

Funding appeal: **The Bakhtiari: nomads who ruled Iran**

Successful exhibitions at the London School of Oriental & African Studies (SOAS) in 2008 illustrated the key roles the Bakhtiari have played in the making of modern Iran. Although the exhibitions were accompanied by an e-catalogue of some of the rare images shown (see www.soas.ac.uk/gallery/bakhtiari-kuch/); there is still no enduring published photographic history of the Bakhtiari.

To remedy that gap, I.B.Tauris (www.ibtauris.com/), as the leading publisher on the Middle East and the Islamic World, is keen to support such a publication. They have agreed that any book can – uniquely – take a Bakhtiari-centric approach, as well as including most of the fascinating images which have come to light following the exhibitions. Many of the photographs are a hundred years old or even older, and thus represent some of the oldest in existence from Iran. Their publication therefore represents a unique chance for both Iranians and non-Iranians to see the Iran of that time.

However, with the large number of images, the publishers are asking for a financial contribution to printing costs. With the costs necessary to prepare some of the images for publication, we are therefore looking currently for a total of £27,000.

This funding request represents a chance to be part of ensuring that the story of the Bakhtiari is preserved, rather than a business opportunity. All of the copyright-holders – including several family collections (early European travellers as well as Bakhtiaris) and various archives (including those of British Petroleum and Wilfred Thesiger) are willing to give free access to ‘their’ images. I myself have already given my time and expertise for free, as well as somehow acting as the major funder for the original exhibitions from my student earnings.

This is now *your* chance to be part of ensuring the photographic history of the Bakhtiari is preserved for ever. Donations to the publishing fund – however small (or large!) – are all gratefully received. Donors will not be called on until all of the necessary money is definitely promised, and will of course be acknowledged in the final publication.

For more detailed information, please contact Caroline Mawer on caroline@carolinemawer.com

May 2010