

The Ecole des Beaux-Arts and the Advent of Modern Architecture in Interwar Iran

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Abstract

From the late nineteenth to the early twentieth century, Iran experienced one of the darkest periods of its history. Poverty, chaos, and material shortages of the First World War exacerbated the situation to the extent that almost all factions of the society were accorded with the rise of a strong government. It was only at this moment that Reza Shah (1925-1941) could organise the Coup of 1921 and become the new ruler of Iran. By the dawn of the 1930s, Reza Shah reached his absolute power. He placed among his priorities the construction reform to accommodate modern functions vital for the shaping of his government. Having a long-lasting cultural relationship with France, the Beaux-Arts graduates were among Reza Shah's principal architects and were promptly absorbed by the state. Alongside this, the interwar era brought with itself the popularity of new materials and construction techniques, particularly reinforced concrete, and created a new design approach prevalent among the students of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. When the Beaux-Arts graduates travelled to Iran, they introduced a modern architecture, the design of which was originally emanated from their education at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts. Notwithstanding the significance of this issue, there is no publication pointing directly at the influence of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts on the advent of modern architecture in Iran. By looking at some works of Mohsen Foroughi, the first Iranian ever graduated from the Ecole, this article endeavours to unearth the significance of this noteworthy French school in the shaping of Iranian architecture of the interwar era as well as the role of Mohsen Foroughi as the facilitator of this architectural transformation.

The history of Iranian architecture of the Pahlavi era (1925-1979) has proven its significance through ongoing publications that became available from the early twenty-first century. The "Ecole des Beaux-Arts" is a set of words in almost all writings concerning modern architecture in Iran, but there is no publication on how the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, its architectural education as well as its encounter with interwar modernism, contributed to the creation of the new architectural language in Iran. This research will

add value to the understanding of the Iranian interwar architecture by returning to one of its initial sources, the agency of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.

The concept of the “architect” as an educated person, who had not acquired his knowledge by experience but by officially enrolling in an architectural institution, was only introduced to Iran during the interwar era. Iran of the nineteenth and early twentieth century was deprived of an organised system of architectural education. The architect, known as *me'mar*, was a builder who worked traditionally with an *ostad* (master). The experience was his strongest tool through which he could acquire his architectural knowledge. It was in the interwar era, during the reign of Reza Shah (1925-1941), that the Iranian government for the first time felt the urge to employ educated architects. Reza Shah, the new ruler of Iran, a patriot and nationalist, insisted on changing and modernising the appearance of the country by implementing intensive programs of reform including the construction of modern buildings for housing new institutions, banks, ministries, etc. Lack of educated architects and incapability of the *me'mars* obliged Reza Shah to use foreign-educated architects, among whom the Beaux-Arts graduates found an unquestionable reputation.

Reza Shah and Architecture

The interwar era witnessed the rise of nationalist intelligentsia throughout the Middle East who aimed at reconstructing their lost national identity by criticising their past and hoping for a better future. It was a period of rigid modernisation and intensive reforms, which marked a socio-cultural shift from a traditional society towards a modern and Western-like nation-state governed mainly by fierce nationalists. Reza Shah ruled Iran for sixteen years from 1925 to 1941, during which he had two overriding goals: “to restore Iran to some of its former greatness and to establish himself as the absolute power on top of a reconstructed nation”.¹ When Reza Shah reached power, he soon established a dictatorship. He curbed the power of clergies who had a great social status during the Qajar era (1789-1925) and leaned strongly towards Iran’s pre-Islamic national identity. From 1931 to 1941, the Shah’s power became absolute and arbitrary. At the end of 1934, when the concept of an “Aryan Race” was the inseparable part of much debates in Europe, the name of the country, suggested by the Iranian embassy in Berlin, was officially changed from Persia to Iran (the land of Aryans).² After his visit to Turkey, in 1935, he ordered all men to wear European hats, and in February 1936 women were forced to give up their traditional black veil.

Reza Shah’s patriotic feeling and his tendency for being Iran’s absolute power, however, did not exclude architecture from his program of reform. Architecture was immediately turned into a tangible way of representing Iran’s lost power, prestige and glory. Arguably,

the first moment that Reza Shah became aware of the significant role of art and architecture was few months before his coronation, on 22 April 1925, when the American art historian and publicist Arthur Upham Pope (1881-1969) delivered a memorable speech on "the Past and Future of Persian Art". Organised by Mohammad Ali Foroughi, the President of Society of National Heritage³, later Reza Shah's first Prime Minister, this speech was for a group of prominent Persians including Reza Shah, Reza Khan at the time.⁴ In his remarks, Pope extolled the greatness of the Persian art and architecture as well as its worldwide significance, but also condemned its deterioration by some Persian rulers especially the Qajars. Moreover, Pope admired those Persian kings who were ardent advocates of artists and demanded support for a conscious renaissance.⁵

