Encyclopædia Iranica

DEH
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Published: December 15, 1994
Last Updated: October 23, 2013

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DEH (village) in Persia and Afghanistan. The Persian word *deh* (Paštō *kəlay*, Ar. *qarya*) has a more precise meaning than Persian *ābādī* "inhabited place," which can refer to cities and towns, on one hand, and isolated farms (*mazraʿa*), on the other. A *deh* is a rural settlement perceived as an autonomous social and spatial unit.

The village as a spatial entity.

Villages in Persia and Afghanistan can be classified in four main types, according to formal features linked with ecological and cultural determinants (de Planhol, *Camb. Hist. Iran*, pp. 418 ff.).

Ancient clustered villages. The most common type is a dense clustered village, varying in size from around a hundred to several thousand inhabitants. It was characteristic of early settlements that have withstood successive stages of "beduinization" (de Planhol, 1968, pp. 209-13) and are now inhabited by different ethnic groups, like Persian or Tajik, on one hand, and Azeri or Uzbek, on the other. It is clear from toponymic analysis that linguistic turkicization of the latter did not disrupt the continuity of settlement. In Azarbaijan, for example, the great majority of village names in the Sahand area are of Iranian origin (de Planhol, 1966, pp. 304-05); in the Ḵalḵāl district most of the village names mentioned by Yāqūt in the early 13th century or by Ḥamd-Allāh Mostawfī in ca. 741/1340 can still be found (Bazin, 1980, II, p. 81); and in the small district of Ḵalajestān a number of old Iranian toponyms with the suffixes *-gerd/jerd* or *–gān/jān* are still in use (e.g., Dastjerd, Fowjerd, Vasfūnjerd,

Tīzagān, Mowjān, Kardījān), though Ḳalaj invaders either settled or converted the local population to their eastern Turkish language at a very early date (Bazin, 1974, p. 26).

These old villages are located mainly in two particular kinds of setting. In the mountains they are usually built on the lower slopes overlooking irrigated valley bottoms or, when the slopes are steep, on cliffs, as in the Hindu Kush (Hallett and Samizay, 1975). On the alluvial fans of arid piedmonts, on the other hand, they are built at the outlets of *qanāt*s or along canals, with their main street(s) usually paralleling the main water channel(s) (Roaf), though the latter may also pass through several domestic compounds (English, pp. 50-51). Access to water produces a social gradient within each village: The cleaner and more abundant the water, the wealthier and more powerful are the inhabitants. Close to the village is a cluster of intensively cultivated gardens and orchards, surrounded by mud walls. Extensive open fields of annual crops encircle the village or are concentrated downstream. In irrigated areas new settlements are frequently dispersed among older ones, but they are completely lacking in the dry-farmed lands.

The clustered village may be generally described as a “huddled and haphazard agglomeration” of square individual habitations (*ḵāna*; de Planhol, *Camb. Hist. Iran*, p. 420), but several house types may be distinguished, largely depending on altitude (Kartsev, pp. 42-43). Their main variant features are the number of stories, the type of roof, and the building materials. Single-story houses organized around inner courtyards typify the low-lying areas, whereas in high mountain valleys houses may have up to three stories, with the ground floor, often partly dug out of the cliff, used to shelter animals. There are also various intermediate forms (for examples, see Desmet-Grégoire and Fontaine, pp. 49 ff.). The shape of the roof depends upon the availability of timber. Wherever poplars are grown flat terraced roofs predominate, whereas in dry low-lying areas domes or vaults of sun-dried or fired bricks are more common, though locally they may be replaced by tamarisks or reeds plastered with mud, as in Sīstān (for Afghan examples, see Jentsch, 1980a, pp. 72 ff.; Szabo and Barfield, pp. 118 ff.; for Persian examples, see Bazin, 1974, pp. 82-83 and map 37; Behforūz, pp. 13 ff.; Desmet-Grégoire and Fontaine, pp. 54 ff. and map 14). In Afghanistan, however, the flat roof is more traditional in the east, the dome and vault in the west, the two regions divided approximately by a line running from Qaṭaḡan through the central Harīrūd valley to the Qandahār oasis (Szabo and Barfield, maps pp. 118, 134). Mud brick is by far the most common

building material in villages (Beazley and Harverson, pp. 12 ff.; Engler). Because of its cost baked brick is used infrequently, especially in Afghanistan. In mountainous areas combinations of mud and stone are used, with the proportion of stone increasing at higher elevations. Some mountain villages are built almost entirely of stone, as in the central Hindu Kush. Timber is used for walls only in wooded regions like Nūrestān (Szabo and Barfield, p. 112 et passim).

