



BAM II. RUINS OF THE OLD TOWN

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The Citadel of Bam (*arg-e Bam*), the ruins of a once large settlement built on a hill at a maximum height of about 200 m and a radius of about 1.5 km was, until a century ago, the principal residence of the inhabitants of Bam. Surrounding the citadel was a deep moat which is partially intact. Inside the moat are the citadel's first wall and ramparts, behind which are the ruins of buildings that were evidently where the middle class and the citadel's guards made their homes. Next comes a second wall behind which were the homes of the aristocracy and the wealthy, and finally, protected by a third wall, on the highest point in the citadel, were the seat of government and the residences of its leaders.

Of the three walls and battlements, the third, which defends the citadel's highest point, has seen the least damage; it is also apparently the oldest part, for it is constructed of bricks that date back to the Sasanian era. Remains of the second round of walls can still be seen, especially its several gates. The outer walls have suffered the most damage because of the spillover of rain from the citadel's higher points and particularly because local farmers used the ancient earthworks as a source of fertilizer.

A building with four open corner rooms (*čahār fašl*) stands at the highest point



in the citadel, and next to it are the remains of a watchtower (this tower apparently once consisted of seven stories, three of which Fīrūz Mirzā destroyed during the Qajar period [p. 8]). The tower was used to send signals with fire by night and smoke by day to the surrounding countryside, and thus came to be known as the “fire tower” (*ātaš-kāna*). The name may also be related to a fire temple and a place where a sacred flame was tended.

The *čahār fašl* and the mosque adjoining it have been repaired several times, once some thirty years ago (Bāstānī, *Wādī-e Haftvād*). Surrounding this building are several caved-in ruins which presumably were a stable, a government storehouse, and the quarters of officials and those affiliated with the government.

At its midpoint, the width of the citadel’s outer wall is fourteen *dar’*, while its ramparts are ten *dar’* wide; it is built from a hard clay which is so durable that, according to E’temād-al-Saltāna (p. 293), “no matter how hard one struck it with a pick, from morning until night, not even one *dar’* would be damaged.”

The moat around the citadel was quite deep; when it was under siege, the defenders would feed water from the Abāreq river into it. Once during the Saljuq period, the inhabitants of Bam brought water from as far away as twenty *farsangs* (ca. 120 km) to fill the moat, but this precipitated the ruin of the *rabaž* and the city wall (Kābīšī, p. 103). The present city of Bam is located to the south of the citadel; apparently, its development took place during the last century when security provided by the a strong central government in Iran made the sanctuary of the citadel’s thick walls unnecessary.

Local legend has it that the citadel of Bam was the capital of Haftvād of Kermān (q.v.). It is also said that Haftvād resided in Kermān’s Qaḷ’a-ye Doḡtar and built the present city of Kermān with the riches that he acquired because of the Kerm (“Worm”; S. M. Hāšemī, in *Našriya-ye farhang-e Bam*, p. 53; Bāstānī Pārīzī, *Rāhnamā-ye ātār-e tārikīĀ²-eKermān*, p. 6). If Haftvād was indeed the citadel’s founder, then the earliest record of it dates back to around a.d. 224. At that time Ardašīr Bābakān, by conquering Kermān, put an end to the rule of Haftvād, who was an historical figure whose minted coins are extant (Pīrnīā, p. 2680).

Above the citadel is a place still famous as “Kot-e Kerm”; Wazīrī (*Tārik*, p. 263) refers to the gate of “Kot-e Kerm”; *Kot* in local parlance means “hole or refuge.” Ḥamd-Allāh Mostawfī (*Nozhat al-qolūb*, p. 140) relates “Bam was the



place where the Haftvād burst.” Near Kot-e Kerm is a gate, through which one enters a second citadel.

