



FERDOWSI, ABU'L-QĀSEM IV. MILLENARY CELEBRATION

FERDOWSI, ABU'L-QĀSEM

IV. MILLENARY CELEBRATION (*JAŠN-E HAZĀRA*)

By the early 20th century, European studies (particularly by Mohl and Nöldeke) about Ferdowsī and his achievement, and French, German, and English renditions of the *Šāh-nāma* had made Ferdowsī a household name in the scholarly circles of Europe (Shahbazi, pp. 10-13). Persians, aware of these developments and spurred by the patriotic sentiments motivated by the Constitutional Revolution (q.v.) and the works of fervently nationalistic poets and scholars, began to voice the necessity of the official recognition of Ferdowsī as the true “resurrector” (after the Arab conquest of Persia in the 7th century) of Iranian identity. This movement was led by four notable nationalists: Sayyed Ḥasan Taqīzāda, the statesman and scholar, who not only made the research of Theodore Nöldeke and others available in Persian but also contributed substantially to Ferdowsī studies; Kaykōsrow Šāhroḡ, the highly respected representative of the Zoroastrian community in the Majles; Moḥammad-Taqī Bahār (q.v.), the most influential poet of the time and a politician-journalist; and Moḥammad-‘Alī Forūḡī (q.v.), the erudite prime minister. Already in 1922 Bahār urged Reżā Khan (later Reżā Shah), who had recently seized power, to prove his asserted nationalism by celebrating Ferdowsī and building a worthy mausoleum for the “resurrector of Iranian



national identity and people” (*zenda konanda-ye mellīyat-e o neżād-e Īrān*; Bahār, 1922-23, pp. 434 ff.), while Šāhrok, ‘Abd-al-Ḥosayn Teymūrtāš, and others explored the best way to achieve such a goal. By 1933 Reżā Shah was persuaded, despite angry protests from fanatical anti-Ferdowsī groups (Bahār, p. 449-50; cf. Šāhrok, pp. 164 ff.) to arrange for an official celebration of Ferdowsī’s millenary. Nöldeke had calculated Ferdowsī’s birthdate to be 934-35 (in *Grundriss*, p. 151) and Taqīzāda strongly favored this date (pp. 7-12), which meant the dating of the millenary to be 1934-35. Jules Mohl (pp. XXII ff.) and Bahār (pp. 760 ff.), however, had demonstrated that the birthdate was 939-40 (for the exact date, 3 January 940, see Shahbazi, pp. 27-30), which favored the holding of the millenary in 1939/40. Forūgī settled in favor of 1934: “The *hazāra* of Ferdowsī in any rate coincides with these current years. A few years earlier or later makes no difference” (1933, p. 757).

The celebrations were held in Tehran, Mašhad, and Ṭūs (where the Ferdowsī mausoleum, q.v., was inaugurated in 1934) and lasted for nearly a month. Simultaneously, various state officials and scholars in the Soviet Union, France, Britain, U.S.A., Germany, Egypt, Iraq, and a number of other countries held festivities in universities, clubs, and embassies, and various publications (see below) were dedicated to the study of Ferdowsī and the *Šāh-nāma*. The gathering of some one hundred distinguished scholars as well as many dignitaries of various nationalities in Tehran and Mašhad was a most beneficial event for Iranian studies in general and for research on Ferdowsī and the *Šāh-nāma* in particular. The Persian delegation, comprised of forty members, was led by Forūgī (who delivered the inaugural speech) and included, among others: Moḥammad-Taqī Bahār, Aḥmad Bahmanyār, ‘Abbās Eqbāl (q.v.), Naṣr-Allāh Falsafī (q.v.), Badī’-al-Zamān Forūzānfar (q.v.), Jalāl-al-Dīn Homā’ī, Aḥmad Kasrawī, Mojtabā Mīnovī, Sa’īd Nafīsī, Ḥasan Pīrnīā, Ebrāhīm Pūr-(e) Dāwūd, ‘Abd-al-‘Azīm Qarīb, Ġolām-Reżā Rašīd Yāsamī, Moḥammad-‘Alī Tarbīat, and Ḥasan Waḥīd Dastgerdī. The elder statesman Moḥtašem-al-Salṭana Ḥasan Esfandīārī (q.v.) was appointed honorary chairman of the congress, ‘Īsā Ṣadīq served as its coordinator, and Arthur Christensen (q.v.), ‘Abd-al-Wahhāb ‘Azzām, and Henri Massé as its secretaries. Forūgī, ‘Alī-Aṣḡar Ḥekmat, and Šāhrok accompanied Reżā Shah during his visit and played host to the large gathering (Šāhrok, pp. 171-73). After Persia, the Soviet Union sent the largest delegation, which included Iosif Orbeli, A. A. Freiman, Yuri N. Marr, and Evgenī E. Berthels (q.v.). In addition, the Soviet Union presented the people and government of Persia with reproductions, which had been manufactured by a galvanoplastic technique from actual



