

Toronto, August 10, 2022

To whom it may concern

My name is Enrico G. Raffaelli and I am Associate Professor of History of Zoroastrianism at the University of Toronto. I am writing in support of the application of Abolfazl Moshiri for the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Postdoctoral Fellowship in Iranian Studies.

I have known Abolfazl for over nine years. He took various of my graduate courses on Zoroastrianism when he was a Master’s student and during the first two years of his doctoral studies. I have been the secondary supervisor of Abolfazl’s thesis “The Devil’s Advocates: The Exoneration of Iblis in Persian Mysticism,” which he successfully defended in August 2021.

Abolfazl is a hard-working, insightful and mature scholar, who joins a deep knowledge of Persian mystical literature to a sound level of knowledge of the pre-Islamic Iranian civilization. He has an interest in the elements of continuity between the pre-Islamic Iranian civilization and the Islamic Iranian civilization. Part of his doctoral thesis is devoted to the commonalities between the representation of the demonic entities in pre-Islamic Iranian literature and the representation of the devil in Islamic mystical literature. The part of his thesis that is devoted to Persian Islamic authors reflects an in-depth knowledge of Islamic theology and of classical Persian literature, and reflects a masterful command of the sources. His thesis represents an important contribution to the study of Islamic demonology, which bridges one of the many gaps in the analysis of one aspect of the theology of classical Persian sources, that is, the development of demonology in Iran from the pre-Islamic to the Islamic period.

Abolfazl is an excellent scholar who, thanks to his solid training and range of scholarly interests, will certainly give important contributions to the study of the Iranian civilization, and of the Islamic civilization, in the years to come, and therefore I strongly support his application.

Best regards,

Enrico G. Raffaelli

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