



FORŪĠĪ, MOḤSEN I. BIOGRAPHY

Moḥsen Forūġī was the son of the famous statesman and man of letters Moḥammad-‘Alī Forūġī (q.v.). He was sent to study abroad in 1926 and after a short stay at Toulouse, he moved to Paris where he attended the prestigious Lycée Jeanson-de-Sailly and was successful at the stringent entrance examinations, the *concours*, for both the École centrale and the École des beaux-arts. He chose the latter, specializing in architecture. He graduated in 1937, coming first in his class and winning the prize for the best diploma (Gillet, p. 14). He returned to Persia in the same year and taught at the various Faculties of the University of Tehran (q.v.), including the Faculty of Engineering as well as at the School of Architecture (Madrassa-ye ‘ālī-e me‘mārī). He was instrumental, along with [André Godard](#), Roland Dubrul, and Maxime Siroux, in establishing the University of Tehran’s Faculty of Fine Arts in 1940 and was one of its initial professors, eventually succeeding Godard as its dean (*Architecte* 1, 1325 Š./1946, p. 31; *Architecte* 3, 1326 Š./1947, p. 111; see also [FACULTIES OF THE UNIVERSITY OF TEHRAN ii](#)).

Forūġī was the architect of numerous public buildings while associated with the technical office of the National Bank (Bānk-e mellī) and with the Ministries of Finance and Education. Architectural projects designed by him include the Ministry of Finance and a series of buildings for the National Bank including hospitals, bank offices in Tehran’s *bāzār*, and branches in Shiraz, Isfahan, and Tabrīz. He also advised and carried out several restoration and building



projects for the National Monuments Council of Iran (Anjoman-e āṭār-e mellī, q.v.), including designs for the mausoleums of Sa'dī in Shiraz and Bābā Ṭāher in Hamadān. Forūġī collaborated with Godard, Siroux, and Dubrul on the design of the master plan for the University of Tehran and its associated buildings, including the Faculty of Law and Political Science. During a long and productive career stretching over forty years, he worked with a number of well-known Persian architects, including 'Alī Ṣādeq, Kayqobād Zafar, and later with Ḥaydar Ġiā'ī (*Architecte* 5, 1328 Š./1949, p.185).

Although his approach to building design was fundamentally modern, Forūġī had an intimate knowledge of traditional architectural principles, such as the use of *ayvāns* (q.v.), and in the application of *kāšikārī* (faience revetment) to emphasize facades and main entries. The Bānk-e Mellī's *bāzār* building in Tehran perhaps best embodies his style and represents Forūġī's modern rational approach to public edifices, in contrast to the pre-Islamic imagery of the main Bānk-e Mellī building in Tehran. Although the building is modern in its materials (reinforced concrete, brick, and cement mortar), interior plan, and elevation, its *kāšikārī* decorative panels recall surface decorations used on traditional Persian buildings.

Forūġī also designed many private residences and villas in Tehran in a distinctly modern style, setting the pattern for a new western floor plan, with functional rooms replacing the traditional spatial division based on private and public spheres of life (Marefat, 1988, pp. 224-32; see [ANDARŪN](#)).

As an architect, Forūġī's influence was considerable, and yet his greatest contribution may have been in the development of architecture as a profession. He was instrumental in the creation of the first school of architecture, the Society of Persian Professional Architects (Anjoman-e aršitekthā-ye Irānī-ye dīploma), and the founding of *Architecte*, Persia's first professional journal dedicated to architecture. For the last sixteen years of his life, he was a foreign corresponding member of the highly prestigious Académie des Beaux-Arts (Gillet, p. 14).

Forūġī married Leone Daviaud, a French citizen, in 1939, and they had two sons. He was noted for his kindness and hospitality towards scholars who came to visit his magnificent collection. He was also active in politics. In 1956, he served for one parliamentary session as a representative from Tehran. His later years were sadly marred by tragic events in his personal and public life. His younger son died in a riding accident while playing polo, and he himself



was imprisoned for a while in 1961 on charges of corruption and mismanagement related to the construction of the Senate building in Tehran. He was later cleared of the charges and was a member of the Senate from 1966 until 1978 when he was Minister of Education and Culture for about three months in the two short-lived cabinets of Ja'far Šarīf Emāmī and General Reżā Azhārī, immediately before the fall of the shah. He was imprisoned after the revolution, on 1 April 1979, and his art collection was sequestrated and placed in the Archaeological Museum (Mūza-ye Īrān-e bāstān) at Tehran, the very museum to which, prior to the revolution, he had intended to leave his collection. He was released from prison on 27 December 1982 and died ten months later.

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