



# SHIRAZ I. HISTORY TO 1940

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## SHIRAZ

### i. HISTORY TO 1940

The city of Shiraz has been the capital of the province of Fārs since the Islamic conquest, succeeding [Eṣṭakr](#) of the Sasanian period and [Persepolis](#) of the Achaemenid days. Renown for its gardens, wine, and poets, it has also received at times the titles of the Seat of Government (*dār-al-molk*), the Abode of Knowledge (*dār-al-‘elm*), and the Tower of Saints (*borj-e awliā*). The claim that Shiraz was a Muslim encampment until a cousin or brother of Hajjāj b. Yusof developed it into a town in 693 ([Eṣṭakri](#), pp. 124-25; [Ebn Ḥawqal](#), p. 279; [Ḥodudal-‘ālam](#), ed. Sotuda, p. 130, tr. Minorsky, p. 126; [Schwartz](#), *Iran* II, pp. 43-44; [Le Strange](#), *Lands*, pp. 249-50) is unsubstantiated. In June 1970 several late second millennium BCE Elamite artifacts (including a bronze tripod) were recovered when digging for a brick-making kiln in southwestern Shiraz ([Eslāmi](#)), and a number of Persepolis Elamite tablets mention major workshops in T/Ši-ra-iz-iz-iš (T/Širazziš), undoubtedly “the name of a site of which the modern form is Shiraz” ([Cameron](#), p. 151; see also [Hallock](#), *Glossary*, p. 762b). Early Sasanian rock-reliefs carved in the vicinity of Shiraz (at [Barm-e Delak](#), and [Guyom](#)), late Sasanian artifacts from [Qaṣr-e Abu Naṣr](#) ([Whitcomb](#)) and the reports ([Ḥodud al-‘ālam](#), ed. Sotuda, p. 131, tr. Minorsky, p. 126; [Eṣṭakri](#), p. 119; [Ebn Ḥawqal](#), p. 274) that Shiraz had two revered fire temples (called [Hormozd](#) and [Kārniān](#)) and a very ancient citadel called [Šāh Mōbad](#) (or [Pahndar](#), corrupted to [Bandar](#), which existed till 1620s), all suggest that by the end of the Sasanian period, Shiraz was a town, “a major population, and



presumably administrative, center” (Whitcome, p. 221).

Late in the caliphate of ‘Omar b. Kaṭṭāb, an Arab army conquered Shiraz and forced its inhabitants to leave or pay tribute (Balāḍori, p. 388). Located at the crossing point of the roads leading to Yazd, Isfahan, Kuzestān, the Persian Gulf, and Kermān, Shiraz became the military depot of the army of Fārs, the government offices and the seat of the highest civil and military officials (Eṣṭakri, pp. 124-25; cf. Moqaddasi, pp. 429-30). For two centuries it was the residence of the Arab governors of Fārs. A monument of this period is the tomb of the pioneer Arabic grammarian, the Persian ‘Amr b. ‘Oṭmān Sibōē (Sibawayhi; d. ca 800) in Bāheliya quarter (also known as Sang-e Siāh, southwest quarter of Shiraz, Afsar, p. 39). The Saffarid Ya‘qub b. Layṭ captured Shiraz in 869, and his brother, ‘Amr, built the congregational Old Mosque (see MASJED-E JĀME‘-E ‘ATIQ; Qāzi Bayzāwi, apud Afsar, pp. 41-42) there, which still stands, after many repairs and alterations, in the middle of the old town (just off Loṭf-‘Ali Khan Zand Street). At the end of the 9th century Ebn Wāzeḥ Ya‘qubi described Shiraz as “the main town of Fārs, splendid and large, the seat of governors ... There is no house unless the owner has an orchard of various fruits, flowers, vegetables, and so on. People get their drinking water from springs that originate from snow-covered mountains and flow as streams” (*Boldān*, p. 362).