Fortified settlements. In Persia and Afghanistan, where perched villages are uncommon (de Planhol, 1983, pp. 97 ff.), purely architectural forms have evolved to meet the settlers' defensive needs. For example, watch towers dot many villages in Nūrestān, the Solaymān mountains, and other mountainous areas in central Afghanistan (Edelberg, pp. 145 ff.; Jentsch, 1980a, pp. 66 ff.), and ladder systems are also in use for circulation within villages of Nūrestān, reflecting a tradition in the high mountain ranges of Central Asia. The most common defensive adaptation by far, however, is the fortified village or farmstead (*qalʿa*), sometimes inaccurately called "castle" or "fort" (Klinkott, p. 116). Fortified villages, or fortress villages, appear to be the dominant type of defensive settlement in Persia, whereas fortified farmsteads housing extended families predominate in Afghanistan (Bruno; Hallett and Samizay, 1972; de Planhol, 1958; Rozenfel'd; Turri). The typical *qalʿa* is a square or rectangle enclosed by a mud-brick wall, with a projecting round tower (*borj*) at each corner. In larger examples there may be additional towers along the walls, sometimes flanking the entrance. A maximum of twelve towers has been recorded near Kabul. A few towerless *qalʿa*s are also known in eastern Afghanistan (Jentsch, 1980a, p. 85). Dwellings are built against the inner face of the wall, their doors and windows all facing onto a central courtyard; hence the designation of such settlements as "settlements with habitable walls" (Tolstov).

Similar fortified settlements have been known in Central Asia since the Bronze Age, and fortified rectangular villages were common there in the time of Alexander the Great. Quadrangular buildings with central courtyards and corner towers dating from the 2nd millennium B.C.E. have also been excavated in northern Afghanistan (Sarianidi, pp. 30 ff.). According to A. Z. Rozenfel'd, the *qalʿa* has little defensive value and thus cannot be explained as a technical solution; instead, he considers that it probably belongs to the Iranian cultural complex. This assessment appears to be contradicted, however, by the fact that at present *qalʿa*s are concentrated mainly in the most

insecure areas; when the threat is from external enemies, *qalʿa* villages predominate, whereas family *qalʿa*s are intended to protect against local marauding.

In Persia all *qalʿa* villages are located in easily invaded plains and broad valleys (Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, 3rd ed., pp. 8-9), for example, the Varāmīn plain south of Tehran (de Planhol, 1964, pp. 9 ff.) and the valleys and basins of central Persia between Isfahan and Qom (Bazin, 1974, pp. 81-82), Fārs, and Khorasan on both sides of the Afghan-Persian boundary, that is, wherever villagers have been threatened by nomads or invaders of whatever origins. The fluctuating security of territory along major travel routes is illustrated by the conversion of abandoned caravansaries into settlements resembling *qalʿa*s, as near Qom (Bazin, 1974, p. 82).

Extended-family *qalʿa*s (Paštō *kalā*), on the contrary, are concentrated primarily in southeastern Afghanistan. They may be combined with less monumental but more crowded *qalʿa* villages in loose agglomerations of fortified settlements, as at Deh Afḡānān in the Meydān valley (Szabo and Barfield, pp. 160 ff.), or dispersed among traditional clustered villages (Wald, p. 80). There is a close connection between the prevalence of this type of settlement and several structural characteristics of Ḡilzay society, in which internal insecurity is emphasized to a degree unmatched elsewhere. Outside this area diffusion of the family *qalʿa* has been restricted to the upper social classes, symbolizing nothing more than the owner's status (Schurmann, p. 360).

Changes reflecting demographic pressure are part of the normal evolution of the *qalʿa*, especially during periods of greater security. The inner courtyard first becomes crowded with new buildings; then new houses are constructed outside the wall. Scattered *qalʿa*s with fewer defensive features appear: The corner towers may completely disappear or shrink to no more than symbolic decorative appendages, as in most of the *qalʿa*s built recently in Afghanistan, including Hazārajāt (Bero). Moreover, rooms with large windows opening to the outside may be added to older traditional *qalʿa*s, either just above the monumental entrance gates or high in corner towers.

