



## FARROĶI

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**FARROĶI** (فاروکی), township on the southern edge of the Great Desert, in Ķur-Biābānak Sub-province, [Isfahan](#) Province.

FarroĶi is an isolated oasis on the southern fringes of the Dašt-e Kavir (see DESERT) in central Persia. Situated at lat 33°50.5' N and long 54°57.0' E, 2,735 feet above sea level, FarroĶi belongs to the warm climate (*garmsir*), with average precipitation as low as 4 inches annually. It stands in the middle of the Ķur-Biābānak Sub-province (*šahrestān*), twelve miles west of its capital, [Ķur](#). As the third largest settlement of the sub-province, FarroĶi's administrative status was promoted from village (*rustā*) to city (*šahr*) in 2009 (Majles-e šurā-ye eslāmi). The local name of FarroĶi is Farvi.

In spite of its archaic name, FarroĶi's documented history begins as late as the Qajar period (1779-1925). It was then one of the eight major villages that constituted the district of [Biābānak](#) (E'temād-al-Salṭana, IV, p. 2260). The earliest demographic data comes from the local census of 1301/1884, which recorded 230 households with 939 inhabitants in FarroĶi (Dastān Yaġmā'i, p. 31). The figure had nearly doubled by the 1966 decennial census to 500 households comprising 1,484 inhabitants (Statistical Center of Iran, 1969, p. 23), and it continued to grow to 2,389 souls by 2006 and 2,502 souls by 2011 (idem, 2007, pp. 624 ff.; idem, 2014). The population growth is a combined result of high birthrate and influx from FarroĶi's hamlets and farms, namely, Ja'farābād, Ķorramdašt, Ebrāhimābād, Kāzemābād, Ḥosaynābād, Barātu (or Eramdašt), Ferdows, Ġafurābād, Mehdiābād, Našrābād, 'Azizābād, and Amirābād (Ḥekmat Yaġmā'i, 1991, p. 281; cf. Wezārat-e kešvar, "FarroĶi").



These toponyms bear witness to the late origins and precarious existence of Farroḳi's outpost settlements.

Looking at the satellite maps in 2013, one sees Farroḳi spreading over one-half of one square mile on the western end of its farmlands (Figure 1). The asphalted road from Jandaq to Ḳur cuts Farroḳi into two distinct parts. On the east of the road rests the old town, with narrow lanes running among mud houses tightly bundled together, with an increasing density towards the oasis' nucleus at the outlet of the subterranean conduit (*kāriz*, *qanāt*) on the eastern edge of the settlement. On the west of the highway, farthest away from the fields, stands an expanding modern quarter, still smaller than the old town but with larger houses patterned into orthogonal street blocks. These blocks face 18 degrees southwest, while the houses in the oldest quarter face about 50 degrees southwest. While the latter orientation equals that of the *qebla*, this must be mere coincidence if one subscribes to Michael E. Bonine's hypothesis that in Persian villages the orientation of lanes of blocks generally follows the overall slope of the farmland. Standing conspicuous among the buildings of Farroḳi is the congregational mosque, dated 1256/1840 (Ḥekmat Yaḡmā'i, 1991, pp. 80).

A monograph on the Biābānak district dated 1884 by the local pundit Ebrāhim Dastān Yaḡmā'i provides a good deal of valuable information on Farroḳi. In those days, Farroḳi paid the central government 102 *tomans* of annual tax and provided 21 conscripts. The village was stratified into two groups: the *sayyeds*, mostly proprietors who benefited also from pious endowments spread as far as Garma village, and impecunious, credulous commoners, who worked the land or hauled with the camel, or else were incited by the *sayyeds* to feuds and sedition (Dastān Yaḡmā'i, pp. 32, 40). The villagers would harvest from the village's palm groves up to 4,000 Tabrizi maunds (12 tons) of *dates* annually, most of which was consumed locally. The subsistence farming of *barley*, *wheat*, *turnips*, *cotton* (*jowzaq*), madder (*runās/ronās*), pomegranates, and jujube (*senjed*), barely satisfied half of the local consumption. The major cottage industry, which occupied most women and some men, was cotton spinning and linen weaving (*palās-bāfi*, *karbās-bāfi*), whose textile product was partly exported to the provincial seat of Semnān. Men also engaged in camel breeding and transport, as well as coal making from the trees and shrubs of the surrounding hills (Dastān Yaḡmā'i, pp. 31-32). In the late 1970s, cereals and cotton were cultivated on some 300 acres of farmlands of Farroḳi and 170 acres of its nearby hamlets (Razmārā, p. 141; Ḥekmat Yaḡmā'i, 1991, pp.

280-81).

Groundwater has played a key role in life and economy of Farroqi. Its subterranean canal (*qanāt*) draws water from high water tables of the western hills, carries the water six miles downhill, passes under the settlement, and discharges at the fields (*keštḵān*; Dastān Yaḡmā'i, p. 31). Although the manmade canal yields semi-saline water (Figure 2), it has been a perennial source since the foundation of Farroqi. Another source of water is the seasonal stream (*šurāb*), which is powerful enough to spin the watermills Hizer and Hamzau, both deserted (Ḥekmat Yaḡmā'i, 1991, pp. 31, 35). The water is stored in cisterns (*āb-anbār*; Figure 3) For regulating the precious irrigation water, the villagers developed a meticulous measuring system, considerably different from those of Ḳur and other oases of the district. In Farroqi, the water is measured using a local unit known as *pangun* (Pers. *fenjān*) that equals the volume of water leaving the underground canal in 7½ minutes. The water distribution to the shareholding fields has a return period of ten days, counted by an irrigation calendar with specific day names (Table 1; Ḥekmat Yaḡmā'i, 1991, p. 315; cf. Mehrajān, Table 1).

Ever since Ebrāhim Dastān's report of the 19th century (see above), the inhabitants have held the reputation of being religiously the most fervent in Biābānak, an attribute that was intensified after the Islamic Revolution of 1978-79. The township is adorned with disproportionately many little mosques and *ḥosaynias*, some controlled by the influential Hay'at-e motawasselin-e be Qamar-e Bani Hāšem. Religious ceremonies and observations, especially those of Moḥarram and Šafar (see Ra'isi), keep the underemployed townsfolk entertained and satiated with repasts. It is not surprising that Farroqi is reported as appreciably less developed than the other places in Biābānak (Āl-e Dāwud, endnotes to Honar Jandaqi's *Divān*, p. 435).

Farroqi has its local dialect, called *Farvi* or *Farvigi*, a variety of the West Iranian language spoken in southern Biābānak, also known as the Ḳuri language group. Yet, *Farvi* and *Ḳuri* proper, spoken in oases as much as 12 miles apart, show considerable difference with a substantial level of mutual unintelligibility. When Sayyed 'Ali Moḥammad Bāb invited his former schoolmate (at the Najaf Shi'i seminary) Mirzā Esmā'il Honar Yaḡmā'i to join his newly launched faith, Honar replied in two letters, one written in *Ḳuri*, another in *Farvi*, and posed to the self-proclaimed prophet the challenge that, if he had truly received divine revelation, then he must be able to answer each of the two letters in the language in which it was composed (apud Āl-e



Dāwud's introductory essay to Honar Jandaqi's *Divān*, pp. ix-x). The vernacular is believed by the natives to be a remnant of the Zoroastrian background of Farroqi, and a local tradition attributes its foundation to a certain Myz', the son of the eponymic Farroq-e Gabr (*Dastān Yaḡmā'i*, p. 31).

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