In 933 the Buyid amir ‘Emād-al-Dawla ‘Ali took Shiraz from the ‘Abbasid governor and made it his capital. His tomb still exists in the ‘Ali b. Ḥamza shrine, in the northeast section of the city. His brother Rokn-al-Dawla Ḥasan constructed in the few months that he stayed in Shiraz the Roknābād (or Āb-e Rokni, immortalized in the poems of Ḥāfez, a subterranean canal carrying the spring water of a mountain 10 km northeast of Shiraz to the town (Massé, with literature). His son F/Panāh Qosrow ‘Azod-al-Dawla made Shiraz a cultural and economic center and built there mosques, caravanserais, gardens, palaces (one had 360 rooms and a large library containing “all books that existed in every branch of learning,” Moqaddasi, p. 449), *bāzārs*, and a hospital (*dār-al-šefā*’; Mostawfi, *Nozhat al-qolub*, p. 115). To house his army ‘Azod-al-Dawla built a small town, called Kard Fanāh Qosrow (also Fanā-Qosrow-Kard and Suq-al-Amir), to the east of the city and established two festivals called Jašn Kard Fanā Qosrow (Biruni, p. 286; Moqaddasi, pp. 430-31; Mostawfi, *Nozhat al-qolub*, p. 114; Māfarruḳi, p. 93). The two towns yielded an annual tribute of 316,000 dinars (Ebn Balḳi, p. 172). The king also sponsored religious leaders (e.g., the mystic Shaikh Abu ‘Abd-Allāh Moḥammad b. Kaḳif, d. 982, see ‘Aṭṭār, I,



pp. 130-31, tr. by Arberry, pp. 76-77], whose hostel (*rebāt*) and convent (*kānaqāh*) were near the Eṣṭakr Gate, and Abu ‘Abd-Allāh Ḥosayn b. Abu’l-Ḥasan ‘Alawi). By then the Ḥanafite branch of the Sunni Islam had become well entrenched in Shiraz (Ebn Balḳi, pp. 117-18), but Jews, Christians, and Zoroastrian’s freely practiced their faiths, and the Shirazis still reckoned according to the Zoroastrian calendar, entrusted the running of their affairs to members of the old nobility, and celebrated Iranian festivals with great pomp and circumstance together with Zoroastrians (Eṣṭakri, pp. 118-19; Moqaddasi, pp. 429, 441; Ebn Ḥawqal, pp. 274-75). According to Moqaddasi (p. 430), the city had eight gates, six of which Karāmat-Allāh Afsar (pp. 50-51) has identified with later names: EsĀṭakr (Eṣfahān), Tostar (Kāzerun), Salm (still used as Dar(b)-e Salb/m [named after the Sufi shaikh Salm b. ‘Abd-Allāh], also called Darb-e Šāh Dā’i), Kavār (Qaṣṣāb-kāna), Monḍar (Dawlat or Kal-e Shayḳ Abu Ḍar’a), and Mahandar (P/Fahandar, Sa’di), Band-e Āstāna (perhaps the later Murdestānt or Bāg-e Šāh), and Ġassān (perhaps the later Bayzūmā, or the present-day Kal-e Mošir).

