

Toronto, August 12, 2024

To whom it may concern

Dear Members of the Selection Committee,

I am writing to offer my strong support for the application of Abolfazl Moshiri for “The Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Postdoctoral Fellowship in Iranian Studies.” As an Associate Professor of History of Zoroastrianism at the University of Toronto, I have had the privilege of knowing and working with Abolfazl for over ten years.

During his time as a Master’s student and in the early stages of his doctoral studies, Abolfazl took several of my graduate courses on Zoroastrianism. I also served as the secondary supervisor for his doctoral thesis, titled “The Devil’s Advocates: The Exoneration of Iblis in Persian Mysticism,” which he successfully defended in August 2021.

Abolfazl is an excellent scholar, distinguished by his diligence, insight, and mature approach to research. His deep knowledge of Persian mystical literature is complemented by a strong foundation in pre-Islamic Iranian literature. His work reflects a keen interest in exploring the continuity between pre-Islamic and Islamic Iranian civilizations. A significant portion of his thesis is devoted to examining the commonalities between the depiction of demonic entities in pre-Islamic Iranian literature and the representation of the devil in Islamic mystical literature. This aspect of his work showcases his in-depth understanding of classical Persian language and literature, as well as his masterful command of primary sources.

Abolfazl’s thesis makes a significant contribution to the study of Classical Persian literature and Islamic demonology. By addressing both pre-Islamic and Islamic periods, his research bridges a critical gap in the study of Iranian literatures and culture.

Given his solid academic training, wide-ranging scholarly interests, and proven research abilities, I am confident that Abolfazl will make substantial contributions to the field of Classical Persian literature and culture. I strongly support his application for this fellowship and believe he would be an excellent recipient.

Thank you for considering his application.

Best regards,



Enrico G. Raffaelli

Associate Professor

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