



SHAHBAZ, HASAN

SHAHBAZ, Hasan (Ḥasan Šahbāz; b. Bābol, 13 March 1921; d. Los Angeles, 7 May 2007), writer, journalist, and translator (*BANKING IN IRAN*), established in 1890. After the closure of the bank in 1926, he moved to Isfahan with his family.

In 1928 Shahbaz was enrolled at Stewart Memorial College in Isfahan (Shahbaz, 1977, p. 5). In 1936, when his father was sentenced to a period of imprisonment in Arāk, Hasan and the rest of the family also moved to Arāk, where they lived until 1942. During this period, he taught English there, while at the same time pursuing his education under the tutelage of the blind scholar Moḥammad Ḳazā'eli. He received his high school diploma in 1940 (Shahbaz, pp. 15-16). Shortly thereafter he moved to Tehran, where in 1942 he married Batul 'Abdolvahhābi ('Abd-al-Wahhābi), the niece of the renowned scholar Moḥammad Qazvini (1877-1949). They had two children, a daughter Guity and a son Farāmarz.

From 1942 to 1948 Shahbaz wrote articles for newspapers and magazines, translated his first books, and worked as a translator for foreign companies, as well as a contractor for Allied Forces in Iran—purchasing goods for the British army. In 1949 he became an editor at the News Desk of the Embassy of Pakistan and a year later joined the Cultural and News Center of the American Embassy in Tehran, where he was given a grant in 1950 to attend Wayne University in Detroit, Michigan, to study radio and television programming. Upon returning to Iran he began working with the Persian Section of Voice of America. His acquaintance and subsequent friendship with Loṭf-'Ali Šuratgar,



Dean of the Faculty of Literature, led to his enrollment in the Faculty, and he received a degree in English language and literature in 1955.

From 1950 onwards, besides working at the American Embassy, Shahbaz also produced and presented programs for Radio Tehran, the government-run national Iranian Radio. With the appointment of a close friend, Noṣrat-Allāh Mo'iniān, as the minister of Information and Publicity in 1960, Shahbaz became more involved with Radio Tehran and rose to prominence for producing a series of popular programs, including "A Look at the Masterpieces of World Literature," which ran for several years, as well as "The Stories of Our Lives," "Doctor Koşqadam," "Night-time Stories," and "A Word with the Audience" (Shahbaz, pp. 90-91).

In 1964 he resigned from his job at the American Embassy to work full time with Radio Tehran, and was later transferred to the newly established National Iranian Television Organization, directed by Reżā Qoṭbi (Shahbaz, p. 111). As the representative of the National Television Organization, Shahbaz participated in several conferences organized by the Radio and Television Union of Asia and Australia, including conferences held at Delhi and Manila in 1971 and 1972, respectively (Shahbaz, p. 113).

His translations of *Wormwood: A Drama of Paris* (1890), by the British novelist Marie Corelli (pseud. of Mary Mackay, 1855-1924), as *Sargodašt* (1952); *Rebecca* (1938), by the British novelist Daphne du Maurier (1907-1982), under the same title (1953); and *Quo Vadis* (1895), a popular historical novel by the Nobel prize-winning Polish novelist Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846-1916), as *Havashā-ye emperātur* (1954), first appeared in installments in *Eṭṭelā'āt*, the daily newspaper founded in 1923 by 'Abbās Mas'udi. They were followed by the translation of *Gone with the Wind* (1936), by the Pulitzer Prize-winning American author Margaret Mitchell (1900-1949), in two volumes, as *Bar bād rafta* (1957-1958). These translations went through several reprints in less than a decade (Mir'ābedini, p. 298; for a list of Shahbaz's translations see below).

Shahbaz employed a simple, poetical prose that gravitated towards the Romantic style of some European writers of the late 18th and 19th century. He introduced many Western literary works to the Iranian public. While his translations were well received by young readers, his leftist detractors criticized them as irresponsible to social injustice and merely composed for amusement (Żiā'i, p. 49). Shahbaz spent several years of his life selecting and translating abstracts of 120 well known literary works from all over the world,



including Greece, China, USA, France, England, and Italy. The abstracts, along with the biographies of each poet and writer, were published in four volumes (1974-1981) as *Seyri dar bozorgtarin ketābhā-ye jahān* (Masterpieces of world literature). His translation of *The Waste Land*, by T. S. Eliot, as *Sarzamin-e biḥāṣel*, was recommended by Ehsan Yarshater to a committee at Columbia University in 1982 that awarded the best translation from an American writer into a Middle Eastern language, and received the “Thornton Wilder Literary Award,” established by the American novelist and playwright Thornton Wilder (1897-1975).

Shortly after the 1979 revolution, Shahbaz left Iran, moving first to Washington D.C. and later settling in Los Angeles, where he lived until his death in 2006. In Los Angeles he established the Persian journal *Rahavard*, the first volume of which was published in 130 pages in the spring of 1982. For several years *Rahavard* was published intermittently, often two issues in one. From the 22nd issue (winter 1988) onward, however, the publication of the journal has followed a regular quarterly schedule. Shahbaz himself has contributed over 300 articles to *Rahavard*. The journal has been praised for its significant role in the preservation of Persian language and culture abroad (Yarshater, p. 70), and in rekindling a sense of pride among Iranians in exile (Saršār, p. 39).

Shahbaz also wrote poetry, a collection of which was published in Los Angeles entitled *Bā gāmhā-ye kasta dar daštā-ye dur* (Walking wearily in far-flung plains, 1999). *Soḳanhā-ye parākanda* (Scattered words, Los Angeles, 2006) comprises a selection of his articles, which had all been previously published either in Iran or abroad.

Shahbaz had a wide circle of friends and his home was a meeting place for many poets, writers, musicians, and politicians. His formidable memory enabled him to recite numerous poems, both classical and modern. He was also well familiar with Persian music. *Ġorur o moṣibat* (Pride and sorrow), Shahbaz’s autobiographical account of his turbulent private life, was first published in installments in *Rahāvārd*, and then as a book in Los Angeles in 1999. Shahbaz, who was divorced in 1953, married Sholeh Shams (Šo’la Šams) in 1992, in Los Angeles. She has played a significant role as the journal’s manager ever since.



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