



ENJAVĪ ŠĪRĀZĪ, SAYYED ABU'L-QĀSEM

ENJAVĪ ŠĪRĀZĪ, SAYYED ABU'L-QĀSEM (b. Shiraz, 1921, d. Tehran, 25 Šahrivar 1372 Š./16 September 1993), eminent Persian folklorist. He was born into an educated and clerical family. After receiving his early education in Shiraz he studied political science at Tehran University. Later he traveled to Geneva and visited other cities in Europe. He felt himself intellectually indebted to Ḥasan Waḥīd Dastgerdī, Moḥammad-Taqī Malek-al-Šo'arā' Bahār (q.v.), and Jalāl Homā'ī (q.v.). Above all, he was influenced by his friendship with Šādeq Hedāyat (q.v.), which lasted until the latter's suicide in Paris in spring 1951. In his youth, Enjavī was a member of the communist Tūda Party (see COMMUNISM i.). In 1331 he published the newspaper *Ātašbār*. Following the coup d'état of 1332 Š./19 August 1953 (q.v.), he was arrested in summer of 1954 and exiled to Kārg Island because of his political activities and membership in the Tūda party. He was released fourteen months later (Šedāqat-kīš, p. 245). He later joined the circle around 'Alī Daštī (q.v.).

Since his early years Enjavī had a strong interest in poetry, particularly the *gāzals* of Ḥāfeẓ. He compiled a selection of Rūmī's *Dīvān-e Šams Tabrīzī* (*Maktab-e Šams*, Tehran, 1337 Š./1958) and an anthology of *gāzals* (*Safīna-ye gāzal*, Tehran, 1336 Š./1957; 2nd ed. 1977), as well as an edition of the *Dīvān* of Ḥāfeẓ (5th ed., Tehran, 1363 Š./1984).

After the age of forty, Enjavī devoted all of his efforts to documenting and



preserving Persian folklore. Like Fażl-Allāh Šobhī Mohtadī, Enjavī started a radio program. In Farvardīn of 1341 Š./April 1962, he began to broadcast commentaries on folklore and to ask people all over Persia for their cooperation in sending him folklore material. With the cooperation of several thousand contributors nationwide, Enjavī put together an archive. This archive eventually contained an enormous number of manuscript texts on vastly diverse topics of folklore and folk culture, ranging from regional dialects to folktales and including numerous details of local customs.

While Šobhī sometimes attempted to reconstruct original versions of specific tales, Enjavī stressed the preservation of folkloric statements in the “authentic” form received. Inspired by Šādeq Hedāyat’s *Neyrangestān* (Tehran, 1312 Š./1933), Enjavī compiled a small guidebook on the method of documenting folklore (*Ṭarz-e neveštān-e farhang-e ‘āmiāna*), which was sent from 1342 Š./1963 onward to prospective collectors of folklore. Based on the texts archived in the *Mūza-ye farhang-e mardom*, Enjavī founded the publication of *Ganjīna-ye farhang-e mardom*, a series including ten volumes on tales and local customs, which he himself edited.

Following the Revolution of 1978-79 Enjavī was forced to retire and his radio program was discontinued. Although still a source of inspiration for the people interested in folklore, he died in 1372 without publishing any further major work. He was buried in the cemetery of Ebn Bābūya, a shrine near Tehran.

Enjavī was a skillful orator, gifted with the charismatic power of exciting enthusiasm in his listeners. Until the Revolution of 1978-79 he used broadcasts, interviews, and published articles to stress the importance of preserving folklore. His strong feeling of responsibility for matters of historical and cultural concern and the ensuing sponsorship by the royal family made the new regime consider his activities as undesirable. However, the service he rendered to the collection and preservation of Persian folklore cannot be overestimated.



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