



FĪRŪZKŪH III. THE MODERN TOWN.

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Fīrūzkūh is a town in the central Alborz region, situated 130 km east of Tehran (35° 45' N, 52° 45' E) at an altitude of over 1900 m; it is the seat of the district (*baḵš*) by the same name in the county of Damāvand, province of Tehran. The mountains separating Fīrūzkūh from the Māzandarān plain were the main summer quarters (*yeylāq*) of the Qajar tribe and became popular hunting grounds for the Qajar kings. This is commemorated in the monumental bas-relief of the Tang-e Vāšī defile northeast of the city, which depicts [Fath-ʿAlī Shah](#) and his court on a hunt there.

Located on a vast and bare plateau surrounded by tall mountains, and on the main and also the oldest road crossing the Alborz from Tehran to Sārī and on to Gorgān, Fīrūzkūh is more often mentioned as a stopping place for the many rulers passing through it than as a town. Shah ʿAbbās laid out a road via Damāvand, Fīrūzkūh, and the Gadūk pass, with caravansaries (Jājrūd, Amīnābād, Gadūk) at intervals along the way, linking Tehran to his summer residence at Ašraf, present-day [Behšahr](#) in Māzandarān (Eskandar Beg, II, pp. 989-91, tr. Savory, pp. 1211-12; Kleiss, pp. 301-3; Filmer, pp. 314-15). Another path, the oldest one, linked Fīrūzkūh to Garmsār on the road to Khorasan by way of the great valley of Hablarūd, which is marked by Mongol funerary towers and a Safavid bridge at Enzāhā. Those caravan routes, intersecting at



FĪrŭzkŭh, were partly modernized by a Russian company starting in 1914, and then were rebuilt for automotive traffic under Reżā Shah, who was then able to travel to Ālāšt (q.v.), his native village, located between Sārī and FĪrŭzkŭh. The path of the Hablarŭd road was then used by the north section of the Trans-Iranian railway. Another road, passing through the Bašm pass, links FĪrŭzkŭh to Semnān.

Nowadays FĪrŭzkŭh remains a *yeylāq* for the population of Sārī, and the local tongue is the Māzandarānī dialect of Sārī, which is called *gĭlakī* here as it is in every village of this district all the way to the southern plain (see [ANTI-ALBORZ](#)). The surrounding city and mountains are also the *yeylāq* of the Sangsarī tribe who possess numerous businesses and land in FĪrŭzkŭh. The herds of the Ošānlŭ and [Alī Kāy nomads](#) and those of pastoralists from villages close to Semnān, such as After and Ṭorŭd, also spend summer grazing in those pasture lands.

In spite of the construction of the railway and modern roads, FĪrŭzkŭh has remained a small town with modest development. The town's population was 3,041 (648 families) in 1941 (Wezārat-e kešvar, I, p. 22), 3,500 in 1956 and less than 9,000 in 1986 (National Census, 1365 Š./1986). The same is true about the villages of its four rural districts (*dehestān*), namely Qazqānčā'ī, Hablarŭd, Pošt-e Kŭh, and FĪrŭzkŭh. The population, smaller in winter, subsists on animal husbandry, trade, and the administration of roads, railway, and pasture lands. Crafts and agriculture (potatoes, fodder) are not very developed. Downstream, along the Hablarŭd valley, orchards are especially plentiful (apples and especially apricots for drying). The region has numerous historical monuments, but the town itself, built at the bottom of the fortress ruins, presents little interest. To the south is the modern train station neighborhood, built in the 1930s, and to the north, numerous underground stables (*kohol*) are grouped together at a short distance from the town. Since 1985, new modern sections have been built north of the city, as well as an industrial sector.

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