learning education has to offer, including web-based teaching tools.

Preparing for a Teacher Education Workshop in Canada



In addition to developing and producing the Ta'lim curriculum, educational specialists at the Institute provide advisory and evaluative assistance for the use of these materials in religious education centres in *jamats* around the world. As part of this endeavour, work continues on the pilot Professional Teacher Educators' (PTE) programme in collaboration with the Institute for Educational Development of the Aga Khan University and Ismaili Tariqah and Religious Education Boards (ITREBs). The long-term aim of the programme is to develop human resources that will improve the implementation of the Ta'lim curriculum in the classroom. The Institute's Teacher Education Project Team were ably assisted by Mr Sabzali Baig (ITREB Pakistan) and Mr Pyarali Keshwani (ITREB

India) who were seconded to the project for two months. Their role was to develop materials for the PTE programme by providing input from the field.

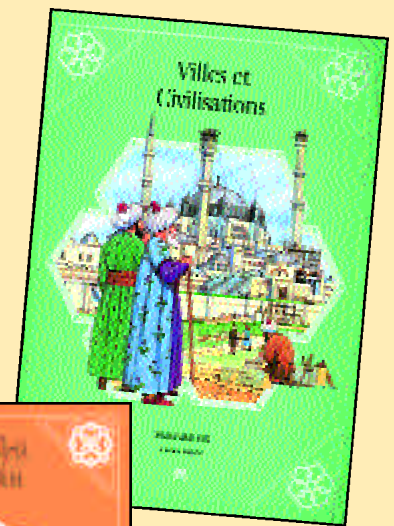
Teacher Education Workshop

In May of 2000, IIS educational specialists met with Bayt al-'Ilm teachers, parents and youth in Canada, East Africa and Karachi. The purpose of these meetings, organised by the respective ITREBs, was to facilitate a dialogue between the Department of Education and teachers, and to highlight key issues in the field for the Institute's team of curriculum developers. The Department of Education looks forward to future fact-finding meetings in Europe, USA, India and Tajikistan and the continuing support, co-operation and assistance of ITREBs worldwide.

Ta'lim Translations

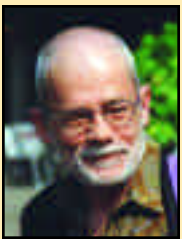
In response to the cultural and linguistic diversity of the *jamat* spread across many parts of the world, Ta'lim materials are produced in nine languages: Arabic, English, French, Gujarati, Persian, Portuguese, Russian, Tajiki and Urdu. This year has seen a number of translations of different levels of the Ta'lim curriculum come to completion including Gujarati P4 and P5, Urdu P4 and P5, Arabic P1, Persian Pre-School, P1 and P2, Portuguese P5, as well as French P6.

To ensure that Ta'lim materials in all languages are sensitive to the diverse cultural contexts of the *jamats* around the world and that they are of a consistently high quality, the Department of Education works in collaboration with ITREBs worldwide.



New Appointments

Senior Research Fellowship



Dr Hermann Landolt
Senior Research Fellow

A major contributor to modern scholarship on Sufism and Iranian Philosophy, and a student of Fritz Meier and Henry Corbin, Dr Hermann Landolt was educated at Basel University, Switzerland and Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes (Sorbonne), Paris. He taught Islamic Studies and Persian at McGill University in Montreal, Canada from 1964 to 1999, where his duties also included several assignments at the University's Tehran Branch. From 1982 to 1984, Professor Landolt served as the Head of the Institute's then Department of Graduate Studies and Research.

His more recent publications include *Nuruddin Isfarayini: Le Révélateur des Mystères: Traité de Soufisme* (Verdier: 1986, 2nd Rev. ed) and *Nuruddin 'Abdurrahman-i Isfarayini (1242-1317): Kashf al-Asrar* (Institute of Islamic Studies, 1980). He was also the General Editor for the edition of Henry Corbin's *Cyclical Time and Ismaili Gnosis* (Kegan Paul International and Islamic Publications Ltd., 1983).

Professor Landolt has contributed over sixty-five journal articles, book chapters and encyclopaedia entries to a variety of publications, including the forthcoming, "The Role of Sufism in the World of Islam" as part of *Anthology of Islamic Studies, vol. 2* (Institute of Islamic Studies).