The gates to the citadel were of course limited in number, consisting of the Kot-e Kerm, Šāhnešīn, Qūrkāna, and Ġolām-kāna gates, the names of which go back to Qajar times. Moqaddasī (p. 465) speaks of four gates: the Narmāsīr, which undoubtedly faced east; the Kūsakān; the Esbīkān, which probably faced the famous city Espehka of Baluchistan to the southeast; and the Kūrjīn. Unlike citadels in wetter regions, in which reservoirs were used to provide water, at Bam water was supplied by means of an underground channel known as a *šotorgalū*, for its curving course (Sayf-al-Dīnī, in *Našrīya-ye farhang-e Bam*, p. 35). There were also wells on the grounds of the citadel that could be tapped during emergencies. According to Wazīrī (*Joğrāfiā*, p. 92), above the fort there was a well more than 200 *darʿ* deep, which contained the most appetizing water. Quoting the now apparently lost *Bam-nāma* of Šams-al-Dīn Bamī, Wazīrī attributes the digging of the well to the prophet Solomon (*Tārīk*, p. 246). In an account contemporary with Wazīrī’s, E’temād-al-Salṭana, who devotes more scrutiny to the matter, wrote (p. 293) that the well was 40 *gaz* deep and that a second well, at a lower level, was 30 *darʿ*, and a third was 27 *darʿ*; *water was brought up from these wells with buckets weighing 135 kg (45 man-e tabrizī), which, though used a thousand times daily, would not show defect or wear. Sykes (p. 250) curiously puts the depth of the second well at only 54 m. More accurate than these sources are local reports that state that drinking water was extracted from these wells by means of a water wheel which supplied the needs of the citadel’s inhabitants at a flow rate of two sangs. In 1258/1842, ‘Abbāsqolī Khan Javānšīr reexcavated one of the wells that had silted up (Bāstānī Pārīzī, Farmānfarmā-ye ‘ālem, p. 363).*

Situated above the citadel was a windmill that ground grain for the populace; this mill continued to function until about a century ago (Wazīrī, *Joğrāfiā*, p. 94). Owing to the region’s perpetually strong north wind, the mill was always in operation. According to E’temād-al-Salṭana, the mill was last repaired in the time of Ebrāhīm Khan Sarhang As’ad-al-Salṭana by Moḥammad-Qāsem Khan Bamī. The millstones were about 10 *darʿ* (ca. 3 m) in diameter and about 75 cm thick (*Mer’āt al-boldān*, p. 293).

The citadel contains a relatively small enclosure which was probably a monastic retreat or a school or a place where religious ceremonies were held (*takīa*). There is also a pavilion that housed a gymnasium (*zūr-kāna*) whose exercise pit was sunk 1.5 m below the surface of the fort. The Mīrzā Na’īm



takīa, which may also have served as a religious school is located in the citadel next to a small mosque. This mosque, which is not the citadel's principal one, may have been built in Safavid times. The bathhouse, which also may be Safavid in origin, was located behind the citadel's large west tower; the remains of the bath's two reservoirs are still discernible. The *bāzār* is situated where the citadel's entry gate begins and at the end of an open space, in which, in addition to commercial sites, were places for religious ceremonies and public mourning. The dimensions of the shops and merchants' compartments (*hojras*) located at the beginning of the *bāzār* differ from those found at the end of it. In the center of the *bāzār* was an intersection (*čahār sūq*) in which the (*dārūga*) quarters of the police official and a bakery are discernible. The roof of the *bāzār* no longer exists.

The building of the citadel's mosque is attributed to 'Abd-Allāh b. 'Āmer, who captured Bam in 29/650. He reportedly blessed the mosque by placing in its sanctuary a piece of the tree under which the pledge at Ḥodaybiya had been made. According to Wazīrī (*Tārīk*, p. 280), the mosque, known as Masjed-e Ḥažrat-e Rasūl, still stood, in good shape, outside the citadel in 1291/1874. According to the *Bam-nāma* (in Wazīrī, loc. cit.), 'Abd-Allāh built a second mosque inside the town, using a donation by an old woman who had converted to Islam, but no trace of this mosque remained in Wazīrī's time. The *Ḥodūd al-'ālam* (ed. Sotūda, p. 128) states that there were three congregational mosques in Bam: one for the Kharijites, one for the Muslims, and the other within the walls. If the temple converted to a mosque was indeed that of Ebn 'Āmer, then that mosque must have been within the walls; however, if the mosque, which is known today as the Masjed-e Rasūl is meant, then it was outside the walls of the citadel. (See also *Survey of Persian Art* II, p. 930.)

