

September 26th 2023

Dear Sir/Madam,

Reference: Iraj Rezaie

I write to support Iraj Rezaie in his application for a Postdoctoral Fellowship in Iranian Studies at the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Institute of Iranian Studies at the University of Toronto. I would like to say at the outset that this is an excellent proposition. I have known Iraj for a number of years, having established a warm collaboration in the pursuit of our shared interest of researching the archaeological imprint and the societal impact of the Assyrian Empire in Iran. From my work with Iraj I can attest that he is a highly competent archaeologist, an excellent scholar, and a very respected figure in Iranian archaeology. Iraj's natural aptitude is only magnified by the huge advantage he has of being able to work in Iran, throw himself into the countryside, follow up leads suggested by archaeology or textual clues, and carry out fieldwork at sites of potential interest: in short, opportunities to advance the agenda of exploring the archaeological footprint of the Assyrians in Iran available to few (if indeed any) western scholars. Of course, the Assyrian presence in Iran is only one aspect of Iraj's competence, and these advantages apply equally to his wider research agenda into the historical geography of the central Zagros from antiquity up to the Islamic period. I have no doubt whatsoever that bringing Iraj to the Institute on a post-doctoral fellowship will not just be a superb opportunity for him to deepen his own personal knowledge and understanding, which will be enriched by contact with the diverse community of academics of international standing which he will meet in Toronto, but that with his own broad experience and first-hand knowledge of Iranian archaeology he will be able to make a real contribute to the life and work of the Institute.

In summary, I strongly support Iraj's application for a post-doctoral research position at the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Institute. It is an opportunity to help an outstanding colleague, and will materially contribute to building bridges with the Iranian archaeological community and, quite certainly, lead on to rich future work.

Yours sincerely



Dr. John MacGinnis
Senior Curator (Middle East Department)