During the turbulent years that followed the death of Azod-al-Dawla, Shiraz suffered heavily, and Kard Fanāh Kōsrow was ruined. Šamṣām-al-Dawla Abu Kālijār built the first wall around Shiraz (Ebn Balḳi, p. 133), but it was repeatedly attacked and looted by the Saljuqid Turks and the Šabānkāra of eastern Fārs and Kermān. Only a few quarters escaped destruction, together with the Old Mosque and the (Azodi) library (Ebn Balḳi, pp. 132-34). Saljuqid atabegs, (Jalāl-al-Din Č/Jāwli, Qarāč/ja, Mengübars, Bozāba and his wife Zāheda Kātun) restored the town and built splendid *madrāsas*, and constituted endowments sufficient for paying the daily allowance of many jurists and convent residents. Qarāča also built the Taḳt-e Qarča, a terraced palace in his large garden, both of which survived for centuries (Zarkub, pp. 63-67; Afsar, pp. 62-64). Shiraz became home to pious people, notable judges, jurists, and religious notables (Afsar, pp. 3-4, 117-18, 134; Ebn Baṭṭuṭa, tr., II, p. 300; Mostawfi, *Nozhat al-qolub*, p. 115; Jonayd Širāzi). Under the Salghorid dynasty (see [ATĀBAKĀN-E FĀRS](#)), Shiraz once more became a state capital. The pious Moẓaffar-al-Din Sonqor b. Mawdud (d. 1163) constructed a *saqāya* (or *āb-anbār*) and the Madrasa-ye Sonqoriya, and provided them with rich endowments (four *bāzārs* and several *qanāts*). His tomb in the Madrasa-ye Sonqoriya became a shrine, and two centuries later the oath sworn on it was accepted by religious jurists (Zarkub, pp. 72-73; Jonayd Širāzi, pp. 256-58). Zangi b. Mawdud rebuilt the shrine of Ebn Kāfif, provided it with a *rebātá*, and endowed a number of flourishing villages for it (Zarkub, pp. 73-74; *Tāriḳ-e*



*gozida*, ed. Navā'i, p. 504). Amin-al-Dawla Kāzeruni, the vizier of Tekla b. Zangi built a *rebāṭ* and the Amini Mosque near the Masjed-e 'Atiq (Zarkub, p. 74). The famous mystic Abu Moḥammad Baqli (of Daylamite origin), known as Shaikh Ruzbehān (1128-1209) preached in the Old Mosque and established his own circle of Sufis in a convent he built nearby. His tomb in the Bālākāft quarter became a shrine, which Ebn Baṭṭuṭa visited (Ebn Baṭṭuṭa, tr. Mowaḥḥed, I, p. 232; Arberry, pp. 87-111). After a period of ruinous dynastic feuds and famine in the late 12th century, Sa'd b. Zangi (r. 1195-1226) restored some prosperity with fair rule, low taxes, and patronage of art and agriculture. He fortified Shiraz with a new wall, built a new congregational mosque (Masjed-e Now), a *bāzār* (Bāzār-e Atābaki), and the Qanāt-e Zangi (W aṣṣāf-Āyati, p. 90; Jonayd Širāzi, p. 126; Afsar, p. 21). His patronage led the poet Shaikh Mošref-al-Din Mošleḥ to adopt the pen name "Sa'di," thereby bringing the king immortal fame (Šafā, *Adabiyāt* III, p. 589; Arberry, pp. 112-38). Again a period of internal discord and outside invasions damaged the city (Waṣṣāf-Āyati, p. 89), but **Abu Bakr b. Sa'd** restored it and built a new *madrassa*, public parks, a hospital well provided with endowments, mosques, and *bāzārs*, not only in Shiraz but also in other towns. He saved Shiraz from destruction by offering tribute to the invading Mongols and for a time prevented their representatives to enter the town by transferring his seat of government to a garden (Bāg-e Firuzi) located outside the wall (Arberry, pp. 46-47; Eqbāl, pp. 385-86). His two viziers followed his examples in building and instituting charitable endowments. One of them, Amir Moqarrab-al-Din, discovered the grave of Aḥmad b. Emām Musā al-Kāzem, and built on it a shrine, which henceforth became the holiest sanctuary of Shiraz (see ŠĀH-E ČERĀĠ; Zarkub, p. 197-98).