Pope's speech was in line with Reza Shah's appreciation of Iran's past glories, but, as Abdi pointed out, "patronage of arts and culture was a new challenge that he (Reza Shah) found particularly appealing".⁶ A few days after Pope's speech, Reza Khan ordered the restoration of the famous Sheikh Lutfullah Mosque in Isfahan using his personal funds and the construction of the National Bank (*Bank-e Melli*) in a purely "Persian style".⁷

Reza Shah's fondness for monumental architecture became apparent after his coronation, in his second visit to Persepolis in 1928, the most prominent Iranian pre-Islamic complex. There, Reza Shah was once again impressed by the glory of Persian kings, but this time conscious of imperial iconography embedded in their architecture. In his speech, he professed to an assembly of officials:

When I saw the structure of Persepolis, I was moved by those colossal monuments, but seeing them in such impaired state deeply depressed me. I was nonetheless delighted to learn that such great kings have ruled Iran and left these magnificent remains.⁸

Later in 1936, he left a comment for the construction of a guest house in Tehran: "the guest house building must be visible, scenic, and of grandeur".⁹

Reza Shah who sought his government to be as legitimate as the Great Persian Empire was now aware of the power of architecture as a new tool in his hand. He had preferences for pure Persian style and monumental architecture, but at the same time, he did not interfere directly in the work of design. Reza Shah greatly trusted his foreign-educated architects.¹⁰

The Beaux-Arts System, a Design Method

The dominance of French culture and language over Iran started in the nineteenth century. During the nineteenth century, Iran witnessed the foundation of different types of French schools inside its borders. Almost all educated Iranians could only speak French as the French language was the primary language of teaching in many schools.¹¹ The Franco-Iranian cultural relations, however, significantly intensified in 1900, when a Qajar ruler, Mozaffar ad-Din Shah (1896-1905), granted to the French the exclusive right of archeological excavation throughout Iran. The rise of Reza Shah, however, heralded a new era. Soon after his coronation, in 1927, Reza Shah terminated the convention of 1900, but the French cultural influence did not diminish. France remained the primary destination of Iranian students by attracting almost eighty percent of all students studying abroad.¹²

Perhaps the key event that led to the flow of the Beaux-Arts graduates in Iran happened in 1929 when to compensate the French for the cancellation of the 1900 convention, the Iranian government agreed with the employment of a French citizen as the first director of the "Antiquities Service of Iran".¹³ That nominated Frenchman was André Godard who studied architecture at the Ecole from 1901 to 1908. Following Godard, two other influential French citizens, Maxime Siroux (1928-1934) and Roland Marcel Dubrulle (1926-1934), travelled to Iran in 1935. It was not until February 1932 that the first Iranian, Mohsen Foroughi, was victorious at the entrance examination of the Ecole and returned to Iran in 1938.¹⁴

The Ecole des Beaux-Arts was a cosmopolitanism institution in Paris that offered tuition-free education by welcoming apprentice painters, sculptors, engravers, and architects from many countries. It provided a system of professional training in architecture that taught architecture from 1819 until 1968.¹⁵ The atelier was the core of the Ecole's education system where most of the student's learning was achieved. In order to graduate, the student had to fulfil four levels of requirements within the regulations of the Ecole. The lowest was preparation for the admission, above it was the *seconde classe* and *première classe*. And at the top, was the *diplôme* project as the final step.¹⁶

The Beaux-Arts system was premised upon the principles of classical composition.¹⁷ It was a method of design through which the student could attack and study any design problem.¹⁸ Most architectural problems at the Ecole were mere exercises of composition initiated with an *esquisse en loge* (sketch executed in small cubicles), executed usually in a twelve hour time frame. During this limited time, the preliminary ideas of composition would be generated. The preliminary ideas executed *en loge* were called *parti* (choices/ to make a

choice), a figure or diagram that highlighted “the main characteristics of a program’s distribution of an ensemble and the axes of composition.”¹⁹ The axes that the *parti* generated played a key role in arranging various elements of design as well as determining the dominant element, the focal point, located along the principal axis.²⁰ At the Ecole, symmetrical *parti* was preferred over asymmetrical ones, but sometimes it was inevitable to make a composition asymmetrical. The aim was to single out an appropriate composition that could address all practical and aesthetical requirements of a given program.²¹

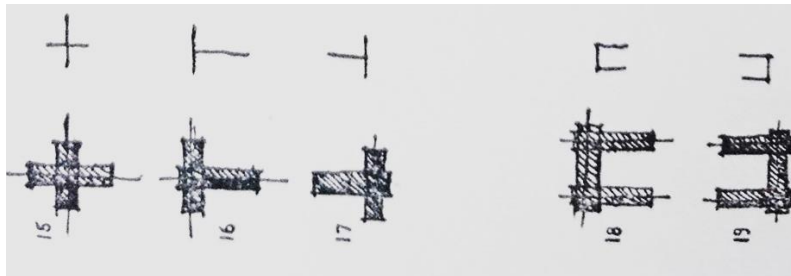


Figure 1. Some compound compositions described by Curtis. Making a good composition was the first thing one had to consider at the Ecole. The initial decisions regarding architectural composition had to be made through *esquisse en loge* by choosing the most suitable *parti*: (Nathaniel C. Curtis, *Architectural Composition*, (Cleveland: J. H. Jansen, 1935), p. 192)