A group of Kharijites, who were hounded out of Iraq by Ḥajjāj b. Yūsuf Ṭaqafī, found refuge in the deserts around Kermān, especially in Bam and Jīroft. For years they resisted Ḥajjāj under the leadership of a certain Qaṭarī, who was killed around Jīroft in 75/694. The Kharijites remained in Bam, maintaining a mosque and practicing their rite, until Ya'qūb b. Layṭ Ṣaffār fought and defeated their leader Esmā'īl b. Mūsā in 254/868, when they were completely wiped out (Bāstānī Pārīzī, *Ya'qūb Layṭ*, p. 211). Around this time the citadel of Bam fell into the hands of Ya'qūb Layṭ, who was also in the process of subduing the Bārez and Qofṣ tribes and captured the Qofṣ chief, holding him hostage in the citadel (Afżal Kermānī, *'Eqd al-'olā*, p. 123). The citadel appears in the Saljuq-era sources when it was controlled by princes or such men of the



first rank and viziers as Abu'l-Mafāker Zīa'-al-Dīn (Afzal Kermānī, *Badāye'*, p. 41). One of the amirs who lived at the close of the Saljuq era in Kermān, Sābeq-al-Dīn (*'Eqd al-'olā: Šāyeq-al-Dīn*), was partly able to check an invasion of Ġozz by holding the Bam citadel (Moḥammad b. Ebrāhīm, pp. 90ff.). He was the citadel keeper (*kūtvāl*) of Moḥammad Shah b. Bahrām Shah, the eleventh king of the Qāvordīān (Ḳabīšī, p. 91).

The Qarākatā'īān (Qara Khitay) also strove continually to make Bam the stronghold in the east and southeast regions of their holdings. The citadel was also the focus of wars fought between Moḥammad Shah Qarākatā'ī and the Sīstānis, which were prolonged principally by the citadel's sturdiness (Monšī Kermānī, p. 82). Aḳī Šojā'-al-Dīn, an *'ayyār* and a *šo'lūk*, was able to hold out against Amir Moḥammad Moḥaffarī in the citadel. Finally in 743/1342, after Amir Moḥammad diverted a river into a channel aimed at the base of the walls and the ramparts of the citadel fell, Aḳī Šojā'-al-Dīn emerged with his sword and shroud draped about his neck (Wazīrī, *Tārīḳ*, p. 485; Kotobī, p. 34). At the end of his life Amir Moḥammad Moḥaffarī was arrested by his sons, blinded, and imprisoned in the citadels of Ṭabarak in Isfahan, Qaḷ'a-ye Sang in Sīrjān, and finally of Bam, where he passed away in 765/1364. His body was carried to Meybod for burial (Wazīrī, *Tārīḳ*, pp. 485, 516).

During the time of Tīmūr's successors, Prince Abā Bakr ruled over Bam and became involved in hostilities with Sultan Oways Tīmūrī. Abā Bakr wished to rebuild the citadel's tower and ramparts; however, Sayyed Šams-al-Dīn Bamī, one of Bam's noted gnostics, persuaded him not to do so, as it would keep the people from their farms (*Maqāmāt*, p. 180). This caused Abā Bakr to be defeated by Sultan Oways, who, after his victory, ordered the citadel to be repaired. He then rounded up the survivors in the citadel and had his opponents killed; over the ruins of their homes within the walls, the victors planted barley (*Našrīya-ye farhang-e Kermān*, p. 42; Wazīrī, *Tārīḳ*, p. 568). Oways's repair of the citadel is mentioned in an inscription on the mosque dated 810/1407. E. Schröder (*Survey of Persian Art* II, pp. 943f.) believes this mosque to be Saffarid in origin; however, it seems more likely that it was built over the foundation of a fire temple. The citadel continued to serve as a center of resistance: Pīr Moḥammad, a rebellious Timurid amir, held the fort for many years (*Maqāmāt*, p. 124), ultimately yielding to the authority of Mīrzā Alvand Beg.