Loose settlements. Loosely structured settlements, including the agglomerations of Ḡilzay *qalʿa*s mentioned above, are generally of nomadic origin (for those north of Qom, see Bazin, 1974, pp. 82-83; for the Ḡāznī basin, see Balland). The layout is often more or less regular, especially in villages

built under official sedentarization schemes (see village plans in Kraus, pp. 16 ff.); the houses, flat-roofed or vaulted, according to local traditions, are not clustered but rather stand side by side, with open space between them, like tents in a nomadic camp. No tree or garden can be seen nearby, and tents or huts may be intermingled with the houses for summer comfort. Settled nomads are actually often seminomads, and a main village is thus usually associated with one or several temporary camps on pasturelands and sometimes with a second village or a few hamlets built on complementary agricultural land, as in northern Khorasan (Pāpolī Yazdī, 1991, pp. 214 ff.). Many such villages are named for their founding clans or lineages, like those of Šāhsevan clans southeast of Ardabīl and Kurdish clans north of Ḵalḵāl (Bazin, 1980, II, pp. 81 ff.). An exception is found in northern Badaḵšān, where a similar loose but less regular layout typifies old Tajik villages (Kussmaul, p. 499; Patzelt and Senarclens de Grancy).

Scattered hamlets of the Caspian lowlands. A completely different rural landscape has evolved in the humid conditions of the Caspian provinces of Gīlān and Māzandarān. True villages are lacking; the basic settlement unit is the *maḥalla*, a loose agglomeration of a few dozen to several hundred scattered farmsteads (Bromberger, 1989, pp. 34 ff.). Each farmstead is itself composed of several separate buildings scattered amid trees and a vegetable garden within a fenced enclosure: a house, a cow shed, a storage shed for rice, a silkworm nursery, and so on, each with a wooden framework and a peaked roof of thatch or tile. The *maḥalla*s are interspersed with orchards and fields of tobacco or tea along alluvial rims and ancient shorelines, quite distant from the extensive treeless rice fields.

The village as a socioeconomic microcosm.

Villages, including the Caspian *maḥalla*s, are the basic units of social and territorial affiliation in rural areas. Related lineages form the human nuclei, to which newcomers may have been added by spontaneous or state-controlled immigration. In such instances the later arrivals live in distinct quarters (Centlivres and Centlivres-Demont, p. 14).

The basic statistical unit. Much of the available information about rural areas in Persia and, to a lesser degree, in Afghanistan has been collected at the village level. As delimitation of villages varies according to different government sources, however, that is not a guarantee of accuracy. Uncertainty is greatest in the Caspian lowlands and Gīlzay country, where the so-called

"villages" are generally artificial groupings of *maḥalla*s (see, e.g., Bazin, 1980, I, pp. 100-01) and *qalʿa*s respectively. In other areas, too, it is often difficult to ascertain whether a small settlement is an independent village or a *mazraʿa* attached to a larger village nearby (see, e.g., Patzelt and Senarclens de Grancy, p. 225). Gazetteers of inhabited places in Persia thus include from 14,721 (Mofaḵḵam Pāyān) to 80,717 names (Pāpolī Yazdī, 1989), and estimates of the total number of villages range from 42,000 to 58,000. A figure of 48,592 was used by the Persian government for purposes of land reform (McLachlan, p. 686). In Afghanistan conflicting figures have been published: In 1339 Š./1960 the Ministry of agriculture and irrigation enumerated 14,205 villages (*Survey*), a figure that was increased to 15,270 after the agricultural census of 1346 Š./1967 (*Natāyej*); the Ministry of interior, on the other hand, listed 20,753 villages, of which 15,599 were classified as "independent villages" and 5,154 as "associated subvillages" (*Aṭlas*). Although the Ministry of agriculture's figures for villages and the Ministry of interior's enumeration of "independent villages" are similar, they only partly coincide. Combining both lists would produce a total of 22,425 inhabited places (computed from *Aṭlas*). It is thus necessary to use the data from gazetteers with caution.

For Persia the following village gazetteers have been published: *Farhang-e joḡrāfīāʾī-e Īrān* in 1328-36 Š./1949-57 (Razmārā, *Farhang*), which remains the only source providing data on languages and religious affiliations, together with population, economic activities, and products; *Farhang-e ābādīhā-ye kešvar* (Markaz-e āmār; Schweizer), providing demographic data from the census of 1345 Š./1966 and the most detailed figures on land use, crafts, and equipment in each enumerated village; a subsequent edition of the same gazetteer, providing population data for 1355 Š./1976 but with less detail than its predecessor; and the *Farhang-e joḡrāfīāʾī-e rūstāhā-ye Īrān* (Sāzmān), which is still being published and which includes useful sketches of locations.

