



## ĀBĀDĪ

**ĀBĀDĪ**, Persian term meaning “settlement, inhabited space;” it is applied basically to the rural environment, but in colloquial usage it often refers to towns and cities as well. The Persian word derives from Middle Persian *āpāt*, “developed, thriving, inhabited, cultivated” (see H. S. Nyberg, *A Manual of Pahlavi II*, Wiesbaden, 1974, p. 25); the Middle Persian word is based on the Old Iranian directional adverb *ā*, “to, in” and the root *pā*, “protect” (*AirWb.*, cols. 300f., 330, 886). Some Iranian social scientists have suggested an analysis into *āb* “water” and a suffix *-ād* (cf. the common expression *āb ābādānist*, “water prosperity”), and this error is also found in some early modern dictionaries (e.g., *Behār-e ‘aǧam*, 1296/1879; *Āṣaf al-logāt*, Hyderabad, 1327-40/1909-21; *Farhang-e Ananderāǧ*, 1303/1924).

Nineteen century Persian travel narratives seem to have popularized the term *ābādī*, and they use it with reference both to rural districts and to towns. For instance, regarding rural Iran, the population of the village Āīna Varzān is described as residing in two *ābādīs* (Nāṣer-al-dīn Shah, *Safarnāma-ye Korāsān*, Tehran, 1306/1888, p. 14). And “the Sang Bast itself does not have *ābādī*; there are only a few peasants who reside in the Shah ‘Abbās caravanserai” (Q. Rowšanī, ed., *Mosāferat-e Harāt in Se safarnāma*, Tehran, 1347 Š./1968, p. 24). “Aqdar Band is an important site; several households should live there as road sentinels, so that this locale develops into an *ābādī*” (Moḥammad-‘Alī Monšī, ed., *Safarnāma-ye Rokn-al-dawla be Saraḵs*, Tehran, 1977, p. 25). “Thereafter each of his companions built a home near his, and [Dawlatābād] was thus turned into an *ābādī*” (Fasāī, *Fārsnāma II*, p. 273). “Kalāta Kīj was first a fort,

within which was an *ābādī*, but now there also houses built around the fort,” and “Solaymānābād does not have an *ābādī*, but it does have cultivated land” (Ṣanīʿ-al-dawla, *Maṭlaʿ al-šams*, Tehran, 1301/1883, I, p. 89; III, p. 343). With reference to towns, the following may be noted. “[Fīrūzkūh’s] *ābādī* is located on the mountain’ slope” (Ṣanīʿ-al-dawla, op. cit., I, p. 24). “[Nakjavān’s] thriving *ābādī* includes approximately 3,000 households” (Eʿtešām-al-molk, *Safarnāma*, Tehran, 1351 Š./1972, p. 11). And Amīn-al-dawla refers to “Enzeli’s *ābādī* environs” and “monuments of the city and *ābādī* of Ezmir” (*Safarnāma-ye Amīn-al-dawla*, Tehran, 1354 Š./1975, pp. 57, 102).

Such travelers thus amply *ābādī*, not only in its basic sense, but also as a synonym of the terms for village (*deh*, *qarya*), which refer both to inhabited space (*ābādī* proper) and to the adjoining farmland. The more restricted sense of *ābādī* is retained today in the usage of villagers in many regions of Iran. The term entered popular dictionaries of the early twentieth century with the sense of “inhabited space.” For instance, the *Farhang-e Nafīsī* (Tehran, 1303/1924, I, p. 3) defines *ābādī* as “any place where a group of individuals has come together and erected dwellings for itself; for instance, there are various *ābādīs* between Tehran and Qom.” At the same time the word was being used for towns as well as villages (A. Kasravī, “Nāmhā-ye šahrhā-ye Īrān,” *Majalla-ye āyanda* 1/6, 1304/1925, p. 355) This usage continued in Iran’s Geographical Gazetteer (*Farhang-e joḡrāfiāʿī-ye Īrān*, 10 vols., Tehran, 1328-32 Š./1949-53) and Settlements Gazetteer (L. M. Pāyān, *Farhang-e ābādīhā-ye Īrān*, Tehran, 1339 Š./1960).

However, during the second general census of 1966, *ābādī* acquired an official usage with reference to rural districts only, and five types of *ābādī* were defined. These were more closely described in the 1976 census: The census guide stated that “*ābādī* is applied to one or several habitations or cultivated fields located in a country district and possessing official (or possibly unofficial) boundaries” (*Rāhnāma-ye saršomārī-ye 2535*, Tehran, 1355 Š./1976, p. 10). The term was made to refer to teahouses, mines, railroad stations, and other clearly demarcated installations, as well as to villages and fields. The five type of *ābādī* comprised (1) the village, i.e., a complex of habitations and fields with an official head, (2-3) non-village agricultural areas (*mazraʿa*), administratively either separate or part of a village, (4-5) non-agricultural sites (*makān*), likewise in two administrative categories (ibid., pp. 70-71). According to this definition, as applied in the 1973 agricultural census, Iran’s *ābādīs* comprised about 59,000 villages, 6,000 independent farm areas, 16,000



administratively dependent farm areas, and 2,000 non-agricultural sites (*Natāyej-e saršomārī-e kešāvarzī: marḥala-ye avval*, 1352, Tehran , 1354 Š./1975). Together they contained nearly 3.3 million households, with villages containing 99 percent of them. About 23 percent of the *ābādīs* were non-residential; the rest averaged 51 households each (30 percent contained fewer than ten each, 13 percent contained 100 or more). Forty-seven percent of the households were found in *ābādīs* of fewer than 100 households. As to geographical distribution, half the *ābādīs* were in mountain regions, and half in the plains.

See also [DEH](#), [ŠAHR](#), [SAVĀD](#), [SETTLEMENTS](#).

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

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: Given in the text.