

Ali Gheissari

Editorial Note

The year 2017 marks the fiftieth-year anniversary of the establishment of *Iranian Studies*. With international distribution and recognition, the journal currently stands as the leading academic periodical in the field. In no small way do we owe the achievements of the journal to its successive editorial teams whose commitment and hard work helped the journal become the premier academic forum in the field of Iranian studies. Credit is also due to a growing pool of scholars worldwide whose contributions have expanded the field in depth and scope. The journal's growth also owes much to its publishers for providing an online submission platform which facilitates efficient editorial work, for timely production and distribution, and for maintaining a digital archive for all past issues. A particular note of thanks also goes to the International Society for Iranian Studies, recently renamed the Association for Iranian Studies (AIS), and its officers and general membership who have given the journal indispensable resources and support.

Over the years the journal's editorial efforts were overseen by a dedicated group of scholars whose exemplary service and perseverance ensured the journal's continuity and valuable contributions to the field—they included Ali Banuazizi (1968 to 1981), Ervand Abrahamian and Farhad Kazemi (1982 to 1986), Richard W. Bulliet (1987 to 1989), Abbas Amanat (1990 to 1997), Robert D. McChesney (1998 to 2003), and Homa Katouzian (2004 to 2016). On the occasions of the journal's fortieth year anniversary Ali Banuazizi, the founding editor, offered an overall account of the journal from its early days and assessed its impact on the evolution of Iranian studies in general (*Iranian Studies*, 40/1, 2007). In the following pages three other former editors, Ervand Abrahamian, Abbas Amanat, and Homa Katouzian, write further about their first-hand experience and reflect on the journal's challenges and achievements in different periods.

In May 2015 I was elected by the AIS Council as the new Editor-in-Chief of *Iranian Studies* to succeed Homa Katouzian whose term was to end in November 2016 by the publication of volume 49/6; my term would then begin with volume 50/1 (2017). I am honored by this appointment and the confidence shown to me by the President, Council members, and the AIS membership in general. To make for a smooth transition, since September 2015 I began working closely with the journal's editorial office to process a considerable volume of submissions. In evaluating and reviewing these submissions every attempt has been made to not only maintain but also raise the quality of the journal.

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The editorial office is fully committed to a rigorous double blind peer review process. Every article that is assessed and accepted for consideration is read by two (sometimes more) anonymous experts. Subsequently the article goes through two, three, or more rounds of inspections and reviews by the anonymous reviewers. The editors and reviewers work together to ensure that the authors incorporate and address various suggestions they receive through the peer review process. On occasions we have had further recourse to a third or fourth scholar in the field to ascertain the highest quality of our double blind review process. A testament to the enhanced quality of the journal is that our acceptance rate is currently on a par with the best of academic periodicals in the field of Middle Eastern studies, but we would like to improve this rate even further. We continue to seek and publish articles of highest quality in all aspects and periods of Iranian studies such as history, culture, literature, the arts, politics, economics, and the social life of a broad regional context including Iran, South and Central Asia, the Caucasus, as well as the diaspora communities of Iran. We therefore welcome both established and young scholars in these fields to consider *Iranian Studies* as their primary journal for the publication of their research.

As in the past, our success in the years to come will depend on the support from the diverse community of scholars in the field to contribute original research. We also rely on scholars who can serve as anonymous peer reviewers of articles and those who write balanced and critical book reviews. Therefore, I would like to reach out to all scholars in the field to consider submitting to *Iranian Studies* their original work and to encourage their colleagues and graduate students to do the same.

We are also particularly interested in expanding the book review section of the journal because it has a significant role in generating fresh debates and has a special place in the development of the field. Many scholarly books are published every year in various aspects of Iranian studies, and it is important that these books are given due attention and evaluated by the scholarly community. We would therefore like to invite all scholars to serve as reviewers of these books and help the journal to broaden the range of its scholarly exchange and discussions.

From time to time, and in full adherence to the peer review process, the journal will also continue with its tradition of publishing thematic issues. On such occasions it will be essential that various contributions in a single thematic issue are in conversation with one another and correspond with an overarching topic or question in the field. The idea is that such thematic issues should reflect the state of the art in closely-aligned research and thus make a lasting contribution to their respective field of inquiry.

In conclusion I should once again renew the invitation of the editorial office to all scholars in the field to consider *Iranian Studies* as the primary journal for the publication of their research. It is only with the help of our community of scholars that we can continue to thrive as the flagship journal in the field of Iranian studies.

San Diego, CA
November 2016