Shiraz declined After Abu Bakr, due to heavy taxes exacted by the Mongols, misrule by corrupt officials, and repeated pillage by local magnates and neighboring lords. Three years of drought (1284-87) caused famine in Fārs and claimed 100,000 lives (Waṣṣāf-Āyati, pp. 106-28), and pestilence and measles killed another 50,000 people of Shiraz and its surrounding regions in 1297 (Waṣṣāf-Āyati, p. 359). **Ābeš Kātun** and her daughter Kūrdūjin improved the situation somewhat by keeping charitable foundations and religious buildings in good condition (Waṣṣāf-Āyati, pp. 359-60), but the involvements of the Enju rulers of Fārs, Šaraf-al-Din Maḥmud Shah and his son Abu Ešḥāq (q.v.), in the power struggle evolving in the late Il-khanid period caused more warfare and interruption of civil order (Eqbāl, 344-45, 350, 410-23; Boyle, pp. 397-421). The Mozaffarid Mobārez-al-Din Moḥammad captured Shiraz in 1353 and executed Abu Ešḥāq, whom Ḥāfeẓ mourned in one of his famous lyrics. The next



Mozzafarid ruler, Shah Šojā' (r. 1357-84), famed for his patronage of the celebrated poet [Ḥāfez](#), averted danger to the city in 1382 by appeasing Timur with precious gifts. After him, the Moẓaffarid became engaged in fratricidal warfare, and their last ruler, Shah Maṣṣur, fell in battle against Timur, who twice conquered Fārs (1387 and 1393).

By this time Shiraz had become known as the home of Sa'di and Ḥāfez, whose poetry have dominated every aspect of the Shirazi life and eclipsed the old dialect of Shiraz (see Ṭusi; Nawābi), replacing it with reputedly the best representative of New Persian (Kent, *Old Persian*, p. 7). Their tombs have been revered shrines; that of Sa'di is located at the site of a convent he built inside a flourishing garden watered by the Qanāt-e Sa'di (or Bandar < P/Fahandar) near the site of the old Sasanian fort of Fahandar, and that of Ḥāfez is situated in the former Moṣallā Park, famed for its cypress trees, south of a narrow gorge (the Tang-e Allāh Akbar), leading into the Shiraz plain from the northeast. Ebn Baṭṭuṭa, who visited Shiraz twice in 1327 and 1347, writes that it was surrounded by orchards and intersected by streams, notably the Roknābād, and that it was densely populated with handsome, pious, upright, and cleanly dressed inhabitants. Traders had their own *bāzārs*, and of its numerous sanctuaries the most revered were the shrine of Aḥmad b. Musā (Šāh-e Čerāg) and the mausoleum of Ruzbehān (Ebn Baṭṭuṭa, tr. Gibb, II, pp. 299-317, tr. Mowāḥḥed, I, pp. 216-17, 229). Ḥamd-Allāh Mostawfi, who wrote in 1340, mentions nine gates and seventeen quarters of Shiraz (for their identification see Afsar, pp. 76-80) and says that it had narrow and dirty alleys but was “an extremely pleasant city to live in.” Its population were “lean and brown-skinned.” due to its temperate climate, good water, excellent fruits (especially grapes) and pious people. Most were Shafi'ite Sunni, some Ḥanafites and Shi'ites. There were many genuine Sayyeds there and more than 500 shrines, mosques, *madrāsas*, and charitable institutions, supported by innumerable pious foundations that were mostly managed by extortionists (*mostakela*). Most of its wealthy residents were foreigners, and the annual tax revenue came to 450,000 dinars (*Nozhat al-qolub*, pp. 114-16). In this period Shiraz became a center of artistic patronage (see [ART IN IRAN](#), vii), and during the Timurid rule the new style of painting, the Shiraz School, flourished (Sims et al., pp. 53-4, 68-9; Gray, p. 849). Under the [Āq Qoyunlu](#) Turkmens Shiraz was again a state capital, and according to Josafa Barbaro (p. 74), who wrote in 1467, it was surround by high mad walls, had 200,000 inhabitants, good houses, excellent mosques, and a flourishing trade, especially in silk, jewels, and spices.



