



FARHANGESTĀN

FARHANGESTĀN, a term for “academy” which gained currency in the 20th century to denote an association of scholars. It is used in particular as the abbreviated form of Farhangestān-e Zabān-e Īrān, an organization which was established by the government as a body concerned with the promotion of Persian culture, especially the replacement of foreign loan words by words of Persian origin.

THE HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

In the 19th century, Persia’s expanding contacts with the West led to an influx of technological and other new concepts for which there were no existing Persian equivalents. The first attempt at an organized approach to meet this need, a monthly session called “The Academic Assembly” (*Majles-e ākādemī*), was reported in the first three issues of the official gazette, *Rūz-nāma-ye Īrān-e solṭānī*, the successor to *Rūz-nāma-ye Īrān* (Šadr Hāšemī, *Jarā’ed o majallāt*, pp. 336-37), in 1321/1903. One of the successful coinages of this short-lived venture was *rāh-āhan*, a calque on *chemin de fer* (Nāṭeq, pp. 6-8). Other examples of its suggestions, as well as the policy declarations as stated in the gazette (Nāṭeq, pp. 7-8), indicate that there was no hesitation in using existing Arabic loan-words in Persian and that the question of language purification, already a subject for debate in Qajar Persia (Āryanpūr, *Az Šabā tā Nīmā* III, p. 16), was not addressed.

Several other organizations, generally short-lived, appeared by the mid-1930s. A joint committee of officers and officials from the Ministries of War and



Education met in weekly sessions for about four months from Ābān 1303 Š./1924 and was responsible for the coining of some three hundred military terms, including *havāpeymā*, and *forūdḡāh* (Şadīq, 1959-77, I, pp. 294-96). It is important to note that Reżā Khan, then both prime minister and minister of war, instigated and encouraged these and later organizations and that the preference was now for words of pure Persian origin. A similar group was established by the General Staff of the Army in 1311 Š./1932-33 (Şāmlū, 1968, pp. 834-38). Finally, the Academy of Letters and Fine Arts (Ākādemī-ye adabīyāt wa şanāye'-ye mostazrafa) operated briefly under the chairmanship of Colonel 'Alī-naqī Khan Wazīrī in 1304 Š./1925-26 (Moḡīṭ Ṭabāṭabā'ī, 1970, pp. 541-42).

In 1311 Š./1932, 'Īsā Şadīq, dean of the Teachers' College (*Dār-al-mo'allemin-e 'ālī*), organized a number of cultural societies for students, including the Society for Coining Scientific Words and Terminology (*Anjoman-e waż'-e lōḡāt wa eşṭelāḡāt-e 'elmī*). The Society was divided into four sections: natural sciences, physics and chemistry, philosophy and literature, and mathematics. Formal procedures were established for gathering data and registering suggested terms, and students from the provinces were encouraged to collect and submit words used in their local dialects to the Society. Under the direction of Dr. Maḡmūd Ḥesābī, a French-Persian glossary was compiled, containing data on specific terms from sources in various languages, to be used by the students in coining words. The Society was active up to 1319 Š./1940. It adopted and classified some three thousand terms in all, of which about four hundred gained currency and appeared in textbooks. It continued its work even after the establishment of the Farhangestān, submitting its recommendations to the latter (Şadīq, 1959-77, II, pp. 238-39; idem in Deḡkodā, I, pp. 105-6).

In 1313 Š./1934, the Ministry of Education established a Medical Academy (*Ākādemī-e ṭebbī*) which, by deciding to call itself *Farhangestān-e ṭebb-e Īrān* in one of its preliminary meetings, used the word *farhangestān* as the equivalent for 'academy' for the first time. The Medical Academy itself, however, never got off the ground (Ra'dī Āḡarāḡşī, in Deḡkodā, I, p. 96)

