



SAN'ATIZADEH KERMANI, HOMAYUN

SAN'ATIZADEH KERMANI, HOMAYUN (Homāyun Şan'atizāda Kermāni, b. Tehran, 1925; d. Kermān, 2009), 20th century entrepreneur, man of letters, publisher, and founding manager of Mo'assasa-ye enteşārāt-e Ferānklin (see [Franklin Book Program](#)), who played an instrumental role in the introduction of modern publishing industries in Iran.

San'atizadeh was born into a prominent family of [Kerman](#). His grandfather, Hajj 'Ali Akbar (1858-1938), a textile manufacturer, took the name Şan'ati and established the eponymous orphanages in Kerman and [Bam](#). The children brought up there took the San'ati name. Most noted among them is 'Ali Akbar Şan'ati (1916-2006), the eminent painter and sculptor. 'Abd-al-Ḥosayn Şan'atizāda (1895-1973), Homayun's father, was a prolific writer in many genres, including science fiction and historical novels. His *Dāmgostarān yā enteḡān-k'āhān-e Mazdak* (The ensnarers, or the avengers of Mazdak) was published in two parts, the first in Bombay, 1921-22, and the second in 1925-26 in Tehran (Yavari, p. 581).

San'atizadeh briefly attended the Zoroastrian School in Tehran (present day Jamšid Jam), where he was a classmate to Iraj Afšār, the eminent scholar (Afšār, 2009, p. 4). He later moved to Kerman to live with his grandfather and complete his elementary school education. In 1938 he returned to Tehran to pursue his high school education at the American College (see [Alborz College](#)).



After the occupation of Iran by the Allied Forces and the subsequent abdication of Reza Shah in 1941, San'atizadeh went back to Kerman, and thence to Isfahan to join his mother, who had been separated from his father. He completed his secondary education in Isfahan and, despite his father's insistence, chose not to continue his studies. He sought instead to pursue commerce, and started off as an apprentice in the Tehran bazaar (Griffin, "Road to Damask").

After two years, he was able to open an independent concern. He contacted a number of foreign firms, hoping to represent their interests in Iran. In response, he was sent a number of posters, which he sold for a sizable sum. He found the sale of posters to be an interesting and profitable line of work, and soon got more seriously involved in poster sales, as well as the reproduction and sale of photographs. In 1944, he organized an exhibition of photographs, posters and paintings at the second floor of a gallery in which the works of 'Ali Akbar Şan'ati were on display. A novel idea in those days, the exhibition drew a sizable crowd of mostly foreign residents and the cultural elite. The commercial success of the exhibit marked the beginning of a string of successes that he would enjoy in various fields throughout his career.

San'atizadeh soon established a reputation as a progressive young entrepreneur. The diplomatic corps and foreign residents found their way to his gallery and made his acquaintance. One day the cultural attaché to the American Embassy, accompanied by three board members of the Franklin Book Program, visited his office and proposed that he represent Franklin in Iran. An initiative of the American Publishing Association and the American Library Association, their objective was to encourage publication in local languages of translations from American books in Asia, Africa, and Latin America. Although San'atizadeh first declined the offer, he revised his position after giving their book list greater scrutiny and began work as the managing director of the Franklin Book Program in Iran in 1954. "His intellectual creativity and instinctive understanding of book publishing joined with his courage and entrepreneurial wisdom in bringing almost immediate success to the project" (Datsun, p. 188).

San'atizadeh succeeded in enlisting the participation of such outstanding public figures and intellectuals as Iraj Afšār, Moḥammad-Ja'far Maḥjub, Moḥammad Mo'in, Maḥmud Sanā'i, Ehsan Yarshater, 'Abbās Zaryāb Kō'i, and 'Abd-al-Ḥosayn Zarrinkub, among others. Many publishers, including [Amir Kabir](#), [Bongāh-e tarjoma va naşr-e ketāb](#), Ebn-e Sinā, and Soḵan, cooperated



with Franklin in issuing the books. Many titles were published, and, just as importantly, the professional editor found currency in Iran (see EDITING ix). Prominent editors such as Aḥmad Ārām, Najaf Daryābandari, [Karim Emāmi](#), Manučehr Anvar and Esmā'il Sa'ādat cut their teeth at Franklin. The effect of the movement generated by Franklin was extremely positive and instrumental in the development of the Iranian publishing industry (Afšār, 2009, p. 5). As held by Najaf Daryābandari, the prominent translator and editor-in-chief at Franklin Publications for several years: “In essence, we engaged in activities that in those days Iranian publishers were not capable of undertaking. In all these endeavours, Homayun Şan'atizadeh played an extremely important and effective role” (Możaffari Sāvoji, p. 93).

