

John Theodore (Ted) Good
60 Harbord St., #410c
Toronto, ON, M5S 3L1
(647) 676 – 3959

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Dear Committee,

My name is Ted Good, I'm a doctoral candidate under Prof. Raffaelli and Prof. Andrés-Toledo, and I expect to defend in Spring 2023. I'm addressing you to enthusiastically apply for the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Dissertation Completion Fellowship. I can offer a unique area of expertise to the multidisciplinary Institute for Iranian Studies: Zoroastrian Philosophy.

I've studied Zoroastrianism for many years and have pursued it through the language, culture, and religion of Iran as well as its neighbors in Greece and India. This has given me the background to bring these cultures together in order to describe Zoroastrian philosophy in the early Islamic period (c. 7th – 10th CE); Zoroastrian philosophers use Aristotle and Neoplatonism from the west and Grammar (*vyākaraṇa*), Vedānta, and probably Buddhism from the east. This diversity of sources appears in the Zoroastrian Pahlavi text called the *Dēnkard*, and for this reason I call these philosophers the Dēnkard School. The simplest reason the Dēnkard School is important is that their writings are the earliest preserved philosophy in the Persian language – at least two centuries before Ibn Sīnā's *Dānesh Nāma* (11th); more striking is the fact that the content of their philosophizing shows that the Dēnkard School is the earliest representatives of the movement that later came to be called Illuminationism, usually thought to begin with Sohrawardī (12th). This contravenes the argument by John Wallbridge that the Persian elements in Sohrawardī's thought are mere 'window dressing' decorating his more substantial

Platonism; on the contrary, the Dēnkard School shows there were earlier Persian thinkers that likely underlie Sohrawardī's thought.

I see the Dēnkard School as essential to the history of Persian thought, so my first task after defense is to quickly transition my dissertation for publication, so that it can more easily be integrated into the fields of Iranian Studies, Islamic Studies, and philosophy. However, my dissertation focused only on introducing the most abstract principles of their philosophical system, so I plan to continue my studies by focusing on their philosophical psychology and anthropology next. Analyzing the system is important on its own, but it will also help further accentuate the commonalities and differences between the early Zoroastrian thinkers and the subsequent Illuminationist thinkers.