



BAYŽĀ

BAYŽĀ, a town of medieval Islamic Fārs, the modern village of Tall-e Bayžā. The name stems from Arabic *bayžā* “white,” the name of several places in the medieval Islamic world (Yāqūt, *Moʿjam al-boldān*, Beirut, I, pp. 529-31, names no fewer than 16) from Sind and Iran to Sicily and the Maghrib, a noun like “town” or “fortress” being understood. The Bayžā of Fārs acquired its name, so the geographers state, from the white soil of the area.

Bayžā is situated 25 miles north of Shiraz, 8 *farsaks* according to the medieval geographers and one stage to the east of the Sasanian and early Islamic town of [Eṣṭakr](#). It was the main center of a district called Kāmfirūz lying along the right bank of the Kor river, which flows southeastward into the Baḳtagān lake, and noted for its fertility. Surrounded as this plain is by chains of the Zagros, Bayžā was accounted by the geographers as coming within the *sardsīr* or cool regions of Fārs.

It is probable that there was a settlement at Bayžā in pre-Islamic times; the Arabic geographical sources state that its ancient name was Nesā or Nesāyak, a term still current in the 4th/10th century and which I. Gershevitch has derived from Parthian *ns'yk* “bright, shining,” i.e., semantically equivalent to Arabic *bayžā* (*Iran* 10, 1972, p. 125). The Bayžā plain is certainly an area of ancient settlement, and the Elamite city of Anshan may have been situated there, according to J. Hansman (“Elamites, Achaemenians and Anshan,” *Iran* 10, 1972, pp. 111-23; see [anshan](#)). Legend attributed its foundation to Goštāsp.

In the period of the Arab conquests of Fārs, Bayžā served as a military



encampment during the operations of Zīād b. Abīhi against Eṣṭakr in 39/659-60 (cf. Ṭabarī, I, p. 3450); in the next century, operations in the Bayzā area were conducted by the Omayyad caliph Marwān II's general 'Amer b. Żobāra against the 'Alid rebel 'Abd-Allāh b. Mo'āwīa (in 129/746-47; Ṭabarī, II, p. 1947). Over the next centuries, we find sporadic mentions only in the chronicles of Bayzā, in particular, in accounts of internecine Buyid struggles (Ebn al-Aṭīr, *Kāmel*, repr., IX, p. 339, year 415/1024-25) and of the raids of Ṭoğrel Beg's Oghuz from Isfahan into the Bayzā area of Fārs (ibid., IX, pp. 562, 585, years 442/1050-51 and 444/1052-53), while the citadel of Bayzā was still in a defensible condition in 533/1138-39 when the governor of Fārs Bozaba shut himself up in it against the atabeg Qarasonqor (ibid., XI, p. 70).

The 4th/10th-century geographers mention Bayzā as a neat, clean, and flourishing town with a Friday mosque, walls, a citadel (*heṣn*), and a suburb (*rabaż*), and at this time it was the main town of the district (*kūra*) of Eṣṭakr. Its rich agricultural hinterland supplied grain and fruit to Shiraz. It was the hometown of the mystic Ḥosayn b. Maṣṣūr Ḥallāj (executed in 309/922; q.v.), whose grandfather was allegedly a Magian (cf. Ebn al-Jawzī, cited in 'Arīb, *Şelat Ta'riķ al-Ṭabarī*, ed. M. J. de Goeje, Leiden, 1897, p. 102 n.); it is likely that Zoroastrians were still numerous in the Bayzā area till at least the 4th/10th century. However, numerous Muslim scholars, traditionists, etc., came from the town (cf. those listed in Sam'ānī, *Ansāb*, Hyderabad, II, pp. 397-99; Yāqūt, op. cit., I, p. 529), the most noted being the 7th/13th-century Qur'ān commentator 'Abd-Allāh b. 'Omar Bayzāwī.

Over the succeeding centuries, Bayzā must have declined to village status, and is little mentioned; one mention is that military operations took place in its vicinity at the end of the 18th century between the Zands and Qajars (H. Busse, tr., *History of Persia under Qajar Rule*, New York, 1972, p. 52). At the present time, the village of Tall-e Bayzā is in the *dehestān* of Bayzā in the *baķš* of Ardakān in the *şahrestān* of Shiraz, and about 1950 had a population of 521.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

Given in the text. See also Eṣṭakrī, pp. 126, 148.



Ebn Ḥawqal, ed. Kramers, pp. 266, 272, 288, 301, tr. Kramers and Wiet, pp. 263, 268, 282, 295-96.

Maqdesī [Moqaddasī], pp. 24, 30, 432, 448.

Ḥodūd al-‘ālam, tr. Minorsky, p. 128.

Ebn al-Balkī, *Fārs-nāma*, pp. 128-29, tr. Le Strange, *Description of the Province of Fars in Persia*, London, 1912, pp. 29-30.

Mostawfī, *Nozhat al-qolūb*, pp. 113, 121, tr. pp. 114, 122-23.

Ḥasan Fasā’ī, *Fārs-nāma-ye nāṣerī* II, p. 185.

Le Strange, *Lands*, p. 280.

Schwarz, *Iran*, pp. 16-17, 151, 169, 171, 182.

Razmārā, *Farhang* VII, p. 51.

Search terms:

□□□□ bayza baizaa