The architectural style, however, came after the composition. The Beaux-Arts system was not “local and specific” but a “method” of design,²² which left the student with a freedom to shape the exterior facades according to the given program and its assumed location. With the Beaux-Arts design method, the student was able to create an excellent *parti*, addressing issues of function and circulation, and then decide upon the outward appearance of the building that expressed the dominant character of design.²³

Beaux-Arts, Modernism, and New Technology

The interwar era marked a challenging period in French architecture during which the Ecole des Beaux-Arts lost most of its hegemony. The technology of reinforced concrete gradually found unprecedented popularity among students and made the Ecole’s officials receptive to modern constructions. Avant-garde architects criticised the Ecole’s pedagogy and influenced more progressive students of the Ecole.²⁴ In 1924, the use of reinforced concrete first appeared in the designs of Grand Prix competition,²⁵ and after 1930, for the first time, the winner of the Grand Prix was the one who used reinforced concrete rather than cut stone in his design.²⁶

However, the dominance of new technology and the influence of modern movements did not mean that the Ecole would give up its long-lasting doctrine. Quite the opposite, most Ecole's followers were seeking a way to consolidate their tradition through modernising the appearance of buildings without sacrificing their beloved Beaux-Arts classical principles and design method. A modern architecture whereby they could sustain the Ecole's fame and simultaneously train students to design considering new technology and materials. This new approach was thus an unadorned classicism, a moderate approach the significance of which became explicit in 1932 when Emmanuel Pontremoli the new director of the Ecole encouraged students to eliminate the extensive amount of ornamentation and to learn "more practical measures".²⁷ By the mid-1930s most students applied "principles of classical composition, such as axially, symmetry and monumentality, with modern materials such as reinforced concrete."²⁸

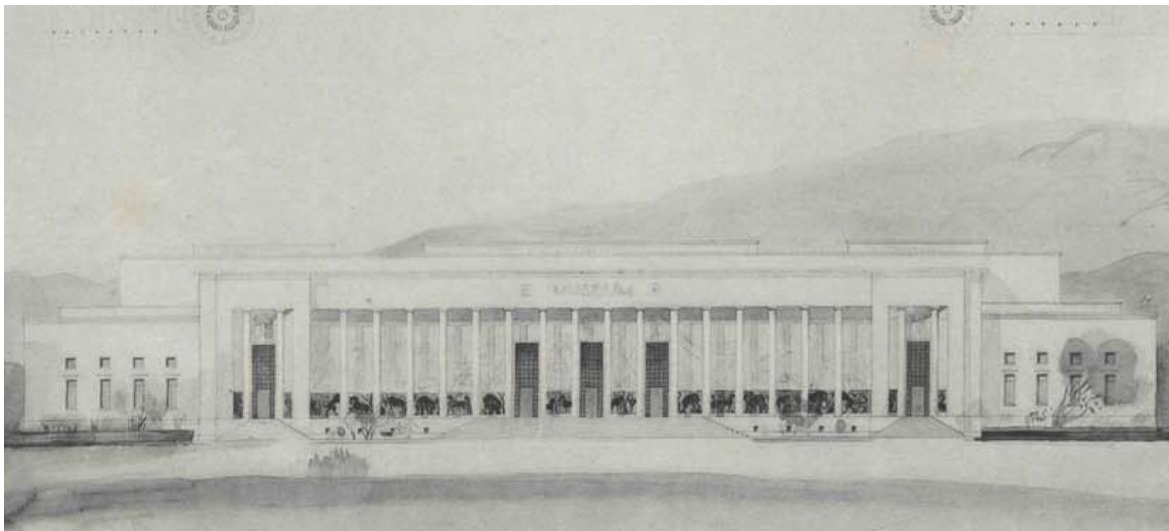


Figure 2. Student project by M. Julien, "*un musée des science natural* (a museum of natural science)". Projet rendu (Jan. 1937). The popularity of reinforced concrete resulted in unadorned classicism, frequently implemented by students of the Ecole. (Les médailles des concours d'architecture de l'École Nationale des Beaux-Arts, Paris: Vincent, 1936-37, pl. 80)

It is true that the modern movement lessened the Ecole's omnipotence, but could not taint the Ecole's unique role as the leading cultural force in both architectural education and state-design commissions in France during the interwar period. The Beaux-Arts graduates remained the chief architects of the state, and their simplified classicism was considered modern and appreciated by the French government at the time.²⁹

The Beaux-Arts architecture, being modern in structure and appearance, monumental and classical in nature, was perhaps the best design method for fulfilling the nationalistic ambitions of Iran's dictator during the transitional period of the interwar era.

