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The Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Postdoctoral Fellowship in Iranian Studies

Faculty of Arts and Science, University of Toronto

Dear Sir/Madam,

I am writing to express my enthusiasm for the Postdoctoral Fellowship in Iranian studies at *The Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali* Center for Iranian studies at the University of Toronto. I successfully completed my Ph.D. in anthropology in Jan 2024 under the supervision of Dr. April Nowell, Dr. Yin Lam, and Dr. Marcus Millwright at the University of Victoria, BC, Canada. My main research interest is in the archaeology of rock art in Iran. My Ph.D. dissertation has discussed multiple major gaps associated with rock art studies in Iran. I have planned to publish my dissertation results as journal articles.

I am an expert on the archaeology and rock art of the Middle East with a focus on the rock art of Iran. I have conducted several fieldworks across Iran to identify and record ancient rock carvings known as petroglyphs, and rock paintings called pictographs. My research and fieldwork results have been published in peer-review archaeology journals. Additionally, I currently have a few research papers on the rock art of Iran under review with high-quality archaeology journals. I am interested in the intersection of landscape, placement of rock art sites, visual, and movement patterns of the landscape of rock art in its Iranian context.

In my dissertation, “The Petroglyphs of Qeydu Valley in Teymare, Central Iran: Style, Relative Dating, and Landscape,” I analyzed one of the largest clusters of rock art in Iran. My dissertation discussed three main themes addressing the most important research gaps associated with rock art studies in Iran, stylistic characteristics, relative dating, and landscape. I provided a detailed stylistic analysis of the petroglyphs to show that the lack of stylistic sequence is the main obstacle to establishing a relative chronology of rock art in Iran. Therefore, in my dating discussion, along with providing new relative dating suggestions, I discussed what other approaches we can take to develop our understanding of the relative age of the petroglyphs in Central Iran. A phenomenologically inspired GIS-landscape approach formed the third theme of my dissertation. Using a variety of GIS tools including density, viewshed, cost distance, and least-cost distance analyses, I attempted to reconstruct the cultural and visual landscape, and the potential movement patterns across the region. My next focus will be on the results of my dissertation to bring them into journal article formats for subsequent submission and publication in high-quality peer-reviewed archaeology journals.

My future research studies will also follow rock art in Iran and the study area where I conducted my Ph.D. research fieldwork. I look at the Qeydu Valley and Central Iran as a long-term research goal. My future research project includes conducting further fieldwork in the sub-valleys of the Qeydu area, which, according to my primary assessment, contains large clusters of petroglyphs that could provide more information about the petroglyphs, their spatial distribution, and the associated landscape. My second research plan is to conduct fieldwork in the Southern Zagros mountains in Iran to collect samples from several rock art/pictograph sites for chronometric dating purposes, which will be the first project to date Iranian rock art by means of chronometric techniques.

I am confident that my fieldwork experiences, publications, research background, and the research papers that I am currently working on would significantly contribute to the commitment of The Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali postdoctoral program to foster and develop Iranian studies and high-quality publications on the Iranian art and culture. I have attached my CV, in which you can find detailed information on my education, research background, and a full list of my archaeology publications.

I would greatly appreciate an opportunity at your convenience for an in-person or online meeting to further discuss how my research experiences on the archaeology of Iran and my plan to publish my Ph.D. research' results can contribute into the research objectives of the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Center for Iranian studies. You will receive three letters of recommendation from Dr. April Nowell, Dr. Yin Lam, and Dr. Marcus Milwright.

Thank you very much for your time and consideration. I am looking forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,

Ebrahim Karimi