In the meantime, the movement for purification of Persian from foreign words (mostly Arabic), which was initiated in the nineteenth century, was gathering pace. Archaic Persian words were used arbitrarily even in official government correspondence, causing confusion among recipients who often did not know what the neologisms meant (Ra'dī Āḡarāḡşī in Deḡkodā, I, p. 98). This led to



chaos and intensified the argument for and against the purification of the Persian language. However, this recurrent debate about purification, which has continued to the present, should be placed in a wider cultural and political context. The state nationalism of the Pahlavi period and its linguistic manifestations, varying in intensity depending on fluctuations in royal power, had a direct effect on the way scholars expressed themselves. At first the argument was not against new coinages, but about the way they were chosen and imposed. Later, however, the excesses of the Farhangestān led to harsher criticisms from some of its original members who questioned its very *raison d'être* (Eqbāl Āštīānī, 1946, p. 6). Much depended also on the narrow definition of purification in this context in relation to the scope of the activities carried out by a language academy. Some scholars, including Moḥamma- 'Alī Forūgī, Sayyed Ḥasan Taqīzāda, and 'Abbās Eqbāl Āštīānī, recognized the value of an academy in which the study of the present-day language and its reform would be merely one of its many cultural activities. The emphasis would be on advice and suggestion rather than mandatory imposition, and the rich semantic range of the language, itself a direct result of its foreign borrowings in the past, would be preserved rather than curtailed (Forūgī, 1937, repr. 1974, pp. 114-16, 134-35). On the other hand, the advocates of purification in its extreme form, including Abu'l-Qāsem Āzād, Dabīḥ Behrūz, Moḥammad Moqaddam, and Aḥmad Kasrawī, favored an interventionist approach to the Persian language, which they regarded first and foremost as a vehicle for modernization. For Kasrawī, the vast vocabulary of languages like Arabic or English was a disadvantage, acting against clear thinking and writing. The message rather than the medium was all important and a leaner language would convey meanings more efficiently (Kasrawī, 1978, pp. 76-77.) But even among these firm advocates of purification there were differences of approach. Kasrawī, for example, unlike his associates, did not believe in reviving obsolete and archaic words, but preferred to use common Persian words whenever possible (Kasrawī, 1978, p. 65.)

THE FIRST FARHANGESTĀN

Reza Shah's interest in the purification movement was strengthened after his visit to Turkey in 1934, where a similar movement was afoot under the leadership of Kemal Atatürk. The shah ordered the Ministry of War to form a committee for adopting Persian equivalents for military terms. As a result, a number of neologisms were hurriedly introduced into the language. The minister of education, 'Alī-Aṣḡar Ḥekmat, alarmed at the turn of events, sought



the help of Moḥammad-‘Alī Forūḡī (q.v.), who was prime minister at the time. Aware of the shah’s support for language reform, Forūḡī suggested the appointment of a group of scholars to study the problem. As a result, early in 1314 Š./1935, an official circular was sent to all ministries, asking them to “abstain from coining and using new words in official letters and documents, or replacing words in common usage with pure Persian words,” until a committee of “scholars, language specialists, men of letters, and researchers” could study the matter (Ra’dī Āḍarākšī, in Dehḡoda, I, p. 100).

At Forūḡī’s request, Ṣadīq drafted a constitution for the proposed organization, drawing on his past experience in language reform and on his study of the constitution of the Académie Française (Ṣadīq, 1959-77, II, pp. 239-41.) The final draft of the constitution of the Farhangestān, consisting of sixteen articles, was approved by the cabinet in Ḳordād 1314 Š./May 1935 (the full text of the constitution and its bylaws are reprinted in Dehḡodā, *Moqaddema*, pp. 106-9). The tasks of the Farhangestān were set out in its second article. These included “selecting words and terms for use in every domain of life, giving preference to terms of Persian extraction whenever possible”; “purging the Persian language from inappropriate foreign words”; “studying the reform of the Persian writing system”; as well as wider cultural duties such as establishing registers of words used in different traditional crafts or in classical texts; collecting folksongs and stories; encouraging poets, writers, and scholars to achieve higher standards; and supporting the publication of ancient texts. The rest of the articles of the constitution dealt with organizational matters. There were to be two types of members—regular (*peyvasta*) and associate (*vābasta*). The latter could include foreign scholars. The initial number of regular members was to be twenty-four, with a possible increase to fifty. At the outset, members were to be selected by the Ministry of Education, subject to the approval of the Council of Ministers. Thereafter, members were to be recommended by the Farhangestān and approved by the Council of Ministers. The possibility of ceremonial sessions and special academic robes for the members was also envisaged. The administration of the first Farhangestān consisted of a president, appointed by the shah, and two vice-presidents and two secretaries elected by a majority of the regular members. Its first president was Forūḡī, who had resigned as prime minister a few months after the establishment of the Farhangestān. He was later succeeded by Ḥasan Woṭūq (Woṭūq-al-Dawla) in 1315 Š./1936 (Ṣadīq 1959-77, II, p. 249).



