



ĀRĀN

ĀRĀN, a small town about 10 km north of Kāšān. In 1354 Š./1975, Ārān was amalgamated with nearby Bīdḡol to form a town with municipal status under the name of Golārā; the ordinance was apparently revoked after the revolution of 1357 Š./1979 and the old names reinstated. Both Ārān and Bīdḡol are counted among the villages of the hot zone (*garmsīr*) of Kāšān. They lie 930 m above sea level on the edge of the central salt desert (Dašt-e Kavīr), south of the Masīla salt lake, and are flanked on the east and north by a barrier of shifting sand dunes (*band-e rīg*). Ārān was the name of the chief place of the *korra* (sub-district) of the Kavīrāt of Kāšān (Dehḡodā, s.v. Ārān). In the 4th/10th century Ārān belonged to the *ṭasūj* (tax district) of Qāsān (Kāšān) and was one of the villages liable for payment of *karāj* (Ḥasan b. Moḡammad Qomī, *Tārīḡ-e Qom*, ed. J. Ṭehrānī, Tehran, 1313 Š./1934, pp. 114, 138). In 703/1304 towards the end of the reign of the Il-khan Ġāzān, the revenues of Bīdḡol and two other villages were assigned as *waqf* (endowment) for the Kāšān Dār al-Sīāda (which served residents of the city claiming descent from 'Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb; the text of the *waqf-nāma* in 'Abd-al-Raḡīm Kalāntar Żarrābī, *Tārīḡ-e Kāšān*, ed. Ī. Afšār, 2nd ed., Tehran, 1341 Š./1962, notes, pp. 473-75). In the Safavid period, Ārān and Bīdḡol flourished as semi-agricultural, semi-industrial communities; Ārān appears to have been more important than Bīdḡol. Chardin, who visited Ārān in the later part of the period, does not mention Bīdḡol, probably because he regarded it as a quarter of Ārān; he states that there were 2,000 houses in Ārān and 1,000 silk weavers among its inhabitants (J. Chardin, *Voyages du Chevalier Chardin en Perse*, Paris, 1811, III, p. 4). Under the Safavids and down to the middle of the Qajar period, Ārān and Bīdḡol suffered much from repeated



raids by the Afghans and by Arabic- and Turkish-speaking tribes (Eskandar Beg, I, p. 532; Żarrābī, *Tārīk-e Kāšān*, pp. 210-16). Both villages appear to have declined steadily after the Safavid period. In 1893 a local chronicler ascribed the decay to “killing and raiding by Afghan troops, requisitioning ordered by Nāder, recurrent insecurity due to the passage of armies marching to or from Isfahan and Shiraz, and other calamities such as drought, high prices, plague, cholera, and lack of demand for the types of cloth woven in the village because of the popularity of imported fabrics” (W. Bīdgolī, “Čerāgān,” *FIZ* 24, 1358 Š./1979, pp. 5-6).

The people of Ārān and Bīdgol derived part of their livelihood from the *kavīr*, through the extraction of salt (for human consumption) and alum (for fixing dyes); these were distributed in Kāšān and the district. Also important were camel-driving and camel-breeding. In the second half of the 13th/19th century, Ārān, which was irrigated by three *qanāts*, had forty-one farms; Bīdgol, with two *qanāts*, had sixteen farms (Żarrābī, *Tārīk-e Kāšān*, pp. 98, 142-43). The arable lands of both villages were rather salty and were used mainly for growing barley, wheat, and other winter crops. Two industrial staples, tobacco and silk, were also produced (Żarrābī, *Tārīk-e Kāšān*, p. 160; Bīdgolī, “Čerāgān,” p. 5). On the whole, however, the prosperity of Ārān and Bīdgol depended on the textile industry and related activities. From the beginning of the 19th century, they shared in the growth of the Kāšān carpet industry and became important carpet-weaving centers. The general stagnation of the Iranian economy in the second half of the 13th/19th century, together with the disastrous famine of 1288/1871, brought both villages near to ruin (*Hālāt wa kayfīyāt-e balada wa bolūkāt wa mazāre'-e Dār al-Mo'menīn-e Kāšān*, anonymous MS dated 1296/1879, Coll. Nāşerī, Golestān Library, Tehran, p. 20). In 1296/1879 Ārān had 4,877 inhabitants, 512 houses, 6 mosques, 7 *ħammāms*, and 70 shops, while Bīdgol had 3,695 inhabitants, 435 houses, 6 mosques, 7 *ħammāms* and 60 shops (*Hālāt wa kayfīyāt*, pp. 16, 41). In 1345 Š./1966 the combined population of Ārān and Bīdgol was 23,265 (Markaz-e Āmār-e Īrān, *Sarşomārī-e nofūs wa maskan-e šahrestān-e Kāšān*, Tehran, 1345 Š./1966, p. 4); ten years later the population of Golārā was 32,032 (*idem*, 1355 Š./1976).

A significant monument midway between Ārān and Bīdgol is the tomb of Helāl b. 'Alī b. Abī Ṭāleb, which attracted many pious visitors from Kāšān and the whole district on special days such as Ġadīr Kōmm, Ramażān, and the ten days of 'Āşūrā (Żarrābī, *Tārīk-e Kāšān*, pp. 431-32).

Distinguished figures from the two villages include the poet Ḥājj Solaymān



Şabāhī of Bīdgol (d. 1207/ 1793; see *Dīvān*, ed. Ḥ. P. Bayzā'ī, Tehran, 1338 Š./1959, preface), and the modern littérateur and poet Neẓām Wafā (b. 1306/1888-89) from Ārān.

Ārān possesses a **Central dialect**, locally called *de(h)ī*, akin to those of Bīdgol and the Jewish community of Kāšān. It is commonest in the Deh-e now and Zīrdeh districts of Ārān but is now gradually giving way to Persian. (See Bīdgolī for a description of these dialects.)

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See also N. Pākdāman and K. Eşfahānī, “Kāšān, Qazvīn, Hamadān dar şad sāl pīş,” *Alefbā* 1, 1361 Š./1982, pp. 63-65.