Iran, Ready for Modern Constructions

The interwar era portrayed a period of rapid modernisation and industrialisation in Iran, which was rigidly stipulated by powerful groups of the intelligentsia and nationalists, on top of them Reza Shah. During the 1930s, Iran was able to make a big step forward. New industries were gradually developed and the access to new construction materials, such as cement, steel and glass, was facilitated.³⁰ In 1934, the foundation of the first cement factory near Tehran heralded a new era of building construction that gave cement and later reinforced concrete an exceptional availability in the construction of state-owned buildings.³¹ The enormous popularity of reinforced concrete, as a substantial deviation from the use of the traditional material, resulted in the factory's remarkable expansion in 1939,³² which encouraged the construction of a considerable number of modern buildings in Iran. It was now the time for the Beaux-Arts graduates that with the accessibility to the new construction materials and their already-achieved learnings in Paris, to create a modern style of architecture and label it as Iranian.

Mohsen Foroughi: from Paris to Tehran

The first Iranian ever admitted to the Ecole des Beaux-Arts was Mohsen Foroughi (1910-1983). Born to a learned family in Tehran on 28 June 1910, Mohsen was the son of Reza Shah's first prime minister and a man of letters, Moḥammad-Ali Foroughi. After finishing his traditional schooling in Tehran, Mohsen enrolled in the Teachers College. Early in 1927, when Iran was experiencing the rise of an educated middle-class, together with his father and one of his brothers, he left Iran to embark on his new life and studying in Europe. They finally settled in an apartment in Paris where his father asked him to approach Qazvini (an eminent Iranian scholar) every Sunday. There, Mohsen "learned much about literature, history, philosophy and even architecture".³³ He began his study in Paris by enrolling in "the math department at the university, but after three years, he had a change of heart."³⁴ Art and architecture outshined.

Mohsen's penchant for art and architecture encouraged him to take part in the stringent entrance examinations for both "the Ecole Centrale des Arts et Manufactures and the Ecole des beaux-arts".³⁵ The outcome turned out to be successful in both tests. He chose the latter and turned enthusiastically towards architecture.

Mohsen enrolled at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in February 1932 and entered the atelier of Gustave Umbdenstock and Paul Tournon as an *étranger* (foreigner).³⁶ His successful dossier at the Ecole demonstrates his trust in the Beaux-Arts design method. He set out his study as the *seconde classe* student on 8 March, 1932. Fulfilling the requirements of the *seconde classe*, he started the penultimate step, the *première classe* to which he was promoted on 16 July, 1934. Mohsen performed an outstanding job in two of his design projects in both of which he won prestigious medals. On 28 May, 1935, Mohsen obtained the highest award, *première médaille* equal to three credits, in an architectural project titled as *une Ecole des langues Orientales*, a School of Oriental Languages (figure 2). His sympathy for Iranian architecture persuaded him to pick an Iranian topic for his final project, titled as *une résidence d'été en Perse*, a summer residence in Persia. His final project was evaluated as *très bien* (very good), for which he accomplished a silver medal and the third prize of the best *diplôme*.³⁷ There, like many other students, he showed off his passion for simplified classicism, but he also expressed his affinity with Iranian architecture.³⁸ The symbolic use of Iranian elements such as *iwan*³⁹ as a gateway to the building decorated with *Kashikari*⁴⁰ was the most remarkable feature that he applied in at least those two projects. Surprisingly, the two projects above were not only the most successful projects in Mohsen's dossier, but also the only ones with topics related to Iranian and oriental architecture.

