

## Cover Letter

Dear Selection Committee of The Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Postdoctoral Fellowship in Iranian Studies,

In April 2021, when I successfully defended my Ph.D. dissertation, “A Study of the Interactions among Zoroastrian, Jewish and Roman Legal Systems during the 7th and 8th Centuries CE Based on a Critical Edition of Išōʿ-boḳt’s *Corpus Juris* with Commentary and an English Translation,” I had ambivalent feelings. On the one hand, it was a sense of relief; I was proud of my achievement, and happy to eventually have a chance to go to bed without thinking about that ancient lawyer Išōʿ-boḳt (I was wrong, of course, he had never left me). On the other hand, there was fear and hesitation; I knew there must have been errors and shortcomings somewhere in my work. Nevertheless, the path was unavoidable. I posted some fifteen pages of my dissertation, containing an abstract, acknowledgment, and a table of contents, on my Academia.edu page.

A few days later, I received a message from a prominent scholar, Prof. Geoffrey Herman, from Ecole Pratique des Hautes Etudes, Paris, who asked for a chapter in my work. I, of course, sent the entire dissertation to him. After that, Prof. Lev Weitz (The Catholic University of America) contacted me to have a copy of my dissertation. Yishai Kiel (Hebrew University), Simcha Gross (University of Pennsylvania), Emanuel Fiano (Fordham University) and several students from Iran to Europe, and North America, did the same. I did not know any of these colleagues in person, and it all happened before University of Toronto released my dissertation. Some of these colleagues returned to me with valuable comments and remarks. Nonetheless, they unanimously encouraged me to continue my work and make a book version. The concrete encouragement came when Prof. Herman, in his publication, “The View from the Frontier and the View from Within: On Christian Persecution in the Fifth Century Sasanian Empire,” *JCSSS* 21, (2021): 43-54, cited my dissertation. Later on, Prof. Yishai Kiel mentioned it in his contribution, “Above and Beyond the Law: Applying Moral Standards in the Sphere of Private Law in the Jewish Babylonian, East Syrian Christian, and Iranian Legal Traditions,” *Diné Israel* 35 (2021): 1-34. Moreover, Dr. Shervin Faridnejad, one of the editors of Ancient Iran Series in Brill, also invited me to submit a draft of the book version of my dissertation to their series, which I will do when I finish this project.

This encouraging reception removed my doubts. Now, I have decided to expand the first two parts of my dissertation into a monograph. The monograph will be a study of the dynamics of legal thinking in Sasanian Iran. To realize this plan, the academic and intellectual support that Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Institute offers will best facilitate my work. Scholars and colleagues who I personally know at this prominent institution for Iranian Studies will have instructive insights to share with me. On a broader scale, NMC and University of Toronto will provide me with all necessary resources. Furthermore, I have been working with Prof. Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, on various occasions in the past ten years. This working experience has always been constructive for me through enriching my understanding of not only historical studies but also academic pursuits. All these that solely The Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Postdoctoral Fellowship can offer make this position the ideal place for me to reach this milestone in my academic life.

Sincerely,  
Nima Jamali