

Preface

In regard to the study of the arts and cultures of ancient civilizations, the Iranian civilization is one of the most inviting and rewarding ones. There are more than a few scholars in the world who consider Iran in the ancient period as one of the important centers of civilization, culture and arts. In reality, in the Islamic period, Iran in many respects, has had a predominant role in the expansion of the arts and culture of the Islamic civilization in different periods. This is true for different areas of Asia where Iranians have influenced the Islamic world but their contribution has not been singled out and, to a large extent, it has remained mute. To understand the different political, social and cultural components and institutions of the early Islamic period, it would not be possible to do so without understanding its roots in the past, that is before the Islamic era. In fact for better understanding of the Islamic culture, we have to look to the ancient period. If we are to name several civilized cultural centers of the ancient world, Iran is one of them along with India, China in the east and Greece and Rome in the west. Politically Iran in the ancient period was also a superpower.

The ground for understanding the different aspects of ancient Iran has been worked out in modern times by Western Iranologists. The understanding of the political, social and cultural institutions of the Median, Achaemenid, Parthian and Sasanian empires has been made possible by Western scholars working on Iranian languages. In the past two or three centuries the Western Iranologists, by exploring various aspects of ancient Iranian civilization and introducing it to the people of the world, have played a paramount role. It is true that in the past century, with the establishment of universities in Iran and the implementation of the Western scientific method, some Iranian scholars in the field of the cultures and languages of ancient Iran have had a negative view of the contentions of Western scholars. Even some Iranian scholars with extreme nationalist feelings have tried to emphasize the idea that Iran has had a decisive influence on ancient cultures, far from the historical reality. But luckily, now in the Iranian universities this view has dimmed and Iranian scholars are increasingly appreciating the work of Western scholars. On the other hand, there has been a minor group of Western scholars who have tendentially disregarded the scholarship of Iranians in the field of Iranology. In the past two decades, for various reasons, the works of Western Iranologists have not reached their Iranian counterparts.

The primary reason for the publication of the *Journal of Nāme-ye Irān-e Bāstān*, which in its scope and aim is somewhat new, is to establish grounds for dialogue between Western and Iranian scholars in the field of ancient Iranian studies at home. These relations, however meager, have led to brilliant results. For this reason, the *Nāme-ye Irān-e Bāstān* will endeavor to publish research articles and reviews of works on ancient Iran in different languages (Persian, English, Arabic, German, French, Italian) in order to expand this relationship. We hope that this journal will be an effective means in the expansion of Iranian studies and the place of its publication a meeting ground for the publication of scientific and artistic topics in relation to Iranology. We hope this will be possible so that *Nāme-ye Irān-e Bāstān* will easily reach the scholars and those who are researching ancient Iran throughout the world, especially in Europe and the United States.