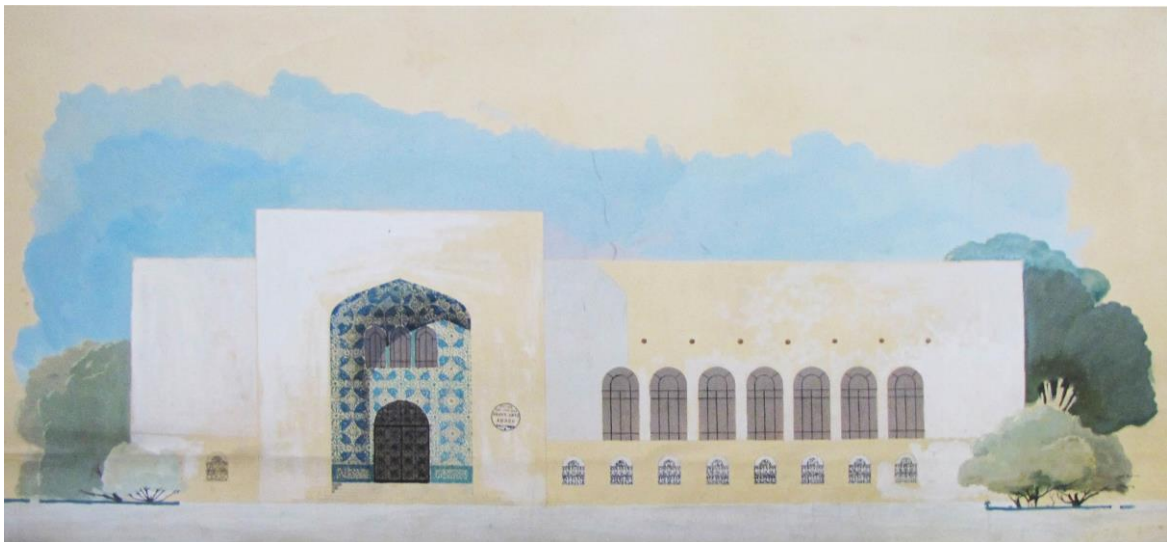


Figure 3. Student project by Mohsen Foroughi, “*Une Ecole des langues Orientales* (A school of oriental language)”, projet rendu (main elevation), March 1935. In this project, designed with asymmetrical composition (fig. 5, A), Mohsen's strict approach towards unadorned classicism as well as the apparent use of vaulted *iwan* and *kashikari* for highlighting the entrance, is noticeable. (Courtesy of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts' Archive)

Tackling the last step of the Ecole's educational program, Mohsen was graduated on 5 June, 1937. Accompanied by Qazvini, he returned to Iran in 1938 and became one of the most prolific architects during the last year of Reza Shah's reign.⁴¹ Apart from practical architecture, Mohsen participated actively in academic arenas by teaching in some faculties of the University of Tehran, the first Western-like University in Iran founded in 1934. First at the School of Literature, then at the Technical School, and finally as a professor of architecture atelier, he played a decisive role in the establishment of the first academic school of art and architecture, the School of Fine Arts in 1940, the program of which was modelled after the Ecole des Beaux-Arts.

Mohsen's Architecture

As discussed previously, the Beaux-Arts student of the interwar era especially mid-1930s was trained to create modern architecture. But unlike the avant-garde architects, the Beaux-Arts architect was taught to design expressive, but conservative, modern structures and choose a unique character that he considered the best for every individual project. From 1938 to 1941 (the end of Reza Shah's reign), Mohsen remained a rigid follower of the Beaux-Arts design method in major state-commissioned buildings. Regarding the character, he devised the best solution considering the significance, purpose, and function of the given program. He had two principal approaches concerning building's outward appearance, in both cases he followed the Beaux-Arts interwar classicism. Sometimes he pursued the unadorned classicism usually covered with stone and cement, propagated in Paris mainly by the Ecole and its graduates,⁴² or he localised the outer appearance of his architecture. While Beaux-Arts simplified classicism still reigned, some of his buildings were entrusted deliberately with an Iranian taste, a manifestation of Iranian national identity; an approach in which Mohsen had already been master of during his study in Paris.

An example of the former was the Faculty of Law and Political Science (1938-1940), Mohsen's first serious design project in Iran, located on the main campus of Tehran University. The University, as the leading institution of higher study, was the ultimate result of Reza Shah's educational reforms, the construction of which was headed entirely by the Beaux-Arts graduates. The design initiated by two French architects and archeologists, André Godard and Maxime Siroux. Later, Mohsen and Roland Marcel Dubrulle assisted them in the design of four other buildings.⁴³ Being influenced by the modern movement, and by considering the concept of the University as a product of the West,⁴⁴ as well as the University's concurrent foundation with Iran's first cement factory, the Beaux-Arts graduates decided upon designing a modern set of buildings. The University buildings were finally constructed with cement, metal and glass for the exterior elevations and technology

of reinforced concrete combined with baked brick and cement for the structure. The construction of the University, subjectively and objectively, was, in fact, a green light for placing Iran, albeit superficially, in the circle of developed countries.