The books published by Franklin set a high standard, not only for their content, but also for layout, graphic design, and eye-catching covers; consequently, they enjoyed commercial success. It should be noted, however, that Franklin espoused a model in which they generated print-ready titles and handed them over to other publishers for printing and publication. In exchange, they received 15% of the cover price (Ja'fari, 2010, p. 458). In this fashion they were able to devote themselves wholeheartedly to generating and providing translations and Iranian titles to the public. They pursued this model for more than twenty years, until the Revolution of 1979 (For a title by title study of the books published by Franklin see [FRANKLIN BOOK PROGRAM](#)).

Beyond increasing the number of titles, San'atizadeh also devoted himself to the sheer volume of publication, and founded Şerkat-e saḥāmi-e ketābhā-ye jibi (Pocket Books, Inc.), as a division of Franklin. The company would acquire paperback rights from other publishers and issue inexpensive, pocket size editions. These generated a huge demand and gave books a new popularity. As 'Abd-al-Raḥim Ja'fari, founder of Amir Kabir Publications, notes, “In a short period of time he issued hundreds of paperback book titles, typically printing five thousand to twenty thousand copies” (Ja'fari, 1990, p. 38). The price ranged from 20 to 25 riāls, “which was essentially the same as the price of admission to a movie theatre in those days” (Możaffari Sāvoji, p. 96).

Another of San'atizadeh's contributions while at Franklin was the founding of *Dāyerat al-ma'āref-e Fārsi*, the first general encyclopaedia in Persian compiled along modern lines (Āşuri, p. 168), in 1956 with funds received from the Ford Foundation. The project was constituted as a separate entity under the umbrella of the Franklin Book Program. After an extensive search, San'atizadeh settled on Ġolām-Ḥosayn Moşāhab (1910-1979; q.v.) as the



Encyclopaedia's editor, who oversaw the publication of the first volume (alef-sin, 1966) and the preparation of the work up to the letter 'ġayn' in the second. His monumental contribution brought the project to fruition with a small group, in a small space and with rudimentary equipment (Homāyunpur p. 60). Moṣāḥab's extensive introduction to the first volume includes an explanation of the methodological principles and innovations embodied in the *Dāyerat al-ma'āref* (Houman, p. 57). The second and third volumes (sin-lām, lām-yā) were published in 1977 and 1994, respectively. Of a total of approximately 43,000 entries of *Dāyerat al-ma'āref*, about 30,000 were translated from the *Concise Columbia Viking Desk Encyclopaedia* and other references, supplemented by approximately 13,000 original articles on Iran (Fāni, p. 66). After the resignation of Moṣāḥab in 1976, Reżā Aqṣā was appointed as the editor of the *Dāyerat al-ma'āref* (Aqṣā, p. 6).

In 1957 Şan'atizadeh established Şerkat-e saḥāmi-e offset (Offset Printing Company), with an initial investment of eleven thousand tomans, in what was then Qavām-al-Saltāna Street (now 30th of Tir Street). The start-up capital came from Franklin as well as the sale of shares to the Imperial Organization for Social Services (Sāzemān-e šāhanšāhi-e ḳadamāt-e ejtemā'i). However, after a few years, it was moved to Goethe Street, and San'atizāda engaged in the purchase of a range of modern printing and pagination equipment. The most impressive feat of the Offset Company was its reproduction in full colour of the manuscript of the *Bāysonġori Şāh-nāma*, an illuminated and gilded manuscript of *Şāh-nāma*, which was commissioned by Ġiāṭ-al-Dīn Bāysonġor b. Şāhroḳ (d. 1433), the Timurid prince in 1426.

In 1958 San'atizāda made a trip to Afghanistan, the only other Persian-speaking nation with Persian script, in order to increase the publication of Persian titles. He was not able to secure any contracts, however, and roughly a year later he was approached to publish Afghanistan's school textbooks. This he did, realizing a considerable profit for Franklin (Alinežād, 2010, p. 622).

