## Description of Future Research Plans

In brief:

The topic that interests me now most of all is the journey and formation of the theory of the four humors, starting in Greece and Rome, through its branching into the Iranian and Muslim spheres and back to Christian Europe.

The theory of the four humors is a case study for the phenomenon in which a new medical theory spreads to neighboring geographical spheres, takes hold in new cultures, and from there continues its spread onwards.

It is known that as opposed to the conservative bent that the theory took in its region of origin (Greece, Rome and the Byzantine Empire), when it arrived in new cultural areas (the Near East, for example) a variety of dynamics occurred that represent a range of responses to this new idea.

I have a special interest in the encounter between the theory of humors and Sasanian culture, and later Muslim culture. Varied processes of rejection, adaptation, and acceptance occurred among these cultures.

These processes led to the enhancement of the theory as compared to the conservative line adopted in Byzantium. These processes also have a Jewish connection – it seems that Asaf’s Book of Medicines (the first Jewish medical treatise) made a significant contribution to this process, in its journey that crossed continents and cultures.

In fact, the four humors appearing in many compositions from the Sasanian sphere, and the later, the Muslim sphere, present a “different” structure of four humors, a phenomenon which scholarship has yet to explore.

This story can be an instructive example of the evolution of a medical idea—the theory of the four humors became dominant and undisputed, even sanctified, in an array of cultures, nations and spheres, for thousands of years, and saw developments and enhancements. The Renaissance introduced new ways of observing the human body and understanding the nature of medicine, and the acceptance of the celebrated four humors theory unraveled, and the theory faded in popularity, until being entirely abandoned.