Most of these resolutions were executed in the internal bylaws of the Farhangestān, adopted and approved two months later, which among other things called for the establishment of seven committees: on vocabulary; on grammar; on technical terms of different crafts (*eṣṭelāḥāt-e pišavarān*); on medieval texts (*kotob-e qadīm*); on expressions from regional dialects (*eṣṭelāḥāt-e welāyatī*); on guidance to poets, writers and scholars and their choice of texts (*komīsīūn-e rāhnemā*); and on the writing system. However, the first Farhangestān spent most of its time adopting Persian words to replace foreign ones. Each government agency was encouraged to send a list of the terms it needed to the Secretariat. The vocabulary committee would meet weekly with a representative of the agency. The proposed term would be discussed, making sure that it “agreed with the spirit of the Persian language, with Persian taste, and grammar”; and that it was phonetically and etymologically correct, and easy to pronounce. The spokesman of the committee would then present its recommendations to the general assembly of the Farhangestān, which in turn would send the proposed terminology to the court for approval. Once royal assent was granted, the prime minister would transmit the list of approved terms to the ministries and other agencies, which would be required to use them. At the end of each year, the approved terms would be published in book form (Şadiq, 1959–77, II, pp. 250-51).

The inaugural meeting of the first Farhangestān was held in 1314 Š./1935, with Forūgī in the chair. Among the twenty-four members present were Ḥasan Esfandiārī (Moḥtašam-al-Salṭana), Moḥammad-Taqī Bahār (Malek-al-Šo‘arā’), ‘Alī-Akbar Dehḳodā, Badi‘-al-Zamān Forūzānfar, Sa‘īd Nafīsī, ‘Alī-Aşğar Ḥekmat, ‘Abd-al-‘Azīm Qarīb, Maḥmūd Ḥesābī, Ğolām-Rezā Rašīd Yāsemī, ‘Isā Şadiq, Şādeq Reżāzāda Şafaq, Ḥosayn Samī‘ī (Adīb-al-Salṭana), Ḥasan Woṭūq, Ḥosayn Golegolāb, Major-General Aḥmad Naḳjavān, and Brigadier-General Ğolām-Ḥosayn Moqtader. By 1321 Š./1942, seventeen new permanent members were elected, including Qāsem Ğanī, Ebrāhīm Pūr-e Dāwūd, ‘Alī-Akbar Siāsī, ‘Abbās Eqbāl Āštīānī, Moḥammad Hejāzī (Moṭī‘-al-Dawla), and Moḥammad Qazvīnī. Associate members elected in the same period included Sayyed Moḥammad-‘Alī Jamālzāda, Arthur Emanuel Christensen (Denmark), Henri Massé (France), Jan Rypka (Czechoslovakia), and Moḥammad Ḥosayn Haykal (Egypt; Ra‘dī Ādarakšī, in Dehḳodā, I, pp. 102-3; Şadiq 1959-77, II, pp. 242-49).

The rate at which new terms were adopted did not meet with Reżā Shah’s approval (Bayāt, 1991, p. 50). Consequently, the first Farhangestān was



reorganized in Ordibehešt 1317 Š./1938. Six new members were added and Woṭūq, Dehḳodā, and Sayyed Naṣr-Allāh Taqawī were removed. The single committee responsible for coining new words was replaced by four new committees in charge of administrative, judicial, scientific, and geographical terminology. All other committees from the old structure were replaced with four new formations: one to compile a Persian dictionary, a second to “direct public opinion” and to collect folk music and local proverbs, a third to “investigate medical terminology,” and a fourth to serve as a “committee on Persian grammar.” The committee responsible for geographical terms was later expanded and put in charge of educational terminology as well. Thus, the objectives of the new organization were practically restricted to the revision and expansion of the lexicon. With the active encouragement of the new minister of education, Esmā’īl Mer’āt, the reorganized Farhangestān worked faster but with less precision and care. The advice of “the aged and the elderly” (Şadīq, 1959-77, II, p. 258) among its members was ignored, and committee recommendations went through without much discussion. This offended some members, including Bahār and Qazvīnī, who henceforth attended the meetings reluctantly (Şadīq, 1959-77, II, pp. 253-59).

