

In Memoriam

William Lippincott Hanaway Jr. (1929–2018): Professor of Persian Literature



We note with sadness the passing of Professor William Hanaway, on 30 December 2018, at the age of eighty-nine, and extend our condolences to his family and friends. He was Emeritus Professor of Asian and Middle Eastern Studies at the University of Pennsylvania, where he earned a reputation as an accomplished scholar, an accessible teacher and a committed spokesman for the discipline. His students often speak of his erudition, patience and kindness.

After a BA from Amherst followed by an MA and PhD from Columbia, he began teaching at the University of Pennsylvania in 1971. He retired with emeritus status in 1995. During his career he pioneered the study of Persian romance in his dissertation at Columbia University (“Persian Popular Romances before the Safavid Period,” still quoted frequently), and later in his translation *Love and War: Adventures from the Firuz Shah Nama of Sheikh Bighami* (Persian Heritage Series, 1974). His publications include *Studies in Pakistani Popular Culture* (with Wilma Heston, eds., Sang-e Meel Publications, 1996); “The Concept of the Hunt in Persian Literature” (*Boston Museum Bulletin*, 69/355–356, 1971, pp. 21–69); “Blood and Wine: Sacrifice and Celebration in Manūchiri’s Wine Poetry” (*Iran* 26, 1988, pp. 69–80); “Ānāhitā and Alexander” in the *Dārābnāmeḥ* (*Journal of the American Oriental Society*, 102/2, 1982, pp. 285–295); and “Persian Travel Narratives: Notes Toward the Definition of a Nineteenth-Century Genre” (in Elton L. Daniel, ed., *Society and Culture in Qajar Iran: Studies in Honor of Hafez Farmayan*, Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers,

2002). He was the editor (with Brian Spooner) of the elegant and ground-breaking *Literacy in the Persianate World: Writing and the Social Order* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Museum of Archaeology and Anthropology, 2012), which studies the vast subject of writing in Persian from a wide, all-encompassing framework. With Brian Spooner he wrote the essential reference work *Reading Nasta'liq: Persian and Urdu Hands from 1500 to the Present* (Costa Mesa, CA: Mazda Publishers, 1995; rev. 2nd ed., 2017), this project was characteristic of him: challenging, erudite, unassuming and eminently useful.

Professor Hanaway was well known for his commitment to the university community, willingness to listen and to support the careers of others. He was a consultant and contributor to the *Encyclopaedia Iranica*, and a member of the Editorial Board of *A History of Persian Literature*. He was a respected specialist with wide-ranging vision, always willing to see beyond the boundaries of his specific field. With Roger Allen and Walter Andrews he was, in 1976, one of the founders of *Edebiyât: A Journal of Middle Eastern Literatures*. It may not be so evident today as it was then how revolutionary that journal was. It created a forum for the humanities throughout the Middle East, at a time when studies of literature were overshadowed by the neighboring disciplines of history, political science and philology. Studies of literature were at that time often brilliant, but just as often unadventurous and narrow: the first readers of *Edebiyât* can attest how liberating it was to read a journal explicitly devoted to all the literatures of the field, with the same kind of research which had developed a generation earlier in the study of literature in Europe.

It is characteristic of his loyalty to friends and community that in his obituary in *The New York Times* the family asked that in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Memorial Library of Radnor Township (radnorlibrary.org). We offer our deep condolences to his wife Lorraine, their daughter Annie, two grandsons Will and Robin, and his brother Joseph.

Michael Beard

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