



HĀNIBĀL, 'ALI

HĀNIBĀL, 'ALI (b. Russia, 1891; d. 16 Esfand 1344 Š./7 March 1966), Russian-born Persian scholar and founder of the first journal of anthropology (*majallaye mardom-šenāsi*) in Persia. He was born into a Christian family of Arab and Lithuanian ancestry. He came to Persia in the early 20th century, where he converted to Islam and adopted 'Ali as his first name (his Christian name is not known). He married a Persian girl from Ṭabas, where he kept a traditional Persian house and garden.

Hānibāl studied law at University of St. Petersburg, where he graduated with a bachelor's degree in 1912. He then studied Arabic and Persian at the Faculty of Oriental Languages of the same university. He continued studying these languages at the École des Langues Orientales in Paris and later at the University of Berlin. He was fluent in Russian, French, German, English, Italian, Arabic and Persian, and was familiar with Latin and Czech. Because of his proficiency in several foreign languages and his background in working with British and Russian officials in World War I, the Allies, during their occupation of Persia in World War II, put him in charge of the transportation of war materials to the Soviet Union (Afšār, 1965, p. 107). He also acted at the same time as the intermediary between the Allied forces and the Persian authorities in Qazvin, where he was stationed.

Hānibāl loved Persia and its culture and spent forty years studying and trying to rejuvenate and preserve its cultural heritage. The breadth of his personal knowledge in this field, coupled with his learned familiarity with the works of Western Orientalists, had turned him into a scholar of Iranian studies in his



own right. He was a member of Anjoman-e adabi-e Irān (The Literary Society of Iran), and a number of scholarly societies in Europe, including Société Asiatique of Paris. He was one of the founding and honorary members of the National Monuments Council of Iran (Anjoman-e ātār-e melli-e Irān, q.v.). In 1938 he became a member of Anjoman-e mošāwara-ye 'elmi at the Persian Institute of Anthropology (Mo'assasa-ye mardom-šenāsi-e Irān), which was then directed by Doka'-al-Molk Moḥammad-'Ali Foruḡi (q.v.). In 1955 and 1957 respectively he was appointed curator of the Museum of Anthropology (Muze-ye mardom-šenāsi) and advisor to the Department of Fine Arts (Edāra-ye koll-e honarhā-ye zibā). Finally, in 1961 he became Director of the Museum of Ābādān, a post he occupied until his death in March 1966.

Hānibāl's first research mission was for a period of one month in Ṭālaqān near Qazvin, where he made a survey of the folklore, dialects, local industries, and popular beliefs and rituals of the region as well as its ethnography and historical sites. In 1952 he was sent on a mission to Yazd, where he studied paintings of religious scenes on old buildings and sites. The results of his lifetime research are spread in a large number of notes that, unfortunately, have not been published (Afšār, 1966, pp. 107, 108). His only published contribution is the text of the speech that he delivered at the Ministry of Education on 18 Kordād 1306/8 June 1927 and was published a few months later (see bibliog.). Hānibāl was responsible for the foundation of the "Journal of Anthropology" (*Majalla-ye mardom-šenāsi*, later *Majalla-ye mardom-šenāsi wa farhang-e āmma-ye Irān*) of which he was the chief editor, and which was published by the Department of Fine Arts sporadically for nine issues between 1956 and 1959. Each issue contained several original articles on anthropology and related disciplines, some of which are still considered as works of reference. He served for a time as the director of the Museum of Anthropology and was also responsible for setting up the museums of Qazvin and Ābādān in 1955 and 1961.

Hānibāl's passion for Persian art had made of him an enthusiastic collector of it. His small house in the Emānzāda Yaḥyā quarter of Tehran was filled and decorated with precious and rare objects, looking like a small museum. He had a unique collection of Persian glasses, which he donated, along with his collection of paintings of the Qajar period, to the Museum of Anthropology upon its inauguration in 1936 (Komisiun-e melli-e Yunesko, II, p. 1239). He was praised by Sayyed Ḥasan Taqizāda as an incomparable man (*mard-i bimeṭāl*; apud Afšār, 1965, p. 108).



BIBLIOGRAPHY

Correspondence and letters of appointment contained in the personnel file of Hānibāl at the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (Wezārat-e farhang wa eršād-e eslāmi). Iraj Afšār, “Wafāt-e Panj Dānešmand,” *Rāhnamā-ye ketāb* 8, 1344 Š./1965, pp. 107-8.

Idem, “Wafayāt-e mo’allefin,” in idem, *Sawād o bayāz*, 2 vols., Tehran, 1344-49 Š./1965-70, pp. 513-617.

Mas’ud Barzin, *Šenās-nāma-ye maṭbu’āt-e Irān az 1215 tā 1357 šamsi*, Tehran, 1371 Š./1992, p. 364.

‘Ali Hānibāl, “Tajdid-e ḥayāt-e dawq-e šan’ati-e Irān,” repr. in *Majmu’a-ye entešārāt-e qadim-e Anjoman-e ātār-e melli*, Tehran, 1351 Š./1972, pp. 74-85.

Šokuh Kāva-riān, “Muze-ye Hānibāl dar Tehrān,” in Moḥammad-‘Ali Jamālzāda, ed., *Hezār piša*, Tehran, 1326 Š./1943, pp. 124-26.

Komisiun-e melli-e Yunesko (UNESCO) dar Irān, *Irān-šahr*, 2 vols., Tehran, 1342-43 Š./1963-64.

Majalla-ye mardom-šenāsi, Ābān 1335 Š./1956, pp. 1-2.

Sayyed Moḥammad-Taqi Moštāfawi, “Talāš dar rāh-e kedmat ba ātār-e melli wa omid ba āyanda,” *Gozārešhā-ye bāstān-šenāsi* 3, Tehran, 1334 Š./1965, pp. 396-97.