During its six years as an active organization, the first Farhangestān adopted over 3500 words, including suggestions proposed by others and confirmed by it. Its published lists covered banking, administration, jurisprudence, arithmetic, geometry, physics, geology, medicine, zoology, botany, and other natural sciences. Morphologically, the adopted words fell within three categories: (a) simple words: *andām* (member), *pezešk* (physician); (b) compounds: *dārū-kāna* (pharmacy); *volt-sanj* (volt-meter); (c) words formed with the help of affixes: *dāneškada* (faculty), *āsāyeşgāh* (sanitarium), *bīāzār* (harmless). Furthermore, the combining forms *-šenāsī* and *-šenās* were adopted as counterparts to ‘-logy’ and ‘-logist’ respectively, and were used in forming new terms, e.g., *mardom-æenāsī* (anthropology), *mardom-æenās* (anthropologist). The approved words could also be classified as follows: (a) existing words, which were given new specialized meanings, e.g., *basīj* (military mobilization), *arz* (foreign exchange); (b) synonyms which were given greater differentiation of meaning and turned into specialized terminology, e.g. in geology—*dawr* (epoch), *dawra* (period), *dawrān* (era); in warfare—*jang* (war), *razm* (combat), *nabard* (battle); (c) existing Persian words used in preference to their foreign synonyms, e.g. *bāzargānī* (commerce) instead of *tejārat*; *pāyān* (end) instead of *āker*; (d) new terms derived through semantic differentiation by phonemic variance, e.g., *āgāhī* (secret police),



āgahī (advertisement); (e) changes in the orthography of existing words, sometimes etymologically based, to make them appear more Persian, e.g., *Ābādān* instead of *ʿAbbādān*, *tūfān* (storm) instead of *ṭūfān*; (f) European words, e.g., *terānzīt* (transit), *mīn* (mine); (g) outright creations, e.g., *pušīna* (capsule), *kārvarz* (intern); (h) calques, e.g., *naḳost vazīr* (prime minister); *zīrdaryāī* (submarine); and (i) partial loan translations, i.e., words inspired by the meaning of a component in the foreign-language models, e.g., *davāzdaha* (duodenum) from *davāzdah* (twelve); *zāyā* (generator) from *zāyīdan* (to give birth). Not all words recommended by the first Farhangestān found a permanent home in the language. One group that did survive applied to civil and military administration and bureaucratic terms, e.g., *parvāna* (license), *godār-nāma* (passport), *pāsbān* (policeman). Many other recommended words, including technical terms in mathematics and physics, never entered common usage.

Place-names had been changing sporadically at least since 1303 Š./1924, when Anzalī was renamed Pahlavī. However, these early changes were not always well conceived, nor were they coordinated. Therefore, Forūgī appointed a commission to seek out and revive the historic names of such places wherever possible, or to coin new names, based on local custom and geographical conditions. Turkish or Arabic components of geographical designations were to be turned into Persian. In the spring of 1315 Š./1936, the office of the prime minister sent out a memorandum to various government institutions with the request that a list of newly-installed geographical names be submitted to the Farhangestān for “lexical, historical, and geographical consideration.” By the end of 1319 Š./early 1941, the Farhangestān had approved about 107 new geographical names (Bayāt, 1991-92, pp. 172-84). After the Islamic Revolution some of these changes were reversed.

Absence of precise methods and criteria, disregard for the history or structure of Persian, and the excessive speed with which decisions were made, led to some questionable choices: (a) the proposed new term *dāneš-nāma* (university diploma) ignored the old meaning of the word (encyclopedia); (b) *aškūb* (story in a building) was of Aramaic, not Persian, extraction; (c) *āmūzgār* (teacher) was specified as “elementary school teacher,” along with *dabīr* for “high school teacher,” and *ostād* (master) for “university professor,” leaving no general word for teacher; (d) *dabīr*, an obsolete word meaning “scribe, secretary” was adopted for “secretary (of an organization).” However, *dabīr* was also approved for “high school teacher,” and *sar-dabīr*, for “editor-in-chief,” thus



creating needless confusion.