The Institute is pleased to welcome many new members of staff from diverse backgrounds and fields who bring to the Institute a unique range of skills:

Dr Shantharane P. Arulanantham - *Writing Advisor*

Teresa Cullip - *Student Affairs Officer*

Dr Paul Dhalla - *Visiting Fellow*

Dr Neil Frearson - *Website Administrator*

Norma Graham - *Office Administrator*

Nadia Holmes - *Editorial Assistant*

Christopher Hill - *Audio-Visuals Librarian*

Suzee Horsford - *Resource Development Officer*

Naznin Jiwa - *Administrative Assistant*

Dr Reza Shah-Kazemi - *Research Associate*

Shahed Karim - *Resource Development Officer*

Shellina Karmali - *Assistant Librarian*

Najma Malik-Noor - *Graduate Studies Administrator*

Dr Gregory Minissale - *Librarian*

Deanna Ramdeen - *Administrative Assistant*

Riaz Rhemtulla - *Education Officer*

Dr Aryn B. Sajoo - *Visiting Fellow*

Patricia Salazar - *Assistant Editor*

Nina Turnbull - *Administrative Assistant*

Continued from front page.

represented at the "XIIIth International Meeting of Peoples and Religions", held in Lisbon, Portugal - an annual event organised by a Catholic Church organisation, the community of Sant Egidio, which seeks to foster dialogue amongst religions and cultures.

Another highlight from 2000 was the "Infectious Energy" conference, the first ever international, Ismaili youth conference held in Nairobi, Kenya. The conference provided Dr Aziz Esmail, Dr Shafik Sachedina and I, representing the IIS at the conference, an opportunity to discuss topics affecting young Ismailis worldwide as well as to present the Institute's publications, perspectives and resources to those concerned with youth issues.

At the Institute, the Department of Education's Secondary Curriculum Team is actively engaged in preparing materials for the first year of secondary religious education.

In the year 2000, the IIS-ITREB Liaison Department hosted two meetings of Chairpersons of Ismaili Tariqah and Religious Education Boards (ITREBs) from a number of countries around the world. Deliberations focused on how the partnership and collaboration between ITREBs and the Institute could be further strengthened. Areas of collaboration include the preparation of resources for international programmes for adolescents, waezeen and teacher education.

On behalf of all of us at the Institute, it gives me great pleasure to congratulate the thirteen students who graduated this year from the Institute's Graduate Programme in Islamic Studies and Humanities. Many of them are engaged in a number of exciting endeavours within and outside the Institute. We wish them every success. We were also fortunate to welcome this year's new graduate class, which is the most 'globally' representative in the Institute's history, and includes students from Central Asia, Iran, North America, the Sub-Continent, Syria and Western China.

Much more remains to be done and achieved, as we get involved in projects worldwide. The nexus of different worlds converging and creating together has opened up new frontiers. This continues to inspire us to advance scholarship and learning and enlarge an endowment of knowledge for the service of the community and of society at large.



Director

Volunteer & Alumni News

Volunteers, with relevant experience and skills are vital to the development of the Institute and they continue to work with energy and dedication on a number of exciting ventures:

FEIZIN AMLANI and ZARINA KHERAJ taught on the Academic Skills Programme in Khorog.

SURAIYA KHANMOHAMED has extensive Arabic and French Language skills and has been a valuable member of the Department of Education's Translations Unit for the last few years.

RAZIA NANJI has a background as a Librarian and a keen interest in Islam, and has assisted the IIS Library with its catalogue automation and in reviewing collections.

JULIE PAPERWALA joined the website team for several weeks, assisting in its preparation.

ASHIF TEJANI and NAZIRA LAKHOO who are both multi-media and digital media specialists worked on developing the IIS interactive CD-ROM *Facets of Learning*.

We would like to thank all our volunteers and we wish them every success in their future endeavours.

The Institute is happy to welcome back its alumni who continue to contribute their expertise as consultants and volunteers on a number of projects:

SALIMA BHATIA, UK Independent Film Producer, was commissioned to write the script and co-edit the IIS video "Worlds of Learning" for the IIS Fundraising and Awareness Campaign. Her knowledge of the Institute's mandate as well as her talents contributed to making the video both innovative in its approach and intellectually stimulating.

SELINA KASSAM from Atlanta, USA, has extensive experience of donor data administration from her work at Focus Humanitarian Assistance USA and has been assisting the Department for Resource Development and Communications with the entry and verification of donor information.

JASMIN MAMANI from Toronto, Canada, spent two months working in the IIS Library, assisting in organising, cataloguing and editing bibliographies of items in the Institute's collections. Jasmin's background is in Museum Studies and she has set up the permanent exhibition "Arts of the Islamic World" now showing at the Oriental Museum, University of Durham.

RIZWAN MAWANI is from Toronto, Canada. The fruits of Rizwan's labour were apparent when the IIS Website went live on 11th July 2000. He will continue to contribute to the IIS Website, in the future.

The Institute is keen to keep in contact with its alumni and would request that they keep us informed of their progress and contact details, so that we can update our records accordingly and keep them informed of the latest news and activities at the Institute.