



# FALSAFĪ, NAŞR-ALLĀH I. BIOGRAPHY

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## i. BIOGRAPHY

Falsafī's father was Mīrzā Naşr-Allāh Mostawfī Savādkūhī, a government accountant. His maternal grandfather was Āqā 'Alī Ḥakamī, son of Mollā 'Abd-Allāh Zonūzī, both of whom were scholars and philosophers of the 19th century "Tehran School" mentioned by Joseph-Arthur Comte de Gobineau in *Les religions et les philosophies dans l'Asie Centrale* (Paris, 1869; see Afşār, 1962, p. 442; Eḥtešāmī, p. 112; S. Ḥ. Naşr, "Falsafa wa boḥrān-e jahān-e konūnī," *Rahāvārd* 34, 1372 Š./1993, p. 23).

Falsafī studied at the Aqdasiya school, the Alliance Française, and then the Dār al-fonūn (q.v.). He started his career in 1920 as an assistant-editor of the journal published by the Ministry of Post and Telegraph (Wezārat-e post o telegrāf); subsequently he became its editor. While at the ministry, Falsafī founded also Kolūb-e bayn-al-melalī-e Īrān, a society for the international exchange of postage stamps, coins, books, pictures, and collectibles, which published the bilingual Persian-French journal *La Revue Iran* (Afşār, 1981, p. 315; *La Revue Iran* 1, 1923, pp. 1-2). The journal printed poems and feature articles in Persian with some French and English translations. Falsafī left the ministry in 1925, and after serving briefly in the Ministry of Justice he transferred to the Ministry of Education and started teaching history, geography, and French at high schools in Tehran. In 1936 he became a



professor of history and geography at the University of Tehran, where he taught for 28 years until his retirement in 1964. In 1945-46 he was invited by the University of Strasbourg, France, to lecture on the evolution of Persian prose (Afšār, 1981, p. 315). Falsafī remained active as a journalist, writer, and magazine editor, contributing scores of reviews, stories, feature articles, and translations to leading newspapers and magazines. He served as editor of a learned journal published by the Ministry of Education, *Ta'lim o tarbiyat* (1934-35); he also edited the literary journal *Mehr* (1933-37) and the weekly *Omīd* (1943-47).

In 1956, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs appointed Falsafī as cultural attaché to the embassies in Rome and Madrid, an assignment that lasted five years (Afšār, 1981, p. 315; “Šarḥ,” p. 2). During that time he supervised the publication of the journal *Iranica* in French, Italian, and Spanish. Between 1970 and 1975, at the ministry’s request, he sought out photographs and documents on Persia kept in the museums and archives of several European countries and the Vatican. Falsafī suffered a stroke in 1975, which prevented him from active research. He died in Tehran in 1981.

Falsafī’s works comprise writings on history, geography, and Persia’s foreign relations as well as translations from famous European writers and poets. Among the best of his translations is his rendition of a French version of Johann Wolfgang von Goethe’s *Die Leiden des jungen Werthers*, which he published in 1305 Š./1926. Dr. Moḥammad Mošāddeq, then a member of the Majles, commissioned Falsafī to translate *La cité antique* by the French historian Numa-Denis Fustel de Coulanges. To this translation, published in 1309 Š./1930, Falsafī added a seventy-five-page glossary of specialized terms, personages, and events from Greek and Roman history, thus equipping Persian students with a concise guide to the classics unavailable to them through other works in their own language (Zarnegar, p. 257). Falsafī’s own poetry was published in a volume of selected works, *Čand šer* (Tehran, 1351 Š./1972). His poem “Afsāna-ye ‘omr” is included in almost all anthologies of modern Persian verse. Finally, Falsafī is regarded as one of the most prominent contemporary Persian historians and a founder of modern historiographical methods in Persia. His magnum opus is *Zendagānī-e Šāh ‘Abbās-e Awwal*, a study of the life of Shah ‘Abbās I (r. 996-1038/1588-1629; q.v.). He had planned to write this biography of the great Safavid monarch in eight volumes but completed only five (usually printed in three or four volumes). He collected notes for the remaining volumes but never finished



them due to poor health and depression (Afšār, 1981, p. 316).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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