



## ANJOMAN-E KETĀB

**ANJOMAN-E KETĀB** (the Book Society of Iran), was founded in 1336 Š./1957 in Tehran by Ehsan Yarshater (Eḥsān Yār-e Šāter) in collaboration with Iraj Afshar (Īraj Afšār), ‘Abd-al-Ḥosayn Zarrīnkūb, and a number of concerned scholars, to foster interest in good publications (*Fehrest-e dah-sāla-ye rāhnemā-ye Ketāb*, Tehran, 1349 Š./1970, pp. 3f.). The work of the society, practically all of a pioneering kind, included:

1. Book exhibitions. The first annual exhibition of Persian printed books was organized by the Society in 1336 Š./1957 and continued for six consecutive years, until 1341 Š./1962. The society also participated in a number of international book exhibitions: It sponsored an exhibition of Persian printed books in Tokyo in 1338 Š./1959, in Moscow at the time of the meeting of the International Congress of Orientalists in 1339 Š./1960, and at the Frankfurt International Bookfair in 1340 Š./1961; it also organized an exhibition of Persian printed books in Kabul in 1337 Š./1959 and an exhibition in Tehran of Persian books printed in India in 1338 Š./1959. It held the first exhibition of books for children in Tehran in 1340 Š./1961 (see *Rāhnemā-ye ketāb* 1, 1337 Š./1958, p. 94; 2, 1338 Š./1959, p. 796; 5, 1341 Š./1962, pp. 226f.; 6, 1342 Š./1963, pp. 348f.; 9, 1345 Š./1966, pp. 461, 570).

2. Book reviews. *Rāhnemā-ye ketāb*, first a quarterly and from the second year a monthly journal devoted primarily to book reviews, was founded by E. Yarshater in 1336 Š./1957 with Ī. Afšār and M. Moqarrabī (the latter for two years only) as associate editors (*ibid.*, 1, pp. 1f., 97-99). From the second year the journal somewhat expanded its scope and included articles on Persian



language and literature, accounts of rare manuscripts, and still later, reviews of the latest research in the fields of Iranian studies. The journal also published documents and photographs mainly from the Qajar period, as well as obituaries and bibliographies of writers, poets, and scholars. In 1344 Š./1965 Ī. Afšār, who had been the main editor of the journal since its inception, was made the editor-in-charge (*modīr-e mas'ūl*) and more directly responsible for editorial policies. The journal ceased publication in 1359 Š./1979, but Ī. Afšār has continued its format, rubrics and tradition in *Āyanda* which began a new series under his editorship following the Islamic Revolution in 1357 Š./1979. *Rāhnemā-ye ketāb* provided as a rule in each issue a bibliography of Persian printed books published since the previous issue. It also listed at irregular intervals the books published abroad in the field of Iranian studies.

3. Bibliographical publications. This was the most important part of the bibliographical service provided by the society to widen public awareness of the published works in Iran. Under the direction of Ī. Afšār, thirteen annual catalogues of Persian printed books and nine subject bibliographies were brought out. In 1967 the society combined the catalogues of ten years, 1954-63, into the *Ketābšenāsī-e dah-sāla* by Ī. Afšār and Ḥ. Banī-ādam.

4. The lending library. This was founded in 1338 Š./1959 by E. Yarshater in collaboration with Ī. Afšār, M. Āhī, M. Bayānī, Ḥ. Farmānfarmā'īān, S. Nafīsī, and M. Šabā, with a view of encouraging and facilitating good reading and combating the cumbersome procedures that surrounded the borrowing of books from public libraries (*ibid.*, 2, p. 505; see *ibid.*, p. 657 for the library's regulations). For five years the library was also able to send out small mobile collections of books to some poorer districts of Tehran as well as to townships around it, such as Karaḡ, Varāmīn, and Damāvand (*ibid.*, 5, p. 827). In 1979, in compliance with the demand of the revolutionary authorities, it ceded to the Bongāh-e Tarḡama wa Našr-e Ketāb its more than 3,000 volumes in various fields, mostly humanities, and ceased to function.

5. Selection of the best books of the year. Beginning in 1337 Š./1958, and continuing for four years, the society selected the best books of the year in several categories with the assistance of a number of scholars mostly drawn from the faculty of the University of Tehran (*ibid.*, 2, p. 795; 3, p. 90; 4, p. 196; 7, p. 209).

Other activities of the society included organizing lectures and discussion groups (e.g., *ibid.*, 1, p. 224), donating books to some libraries outside the



country, and providing information on Persian publications to the interested. Among the publications of the society *Bāng-e nāy*, a selection of Rūmī's *Maṭnawī* by M. A. Djamalzadeh (Jamālzāda) (Tehran, 1337 Š./1959), may be mentioned and a number of books for children in collaboration with the Bongāh-e Tarjama wa Našr-e Ketāb.

As the budget and scope of the activities of city and government agencies expanded, they gradually adopted the pioneering works that the society had taken in, launching a series of programs: The Ministry of Arts and Culture and the Tehran Municipality sponsored book exhibitions; the National Library embarked on the publication of annual bibliographies; and the city of Tehran and the Kānūn-e Parvareš-e Fekrī-e Kūdakān wa Nowjavānān founded lending libraries.

The society, a charitable organization run by voluntary work, was administered during its lifetime by an executive committee (E. Yarshater, president; Ī. Afšār, secretary; and since 1963, 'Abdallāh Sayyār, treasurer) assisted by a board of directors which consisted in the 1970s of the executive committee members and Mehrī Āhī, Ḥosayn Fīrūz, Ebrāhīm Mo'tamedī, and Nowrā Yār-e Šāṭer. Financially the society was able to secure assistance from time to time from the Plan Organization, the Ministry of Arts and Culture and also occasionally from private donors.