

THE IRANIAN CARAVANSARAI DURING THE SAFAVID PERIOD

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ABSTRACT

This work is a study of the Iranian caravansarai during the Safavid period. It describes the buildings which for economic and religious reasons were erected during this period.

It consists of seven chapters as follows:

Chapter one: consists of three parts, introduction, historical background and outline history of the Iranian caravansarai.

Chapter two: Caravan Routes and Caravansarais, describes old caravan routes across the Iranian plateau and the caravansarais which were erected along these routes during different periods.

Chapter three: consists of a description of the Iranian caravansarai from the early Islamic period up to the end of the Timurid period and its development in its various aspects.

Chapter four: deals with Iran during the Safavid period, and consists of subsections with special reference to the Political Situation, Art and Architecture, Decoration and travellers who visited Iran during the Safavid dynasty.

Chapter five: is a description of four different types of Safavid caravansarais in different cities of Iran.

Chapter six: In this chapter is the first translation of a British Museum manuscript dealing with Safavid Caravansarais in Isfahan. It is the writer's belief that this hitherto neglected document is an important addition to our knowledge of these structures.

Chapter seven: contains the conclusion, which sums up the

result of the investigation and is followed by a list of Safavid rulers, and a bibliography.

Illustrations of Iranian caravansarais form the final section of this work.

INTRODUCTION

The land of Iran because of its location has been a bridge between the Far East and the Mediterranean World since earliest times.

The antiquity of the plateau as a centre of human life has been attested by recent investigation in western, northern and eastern Iran. Evidence pointing to cave dwellers in the region 40,000 years ago has been discovered, and human remains believed to be 150,000 years old have been found.

The name of Iran is derived from Aryan, a people who migrated to western Asia in about the 14th century B.C. entering Iran some 500 years later and who gradually spread over the whole of the plateau. The first Aryan dynasty, the Medes, was established in northern Iran in about 708 B.C. and ruled until 550 B.C. In that year Kurush (Cyrus) united different parts of the country and established the great Achaemenid Empire which spread until, under the rule of Dariush (Darius), it extended eastwards to the Indus valley and westwards to Ethiopia and the Mediterranean. All the ancient civilisations such as the Egyptian, Ionian, Babylonian, Median, Armenian and Elamite cultures contributed to the arts and civilisation of this vast new empire. The artistic and architectural achievements of the dynasty can be judged from the remains of Persepolis, Naqsh-e-Rostam which also, together with inscriptions at Bisuton, provides evidence of the spiritual awareness and philosophy of the period. The region of Achaemenid

kings came to an end with the tragic defeat of Darius III, 336-330 B.C. by Alexander of Macedonia.

In 250 B.C. the Parthians came to power, and their dynasty ruled Iran for nearly five centuries. Throughout their history the Parthians were in conflict with the other great power of the period, Rome, and little effort was available for the development of the arts.

In 266 A.D. Ardeshir established the Sasanian dynasty. With the establishment of the Sasanian dynasty, which ruled Iran for more than four centuries, the empire passed through one of the most splendid periods of her history.

The Sasanian Empire, stretching over an immense territory from the Far East to the shores of the Atlantic, played a foremost role in the formation of both European and Asiatic medieval art. The great palaces of Firuzabad, Sarvistan and Cetusiphon, many fire temples throughout Iran and the remains of such monuments as Shapur, Taq-i-Bostan and Takht-i-sulyman represent the high point of architectural development.

Under the successive Achaemenid and Sasanian dynasties the frontier of Iran extended much farther to the West, North and East. Asia Minor, Iraq, Syria, Afghanistan, all once owed allegiance to Iranian kings, and their civilization has been deeply influenced by Iranian arts and architecture.

The emergence of the Muslim religion was a new element which changed the destiny of Iran.

Conquest of the Sasanian empire by the Arabs during the middle of the seventh century temporarily halted this great

artistic florescence, but soon Islamic rulers became enthusiastic patrons of Iranian craftsmen. Nevertheless, as has always been the case with invaders of Iran, the Arabs were eventually assimilated and the great Islamic culture was influenced by Iran in many ways. Islam, however, was the true heir to Sasanian culture and Islamic arts received an important contribution from the ancient traditions of Iran. During Arab domination various new autonomous states, such as the Tahirids, Saffarids and Samanids, emerged to cover different areas of Iran. The Samanids reigned over most of Iran and Transoxiana, and under their rule scholarship and arts flourished. From the beginning of the 11th century until the middle of the 12th century the Seljuq dynasty ruled Iran. The Seljuq empire was the greatest since the Arab conquest, extending between Byzantium and India. Iranian science and literature blossomed during this period and architecture reached its highest degree of magnificence. The Mongol invasion and the Timurid dynasty made eastern Asiatic art an integral part of the Iranian culture. In the 15th century Samarqand and Herat, two north-eastern cities of Iran became the centre of Iranian art.

The various schools of fine arts established there influenced the whole empire and it was these same schools which moved south and west with the establishment of Isfahān as the capital and artistic centre of Iran in the 17th century.

