

Historic house in Babol renovated



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The Historic House of Aghajan Nasab in northern Iran has been renovated through the efforts of

President Ebrahim Raeisi's government.

The mansion is located in the city of Babol, in Mazandaran Province. The late Qajar-era (1789-1925) building is among the greatest monuments of the province and was inscribed on the National Heritage List in June 2000.

The Organization of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts purchased the house in 1999. This house has 13 rooms and four courtyards. It is now being used as a cultural and tourism center.

The renovated house displays the style of art and architecture of the Qajar era with special splendor and elegance.

The beautiful ponds in the courtyards of this historic building and its Qajar-era architecture have created a relaxing environment.

The statues of Mazandaran's famous people in the fields of politics, culture and art have been installed in the house, which adds to its glory.

The investor of the Aghajan Nasab House is Komeil Barari, who said that nearly \$700,000 have been spent on restoring the historic mansion.

Barari said he has been granted a 25-year lease in return for his investment in renovating and restoring the historic building.

He added that the renovation of the house has generated 40 direct jobs and 120 indirect jobs.

Preserving historical monuments

An author and researcher in the field of historic buildings hailed the renovation of Aghajan Nasab House as valuable.

Samad Saleh told IRNA about the private sector's role in preserving such monuments.

"Presently, investment by the private sector is the best option for preserving historic sites," he said. The researcher called for encouraging and supporting investors to invest in restoring historic sites.

Babol has more than 200 historical and cultural heritage sites in Mazandaran Province, which has the largest number of such monuments. These include historic houses, bridges, baths and burial sites.

Babol is located approximately 20 kilometers south of the Caspian Sea. It borders the cities of Babol-sar and Fereydunkenar to the north, Qaemshahr and Shirgah to the east, Savadkooch to the south-east, Firuzkooch to the South, and Amol to the west.

Literary return

The idea of 'literary return' was given its name, and most prominently formulated, by the poet and literary historian Muhammad Taqi Bahar (died in 1951) in the early part of the twentieth century. Starting in the 1930s, Bahar began articulating some of the characteristics of 'literary return' and, alongside it, developed his criteria for evaluating 'good' poetry. But it was most notably in his groundbreaking work 'Stylistics or the History of Evolution of Persian Writing' that Bahar devised a schematic for understanding Persian literary history by dividing its evolution into four distinct categories, which included 'literary return'. About a decade prior to the appearance of 'Stylistics' in the 1940s, Reza-Zadah Shafaq began articulating an idea of 'literary return' as well, but had not yet narrativised and periodised the movement in any orderly fashion as his contemporary Bahar would. While Bahar built upon the earlier work of biographical anthologists in this endeavor, he is nonetheless the first individual to give a concrete historiographical voice to the idea of 'literary return' as a distinct period and movement in Persian literary history. Like any good literary historian, Bahar leveraged the messier details of poets'

lives, relationships and verse from earlier texts to create a macroscopic vision of the evolution of Persian literature. It was as much an effort to shape a narrative of Persian literature's development as it was indicative of a break from the older model of biographical anthologies, which had dominated Persian literary history writing for several centuries.

Bahar's work was emblematic of the more en vogue form of temporalising literary history into distinct periods, rather than simply recording the work and lives of individual poets.

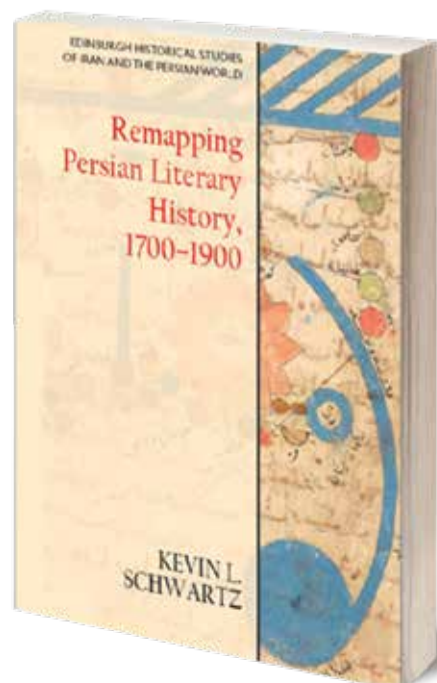
Bahar understood the evolution of Persian literature as unfolding according to four distinct categories. Each category constituted a different school or style of poetry, maintained its own special characteristics and roughly corresponded to a different period in history. The Khorasani style, dominant from the ninth to the thirteenth century, was primarily defined by the ode (*qasideh*) performed for patrons in a courtly setting. The theme of naturalism, battlefield triumphs, grand feasts, hunting and royal merry-making predominated. The 'Iraqi style, which prevailed from the thirteenth to the fifteenth century,



Muhammad Taqi Bahar

marked a shift from a gaze dedicated to recording worldly splendour to one more inward-looking and mystically inclined. This shift in the zeitgeist of Persian poetic practice is seen as resulting from the chaos and destruction wrought by the Mongol invasions and the desire to explain an existence impacted by cataclysmic tumult. The dominant form of this period was no longer the ode but the lyric (*ghazal*), which served as a more suitable means of expressing the period's themes. The lyric continued its domi-

nance during the heyday of the so-called 'Indian Style' (*sabk-e Hindi*) from the fifteenth to the eighteenth century. Challenging metaphors, literary acrobatics, wordplays, puzzles and all types of mannerisms defined its highly intellectualised style. The final category is 'literary return', which was active in Iran in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The essence of the style and movement, according to Bahar, was that it sought a 'return' to the simpler models of the Khorasani ode and 'Iraqi lyric of centuries past.



The above is a lightly edited version of part of a chapter, 'Persian Literary Historiography of the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries', from a book entitled, 'Remapping Persian Literary History, 1700-1900', written by Kevin L. Schwartz, published by Edinburgh University Press.