Forūgī resumed his duties as president of the Farhangestān in the winter of 1320 Š./1941-42, shortly after Reżā Shah’s abdication. Since several regular members had passed away, five new members were added: Sayyed Moḥammad Tadayyon, Mas’ūd Kayhān, Aḥmad Bahmanyār, Jalāl-al-Dīn Homā’ī, and Ġolām-‘Alī Ra’dī Āḍarākšī. After Forūgī’s death in 1321 Š./1942, Samī’ī succeeded to the presidency. After Samī’ī’s death in 1332 Š./1954, no successor was appointed, and the Farhangestān practically ceased to function (Şadīq, 1959-77, II, p. 262.)

Within weeks of Reżā Shah’s abdication, Şadīq, who became minister of education in Mehr 1320 Š./September 1941, gave teachers and textbook writers the choice of using either the old or the new terms, since the new scientific terminology was causing problems. This “calmed down the teachers, and authors did not use any of the new terms in their later writings” (Şadīq, 1959-77, II, p. 260).

In 1322 Š./1943 the Farhangestān started a monthly journal, *Nāma-ye Farhangestān*, but only ten issues were published between that year and 1326 Š./1947. A quarterly journal with the same name began to be published again by the third Farhangestān in Spring 1995. It also published lists of its adopted words at the end of each year. In addition, the Farhangestān commissioned a Persian dictionary, to be compiled by Nafīsī, and an Arabic-Persian dictionary, to be compiled by Forūzānfar. Only the first volume of each was published, in 1319 Š./1941-42 (Şadīq, 1959-77, II, p. 262).

THE INTERIM PERIOD

When the first Farhangestān became inactive, other organizations were created to take over the task of coining new words: the Word-Making Society (*Anjoman-e vāža-sāzī*, 1332 Š./1955), affiliated with the Faculty of Public Administration (*Dāneškada-ye ‘olūm-e edārī*); the Society for Scientific Terminology (*Anjoman-e eştelāḥāt-e ‘elmī*, 1342 Š./1963); the Society for Medical Terminology (*Anjoman-e vāzahā-ye pezeškī*, 1342 Š./1963); the Society for Philosophical Terms (*Anjoman-e eştelāḥāt-e falsafī*, 1345 Š./1966); the Supreme Council for Compiling a Military Dictionary (*Şūrā-ye ‘ālī-e tadwīn-e farhang-e neẓāmī*; 1346 Š./1967), founded by the Headquarters of the Commander-in-Chief (Şāmlū, pp. 834-38).

Apart from the above organization, the purification movement itself also kept the language debate alive, with Kasrawī as its most prolific and outspoken advocate. His works received wider distribution after 1320 Š./1941.

THE SECOND FARHANGESTĀN

In a conference on the state of the Persian language, held in Ābān 1349 Š./1970, Moḥammad-Rezā Shah informed the audience that he had issued a royal decree for the establishment of an Imperial Foundation for Persian Academies (Bonyād-e šāhanšāhī-e farhangestānhā-ye Īrān). The charter of the foundation provided for the establishment of a Language Academy, *Farhangestān-e zabān-e Īrān* (Ahsan, p. 131). On the last day of the convention, the minister of culture and the arts, Mehrdād Pahlbod, presented the members of the Academy to the shah. Apart from Šādeq Kīā, who was elected president by royal decree, the other members were Reżāzāda Šafaq, Golegolāb, Ḥesābī, Šadīq,á Behrūz, Jamāl Reżā’ī, Moḥammad Moqaddam, Yaḥyā Māhyār Nawwābī, Moṣṭafā Moqarrabī, and General ‘Alī Karīmlū. Four of the members of the second Farhangestān had been among the founding members of its predecessor. Of the others, Moqaddam and Behrūz were ardent purists (Šadīq, 1959-77, IV, pp. 75-76.)

The second Farhangestān consisted of four research centers (*pažūhešgāhs*), a library, a phonetic laboratory, and a secretariat. The most active of the four was ‘the Research Center for Word Adoption’ responsible for selecting Persian equivalents to foreign words. It was itself divided into different sections, working on terminology in different fields like education, military affairs, economy and commerce, medicine, law and public administration, and language and literature (Šaffār Moqaddam, pt. one, p. 158). The sources for selecting words were listed in the following order of preference: writings in Persian, local Persian dialects, other Iranian languages and dialects, Persian roots, and roots in other Iranian languages. In addition, a series of publications entitled “What are your suggestions?” (*Pišnehād-e šomā čīst?*), were published, each containing a list of technical words in a specified field such as bibliography, gas technology, and social sciences, in English or in both English and French, with a short explanation of their meanings in the given context. These were to be examined by scholars at home and abroad and their responses studied by specialized committees. Finally, the approved suggestions would be vetted by the Council of the Academy before being presented for royal assent (Šaffār Moqaddam, pt. 2, pp. 132-33).