specimens in the Hermitage, of eleven Sasanian and post-Sasanian plates; a facsimile of a *Šāh-nāma* manuscript dated 711/1333; and a number of books on Sasanian metalworks. (The plates were kept in the Īrān-e Bāstān Museum until 1973, when the present writer, serving there as the curator of the Classical Department, was ordered by the court to send half of them to what was then the Šahyād Museum. This was done after the author's departure in 1974.) Vladimir Minorsky, the Russian-born Iranologist, came from London. Other distinguished participants included Denison Ross, Jan Rypka, Bedrich Hrozny, Arthur Christensen, Henri Massé, André Godard, Fuat Köprülü, Hādī Ḥasan (q.v.), Behramgore Anklesaria (q.v.), and Jamshedji Unvala (a full list of the participants may be found in Šadīq, ed., 1943, pp. 1-3; (see also PLATE IV, below). An important outcome of the Ferdowsī millenary was the publication of a large number of scholarly works on Ferdowsī and the *Šāh-nāma* (see bibliography). A year before the millenary, Moḥammad Ramažānī published the *Šāh-nāma* in Tehran in 5 volumes (based on T. Macan's edition) with an introduction by Rašīd Yāsamī. Sayf Āzād edited and published the *Šāh-nāma* and illustrated it with pictures of ancient kings inspired by Achaemenid and Sasanian sculptures (4 vols., Berlin, 1934-35; see Forūg, pp. 6-7). Just in time for the millenary, Massé's *Firdausi et l'épopée nationale* appeared (Paris, 1934), which synthesized previous studies in a convenient form. A collection of articles by Bahār on Ferdowsī's life and works and the chronology of the *Šāh-nāma* was published in Isfahan in a special issue of *Bāktar* monthly (q.v.; Bahār, 1934). Another one, containing mainly the papers presented by various Persian scholars to the congress, formed a special issue of *Mehr* monthly (2/5, 1313 Š./1934) as *Ferdowsī-nāma-ye Mehr*. A third collection by Armenian scholars appeared in Yerevan under the title *Firdusi Žolovacus* (Ferdowsī celebration), which included two fine articles by Melik' Ōhanjanyan. A fourth collection by Soviet scholars was titled *Ferdovsi 934-1934*. Another collection of articles, *Firdausi Celebration*, was published in New York, which included a very valuable catalogue of the principle manuscripts of the *Šāh-nāma* then known. The French periodical *Journal Asiatique* devoted its 1935 volume to Ferdowsī, and Sayf Āzād commemorated the millenary in a special issue of his *Īrān-e Bāstān* (Berlin, 1936).

During the congress, Jan Rypka had expressed the opinion that the greatest service that the scholarly world could render to the Persian-speaking communities would be the publication of a critical and reliable edition of the *Šāh-nāma* (Forūg, p. 7). The Borūķīm Publishing Company in Tehran tried to address this desideratum and published the complete text of the *Šāh-nāma*,



based on Vuller's edition, with page numbers of Macan and Mohl also noted, under the supervision of Mojtabā Mīnovī, 'Abbās Eqbāl, Solaymān Ḥayyem (Haim), and Sa'īd Nafīsī (Yarshater, p. *sīzdah*). This edition was ornamented by illustrations by Darviš Parvarda-ye Īrānī, whose novel style combined Persian miniature traditions with Armenian iconography and European realism. Moḥammad Qazvīnī edited and published the preface to 'Abū Manšūrī's *Šāh-nāma* as "Moqaddama-ye qadīm-e *Šāh-nāma*." Fritz Wolff made a lasting contribution with the publication of his *Glossar zu Ferdosis Schahname*, which was presented as a gift to the Persian people by the German ambassador (Şadīq, ed., 1943, Intro., p. 7). Of the papers read by the participants in the congress, thirty-three were printed (together with one sent earlier by Nöldeke, Taqīzāda's articles originally published in *Kāva* in 1920-21, and Qazvīnī's "Moqaddama-ye qadīm-e *Šāh-nāma*") in Tehran in 1314 Š./1935, but publication was withheld until 1943 due to Reżā Shah's displeasure with Taqīzāda (see Şadīq, 1966, pp. 216-17)³ under the title *Ketāb-e hazāra-ye Ferdowsī* (reviewed by Mīnovī). Forūgī's valuable lectures on Ferdowsī and the *Šāh-nāma* appeared in several periodicals in 1933-35 and much later were published in a separate volume (Forūgī, 1972). These contributions greatly advanced Iranian scholarship, and led to the appearance of Dabīḥ-Allāh Şafā's monumental work in 1942 (Şafā, Intro.), which contained a detailed critical evaluation of all aspects of the *Šāh-nāma* and soon became the standard work in its field. Other millenary celebrations of Ferdowsī and the *Šāh-nāma* held in Tehran and Mašhad in the 1970s and 1990 will be discussed in entries under the *Šāh-nāma*.