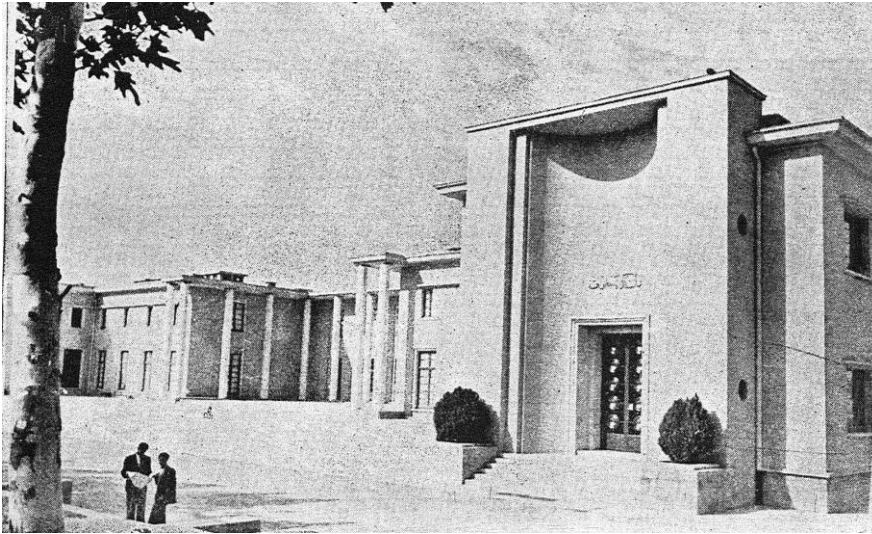


Figure 4. The Faculty of Law and Political Science designed by Mohsen in 1938. Cement elevations, monumental entrances, and grand U-shaped portico are the key characteristics of the main façade of the Faculty. (*The Regulation of Tehran University*, (Tehran: Tehran University, 1947), 105)

For the design of the Faculty of Law and Political Science, Mohsen singled out a symmetrical *parti* with a central axis and three subordinate axes positioning perpendicular to each other (fig. 5, B). It is a three-story building with a program divided into two major parts in the ground floor. The library and its facilities on the left, small rooms such as offices and restrooms on the right, for each of which he designated a grand entrance. For compensating lack of attention along the central axis, he designed a U-shaped, covered porch, and situated the dominant element, the biggest room, the theatre, on that axis (fig. 4).

Mohsen's passion for traditional Iranian architecture did not let him ignore the noble architecture of his motherland. He executed some of his most remarkable works with specific attention towards Iranian architecture. The best examples of this kind were four branches of the National Bank designed around 1940. The banks were structured mainly with reinforced concrete and constructed with stone facades in four different Iranian cities, namely Tehran, Shiraz, Tabriz, and Isfahan.

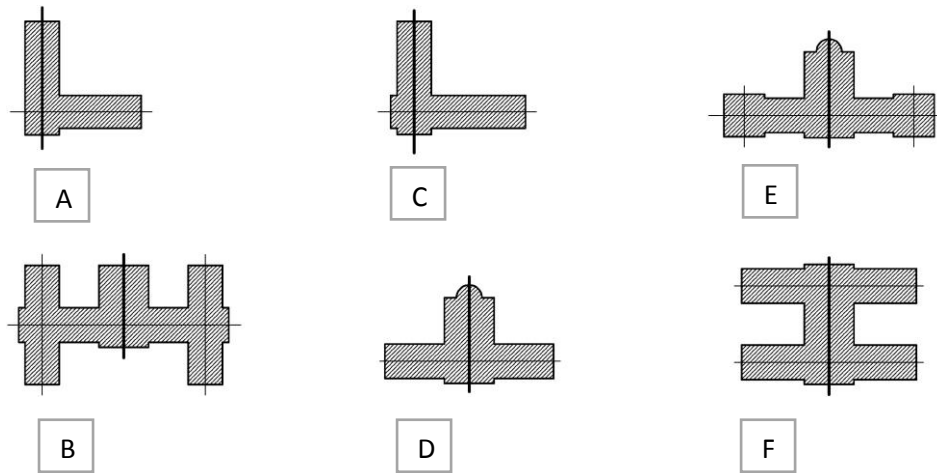


Figure 5. Some plan compositions accompanied by the axes of design used by Mohsen Foroughi (the principal axes has been drawn with a thicker line). A: a school of oriental language (Ecole's project), B: the Faculty of Law and Political Science, C: Isfahan National Bank, D: Shiraz National Bank, E: Tehran National Bank, F: Tabriz National Bank. (By Author)

Mohsen's approach in the design of the banks was almost identical to what he had already experienced at the Ecole, but this time with careful consideration of Iran's climate and simplifying Iranian elements on the main façade. Later, Mohsen, in an article published in 1961, defined "the sun" as one of the most effective factors in shaping the buildings throughout the history of Iranian architecture. He wrote:

In all old [Iranian] residential houses, the important rooms facing the south were endowed with *iwans*, and there were no windows in the Eastern and Western façades. In these buildings, if the proportion of *ivan* and shade-giving elements is calculated, they protect the building from the summer heat and absorb the winter sun.⁴⁵

The most particular of those shade-giving elements used by Mohsen during the interwar era was the long and linear covered porch in the southern elevations of his buildings (fig. 6).

