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Prestige among the Baloch: “Monopolization” of Historical Events in Inter-Tribal Relations in Sarhadd (Iranian Balochistan)

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The Sarhadd region is unique in Iranian Balochistan because of the “tribal” Baloches’ still functioning but gradually fading traditional social structures and relations. Prestige, authority, and honor have always been essential to Balochi “tribal” identity, particularly in Sarhadd where the “tribes” position themselves as the “true” heirs and guarantors of Balochi culture and traditions. Alongside the *mayar* – the behavioral code of honor, certain “implements” exist for constructing and maintaining inter-tribal relations. This presentation examines one such “implement,” the monopolization of historical events, which, though firmly rooted in the past, provides unlimited food for historical imagination. The presentation is based on data and observations obtained during ethnographic fieldwork over the last few years in Balochistan, most recently in March-May, 2018.

Dr. Vahe S. Boyajian received his doctorate from the Department of Iranian Studies, Yerevan State University, Armenia, in 2001 in the field of Iranian Comparative Linguistics and spent the next academic year on a post-doc at the Department of Anthropology, Boston University. Since 2010 he has embarked on a second Ph.D. in the Department of Social Anthropology, University of Saint Andrews, Scotland. Contemporaneously, he is a Research Fellow in the Department of Contemporary Anthropological Studies, Institute of Archaeology and Ethnography in Yerevan, where he is working on a monograph entitled “Everyday Muslim life in Sarhadd” for publication in 2020. His research interests include Balochi language, history and culture and the anthropology of Iran and Afghanistan.

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