Plate IV. Participants in the Ferdowsī Millenary Congress, photographed at the entrance to the Dār al-fonūn auditorium.

Several of those in attendance are not pictured. After Şadīq, d., 1943, facing page 202.

From right to left, first row (on the ground): Heydar-Ali Kamali (Turkey), Moḥammad-Taqī Bahār, Henri Massé (France), 'Abbās Eqbāl, 'Īsā Şadīq, Mehmet Ağaoğlu (United States), Franklin M. Gunther (United States), Sebastian Beck (Germany).

Second row (seated): John Drinkwater (England), 'Abd-al-Wahhāb 'Azzām (Egypt), Georges Contenau (France), Ebrāhīm Ḥakīmī, Evgenii Berthels (Soviet Union), Soviet ambassador (unnamed), Ḥasan Esfandiārī, Moḥammad-'Alī Forūgī, Mrs. Godard (?; France), Dastūr Nūšīrvān (India), Arthur Christensen



(Denmark), Friedrich Sarre (Germany), ‘Abd-al-Ḥosayn Šaybānī, Ḥasan Pīrnā.

Third row (standing): Mojtabā Mīnovī, Sayyed Walī-Allāh Naṣr, Mahdī (?) Dībā, Ḥasan Waḥīd Dastgerdī, Mīrzā Yānes, Badī-al-Zamān Forūzānfar, Sa‘īd Nafīsī, Jamīl Šedqī Zahāwī (Iraq), Šādeq Re zāzāda Šafaq, Mehmet Fuat Köprülü[zāde] (Turkey), Abu’l-Qāsem E‘tešāmzāda, Moḥammad Nežām-al-Dīn (India), Denison Ross (England), Ashikaga Atsuuji (Japan), Zayn-al-‘Ābedīn Rahn emā, A. A. Bolotnikof (Soviet Union), Moḥammad-Ṭāher Rażawī (India), Ġolām-Rezā Rāšīd Yāsamī.

Fourth row: Yad-Allāh Māyel Tūyserkānī, Aḥmad Ḥāmed Šarrāf (Iraq), ‘Alī-Ašgar Ḥekmat, Jan Rypka (Czechoslovakia), Naṣr-Allāh Falsafī, Moḥammad Eshāq (India), Aleksandr Freiman (Soviet Union), Hādī Ḥasan (?; India), ‘Abd-al-‘Aẓīm Qarīb, Ali Nihad Bey (Turkey), Šayḵ-al-Molk Owrang, Aḥmad Bahmanyār, Raḥīmzāda Šafawī.

Fifth row: Joseph Hackin (France), Jalāl Homā‘ī, Yuri N. Marr (Soviet Union), ‘Alī Qawīm, Aleksandr A. Romaskevich (Soviet Union), Iosef Orbeli (Soviet Union), Jamshedji Unvala (India).

Sixth row: Bahram Gor Anklesaria (India), Aḥmad Kasrawī, Naṣr-Allāh Taqawī, Vladimir Minorsky (England), ‘Abd-al-Ḥamīd ‘Abbādī (Egypt), Antonio Pagliaro (Italy), Malek Karam, Ernst Kühnel (Germany), ‘Abbās Ḳalīlī, ‘Alī Jawāher-Kalām, L. A. Mayer (Palestine).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Ī. Afšār, *Ketāb-šenāsī-e Ferdowsī: Fehrest-e āṭār o taḥqīqāt dar bāra-ye Ferdowsī wa Šāh-nāma*, Tehran, 2535=1353 Š./1974 (contains reproduction of program and other material related to the millenary celebration).

M.-T. Bahār, “Qabr-e Ferdowsī,” *Now bahār-e haftagī* 13/2-9, 1301-2 Š./1922-23, pp. 434-35, 449-50.

Idem, “Šarḥ-e ḥāl-e Ferdowsī az rū-ye Šāh-nāma,” *Bāktar* 1/11-12, 1313 Š./1924, pp. 748-829.



E. E. Berthels, “Ferdovsi i ego tvorchestvo” (Ferdowsī and his creation), in *Ferdowsi 934-1934*, pp. 97-118.

M. S. Dimand, “Firdausi’s influence on Persian art,” in D. E. Smith, ed., *Firdausi Celebration 935-1935*, New York, 1936, pp. 13-24.