He also continued the limited application of *ivan* and *Kashakari*, but this time with the rejection of imitating the traditional forms in favour of greater architectural abstraction. The vaulted *ivan* as the gate to the building was purified into a monumental rectangular entrance, decorated with *Kashikari*. Concerning the *Kashikari*, he did not follow the decorative styles of the past. He believed that imitating the past will make the appearance

of the building “old” and therefore will not be in harmony with “the style of the day”.⁴⁶ He applied *Kashikari* with a simple flower-like pattern (probably inspired by the Bank’s logo), using three different colours of white, turquoise, and dark turquoise (fig. 6).⁴⁷



Figure 6. Tabriz’s National Bank, (symmetrical composition, simplified classicism). The purified *iwan* decorated with *Kashikari*, and the longitudinal portico is representative of the transformation of traditional architectural forms and elements into modern structures. (Courtesy of the official website of Contemporary Architecture of Iran, caoi.ir/en/component/k2/item/367-bank-melli-tabriz-branch)

Regarding the architectural composition of the banks, Mohsen applied both symmetrical and asymmetrical *parti*. Specified by the size of the program, the only asymmetrical composition was the Isfahan branch (fig. 5, C). Designed in 1941, the asymmetrical composition of the Isfahan bank was most likely the result of its relatively small program, which did not allow the main axis to be located in the center. In three other branches, the symmetrical composition placed the main hall of the bank in the middle and office rooms in the wings (fig. 5, D, E, and F).

During the postwar era, the role of the Ecole in Iran did not diminish as each year Iranians were attracted to the Ecole until 1968. In Mohsen’s post-war architecture, modernism outpaced traditionalism, and his major works were published by the end of the 1950s in the avant-garde international periodical of *L’Architecture d’Aujourd’hui*. However, despite his inclination for capturing the modernity of his time, Mohsen, albeit modifying the Beaux-Arts design method, remained faithful to the very basics of the Beaux-Arts education, such as the importance of the axes of composition, centrality, and architectural monumentality.

Conclusion

During the 1930s, the gradual prevalence of new ideas and popularity of reinforced concrete paved the way for the creation of a modern architecture based on the Beaux-Arts principles. Thanks to the Beaux-Arts tradition, its graduates were capable of implementing a modern architecture, yet considering the purpose and location of every project. Mohsen's works are perhaps among the best instances of a non-European (and non-American) graduate of the Ecole that organised to incorporate traditional motifs with new material and structures. Imported from the Ecole des Beaux-Arts, but transformed and adapted to Iran's cultural and political situation of the time, Mohsen's interwar architecture, Beaux-Arts in design, monumental in nature, modern in appearance, and mostly Iranian in character, became a representative of Iranian national identity through a style of architecture that was expressive of the authoritarian government of Iran.

Endnotes

1. Kamyar Abdi, 'Nationalism, Politics, and the Development of Archaeology in Iran', *American Journal of Archaeology*, 105, 1 (2001), 51-76.
2. Abdi, 'Nationalism, Politics', 63.
3. The Society of National Heritage (NSH) was a national organization aiming primarily on the revitalization of Iranian lost culture and identity.
4. Jay Gluck, Noël Siver (eds.), *Surveyors of Persian art: a documentary biography of Arthur Upham Pope & Phyllis Ackerman*, (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1996), 89-90.
5. For reading Pope's influential speech see Arthur Upham Pope, 'the Past and Future of Persian Art', in Gluck, Siver (eds.), *Surveyors of Persian art*, 95-110.
6. Abdi, 'Nationalism, Politics', 60.
7. It resulted in the construction of some buildings inspired by Iranian pre-Islamic heritage. Gluck, Siver (eds.), *Surveyors of Persian art*, 90.
8. Abdi, 'Nationalism, Politics', 60.
9. Mostafa Kiani, *Memari-e dore-ye Pahlavi-ye aval (Architecture of the first Pahlavi era)*, (Tehran: Nashr-e Shahr, 2014), 107.
10. For instance, when Mohsen Foroughi was back from Paris to Tehran, Fawzia (the first wife of Reza Shah's son) invited him and his wife to a party where Reza Shah suddenly appeared. In a talk with Reza Shah, Mohsen was commissioned to inspect all government buildings and make sure if they are constructed using standard materials and technologies. Bagher Agheli, *Zoka al-Molk Foroughi and Shahrivar 1320* (Tehran: Maharat, unknown date of publication), 52.
11. The most prominent of those French language schools was the School of Darolfonoun, the first Western-type school established by the Persian government in 1851. Ali M. Hazeri, *Ravand-e E'ezam-e Daneshjou dar Iran (The Process of dispatching students in Iran)*, (Ghom: Samt press, 1994), 106-108.
12. Donald N. Wilbe, *Riza Shah Pahlavi: The Resurrection and Reconstruction of Iran, 1878-1944* (New York: Exposition Press, 1975), 148.
13. Abdi, 'Nationalism, Politics', 59.
14. From 1932 to 1968, almost 45 Iranians graduated from the Ecole. For information regarding the graduates of the Ecole working in Iran see Marie-Laure Crosnier Leconte, *the Dictionnaire des élèves architectes de l'Ecole des beaux-arts 1800-1968* (available online at <http://agorha.inha.fr/>), prepared by on behalf of the Institut national d'histoire de l'art.
15. Isabelle Gournay, & Marie-Laure Crosnier Leconte. 'American Architecture Students in Belle Epoque Paris: Scholastic Strategies and Achievements at the Ecole des Beaux-Arts'. *The Journal of the Gilded Age and Progressive Era*, 12, 2 (2013), 154-198.
16. Richard Chafee, *The Architecture of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts*, (London: Secker and Warburg, 1977), 82.

