



ḤAMMĀM-E WAKĪL

ḤAMMĀM-E WAKĪL (bathhouse of the Wakil), a historic monument in Shiraz built by Karim Khan Zand “the Wakil” (r. 1164-93/1751-79) after 1180/1776 (Nāmi, p. 158; Ġaffāri, p. 279). It is situated in Meydān-e Šāh to the west of the Wakil’s Mosque (Masjed-e Wakil) and north of a water reservoir (*āb-anbār*, q.v.) known as Āb-anbār-e Wakil, from which it is separated by a wide alley.

The bath covers an area of nearly 1,425 m². Attached to its northern and western sides are two rows of shops; the entrance is a low doorway set at the back of a re-cess in the northern row. The entrance leads, through a corridor and a small hallway, to the dressing hall (*bina, raḳtkan*), an octagonal structure covered by a dome with a skylight. Here the patrons would undress and dress on platforms (*šāhnešin*) of stone around the dressing hall, which overlooked an octagonal water basin (*ḥawẓ*) with a large fountain in the middle. According to William Francklin, the British traveler who was in Shiraz in the years 1786-87, each platform was provided with a small water basin and “the sides were adorned with pictures and tapestry” (Francklin, pp. 76-77). The doorway to the bath proper, which is the steam room (*garm-kāna*), stands opposite the entrance and connects the dressing hall to the *garm-kān* through a corridor where the latrines are also situated, as are the private cubicles (*nura-kāna*) for the application of a depilatory mixture called *nura*.

The square *garm-kān* is roofed by a canopy of vaults that rest on four shapely columns. The whole area is lighted by a series of bulbous glass skylights (*qobba*) built in the vault pinnacles. Here “the dome and the sides [were] ornamented with the imitation of lapis lazuli” (Francklin, p. 76). There are



three *ḳazinas* (aboveground water tanks), which hold cold, tepid, and hot water; these are built in the southern end of the *garm-ḳāna*. On the two sides of the row of *ḳazinas* and along the other three walls there are elevated bays, each with a small water tank of its own, around which the patrons could sit to wash themselves.

The plinth course consists of marble slabs imported from Tabriz, as does the lining of the water basins; the columns are solid rocks; the body of the building is made of masonry, bricks, mortar (*sāruj*), and plaster.

The only description of Ḥammām-e Wakil in an early source is found in the travelogue of William Francklin, who was in Shiraz a few years after the bathhouse had been built. No other references to or descriptions of it are to be found in historical or biographical texts, with the exception of Forṣat's *Āṭār-e 'Ajam* (II, p. 828), where the exact location of the building is given and it is described as unique in Persia.

It seems that Ḥammām-e Wakil had been built specifically for the use of the nobility, as no commoners were admitted during the Zand period (Francklin, p. 76). The bathhouse was in use until the closing decades of the last century; later its dressing hall was converted into a traditional gymnasium (*zur-ḳāna*) called Bāšgāh-e Zand (Zand sports club). It has been restored since and is now protected as an historic monument.

Plans of the bath have been published by the Technical Bureau of the National Organization for protection of Ancient Monuments (Sāzmān-e melli-e ḥefāzat-e āṭār-e bāstāni-e Fārs).

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