Dear Members of the Award Committee,

I am writing to apply for the Elahé Omidyar Mir-Djalali Dissertation Completion Fellowships.

This Fall (2024), I will start my seventh year in the PhD program in Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations at the University of Toronto, working on my thesis titled “The Description of Zoroastrian Divine Beings in the New Persian texts of the *Vaṣf-e Amšāsfandān*”.

The School of Graduate Studies recently approved my Program Extension Request for an additional year, extending my studies until August 2025.

The extended timeline has provided me with the opportunity to delve deeply into my research, refine my approach, and conduct a detailed comparative study which has significantly strengthened my research.

My research offers a comprehensive analysis of the depiction of Zoroastrian divine beings in Zoroastrian New Persian literature filling a critical gap in existing scholarship and making an important contribution to the field.

Throughout my PhD journey, I have shared my academic insights through several presentations, including “Iranian Mythical/Legendary Kings in the Šāhnāmeh and the Zāmyād Yašt”, at the 13th Biennial AIS, “Intellect andMirrors for Princes in the Medieval Persian Literature” at the NMCSU, and “The Miraculous King Wahrām” at the Graduate Students and Faculty Symposium. These experiences have greatly enhanced my analytical abilities in my research.

Additionally, I have gained extensive experience as a Teaching Assistant for courses: “Introductory Persian”, “The Book of Kings” and “1001 Nights around the World” where I have honed my skills in the academic communication and mentoring. Currently, I am working as a Research Assistant on the “Tavakoli Archive” as part of a work-study program in the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations at the University of Toronto.

I am fully committed to completing my PhD and believe that this fellowship will provide the essential support I need to successfully complete my research.

Thank you for your time and consideration.

Sincerely,

Sepideh Najmzadeh