The second Farhangestān considered 1,515 technical terms and loan words from European languages, for which 1,470 Persian equivalents were found and approved (Şaffār Moqaddam, pt. two, p. 134). These included: (a) descriptive terms, e.g., *šād-kāna* (cabaret), *yak-pārčagī* (homogeneity); (b) loan translations, e.g., *pāyāna* (terminal); (c) general terms turned into specialized ones, e.g., *dānešvar* (“learned person,” for a holder of a Master’s degree) *dūstār* (“loving, appreciative friend” for amateur); (d) groups of synonyms, covering different meanings of a single loan word, such as *pažūheš-nāma* (learned journal) and *āgāhī-nāma* (news bulletin) for *būletān* (bulletin); (e) generalization of existing specific words, e.g., *govāhī-nāma*, originally a certificate awarded on leaving school, expanded to mean a diploma at any educational level; (f) corrections of some oversights of the first Farhangestān, e.g., in order to remedy the latter’s restriction of the word *āmūzgār* to elementary school teacher, the second Farhangestān coined the term *āmūktār* (derived from the same root as *āmūzgār*) for teacher in general; (g) inexplicable changes in existing words, e.g., *forūdghāh* (airport), literally meaning “place of landing,” was changed to *parvāzghāh*, “place of take-off”; (h) occasional revivals of obsolete words, e.g., *farhīkt* (education).

The second Farhangestān issued several publications on Persian dialects and on ancient Iranian languages as well as a series of statistical studies and data bases of the vocabulary of classical texts including some short Persian works by Avicenna, and a frequency count of the written vocabulary of Persian elementary-school children (Badre’ī). One of its last major initiatives was the publication of the periodical *Pažūheš-nāma*, which came out for the first time in Bahman 1354 Š./January-February, 1975. In the early fall of 1357 Š./1978, amid the protests and strikes which heralded the Revolution of 1978-79, the second Farhangestān formed its 149th and last session (Şaffār Moqaddam, pt. 1, p. 159).

THE THIRD FARHANGESTĀN

After the victory of the revolution, there was much criticism of the previous regime’s exploitation of linguistic nationalism. The Farhangestān’s support for the reduction of the Arabic element in Persian was seen as part of an overall plan to drive Islam and Arabic, the language of the Qur’ān, from the public domain. However, the supporters of the Revolution were also quick to proclaim themselves true guardians of the Persian language, fully engaged in safeguarding it from both excessive purification and domination from borrowed words and calques from the West. Sayyed ‘Alī Kāmena’ī, in

particular, as president and later as spiritual leader (*rahbar-e mo'azzam*) has devoted several speeches to the topic, asking for a “com passionate concern for the Persian language,” the “national language” of the Iranian people, which was also “the language of the Revolution and of Islam” (Kāmena’ī, 1988, pp. 2-6). Shorn of their political and religious rhetoric, Kāmena’ī’s views on the relationship between Persian and Arabic as well as his emphasis on the need to avoid foreign calques are reminiscent of both Taqīzāda and Forūgī, and particularly the latter’s famous address to the Farhangestān, some fifty years before (Forūgī, 1316 Š./1937).

In the fall of 1366 Š./1987 Moḥammad Farhādī, the minister of education, announced the establishment of an Academy of Persian Language and Literature (*Farhangestān-e zabān wa adab-e fārsī*), and also of an Academy of Sciences (*Farhangestān-e ‘olūm*), both of which were to begin work soon (*Iran Times*, 12 Mehr 1366 Š./25 September 1987, pp. 5, 14).