In 1503 the Safavid [Shah Esmā'il I](#) took Shiraz and killed Sunni religious leaders in an effort to enforce Shi'ism (Şafā, *Adabiyāt* V, p. 160). Henceforth the convents and preaching places of the Sunni Shaikhs lost their importance, while Shi'ite shrines gained prestige and richer endowments (Afsar, p. 167). The [Dahabiya](#), a Shi'ite Sufi order with allegiance to the Safavids, was established in the early 17th century in Shiraz, which has since remained its center. The Shirazis were divided into two rival groups: the Ḥaydari (allegedly followers of Shaikh Ḥaydar the Safavid, but see Mirja'fari) occupied the eastern quarters, and the Ne'matis (followers of the mystic Shah Ne'amat-Allāh) the western quarters (Fasā'i, II, p. 908). After several ineffective governors, Shiraz rose to prominence under [Allāhverdi Khan](#) and his son [Emāmqoli Khan](#). Emāmqoli Khan built a great *madrasa* (Madrasa-ye Kān), which his father had arranged for, and invited Şadr-al-Din Şirāzi (Mollā Şadrā) to teach there (Eskandar Beg and Moḥammad Yusof, p. 299; Forşat, pp. 816-19; Afsar, pp. 125-26). He also endowed charitable foundations to shrines (Ra'nā Ḥosayni), repaired the town wall and built a palace, a caravanserai (the Qayşarriyya), a very large garden of pyramidal cypress trees in the Moşallā area, and, evidently, the "Royal Garden" (Bāġ-e Şāh). Although heavy floods of 1630 and 1668 damaged Shiraz, travelers who passed through it (notably Tavernier in the years 1632 and 1668, Chardin in 1669-72, Daulier Deslandes in 1664, and Kämpfer in 1683; their accounts are given with commentary by Afsar, pp. 120-69) reported that it was a city of gardens full of sweet myrtle and trees of various kinds (cypress, sycamore, oak, elms, pines, mastics, and maples) and orchards of fruits (oranges, lemons, pomegranates, grapes, apples, pears, apricots, plums, almonds, figs, dates, cherries, and peaches). In addition, Shiraz produced excellent wine (reputedly the best in Persia, Curzon II, p. 100), mosaic on wood (*kātam-kāri*), metal works, and outstanding chain mails. The English East India Company set up a factory in Shiraz in 1621, and Dutch and French merchants frequented the town (see [EAST INDIA COMPANY and DUTCH-PERSIAN RELATIONS](#)). Around 1681 Emāmverdi Beg Kālaf-Begy repaired the Old Mosque and built a *madrasa* and a caravansary (Fasā'i, II, p. 1211; Afsar, pp. 161-64).

**FIGURE 1.** Shiraz in 1671; by Andre Daulier, Homāyun, Pl. 100 with pp. 166-67.

Shiraz rapidly declined due to large scale sacking and massacres by the Afghans (in 1723) and Nāder Shah (in 1744, when he put down the rebellion of its governor), and during the struggle for power that broke out after Nāder's death in 1747; Mirzā Moḥammad Kalāntar, pp. 2-5,10-11, 14-18, 30-42; Marvi,



pp. 338-49). But when Karim Khan Zand emerged victorious in 1766, he chose it as his capital and settled a large number of the Lors and Laks in the town and its suburbs. His liberal administration, monumental constructions, and wise economic measures eased poverty, encouraged trade, and increased security and social benefits (Perry, pp. 215-95). He restructured the town's 19 quarters to 11 (of which five were Ḥaydaris, five Ne'matis, and one Jewish), rebuilt six gates (Isfahan, Bāḡ-e šāh, Kāzerun, Šāh-Dā'i, Qaṣṣāb-kāna, and Sa'di), each opening out into a park-like square, encircled the whole city with a moat 60 feet wide and 20 feet deep, and a 25-foot high wall made of brick resting on stone foundation. He built (or repaired) a bridge over the Ḳorram-darra River, a flood channel known also as *Rud-kāna-ye košk* (Dry river) just outside the northern edge of the city, and constructed the Wakili monuments: a magnificent roofed *bāzār*, a splendid and spacious mosque, two public bathhouses (see [ḤAMMĀM-e WAKIL](#)), roofed water cisterns, the Divān-kāna (central office), the citadel (see [ARG-e KARIM KHAN](#)), an artillery park (*tup-kāna*), a drum-house (*noqqāra-kāna*), four caravanserais (notably Kārvānsarā-ye Fil at the south end of the *bāzār*), and a beautiful pavilion (*Emārat-e kolāh farangi*, now the Shiraz Museum) within a large and well-watered garden (Bāḡ-e Naẓar). Karim Khan also restored many shrines and tombs of the notable (including the Haft-tanān, and the tombs of the Mozaffarid Shah Šojā', Ḥāfez, and Sa'di), paved the streets with stone and provided them with drainage, subsidized the essential commodities, reduced trade tariffs, encouraged artists and artisans (especially glass workers, gun and rifle manufacturers, painters, ceramic makers), and supported all kinds of festivities and merry making. During his time the Jewish and Christian population of Shiraz increased and their lot became much better (Niebuhr, II, pp. 165 ff.; Francklin, pp. 51-77, 90-109, 146-54, 301-309; Waring, pp. 29-70, 259-60; Perry, pp. 272-95; Afsar, pp. 180-219).