‘A. Eqbāl, “Naqš o negār-e dāstānhā-ye mellī-e Īrān,” in Şadīq, 1943, pp. 151-96.

M. Eshāq, “Nofūd-e Ferdowsī dar Hendūstān,” in Şadīq, ed., 1943, pp. 149-50.

Ferdowsi 934-1934, Leningrad, 1934. *Ferdowsī-nāma-ye Mehr*, Mehr 5/2, Tehran, 1313 Š./1934.

Firdusi Zholovacus (Ferdowsī celebration), Yerevan, 1934.

N. Ya. Marr, “Vazn-e še’rī-e Šāh-nāma,” in Şadīq, ed., 1943, pp. 188-97.

K. Melik’-Ohanjanyan “Firdusi yew Irani vipakan motivner ‘Šah-name’-um u hay matenagrut’yan meĵ,” in *Firdusi Žolovacus*, Yerevan, 1934, pp. 1-116.

Idem, “Hay-iranakan Žolovrdakan vep,” *ibid.*, pp. 157-230.

M. Forūġ, “Šāh-nāma-ye Ferdowsī,” *Sīmorġ*, no. 4, 1976, pp. 3-19.

M.-‘A. Forūġī, “Maqām-e arjmand-e Ferdowsī,” *Armaġān* 14, 1312 Š./1933, pp. 745 ff.

Idem, “Maqām-e Ferdowsī wa ahammīyat-e Šāh-nāma,” in Şadīq, ed., 1943, p. 16.

Idem, *Maqālāt-e Forūġī dar bāra-ye Šāh-nāma wa Ferdowsī*, ed., H. Yaġmā’ī, Tehran, 1972.

F. Macler, “Arménie et Chah-nameh,” *JA*, 1935, pp. 549-59.

M. Mīnovī, “Ketāb-e hazāra-ye Ferdowsī wa boṭlān-e entesāb-e Yūsof o Zolaykā ba Ferdowsī,” *Rūzgār-e now* 5/3, London, 1946, pp. 16-36.

J. Mohl, *Le Livre des Rois I*, Paris, 1838.

Th. Nöldeke, “Das iranische Nationalepos,” in *Grundriss II*, pp. 130-211; rev. ed. published seperately, Leipzig, 1920; tr. B. ‘Alawī as *Hamāsa-ye mellī-ye Īrān*, Tehran, 1948.



- I. Orbeli, “L’argenterie sassanide et le Shah-Nameh,” in Şadīq, ed., 1943, pp. 4-71.
- M. Qazvīnī, “Moqaddama-ye qadīm-e Šāh-nāma,” in idem, *Bīst-maqāla-ye Qazvīnī*, ed. ‘A. Eqbāl, 2 vols., Tehran, 1928-34, II, pp. 1-64.
- A. A. Romaskevich “Ocherk istorii izucheniya Shakh-name” (Sketches of the history of Šāh-nāma studies), in *Ferdowsi 934-1934*, pp. 13-50. ‘
- Ī. Şadīq, ed., *Ketāb-e hezāra-ye Ferdowsī/The Millenium of Firdawsī, the Great National Poet of Iran*, Tehran, 1322 Š./1943 (Pers. and non-Persian articles and a brief discussion in the Pahlavi language by A. A. Freiman).
- Idem, *Yādgār-e ‘omr II*, Tehran, 1345 Š./1966, pp. 201-33.
- Ḍ. Şafā, *Ḥamāsa-sarā’ī dar Īrān, Tehran, 1321 Š./1942, 2nd rev. ed.*, Tehran, 1333 Š./1954.
- A. N. Samoilovich, “Iranskii geroicheskiĭ epos v literaturakh tiurkskich narodov Sredneĭ Azii” (The Iranian heroic poetry in the literature of Central Asian Turks), in *Ferdowsi 934-1934*, pp. 161-76.
- A. Sh. Shahbazi, *Ferdowsī: A Critical Biography*, Costa Mesa, Calif., 1991.
- D. E. Smith, “A of the Principal Manuscripts and Printed Editions of the Šāh-nāma in Certain Leading Libraries of the World,” in idem, ed., *Firdausi Celebration 935-1935*, New York, 1936.
- S. Ḥ. Taqīzāda, “Ferdowsī,” *Kāva*, nos., 1-2, Berlin, 1920-21.
- P. B. Vachha, *Firdousi and the Shahnama: A Study of the Great Persian Epic of the Homer of the East*, Bombay, 1950.
- E. Yarshater, intro. to *Šāh-nāma*, ed. Khaleghi, pp. *yāzda-hijda*.