The establishment of the third Farhangestān was announced officially on 8 Esfand 1368 Š./27 February 1990. Shortly afterwards, its constitution was approved by the Supreme Council of the Cultural Revolution (*Šūrā-ye ‘ālī-ye enqelāb-e farhangī*) and submitted to the government. The first objective of the organization was “the preservation of the strength and authenticity of the Persian language as one of the pillars of Persian national identity, as the second language of the Islamic world, and the bearer of Islamic learning and culture.” Other objectives included developing Persian for expressing scientific and literary ideas in order to meet changing conditions while “preserving the authenticity of the language.” Its responsibilities entailed coining and adopting new words and setting linguistic standards. The initial number of fifteen regular members, “loyal to the Islamic Republic,” could be increased to twenty-five with provisions for nominating associate members. The Farhangestān would be an independent organization, “the highest authority for setting policy and investigating issues concerning the Persian language and letters.” Its administration would consist of a council, a president, and a secretary. The president of the country would hold the honorary presidency (*rīāsat-e ‘ālīā*) of the Farhangestān (*Asās-nāma-ye Farhangestān-e zabān*).

The following list of regular members was soon announced: Ḥasan Ḥabībī (vice-president of the republic), Sayyed Ja’far Šahīdī, Naṣr-Allāh Pūrjawādī, ‘Alī Rawāqī, Ḥamīd Farzām, Mahdī Moḥaqqueq, Aḥmad Ārām, Bahā’-al-Dīn Korramšāhī, Faṭḥ-Allāh Mojtabā’ī, Moḥammad Moḥiṭ Ṭabāṭabā’ī, Ġolām-Ḥosayn Yūsufī, Moḥammad-Taqī Dānešpažūh, Moḥammad K’ānsārī, Ġolām-



‘Alī Ḥaddād ‘Ādel, Abu’l-Ḥasan Najafī, Sīmīn Dānešvar, Ṭāhera Ṣaffārzāda. A summary of the activities of the Farhangestān, including a list of members elected later, appeared in the first issue of its journal *Nāma-ye Farhangestān* (Spring 1374 Š./1995, pp. 144-51). Reports of the Farhangestān’s suggestions are also regularly reported in Persian newspapers and journals. For example, the list of approved Persian words to replace English and French terms in ‘ski’ sports and *patinage* appeared in *Našr-e dāneš* 13, 1372 Š./1993, p. 467. The Farhangestān also ruled that in official correspondence in European languages, the word “Farsi” should not be used as a substitute for “Persian” (*Našr-e dāneš* 13, 1372 Š./1993, p. 217). The final discussion on the general criteria for selecting words took place in the 58th session of the Farhangestān in Mehr 1373 Š./1994, and the approved text was published in the same issue of *Nāma-ye Farhangestān* (pp. 152-53). The main emphasis in the proposals was on the use of already familiar Persian words, and in case of need, Arabic loan words already existing in the language. In exceptional cases European words which had become firmly established and could be regarded as international in their usage, would be left alone.

In the first two Farhangestāns, the linguistic concern to adopt appropriate words expressing new concepts in Persian, was soon overtaken by a nationalistic drive for large-scale language purification. As a result, linguistic changes occurred more rapidly and fitfully than they would have otherwise. Thus, in less than thirty years, the word for education was changed three times, from *ma‘āref*, to *farhang*, to *āmūzeš wa parvareš*. One consequence of such swift changes was the bewildering increase of synonyms even in specialized technical vocabularies, e.g., *zīst-æenāsī* and *bīoložī*. Another consequence was the misuse of some new words, especially in the fields of the social sciences and the humanities, e.g., *nehād* (cultural institution) is sometimes used for ‘organization’, and *vāžagān* (vocabulary) is often mistaken for the plural of *vāža* (word).

Problems faced by both the first and the second Farhangestāns included the absence of long-standing traditions in linguistic research, and the lack of a consistent methodology for coining scientific terms. The words approved for use by the first Farhangestān were mandatory; those of the second were optional. On the whole, government-related terms and place-names were virtually the only changes which gained wide currency, and under the Islamic Republic many of the latter have been changed back.

The second Farhangestān was better organized than the first and its



procedures more carefully thought out and better funded; but excessive adherence to purification marred many of its decisions. Although it is still too early to assess the activities of the third Farhangestān, a welcome return to the pragmatism of the early days of the first Farhangestān can be detected in most of its deliberations. It has also taken important steps to foster relations with similar academies in the republics of the former Soviet Union, and has encouraged the study of Persian in the Indian Sub-Continent. As a government establishment, however, its future path will be determined largely by political factors beyond its control.

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