

International workshop on the Digitization of Cuneiform Tablets

On the occasion of the week of cultural heritage with the theme “Digitization Project of the inscriptions of the National Museum of Iran” and a “Proto-Elamite reading group” was held yesterday in the meeting hall of the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage.



According to the **IRIB News Agency**, Director of the National Museum of Iran Dr. Jebrail Nokandeh delivered a address for the opening of the event, remarking that “the International Workshop on the Digitization of the Cuneiform and Proto-Elamite Tablets of the National Museum is a collaboration among the German Max Planck Institute for [the History of Science], the Research Institute of Languages and Dialects as the academic branch of the Cultural Heritage, Handcrafts and Tourism Organization (RICHT), and the National Museum of Iran. The ultimate goal of this project is the digitization of cuneiform and Proto-Elamite tablets of the National Museum.” He added that due to the great importance of the collections preserved in the Tablets Room of the National Museum, modern documentation and the creation of a database of the collections of the National Museum of Iran are a priority.

Nokandeh emphasized that the use of modern recording techniques, especially those benefiting from computer science and modern software, can result in a shorter time expenditure, and high accuracy in achieving this goal. “In the past, the National Museum of Iran has collaborated with several overseas universities, and as a result almost one hundred cuneiform tablets have been digitized so far,” he stated, and added that this project not only provides reliable records of the collection, but will make it possible for all researchers worldwide to have access to this collection; these large data sets thereby help to accelerate further progress in the study of ancient Iranian documents at the international level.

In her address, Ms Sedigheh Piran, the curator in charge of the Tablets Room of the National Museum of Iran, highlighted practical advantages of the CDLI in the study of Proto-Elamite seals conducted at the National Museum of Iran, and stressed the necessity of using technology in innovative ways to share, in the form of online publications, museum research with other colleagues and specialists.

In this workshop, Professor Jacob Dahl from the University of Oxford discussed the latest methods of digitization of shared world cultural heritage, followed by a paper by Klaus Wagenonner from the [Free] University of Berlin about the methods of digitization in the round; due to his absence, his paper was read by Professor Dahl. Dr. Elynn Gorris from the University of Louvain talked about using the portable light dome to image archaeological artifacts.

In the second day of the workshop, Professor Dahl presented a lecture with the theme “Progress and Pitfalls in the Decipherment of Proto-Elamite,” followed by a workshop acting as an introduction to proto-Elamite, and a proto-Elamite reading group in which he read and analyzed a proto-Elamite inscription.

Finally, in a short address, Dr. Esmaili, Director of the Research Institute of Linguistics, Inscriptions and Texts, talked about the crucial role of cuneiform tablets in the continuity of national identity. Mr. Parsa Daneshmand from the University of Oxford translated the English sections of the lectures.

The Belgian ambassador, François Delhaye, attended the meeting of the afternoon workshop.

The workshop, a joint effort of the National Museum of Iran and the Research Institute of Linguistics, Inscriptions and Texts of the Cultural Heritage, Handcrafts and Tourism Organization (RICHT), was held on the occasion of the Cultural Heritage Week in Iran.

English translation of the Farsi text by Parsa Daneshmand