Aside from the somewhat outdated gazetteer produced by the British during the late 19th and early 20th centuries (in four successive editions, the fourth, which is not the best, reissued with only minor editorial updating by L. W. Adamec as *Gazetteer of Afghanistan*), the following village gazetteers are available for Afghanistan: the Persian and Pašto editions of *Qāmūs-e joḡrāfīāʾī-e Afḡānestān*, edited by M.-H. Nāheż, totally different in content but both concerned mainly with purely locational information, and the more recent *Aṭlas-e qaryahā-ye Afḡānestān*, in which no attempt has been made to arrange names in alphabetical order, including only crude demographic data and

unsystematic references to location on maps (see CENSUS ii). Neither includes data on economic activities and products. Although such data were collected at the village level during the agricultural census of 1346 Š./1967, they have been released only as aggregates for whole districts. The same procedure was followed after the census of 1358 Š./1979. The preparatory work for the latter included collection of data on the infrastructure of all Afghan villages (mosques, mills, shops, etc.), which have also never been published.

The village and land ownership. Some decades ago Persia was primarily characterized by a system of large property holdings, so that the village was the usual unit for measuring land ownership (Lambton, *Landlord and Peasant*, passim). Every village, large or small, was in turn divided into six *dāng* and every *dāng* into sixteen *šaʿīr*, so that the village consisted of ninety-six *šaʿīr*. The main distinction was between *šeš-dāng* villages, each owned by a single person, and *ḵorda-mālek*, a rather ambiguous expression embracing both peasant property (rather rare) and small properties under absentee ownership. Some landlords owned dozens of villages. The village headman (*kadḵodā*) was generally an agent of the landlord or of one of the main landlords in *ḵorda-mālek* villages. If the landlord managed his own estate, he also had an overseer (*mobāšer*) in the village.

All efforts to change this agrarian structure had therefore to be implemented at the village level. The first stage in the land reform of Moḥammad-Reżā Shah Pahlavī (1320-57 Š./1941-59) was limitation of land ownership to one village per person (Lambton, 1969). The numerous measures adopted in the second stage, including organized partition or sale of estates and fixing of better conditions for tenancy, were also focused on the village level, as was the third stage, intended to complete the processes by producing a full-fledged system of direct exploitation (see LAND REFORM). The “reintegration phase” of the 1970s (Planck) reflected a more ambivalent attitude toward the village, however. On one hand, most of the agricultural cooperatives (*šerkat-e sehāmī-e zerāʿī*) were organized at the village level, but, on the other hand, foreign or national agribusinesses encompassed groups of villages and favored concentration of the rural population in the *šahrak*, a kind of company town, as in the area of the Dezfūl irrigation project area (Ehlers, 1975, pp. 198-204). Unrealistic policies aimed at generalizing this pattern throughout the country certainly contributed to dissatisfaction with the shah’s regime among the rural population. After the Revolution of 1357 Š./1978-79 attempts by former landlords to recover their estates and by local communities to achieve further

partition of land were undertaken at the village level, but no decisive policy was adopted at the national level.

In Afghanistan, where large landed estates had not developed to the same degree as in Persia, the village has never been the unit of measure for land ownership. Moreover, implementation of the land reforms of 1354 Š./1975 and 1357 Š./1978, incomplete though it was, suffered from inadequate or nonexistent cadastral surveys at the village level.

Organization of agricultural production. The village is also a technical and economic unit for agriculture and animal husbandry, reflecting varying degrees of cooperation and collective organization among its inhabitants. Wherever irrigated cultivation predominates, the tilled area of the village normally coincides with one irrigation unit (called *dašt* in central Persia), drawing water from a single source, though in larger villages the land may be divided into two or more autonomous *dašt*s (for examples, see Bazin, 1974, p. 38). In every *dašt* irrigation is supervised by an elected *mīrāb*, who controls the distribution of water from field to field on a strictly organized cycle. He is a leading personality in village life (Amat). Concern for rational distribution of water may lead to collective crop rotation in systems of common fields (Grötzbach). At a lower level of organization small collective units (called *bona* in the Tehran region, *tāq* in Isfahan, *ṣaḥrā* in Khorasan, *bonkūh* in Dezfūl) played an important technical and social role in the villages of central and southern Persia before land reform by implementing cooperation in agricultural work (Ehlers and Safi-Nejad). A “field watcher” (*daštbān*) may also be appointed to keep flocks and wild animals off the fields.

