

Editorial Foreword

In recent years there has been considerable scholarly discussion on the importance of inter-connected and trans-regional historiography. Scholars of different regions of the world have expended wide-ranging research to show how historical encounters and processes that went beyond the boundaries of the modern nation-states were crucial for the making of the world we have come to know in modern times. Some have taken this idea further back in world history by demonstrating the significance of civilizational interactions in earlier periods. By virtue of their geography, the lands that have historically been associated with the Iranian plateau had their own share of encounters with other cultures and traditions near and far. These encounters and connections that Iran maintained with its neighbors as well as with other regions only grew further in time.

In the period after the sixteenth century, we have thus numerous cases of cross-regional interactions, which are crucial for a more comprehensive understanding of both Iran and its surrounding environment. Indeed the continued interest in the “Persianate” world is only one aspect of a much larger set of cross-regional encounters and interactions which require careful exploration and systematic research work.

In keeping with its scholarly tradition, *Iranian Studies* has been particularly welcoming to research articles, as well as surveys on a broad range of primary source material, that bring out these trans-regional encounters and global connections. In recent years the journal’s new editorial team has spent much effort in encouraging submissions of scholarly works that focus on trans-regional themes and questions, as many of these questions remain understudied.

The present thematic issue which focuses on the Ottoman-Safavid encounters in their borderland regions is an indication of the journal’s editorial attention to promote research on the connections between Iran and the world around it. Various contributions in this issue clearly demonstrate through careful research how the connections and encounters between the Ottoman and Safavid states are important for a better understanding of both.

It has often been noted that in the making of the modern Middle East, the Ottoman-Iranian border was among the earliest frontiers that was settled and agreed upon. This agreement, however, came about after a period of dispute and con-

flict. Given multiple and simultaneous cases of continued confrontation and displacement in the Middle East, it is important to recognize that in the modern history of the region, one can underline how protracted warfare and occupation undermined both empires, their borderlands, and their economies as well as their diverse ethnic and confessional communities. Ultimately it took wars with Russia and another dynasty, the Qajars, to sign a permanent peace treaty.

On behalf the journal's Editorial team I hope that various contributions in the special thematic section that follows and the probing questions they have raised and discussed provide an incentive for further research that would deal with new questions and explore new directions in Iran's trans-regional encounters and interactions.

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