It did not take long for the company to be charged with the production of school textbooks in Iran, which led to the publication of millions of copies of scholastic texts in collaboration with other publishers, as well as Sāzmān-e ketābhā-ye darsi-e Iran (Persian textbook organization, est. 1963) in the Ministry of Education (see [EDUCATION](#) xvi). The implementation of the project was not only a major step in lowering the market price of the text books, but also in enhancing the intellectual worth of the school texts (Ayman, p. 42; 'Abd-al-Raḥim Ja'fari, 2004, II, pp. 763-93). A by-product of these developments was



the compilation by a committee of scholars of a new set of orthographic rules (rasm al-kaṭṭ) for authors, editors, and proofreaders at both Sāzemān-e ketābhā-ye darsi and the Franklin Book Program.

Gradually this printing house was transformed into one of the nation's largest printing concerns. In the early 1970's it was transferred to Sorḡa Heṣār, extensive lands were purchased and equipped with different multi-colour machines. In addition to the publication of elementary and middle school textbooks, it was also involved in the printing and pagination of books, newspapers and magazines (Ja'fari, 2004, I, p. 438).

In 1964 San'atizadeh was appointed head of the National Committee for the International Campaign Against Illiteracy (Komita-ye melli-e paykār jahāni bā bisavādi), which was founded as a consequence of efforts by UNESCO to eradicate illiteracy in the world. The program in Iran was implemented under the fourth development plan (1968-72). It was first launched in the villages of Qazvin and then expanded to rural areas around the country in 1967. The aim was to increase the number of literate adults by 4.5 million but, according to official figures, in 1970 no more than 1 million adults had taken the classes; only about 450,000 had completed the advanced class (Qāsemi and Nuri, p. 78). As noted by San'atizadeh himself, the fight against illiteracy was like a war with a monster in darkness. "I was successful in all my ventures except for in the war with illiteracy," he said of his defeat (Alinežād, 2008, p. 249-50; For further details see Moḡammad Amin Riyāḡi, "Mājarā-ye ketābhā-ye darsi," *Boḡārā*, No.2, Mehr-Ābān 1377 Š./1998, pp. 60-81).

In 1970 San'atizadeh established a paper company, later named the Pars Paper Industrial Group. It remains one of the largest paper-making factories in the nation and the single largest producer of paper in Iran from baggas, the residue left after sugar has been extracted from sugar cane. During this period, his involvement with Franklin had slowed down, and eventually it ceased altogether. The Board of Directors of Pars Paper, where he was the Managing Director, asked him to choose between Pars and Franklin. Given the problems facing him at Franklin, he chose the management of the paper factory. At Pars Paper, however, differences with the primary shareholders (the Board of the Industrial and Mining Development Bank) and the English company, Reed, led San'atizadeh to leave the factory. The Franklin Book Program saw its end after twenty-five years of operation in 1978.

During the years preceding the 1979 Revolution, San'atizadeh got involved in a



variety of short-lived activities, from working, at the invitation of 'Ali Naqi 'Āliqāni, the then Minister of Economy, with the B.F. Goodrich Tire Company, to pearl farming on Kish Island, which despite a high profile that included a visit from the Prime Minister, Amir 'Abbās Hoveydā, saw its end prematurely (For further details see *Zamān*, no. 3, Tir 1374 Š./ July 1995). He also founded Roṭab-e Zohreh, a date-producing concern, which continues to this day. The proceeds are devoted to the Şan'ati Girls Orphanage in Bam (Mokallā, p. 9). San'atizadeh's last entrepreneurial endeavour was flower farming, giving rein to a fascination with farming he had had since childhood (Afšār, 2009, p. 7). He founded Golāb-e Zahrā' (Zahra Rosewater) in 1978, pioneering the cultivation of Damask roses on the slopes of the Lālazār Mountains in Kerman.

