



ḤESĀBI, MAḤMUD

ḤESĀBI, MAḤMUD, contemporary Persian physicist, Senator, and minister of education (b. Tehran, 1321/1903, d. Geneva, 12 Šahrivar 1371 Š./3 September 1992; [Figure 1](#)). He was born to ‘Abbās Ḥesābi, a Qajar government official from Tafreš. Ḥesābi received his primary and secondary education in French and American Schools in Beirut, 1910-19. He completed his degree in road engineering in 1922 from the American University of Beirut and subsequently worked for the road ministry in Beirut. In 1923 he moved to Paris and obtained a bachelor’s degree in electrical engineering from the École Supérieure d’Électricité in 1925. He then worked as an electrical engineer in the Paris railway system. In the meantime, he continued his studies in physics at Paris University, Sorbonne under the noted physicist Aimé Cotton and obtained his doctorate in 1927. His dissertation was on *Sensibilité des cellules photoélectriques* (see *Iran Who’s Who* 1976, 3rd ed., Tehran, 1976, p. 213; Ḥesābi, 2000, pp. 5-6, 185-86).

On his return to Persia in 1927, Ḥesābi was sent to Bušehr to start work on mapping the coastal roads along the Persian Gulf. Thereafter he was invited by Teachers College (*Dar al-mo’allemīn-e ‘āli*) to form the science department in 1928. In 1934, Ḥesābi participated in the formation of two faculties at The University of Tehran: first, by assisting to develop the science department of Teachers College into the Faculty of Science of the University; and secondly, by forming and supervising the freshman class of the School of Engineering (see [EDUCATION xix. TEACHERS TRAINING COLLEGES](#); Ḥesābi, 2000, pp. 6-7, 87; Ḥekmat, pp. 360-61; interview with Kamāl-al-Din Jenāb, 20 August 2003).



Ḥesābi also helped in adopting new methods of teaching science and suggesting Persian equivalents of scientific terminology as a member of the Academy of Persian Language (FARHANGESTĀN-E ZABĀN-E IRĀN). Many of the terms that he proposed are still being used in modern Persian scientific language (for a list of the science terminology he coined, see Ḥesābi, 2000, pp. 163-74). Meanwhile, in a trip to Princeton in 1947 he had the opportunity to meet Albert Einstein, discussing his scientific activities with him (Ḥesābi, 2000, pp. 127-33).

Ḥesābi served as minister of education in 1951-52 in Dr. Moḥammad Moṣaddeq's nationalist government. He was also elected to the Fourth Session of the Senate from Tehran in 1957 (*Iran Who's Who 1976*, 3rd ed., Tehran, 1976, p. 213).

Ḥesābi was fluent in English, French, and Arabic, and had learned German by himself. He obtained several honors, including the *Legion d'Honneur* and the "distinguished Professor of the University of Tehran" (1971). In 1987, the annual Iranian Physics Conference was held in his honor. That same year the "Ḥesābi Prize" was established, to be given each year to the best Iranian undergraduate researcher in physics (Ḥesābi, 2000, p. 8).

BIBLIOGRAPHY

For an account of his life and work, as well as a selection of his writings and a complete bibliography of his works, see Maḥmud Ḥesābi, *Rāh-e mā, goftārḥā'i az Sayyed Maḥmud Ḥesābi*, Tehran, 2000 (however, the foundation of a number of institutions attributed to Ḥesābi in pp. 6-8 and 187-90, should be checked against other reliable sources and documents).

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Theory of Infinitely Extended Particles, Tehran, 1977.

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