From the nineteenth to the early twentieth century, Iran experienced one of the darkest periods in its history. Poverty, chaos, and material shortages of the Great War exacerbated the situation to the extent that almost all factions of the society were accorded with the rise of a strong government. The new Iranian government, established in 1925 by Reza Shah, a fierce patriot and moderniser, criticised the previous administration and sought for a new Iran to be regarded as an independent country with its exclusive national identity. In this program of modernisation, architecture, as a means for accommodating the government’s new functions, soon gained its significance and became a tool in the hands of Iran’s new ruler. It was at this historical turning point that Lack of educated architects and incapability of the me’mars (traditional Iranian architects), obliged the government to use foreign-educated
architects, for the first time, as the main designers of the state-sponsored buildings among whom the Beaux-Arts graduates found an unquestionable reputation. The Beaux-Arts graduates were capable of creating an architecture, monumental in nature but Iranian and modern in appearance. An appropriate approach for retrieving Iran’s lost national identity. Working in Iran, an Islamic country for almost fourteen century, they soon got inspired by Iran’s grand history of Islamic architecture and embarked on creating a new language of modern architecture, and premised it upon the Beaux-Arts design principles. Through the use of the first-hand documents collected in Tehran and Paris, as well as secondary sources, this article reveals the contribution of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts’s educational system and doctrine in the creation of interwar Iranian architecture, particularly those buildings influenced by Iranian Islamic architecture.

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I am a PhD student of architecture, working in the Research Centre of “Architecture Theory and Criticism” in the School of Architecture at the University of Queensland, Australia, under the supervision of Professor John Macarthur. My PhD dissertation is on the rule of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in the creation of modern Iranian architecture during the interwar era. I have achieved my Master degree from the Politecnico di Milano University in Italy with the high grade of 110 out of 110 and my Bachelor from Shahid Bahonar University in Iran. My master thesis was on the contribution of the Ecole des Beaux-Arts in the institutionalisation of architectural education in Iran. I have published two conference papers during my master degree and recently an article in a conference in Paris. I have also submitted two other papers in Australia which will be published shortly.