



AMĀMA

AMĀMA (also 'Amāma), a village in the Lavāsān district at a distance of 39 km north of Tehran, located in a mountainous area 2,230 m above sea level. Heavy snowfalls in winter nearly isolate the village for more than three months of the year. The village population fluctuates, receding to a minimum of about 1,200 souls in winter when the majority of its youths migrate to nearby cities in search of work, and reaching a peak of 3,000 in summer when they return and its cool mountain air attracts city dwellers. Most of the villagers are engaged in gardening and their only source of livelihood is the sale of apples, cherries, and pears, and small-scale animal husbandry. Amāma is divided into two parts, Upper Amāma (Amāma Bālā), which is better developed and more densely populated, and Lower Amāma (Amāma Pā'in). The main road reaching the village was built in 1955, and was improved and widened at the end of the 1980s.

Amāma, because of its hardly accessible mountainous location, has always been considered a secure place of refuge. Yāqut (Beirut, I, p. 369), calling it Anbāma, refers to it as a fortress in the vicinity of Ray. It served many times as the center of Qaṣrān-e Dākeli, which included villages situated behind the mountains north of Tehran, extending as far as Lārijān, Nur, and Āmol. In 1880 when Moḥammad-Ḥasan Khan E'temād-al- Saṭṭana visited Amāma, the village had three mosques and two bathhouses, and its population consisted of three distinct groups of Georgians, Nuris, and Māzandarānis, who lived in more than one hundred houses. (*Ruz-nāma-ye kāṭerāt*, p. 115).



Anis-al-Dawla, the favorite wife of Nāṣer-al-Din Shah, was a peasant girl from this village. Nāṣer-al-Din Shah repeatedly traveled to Amāma and hundreds of pictures were taken of him in this village. Kamāl-al-Molk Moḥammad Ġaffāri produced an oil painting of Amāma in 1883, which is kept in the Golestān Palace Museum.

Monuments. On the slopes of the mountains north of Amāma, at a height of 3,921 m, in an area called Pirzan Kalum, traces of some ancient drawings can be seen on the rocks, which are believed to date from the second half of the first millennium B.C.E (Tafażzoli, pp. 55-60). Another noteworthy historic site is a ruined fortress built north of the village on a towering, hardly accessible spot. E'temād-al-Salṭana (*Ruz-nāma-ye kāṭerāt*, pp. 114-15) considered the fortress to be about 700 to 800 years old and similar to those of the Isma'ilis and the rulers of Ruyān and Māzandarān. According to Ḥosayn Karimān (p. 283), this fortress must have been built in the years 838-45, when the Ziyarid Māziār was ruling in Ṭabarestān. According to E'temād-al-Salṭana, the local people attributed its building to a demon (*div*) called Amāma (*Ruz-nāma-ye kāṭerāt*, p. 115). There are two shrines in Amāma, Emānzāda Nur and Šāhzāda Ḥosayn.

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