**FIGURE 2.** Tang and Allah-o-Akbar Gate in 1888; Curzon II, p. 92.

Reversal of fortune came during the wars of succession following Karim Khan's death. In 1791 [Āḡā Moḥammad Khan Qājār](#) captured the city, pillaged it thoroughly, destroyed its fortification, and killed or exiled a large group of the Laks and replaced them with Māzandarāni riflemen and their families. Subsequent misrule by greedy and ruthless Qajar prince governors, factionalism of feudal families (specially the Qawāms and Qašqā'is), and frequent clashes of Ḥaydari and Ne'matis groups, combined with natural disasters (earthquakes in 1824 and 1853, pestilence in 1822,



cholera frequently, famine in 1830, 1860-71, plague of locusts in 1830-31, etc., Fasā'i, I, pp. 724, 800; Wills, pp. 251-55; Davies) reduced Shiraz to a provincial town (for Shiraz in 1812 see Ouseley, I, pp. 315-19, II, pp. 1-65, 159-224, for its state in 1850s see Binning, I, pp. 270-330). In 1811 it housed only 19,000 people (Morier, *Second Journey*, pp. 110-11) and 53, 607 in 1883 (when the first census was taken, Fasā'i, II, pp. 22-3). Some normalcy prevailed towards the end of the century. Governors and the influential families (Qawām and Mošir, the Qašqā'i khans) built new houses combining ancient traditions and European ornamentations (e.g., Nāranjestān-e Qawām, Bāḡ-e Eram mansion, Delgošā, Golšan or 'Afifābād) and mosques (Našir-al-Molk, Masjed-e Mošir, Ḥosayniya-ye Qawām), and restored large gardens and orchards, specially in Qašr-al-Dašt or Masjed Bardi (Dieulafoy, Ch. XXIV; Curzon II, pp. 98-111; Fasā'i II, pp. 1187-237; ForsĀat, II, pp. 719-866; Browne, pp. 259-97; Jackson, pp. 321-38). Nevertheless, unrest was frequent, always quelled by the Qawāms, increasingly with the active support of British Indian riflemen. The Qawāms also opposed the Shirazis' participation in the Constitutional Revolution (Qā'emmaqāmi). In May 1907 Mirzā Jahāngir Khan Širāzi began publishing the constitutionalist newspaper *Šur-e Ešrāfil*, which antagonized the royalists to the point that the editor was executed in June 1908 (other influential Shirazi papers *Estakr* and *Golestān* appeared in 1918). In 1918 the Qašqā'is besieged the town, and 10,000 peoples died of influenza (Sykes II, pp. 499-517). Some order was restored under Režā Shah, but "modernization" altered natural state of Shiraz beyond repair.

FIGURE 3. Shiraz under Karim Khan: Perry, p. 273, Fig. 3.

FIGURE 4. Shiraz in 1930; Afsar.

FIGURE 5. Map of modern Shiraz.

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