



## BAYĀNĪ, MEHDĪ

**BAYĀNĪ, MEHDĪ** (Mahdī; 1285-1346 Š./1906-68), specialist in Persian manuscripts and calligraphy and pioneer in the field of Persian librarianship. Though born in Hamadān, he was the scion of a long line of *dīvān* secretaries and fiscal officers (*mostawfi*) from Farāhān. He was related to Mīrzā Salmān Farāhānī, secretary and confidant of Abu'l-Qāsem Khan Nāṣer-al-Molk Hamadānī, whose title Bayān-al-Salṭana is apparently the origin of the family name (Bayānī, *Aḥwāl o āṭār-e k̄vošnevīsān*, 2nd ed., Tehran, 1363 Š./1984, introd. by Ḥ. Maḥbūbī Ardakānī, p. 3). Bayānī received his early education and training in calligraphy at the Aqdasīya and Ašrāf primary schools and, after graduating from the secondary school Dār al-Fonūn, enrolled in the Dar al-Mo'allemin-e 'Ālī (later Dāneš-sarā-ye 'Ālī; higher teachers' college). In 1324 Š./1945, Bayānī received a doctorate in Persian literature from the University of Tehran.

Bayānī spent his early career as a teacher of Persian language and literature while working at the same time in the library of Dāneš-sarā-ye 'Ālī; later he became the head of the Ministry of Education's public library (Ketāb-kāna-ye 'Omūmī-e Ma'āref, 1312-16 Š./1933-37); as the founder and director of the Ketāb-kāna-ye Mellī, Iran's first national library, he directed the transferring of the books in the Ma'āref Library to the national library (1316-19 Š./1937-40; see [Anjoman-e Ma'āref](#)). He became the director of education for the province of Isfahan in 1319-20 Š./1940-41. In 1335 Š./1956, he was appointed head of the Royal Library (Ketāb-kāna-ye Salṭanatī, q.v.), a post which he held until he died on 18 Bahman 1346 Š./7 February 1968. While serving as chief imperial



librarian, Bayānī also taught courses on the evolution of Persian scripts and on codicology. Bayānī was a long-time member of the Iran-Soviet Cultural Society and edited the journal *Payām-e now* (q.v.). He also founded a society for the support and publicizing of calligraphers and the calligraphic arts (Anjoman-e ḥemāyat-e kaṭṭ o kaṭṭātān). His biographical dictionary of Iranian calligraphers, *Aḥwāl o āṭār-e k̄vošnevīsān*, is one of the most important research tools in Persian codicology. Bayānī's pioneering efforts in the fields of bibliography and manuscript identification, evaluation, and collection have yielded valuable catalogues of major holdings in Iran.

Among his other published works are: *Rāhnamā-ye ganjīna-ye Qor'ān*, with Maḥdī Bahrāmī, Tehran, 1328 Š./1949. *Fehrest-e koṭūṭ-e k̄voš-e Ketāb-kāna-ye Mellī*, 1328 Š./1949. *Nomūna-ye koṭūṭ-e k̄voš-e Ketāb-kāna-ye Salṭanatī-e Īrān*, Tehran, 1329 Š./1950. *Aḥwāl o āṭār Mīr 'Emād*, Tehran, 1331 Š./1952. *Fehrest-e Ketāb k̄na-ye Salṭanatī: Dīvānhā*, Tehran, 1347-48 1968-69.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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Idem, "Wafāt-e Doktor Maḥdī Bayānī," *Rāhnamā-ye ketāb* 11/1-3, 1347 Š./1968, pp. 115-18.

*Search terms:*

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