



ABHAR

ABHAR (or Awhar in local pronunciation, see *Ḥodūd al-‘ālam*, tr. Minorsky, pp. 132, 383), a small town in the Qazvīn district, on the highway connecting Ray and later Tehran with Tabrīz and Azarbaijan. The geographers state that it lay 12 *farsaks* west of Qazvīn and that Zanĵān (the town with which it is often coupled in the geographical and historical sources) was 20 *farsaks* farther (thus Ebn Ḥawqal, tr. Kramers, p. 351; but Ebn Rosta, tr. Wiet, p. 196, makes this last journey 15 *farsaks*). The town had a plenteous water supply from the landlocked stream of the Abhar Rūd, which rises in the Kūh-e Sarāhand south of Tabrīz and flows southwest until it loses itself in the desert; Ḥamdallāh Mostawfī compares it, in its utility for towns like Zanĵān, Abhar, and Qazvīn, to the Zāyanda Rūd’s value for Isfahan. It drove numerous water mills, and the irrigated fields produced a wide array of fruits, including grapes, nuts, and a celebrated variety of pear called ‘*Abbāsī*, as well as cereals.

The geographers of the 4th/10th century describe Abhar as a small, fortified town on a hilltop, with walls 5,500 paces in circumference. Local legend attributed the town’s foundation to Kay Kōsrow, son of Sīāvoš, or to Šāpūr Du’l-aktāf, and the construction of its citadel (which was on a raised platform, following ancient Iranian practice) to Dārāb son of Dārāb. More historically, this citadel was built in the Saljuq period by the atabeg Bahā’-al-dīn Ḥaydar, hence called *al-qaḷ‘at al-Ḥaydariya*; some celebrated gardens outside the town, used as a camping ground for caravans and armies, were likewise laid out by him and called Bahā’-al-dīn-ābād.

Abhar was conquered by the Arab invaders of Iran in 24/645 under Barā’ b.



‘Azīb, governor of Ray (Balāḍorī, *Fotūḥ*, p. 321). In the early years of the 4th/10th century Abhar was in the possession of the Sajid governor of Azarbaijan, Yūsuf b. Abu’l-Sāj. It then came under Daylamite domination, and in 386/996 the Mosaferid or Kangarid Vahsūdān b. Sallār Moḥammad b. Mosāfer ruled the region south of Azarbaijan and Daylam, including Abhar, Zanĵān, and Sohravard; a coin minted in Abhar in 404/1013-14, either by a Mosaferid or by one of their Rawwadid rivals, is extant (Minorsky, *Studies in Caucasian History*, London, 1953, pp. 160, 165-66; A. Markov, *Inventarnyi katalog musul’manskikh monet imperatorskago Ėrmitazha*, St. Petersburg, 1896, p. 884). In 420/1029, however, the Ghaznavid Maḥmūd b. Sebüktegin’s troops appeared in the Ray and Qazvīn region and secured the submission of the Mosaferid Ebrāhīm b. Marzbān (M. Nazim, *The Life and Times of Sulṭān Maḥmūd of Ghazna*, Cambridge, 1931, pp. 83-84).

A notable figure from the town was Kamāl-al-dīn Abū ‘Amr Abharī, who was vizier to the last two Great Saljuq sultans in Iran, Arslan and his son Toġrı I but who ended his life as an ascetic in Jerusalem and Syria (d. 590/1194; Nāṣer-al-dīn Monšī Kermānī, *Nasā’em al-ashār*, ed. Jalāl-al-dīn Moḥaddet Ormavī, Tehran, 1338 Š./1959, pp. 90-91; Sayf-al-dīn ‘Oqaylī, *Ātār al-wozarā’*, ed. Jalāl-al-dīn ‘Ormavī, Tehran, 1337 Š./1959, p. 265). One of the best-known scholars produced by Abhar was the philosopher Aṭīr-al-dīn Mofaẓẓal b. ‘Omar (d. 663/1265; see s.v. Abharī) the author of two esteemed philosophical works, who worked at the court of the atabegs of Mosul (see Brockelmann, *GAL I*¹, pp. 608-11; S. I, pp. 839-44). Sam‘ānī names a considerable number of theologians and traditionists who came from Abhar, including a well-known Malikite traditionist, Abū Bakr Moḥammad b. ‘Abdallāh; but by Mostawfī’s time (740/1340) the inhabitants of Abhar were predominantly Shafī‘ites. When this same author wrote, the administrative district of Abhar comprised twenty-five villages, yielding a total revenue of 14,000 dinars per annum. He also mentions as still venerated in his time the tomb and *rebāṭ* of the celebrated Sufi shaikh ‘Abdallāh b. Ṭāher Ṭayyār Abharī (d. 330/942).

At the present day, Abhar is administratively in the first *ostān* of Iran, and is the center of the *baḳš* of Abhar Rūd in the *šahrestān* of Zanĵān; the population is about 12,000, and their mother tongue is Turkish, though most are bilingual in Turkish and Persian.



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See also: Ebn Ḥawqal, tr. Kramers, pp. 349, 367, 370. Moqaddasī, p. 392.

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E. von Zambaur, *Die Münzprägungen des Islams, zeitlich und örtlich geordnet* I, Wiesbaden, 1968, p. 37.

Razmārā, *Farhang* II, p. 3.