Shortly before the Revolution, San'atizadeh took over the management of Āršām Printing House in Kerman. However, he soon found himself in conflict with the staff over an issue of misappropriations. It was a conflict that would prove costly, as allegations were brought against him. He was accused of having close ties with the Pahlavi court, of printing American books, and of disseminating Western culture in Iran (Ja'fari, 2004, I, 449-52). He spent four years in prison, a part of his assets were confiscated, and a section of the orphanage in Kerman was taken over by the National Health Organization (Sāzmān-melli-e behzisti) and the Ministry of Islamic Guidance (Vezārat-e eršād-e Eslāmi). During this period, his wife, Şahin Sarlati, was instrumental in expanding the rose flower concern and handling San'atizadeh's other interests. Eventually his release was secured in 1984. He was later able to recover the assets confiscated during his incarceration, and to endow the orphanages inherited from his grandfather and father in Kerman and Bam. He also founded the San'ati Museum in Kerman, where several of [Sohrāb Sepheri's](#) (1928-1980) paintings, all gouache-on-paper depicting desert scenes, are on display alongside the works of other noted painters and sculptors (Ruḥi, p. 44-45; M. Şan'ati, p. 630; see also [SEPEHRI, SOHRĀB](#)).

Throughout the last decades of his life, San'atizadeh joined his wife in flower farming and the extraction of rose water. Hundreds of acres were placed under cultivation, and farmers, who up to that point had planted poppy for opium extraction, were assured of an income from their crops. The substitution of flower farming for poppy cultivation as a fully competitive alternative was a dream San'atizadeh tried hard to realize. He also built a processing plant for rosewater and rose essence as well as a bottling plant for each, which created a good cash income for the farmers and provided



employment in the processing and bottling of plants. In a visit to Kabul he offered to share the technology and help Afghans establish such a venture there (Griffin, “Road to Damask”). He did not live long enough to follow up with the idea.

San'atizadeh's retreat to Kerman and flower farming provided him with a long-awaited opportunity to pursue the completion and publication of a series of translations he had been working on for several years (Eqtedāri, p. 639). His translation of *A History of Zoroastrianism*, a highly acclaimed book in three volumes (Leiden 1977, 1982, 1991), by Mary Boyce (1920-2006), the eminent scholar of Iranian studies—of which the third volume Boyce had co-authored with Frantz Grenet—appeared in Tehran, as *Tāriḳ-e kiš-e Zartošt* (1996), *Čekidaye tāriḳ-e kiš-e Zartošt* (1998), and *Pas az Eskandar-e gojasta* (1996), respectively. It was followed by the publication of Vasili Vladimirovich Barthold's (1869-1930) *An Historical Geography of Iran* (Princeton, 1984), entitled *Joḡrāfiā-ye tāriḳi-e Iran* in 1998. Mention should also be made of his translation of *Persia, Ariana, and the Indian sub-continent* (Book XV of Strabo's *Geographika*; tr. into English by Horace L. Jones, London, 1917), as *Joḡrāfiā-ye Strabo: Sarzamin-e zir-e farmān-e Haḳāmanešiān* (Tehran, 2003).

San'atizadeh has also authored several books, including *Mo'ammā-ye gāh šomāri-e Zartošti* (The question of Zoroastrian calendar, Kerman, 2008). *Qāli-e 'omr* (The carpet of life) and *Šur-e gol* (The thrill of flowers), his two collections of poetry, were published in 1977 and 1991, respectively.

San'atizadeh lost his wife to a car accident in 2005. Their life is the subject of a documentary film, entitled *The Rose Lady* (Bānu-ye gol-e sork, 2006), directed by Mojtabā Mir Tahmāseb (M. Šan'ati, p. 631; see also Mojtabā Mir Tahmāseb, “Belākara man ham film-e ‘šan'ati’ sāḳtam,” *Boḳāra*, 72-73, Mehr-Day 1388Š./2010, pp. 652-54). Šahin and Homayun are buried in Lālazār.

His loss received wide coverage both in Iran and abroad. *Barresi-e ketāb*, a literary journal published in California, published several articles in his memory. *Boḳāra*, a well-regarded journal of Iran, published a special issue in his memory, to which such eminent scholars and cultural figures as Iraj Afšār, Moḡammad Ebrāhim Bāstāni Pārizi, Manučehr Sotudeh, and Parviz Kalāntari contributed. “Zangi,” one of San'atizadeh's unpublished short stories, and several of his poems, as well as 118 of his letters addressed to Iraj Afšār, are also published in the issue.



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