



KASHAN V. ARCHITECTURE (2)

HISTORICAL MONUMENTS

KASHAN

V. ARCHITECTURE

(2) Historical Monuments

This section briefly describes nine landmark monuments of Kashan. Similar architectural features can be observed among them, with the exception of the Zayn-al-Din Minaret (Figure 2). Its extensive yard was partly destroyed in order to make room for a newly laid street. The large front balcony, the ceilings under the dome, and the porches are all adorned with stalactite decorative works. The ceiling over the balcony as well as the booths inside the shrine are decorated with drawings by Ṭāher Naqqāš, who is buried in the front balcony (Kalāntar Žarrābi, p. 431; Rajabi, pp. 83-84; Narāqi, 1969, pp. 160-64).

‘Emādi Mosque (Masjed-e ‘emādi or Mir ‘Emād). Now known as the Mir ‘Emād Mosque, it is located on the southern side of Fayż Square (formerly Sang Square), alongside the main bazaar at the entrance of the coppersmiths market (Bāzār-e mesgarhā; Figure 3 in section 1, above). The original mosque, built in 613/ 1218 during the Saljuqid era, was destroyed during the Mongol onslaught and reconstructed in 868/ 1463 by K̄vāja ‘Emād-al-Din Maḥmud, the vizier of Jahānšāh Qarā Qoyunlu (r. 1438- 67). The old prayer niche, which was



in place until the beginning of the 20th century, is now kept at the Museum für Islamische Kunst in Berlin. It bears the date 623/ 1226 and names Ḥasan b. ‘Arabšāh as the individual who fashioned it in Kashan. An exquisite pulpit (*menbar*) made of glazed tiles stands within the dome area. An inscription in *tolṭ* script on the right side of the pulpit records the name of the artist (Ḥaydar-‘Ali Kāšitarāš) and dates it from the reign of the Timurid Sultan Abu Sa‘id (r. 1459-69). ‘Emād-al-Din Maḥmud also built a number of other buildings around the city square, such as a *caravansary*, a *kānaqāh*, and a healing center (*dār-al-šefā*); none has survived. Noteworthy architectural features are the facade vault, which is adorned with stalactite decorative works (*moqarnas*) and a symmetrical design in order to hide its deviation from the frontage center and the direction of Mecca; the engraved wooden entrance door studded with pegs; inscriptions on the walls around the facade mentioning certain royal commands by the *Aq Qoyunlu*, Safavid, and Qajar kings; a pulpit decorated with various monochromatic glazed tiles, with an inscription dating it from the reign of the Timurid Sultan Abu Sa‘id (r. 1451-69); the vestibule, the corridors, and the open courtyard; verandas, colonnades, and the prayer sections; the brick dome representing the pre-Safavid architectural mode; the water reservoir; the prayer niche adorned with unique shining tiles from the year 623/ 1226 (fashioned by the most famous tile-makers, known as the Abu Ṭāher family); and the minaret, which was ruined by the earthquake of 1192/ 1778 (Rajabi, pp. 146-67; Kalāntar Żarrābi, pp. 95-96, 424-25; Narāqi, 1969, pp. 203-33; *Ganjnameh* VI, pp. 116-123; see plates i, iii, La Perse, la Chaldée et la Susiane: Relation de voyage, Paris, 1887 (orig. h. 35 cm), p. 199. Courtesy of the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, Columbia University in the City of New York.” href="/uploads/files/Kashan/kashan_05_2_fig3_replaced.jpg">Figure 3). It stands on the southeast corner of the courtyard and bears an inscription containing the date 466. It has three prayer sections, a brick dome, a special prayer compartment (*maqšura*) near the prayer niche, and a pool in the middle of the courtyard (plates vi, vii; Kalāntar Żarrābi, pp. 292, 424; Rajabi, pp. 106-9; Narāqi, 1969, pp. 113-20; Farrokyār. pp. 21-22).

Solṭāni Seminary (Madrassa-ye Solṭāni). The largest seminary in Kashan, it was built in eight years by order of Faṭḥ- ‘Ali Shah Qājār (q.v.) in the years 1221-29. The architect, whose name is inscribed on the southern wall under the brick dome, was Moḥammad- Šafi‘. It is located next to the main bazaar, with direct access to its center through its own main entrance. The portal is decorated with glazed tiles and leads to the interior of the school by means of a vestibule and two corridors that end on the two sides of a balcony. The chamber for



calling to prayer stands on the top of the portal. The large courtyard, with an octagonal pool in the middle, lies in the center in a north-south direction with the entrance/portal section to the east of it and the veranda, the dome, and the prayer niche to its west. Fifty-two chambers and two sizeable halls earmarked for holding classes and the gathering of seminary students surround the courtyard. The dome, made with two-layer brick work, covers the area used for prayer. Two other prayer areas flank the dome space to the south and the north. At its end is the prayer niche, which is adorned with stalactite decorative work (*moqarnas*), plaster inscriptions, and multi-colored, glazed tiles. There is also a water reservoir that can be reached by a forty-step staircase (plates [viii](#), [ix](#), BĀDGĪR) on the northern end. The top level holds the dome area and the covered prayer space (*šabestān*). Two pinnacles with chambers for calling to prayer are built on the top of the two rooms flanking the veranda of the dome area. A fine, large prayer niche, decorated with drawings and stalactite plaster work, is built at the southeast corner of the dome area. The founder's name is inscribed on the top of the prayer niche, while another inscription states the date 1268 (1847), apparently referring to the prayer niche. Both inscriptions are done in *tolṭ* script. The mosque is also equipped with two private courtyards and a large water reservoir. The use of two separate courtyards on two different levels of the same building is referred to in Kashan as an “up-and-down” (*pāyin-bālā*) feature of a building (Narāqi, 1969, pp. 254- 61; *Ganjnameh* VI, pp. 134-43; Farroqyār, pp. 25-26; see plates Il-khanids and as recently as during the upheaval of the [Constitutional Revolution](#). It led the founder of the Safavid dynasty, [Shah Esmā'il I](#), to order the leveling of its fortifications (Narāqi, 1969, pp. 297-99; Rajabi, pp. 111-12; Kalāntar Żarrābi, p. 115; Farroqyār, pp. 64-65).

Public bathhouses. A noteworthy architectural feature of Kashan is its old bathhouses. The common architectural features of traditional [bathhouses](#) (for detailed description) included a series of interior rooms for undressing and preparation, the steam room (*garm-kāna*), and rooms for hot, lukewarm, and cold bathing. The floor was of white marble and abraded stone, and the area was paneled with marble or glazed tile. Among the more notable examples still standing today are Ḥammām-e Mollā Qoṭb (966/ 1558), Ḥammām-e ‘Abd-al-Razzāq Khan (1187/ 1773; see [Figure 4](#)), and Ḥammām-e Mir ‘Emād. The last was built by ‘Emād-al-Din Maḥmud, who also constructed the ‘Emādi Mosque (Narāqi, 1969, pp. 298-99; Kalāntar Żarrābi, p. 425; Farroqyār, p. 58).

Caravansary of Amin-al-Dawla (Kārvānsarā va Timča-ye Amin-al-Dawla).



Another notable monument in Kashan is Timča-ye Amin-al-Dawla, a marketplace in a caravansary built in 1868 by Amin-al-Dawla Farroḳ Khan Ġaffāri (

BIBLIOGRAPHY

See section 4.