

Mohamad Tavakoli

Guest Editor's Introduction

Homa Katouzian, Exceptional Editor of *Iranian Studies*

This special issue is dedicated to Dr. Homa Katouzian for his exceptional service as the Editor of *Iranian Studies* since 2004. With an unrivaled commitment to the advancement of this Journal of the International Society for Iranian Studies, during his editorship Katouzian transformed *Iranian Studies* from an irregular quarterly to a highly reputable and punctually published bimonthly. From the outset of his term, Katouzian was committed to opening the pages of the journal to a younger generation of scholars and actively engaged them in all aspects of the editorial process. With this editorial vision, he transformed the journal into an invaluable lever for the academic placement and advancement of younger scholars during an unprecedented period of shrinking resources for Iranian Studies. Concurrently, he mentored a new crop of talented younger editors who learned the complexity of journal publishing and how to thrive during the critical transition from paper to digital printing.

Katouzian vigorously led the increased frequency of *Iranian Studies* from a quarterly to a bimonthly. Whereas before 2004 our quarterly journal was often released late and as double issues, he advocated publishing it more frequently and on schedule in single issues. Katouzian's argument was based on a sophisticated but unconventional reasoning. Some colleagues could not understand his rationale. Contra Katouzian, they argued that increased frequency would undoubtedly compromise the quality of the journal. With the rapid expansion of Iranian Studies as illustrated during the biennial conferences of the Society, however, Katouzian expounded that increased frequency would lead to the submission of more original articles by scholars working all over the world. He further contended that, with serious editorial supervision and peer-review, higher submissions would contribute to a higher quality of published scholarship.

As illustrated in the published issues of the journal under his editorial supervision, Katouzian was right. Released on time as a quarterly in 2004, 2005 and 2006, between 2007 and 2010 the frequency of the journal was increased to five issues per year. Since 2011, the journal has been released punctually every two months. With this increased frequency, *Iranian Studies* has published a considerable number of stellar articles by younger scholars. These emerging scholars were more readily able to secure academic

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positions, tenure and promotion by publishing in our reputable flagship journal. Meanwhile, the journal's continuous progress led to the elevation of its status in 2011 as a prestigious ISI journal, backdated to 2008.

Published on time, more frequently, and with more topically diverse and outstanding articles, under Katouzian's capable leadership *Iranian Studies* became a reliable source of expanding revenue for the Society, whereas before 2004 the journal was a source of recurring financial crisis. Whereas digitization led to the closure of many academic journals, thanks to Katouzian's dedication and hard work it served as a financial blessing for *Iranian Studies*. Thus increased readership and subscriptions provided the Society with an unprecedented period of financial independence. This financial success has thus enabled the Society to escape the debilitating extra-scholarly pressures during a period of sustained political crisis in Iran and the Middle East.

Katouzian's success as the editor of *Iranian Studies* was made possible by his stature in the field. As a multi-disciplinary practitioner with a unique theoretical and methodological orientation, his publications since 1970 have remained pertinent to the problematics and concerns of the field.¹ Katouzian's analytical concepts such as "rentier economy," "petrolic despotism," "arid-isolatic society," "arbitrary rule," "the pick-axe society" and "short-term society" have made his scholarship attractive and thought-provoking for inquisitive students of Iranian political economy. With significant publications in economics, politics, literature and history, he has been in close and direct contact with colleagues in these and other disciplines. Katouzian's scholarly standing, his transdisciplinary scholarship and laudable devotion to academic excellence have made his service as the editor of *Iranian Studies* truly unrivaled. As an active member of the Society working closely with Katouzian to stabilize the journal since 2004, this special issue is an expression of my gratitude to him for his transformative efforts for the advancement of *Iranian Studies* and the International Society for Iranian Studies on the eve of its fiftieth anniversary.

¹For Katouzian's bio and publications see Mohamad Tavakoli-Targhi, "Homa Katouzian: A Bio-Bibliography." *Iran Nameh* 30, no. 4 (2016), ivx–xiii.