

Iranian constitution of 1906 marked the beginning of a new era in the history of Persia, for the first time installing a parliamentary system in that country. The first term of the *Majles-e Showra-ye Melli* (National Consultative Assembly – the Parliament of Iran) lasted from 1906 till 1908, when the shah Mohammad Ali Qajar ordered the Cossacks to fire their cannons at the Assembly.

The most important reminder of the less than two years of the activities of the first Iranian parliament are the minutes of its proceedings that were being published in the newspaper *Majles* (Parliament). They have been often used as a historical source, but it was never accompanied by a contemplation about the minutes themselves. The goal of the present work is to fill this serious gap.

Thus the research tackles a few issues. The most basic of them is an in-depth analysis and study of the minutes of the first Iranian parliament. It will be focused not only on the content of the speeches – after all, these have been already used by the researchers – but mostly on the minutes themselves. They have to be compared to other contemporary sources, such as the press, official documents and memoirs.

This is because these protocols were not a full transcript or a stenograph of the proceedings. One can see in them a few competing styles, with a varying level of detail. Some debates are recorded very briefly, with summaries or short quotations of only some of the speeches, while the others contain a full or almost full account of the speeches. Thus one can deduce that at least two people were responsible for preparing the notes from the parliament.

I raises the questions what was the origin of these two varying methods of recording the debates. In the case of their abridged version, we can see some similarities with the older Persian tradition of preparing daily notes of the ruler's decisions and of important assemblies. These similarities include not only the brevity itself, but also some linguistic aspects of the text. On the other hand the more detailed minutes are similar to the Western-style transcripts.

Because of the above, in order to present the minutes in the proper context, they have to be compared with the types of texts from which they could have originated: older Persian official writings, earlier Persian and foreign press, minutes of the European parliaments.

Above-mentioned analysis will allow us not only to see the minutes of the parliament in a broader perspective, but also point us towards the possibilities of a better use of this historical source and various ways of reading it. Apart from that longer quotations of the politicians' speeches are a basis for the analysis of the language of the parliamentary debates of Iran at the time, while the brevity and summaries of others will allow the deduction of the views of the authors on certain MPs and factions. It is even more important given the fact that the editorial staff of the *Majles* newspaper, which published the minutes, was known for its sympathizing with the contemporary reformist faction and opposition to royalists. The analysis of the material will also allow us to describe the development of public sphere in Iran in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, and that of the parliamentary institutions. Another result of the research will be the translation of the minutes into English and their publication.