In dry-farming areas various patterns of collective organization can be observed, depending on the age of the villages and the relation between agriculture and animal husbandry. In villages of recently sedentarized nomads individual crop rotation usually predominates, resulting in a mosaic of fields. In older villages common fields are alternately cultivated and left fallow; during fallow periods they serve as pastures for common flocks and herds tended by shepherds (called *naḵīrjī* for cattle and *čūpān*, for flocks in Azarbaijan). A further step in collective organization can be observed in Kalārdašt, where fields owned by several adjoining villages and planted with the same crop stretch for miles (de Planhol, 1964). Additional features of collective organization may include the concentration in one place outside the village of the inhabitants’ threshing floors (as in Azarbaijan and eastern Afghanistan), common reserves of animal dung to be used for fuel (as in

Azarbaijan), and common animal pens (as in eastern Afghanistan).

Infrastructure and local institutions. A few decades ago Persian and Afghan villages were generally poorly provided with communal institutions. Some did not even have mosques, though larger settlements might have several, even sometimes both Shiʿite and Sunni mosques, as at Hešajīn (in the Kāḡaḏkonān *dehestān* of Ḵalḵāl). Local shrines (*emāmzāda*; *zīārat*), whether located within or outside the built-up areas, could draw pilgrims from large distances (Einzmann). Almost everywhere trading activity was limited to one or a few unspecialized shops; the entire countryside was heavily dominated economically by city *bāzār*s, according to a "primacy model of settlement" (Bonine). Weekly markets, which are known only in some parts of the Perso-Afghan area, were more often located in cities than in villages (see BĀZĀR ii). Finally, although elementary schools gradually became more standard in villages, the only administrative structure present in all of them was embodied in the headman (*kadḵodā* in Persia, *mālek*, *qaryadār*, or *arbāb* in Afghanistan), who acted as liaison between the villagers and district or provincial administrators (Centlivres and Centlivres-Demont, pp. 242 ff.).

In Persia these traditional structures were severely altered in the course of the White Revolution that accompanied land reform. Several new village institutions were instituted: for example, village councils (*anjoman-e deh*), "houses of equity" (*ḵāna-ye enṣāf*, i.e., boards of mediation), and cooperatives, in all of which former tenants who had become small landowners participated. The school network was expanded and complemented by an educational corps (*sepāh-e dāneš*), small welfare centers were established with the help of a health corps (*sepāh-e behdāšt*), and technical aid was made available through a rural-development corps (*sepāh-e tarwīj o ābādānī*). There were efforts to bring safe drinking water and electricity to villages and to connect villages to towns by means of roads or tracks suitable for buses and jeeps. All these improvements were, however, distributed very unequally, both among villages and among the inhabitants of a single village. Rural society actually changed dramatically, owing to the ascent of a group of new landowners constituting a "petite bourgeoisie," which succeeded in monopolizing all the new functions within the village (Vieille; Khosrovi, 1969). The landless *ḵošnešīn*, who saw no change in his miserable condition, often had no choice but to leave the village for the city (Khosrovi, 1973). This trend was more pronounced in larger or more centrally located villages, in which more improvements had accumulated, than in smaller or more remote ones,

which remained largely outside the modernization process. After the Revolution of 1357 Š./1978-79, which was fundamentally an urban movement, the institutions of the Pahlavi regime were replaced by new ones, including local committees and units of the *pāsdārān* (revolutionary guards) or "reconstruction crusade" (*jehād-e sāzandagī*). The most important change, however, has been the opening of more rural areas through a dense network of roads, on one hand, and electricity (and television), on the other; the consequences of this change cannot yet be properly assessed (Bazin, 1989).

In Afghanistan the pace of modernization has been much slower. Many villages, for example, in Hazārajāt and Badaḵšān, are still days distant from the nearest motorable road (Centlivres and Centlivres-Demont, p. 68 map). Furthermore, after 1358 Š./1979 the war has reversed the modernizing trend, thus intensifying the contrast with Persia. Most of the village schools and basic health centers that were opened during the 1970s have now been closed, with resulting drastic reductions in the educational and sanitary levels of villagers. According to official statistics, only 583 primary schools were operating in the entire country in 1369 Š./1990, compared to 4,136 in 1358 Š./1979, a decline of 86 percent. The road network has suffered severely from the hostilities and lack of maintenance. Rural electrification is nonexistent, though a few notables own diesel generators from which they may operate Japanese televisions sets equipped with video cassette recorders, thus considerably adding to their social prestige among villagers. On the institutional side, the regime claims to have created numerous agricultural cooperatives (*kōparātīf-e zerāʿatī*), but whether or not all of them are really operative remains questionable (679 claimed cooperatives, with a total membership of 99,202, in 1369 Š./1990, compared to 126, with 14,340 members in 478 villages, in 1356 Š./1977).

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