

From the Guest Editors

This special issue of the journal is devoted to a review of the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, a comprehensive reference work that covers all aspects of Iranian studies. This issue is designed primarily as a mid-course review of the first seven volumes of the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*. We also hope that it will serve both the specialist and the general reader as an introductory manual to allow access by subject to more than three thousand alphabetical entries in the *Encyclopaedia*.

The idea for this issue was first conceived in 1995 but the work started in earnest a year later when areas of study were finally determined and contributors were invited. As with most collaborative works of this nature many delays and cancellations prolonged the production of this review issue. These are reflected, above all, in the absence of reviews in a few crucial areas (most regrettably the Qajar period). Despite these shortcomings, however, the reader will find this group of remarkable review articles by international contributors gratifying and academically on a par with the *Encyclopaedia*'s mission and its standards.

The guest editors would like to thank the contributors to this issue for their professionalism, cooperation, and patience. Gratitude is also due to the editorial office of the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* for providing complimentary copies of volume 7 to nearly all the contributors and for providing the subject list of the *Encyclopaedia*'s entries.

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Note

This issue uses both the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* transliteration system and the journal's own system. Entries and quotations from the encyclopaedia use the *Iranica* system; all other transliteration (with some occasional exceptions) follows the journal's standard. This was by no means a perfect solution and produced jarring discrepancies, but the options (to transliterate everything either according to the *Encyclopaedia Iranica* or to *Iranian Studies*) were much less appealing.

-Ed.