During the Safavid era, the citadel served as a staging area and headquarters for the army of Ganj-'Alī Khan, whose incursions into Baluchistan during the



reign of Shah ‘Abbās I form a full chapter in the history of Kermān (Bāstānī Parīzī, *Ganj-‘Alī Kān*, p. 42). During the time of Karīm Khan Zand, the citadel fell into the hands of Sīstānī and Owḡānī tribesmen; A‘zam Khan Owḡānī and Moḥammad-Ḥosayn Khan Sīstānī with their many sons held sway over the fort and the eastern territories for a long period. The ruler of Kermān’s attempt to oust them at Dīvār-e Boland came to naught (Bāstānī Parīzī, *Wādī-e Haftvād*, p. 171). When Āqā Moḥammad Khan Qājār conquered Kermān, Loṭf-‘Alī Khan Zand made it to Bam, where the Sīstānis allowed him to stay outside the walls of the citadel. They finally turned him over to Āqā Moḥammad Khan, thus temporarily strengthening their position in Bam (Bāstānī Parīzī, *Āsīā-ye haft sang*, p. 220).

The English traveler Pottinger, who passed through Bam during the time of Faṭḥ-‘Alī Shah (ca. 1231/1816) on his way to India, visited the citadel, which he describes in some detail.

During the reign of Moḥammad Shah, Āqā Khan Maḥallātī’s (q.v.) taking refuge in the citadel and his familial ties with the Sīstāni rulers of Bam caused Fīrūz Mīrzā to lead an army there and besiege the citadel. After resisting the attackers for a time, Āqā Khan surrendered and emerged from the citadel with a Qur‘ān and his sword draped around his neck and was sent to Tehran (1254/1838; Aḥmadī, p. 77). Several years later Āqā Khan revolted once more and went to Kermān and Bam. Driven from Bam by Fażl-‘Alī Khan Qarabāḡī and Amir Ḥabīb-Allāh Khan Tūpkāna, he escaped to India. From that time it was forbidden to reside in the citadel, which was converted into a garrison (Bāstānī Parīzī, *Farmānfarmā-ye ālem*, p. 315). Wazīrī, who visited the citadel a year later wrote, “now but for two platoons of soldiers, an officer, a few cannons, two artillery pieces with their attendants, and about fifty cavalry whom the provincial government of Kermān has ordered to protect it, the citadel is deserted” (*Joḡrāfiā*, p. 94). Fīrūz Mīrzā Noṣrat-al-Dawla, who revisited Bam forty years after his first incursion, wrote in his travel diary (*Safar-nāma*, p. 7), “the fort’s garrison, arsenal, and armory are still in place; however, the city [i.e., the citadel’s settlement] is completely destroyed . . . the engineering aspects of the citadel are astonishing . . . the walls are wide enough to accommodate two artillery pieces. It has a considerable moat. The city walls have been built on a height which even at a gallop is not easily climbed.” Immediately after the defeat of Āqā Khan in 1259/1843, minor repairs were made on the fort by ‘Abbāsqolī Khan Kord Jehān-Bīglū (Hedāyat, X, p. 273).

Percy Sykes, the British officer who was successful in forming the South Persia



Rifles Brigade in southern Iran, visited Bam in 1320/1902. At the time the city had but 13,000 people, two gates, and a *bāzār* 600 *dar'* long.

In recent years (1337 Š./1958), the National Monument Council of Iran (Anjoman-e Ātār-e Mellī) instituted repairs on the citadel's pavilion (*Rūz-nāma-ye Haftvād* 90, 1337 Š./1958). The entire citadel was placed on the historical monuments list and was protected from further destruction. Throughout its history, the citadel was protected by the collective efforts of the people of every class; each person who had a residence and property outside of the fort was also required to maintain his own special room within the walls. Both before and after wars, villagers and city folk always undertook the repair and reconstruction of the citadel; farmers, laborers, and builders would come from all around and work on the structure. During times of siege, the inhabitants of the town would repair to their rooms within the walls, bearing their precious possessions, and bolt the doors. Until recently, it was proverbial among the people of Kermān that one did not give his daughter in marriage to someone who did not have a room within the citadel.

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