17. The academic tradition imbedded in the Ecole des Beaux-Arts was “to some degree influenced by the relatively free classicism of Michelangelo and architects of the Italian Baroque.” Donald D. Egbert, *the Beaux-Arts Tradition in French Architecture* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1980), 107.
18. Hyungmin Pai, *the Portfolio and the Diagram*, (Massachusetts, the MIT Press, 2002), 71-72.
19. Jacques Lucan, *Composition, Non-Composition* (Lausanne: EPLF Press, 2012), 184.
20. Lucan, *Composition, Non-Composition*, 181-183
21. The short period of decision making *en loge*, in fact, made the Beaux-Arts system a suitable design method for changing societies of the interwar era who were seeking rapid constructions.
22. Pai, *The Portfolio*, 71
23. For more information on the character of design in the Beaux-Arts method see John F. Harbeson, *The Study of Architectural Design*, (New York: the Pencil Points Press, 1927), 91-103
24. For instance, in 1923, some dissident students approached Le Corbusier to open an atelier attached to the Ecole, and in 1925, the Académie des Beaux-Arts asked Garnier for the first time to serve as the *juré adjoint titulaire* of the Grand Prix competition. Donald D. Egbert, *the Beaux-Arts Tradition*, 74-75.
25. Egbert, *the Beaux-Arts Tradition*, 74-75.
26. Elise Marie Moentmann, *Conservative Modernism at the 1937 International Exposition in Paris*, Doctor of Philosophy dissertation (Illinois: UMI, 1998), 27.
27. Moentmann, *Conservative Modernism*, 27.
28. Moentmann, *Conservative Modernism*, 27.
29. Moentmann, *Conservative Modernism*, 22.
30. The number of registered industrial companies increased from 38 in 1931 to 460 in 1940 in Iran. Willem Floor, *Industrialization in Iran 1900-1941*, (England:University of Durham, 1984), 18-35.
31. Mina Marefat, ‘the Protagonists who Shaped Modern Tehran’ in Shahriar Adl, Bernard Orchard (eds.), *Tehran the Capital of 200 Years*, (Tehran: Elmi va Farhangi Press, 1996), 103-133.
32. Floor, *Industrialization in Iran*, 29.
33. Abbas Milani, *Eminent Persians*, 2 vols, (New York: Syracuse University, 2008), 778.
34. Milani, *Eminent Persians*, 778
35. Richard N. Frye, ‘Mohsen Foroughi’, *Encyclopædia Iranica* (2000), online access: www.iranicaonline.org/articles/foroughi-mohsen.
36. All data on Mohsen’s accomplishments at the Ecole as well as his date of birth was acquired by the author from his Ecole’s dossier kept in the *Archives nationales de France*, AJ 52 series.
37. Crosnier Leconte, *the Dictionnaire des élèves*.
38. According to Marefat, ‘the Protagonists who Shaped Modern Tehran’, 119, Mohsen had an intimate knowledge of traditional Iranian architecture (probably through the lessons offered by his tutor, Qazvini).
39. An *iwan* is a vaulted space that opens on one side to a courtyard. The *iwan* developed in pre-Islamic Iran where it was used in monumental and imperial architecture. Strongly associated with Persian architecture, the *iwan* continued to be used in monumental architecture in the Islamic era. Kendra Weisbin, *Common types of mosque architecture*, (www.khanacademy.org)
40. tile-work that is particular to the Islamic architecture and reached its peak during the Safavid dynasty (1501-1736) in Iran.
41. Agheli, *Zoka al-Molk Foroughi*, 43.
42. A built example would be the *Musée d’Art Moderne* designed in 1935 by graduates of the Ecole.
43. Mohsen designed the Faculty of Law and Political Science, and the Faculty of Literature (constructed in 1937).
44. The final decision regarding the establishment of a university was made after comparing Iran to other countries. Ali-Asghar Hekmat, the minister of education, in a meeting, reported to Reza Shah that Tehran, unlike other big cities, is deprived of a university. Reza Shah replied: “I have also heard that such this supreme school must be established. All necessary equipment will be ready for you, start the work immediately”. *Tehran University Guide*, (Tehran: Tehran University, 1967), 2.
45. Mohsen Foroughi, ‘Building Developments in Iran’, *Golbang Magazine*, 3 (1961), 121-127.
46. Foroughi, ‘Building Developments in Iran’, 121-127
47. Mohsen was perhaps inspired by the common use of turquoise colour in the Safavid (1501-1736) architecture. In his article, ‘Building Developments in Iran’, Mohsen, when talking about *Kashikari*, he referred to the mosques and madrasas of the Safavid era, located mainly in Isfahan, a well-known city within turquoise domes.