In 1502 A.D. the Safavid dynasty was established, and during this period the artistic culture of Iran entered a new period of splendour. The great palaces, mosques and bridges throughout Iran

and the remains of roads, madrasahs and caravansarais represent the highest architectural development of the period.

From the 18th century on to the present day great changes have been taking place in eastern Asiatic countries and the influences of modern Europe and the West have been profound, greatly affecting native arts and handicrafts which have been handed down and developed for centuries. Throughout her long history Iran has drawn largely on the many cultures with which she has come into contact, yet has always preserved a native, original element.

In the following chapters we shall examine one aspect of that manifold culture: the caravansarai, with particular reference to the great Safavid years.

However, this thesis could not have achieved its representative character without the generous and invaluable assistance during the various stages of this work of the following people.

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Historical Background

Though its exact function has varied from period to period, the antiquity of the Persian caravansarai is not in doubt. However, the caravansarai as a structural form, as we know it today, is the result of geographic, political and economic influences reaching back to the earliest history of the area. That the exact origin of the caravansarai is in contention seems largely due to the fact that several structures have served a similar function - the protection of travellers. Before the Islamic conquest of Persia, Nestorian Christians and Buddhists had monasteries with attached hostels, and with the advance of Islam came the erection of robats. The word robat itself (from the Arabic verbal form ربط, "he ties up") has lent itself to a multiplicity of uses, from "a frontier post against the infidel" to "a Sufi community house". The word first signified a fort on the Islamic frontier; since the war was considered primarily a struggle for the faith such garrisons had a religious as well as military character. Gradually the meaning enlarged to include post stations, caravansarais and places of refuge. It was used by Nāsir i Khusrāw in the "Safar Nāmeḥ" to refer to rest houses that had no religious significance. The word caravansarai derived from caravān or carabān and sarai. Caravan means a band of travellers journeying together; this they also term in Iran Qafeleh, that is to say, "a company of returners", sarai signifies

a place or spacious inn (whence comes seraglio). Both words, caravan and sarai, originated in Ancient Iran. With the Islamic period came several words like caravan-khāneh (caravan house), caravan-gah and caravan gāh, all with the same meaning. Gradually after Islam other words such as robāt, khān and inn came to be used instead of caravansarai.⁽¹⁾

If we consider the caravansarai as a place of rest and protection for the traveller, whether he be merchant or pilgrim, problems of semantics will be avoided. Indeed, in the fifth book of Herodotus, the Greek historian, there is an account of structures built by the Achaemenians to fulfil this function. He writes of numerous caravansarais and numbers one hundred and eleven in the 2,500 Kilometers between Sard and Susa, the Achaemenian capital, catering for a journey of up to three months. Though these were primarily halting stages for royal messengers, it is likely that they formed the nucleus of commercial centres as they were spaced a convenient day's journey apart and would have afforded a certain royal protection. Of these structures there is no trace, however, but the routes are clearly defined. Excavation of Tappeh, artificial hills on the site of early settlements, reveal materials which must have been transported from afar and though these go back to the earliest history of the area, they too show that the course of the main routes has not changed greatly. Apart from the three great Zagros passes, Shiraz to Boushire, Khorramābād to Susa and Hamadān to Qasr-e-Shirim, there is that followed by Alexander (Behbeham to Falhian), those which joined Pasargard and Isfahan to

Susa and that from Susa to Kermānshāh. In the north there were the passes of Chālūs, Qazvin, Firoz-Khōuh and Damāvand. There were lesser routes too, across the central deserts and the coastal strips. Under Sāsānian rule the same routes were used as well as a route to Kābul and, via the oasis of Tarim, on towards China to bear the lucrative silk traffic.⁽²⁾

There was some trade to southern seaports as well, therefore there was a trail joining the centre of the country with the ports of the south. Indeed, the majority of Sasanian ruins are to be found in the south-west of the country. With the fall of the Sasanians came one of the several disturbed interludes that has disrupted Iranian trade between dynasties. In the absence of a strong central authority inter-tribal warring and local raiding grew rife. The lack of internal security made trading a hazardous business and there was a serious decline in commerce. Monuments and remains of this period are therefore scarce. For the next 300 years the rich revenues that Iran drew from the east - west trade dwindled to a trickle. This situation changed quickly with the conquest of Tēghrūl-Beg, the Seljuq, and the energetic reign of his successors, Malik Shāh, Alb-Arslān and Sultān Sanjar. During this brilliant period many buildings of high architectural value were erected. The ensuing boom in trade and the economic necessity of protecting the caravans led to the construction of caravansarais. Fortunately, many of these were built of durable material, employing brick vaulting, and have survived the years.

After the Seljuq dynasty, Khwārazmshāhin founded an empire that

included most of Iran, Khurāsān and Afghanistan. Though great in extent, it did not last long and was too disturbed to encourage trade.

In 1218 a Mongol trade mission was massacred and two years later Balkh was occupied by Cinghiz Khān's forces and the empire was over, except for a brief restoration (1223 - 1230) after which Cinghiz Khan's son, Ogotay, reconquered the land (1230 - 1243). Iran was devastated and exhausted after these wars, but ready to profit commercially from the vast, efficient new organisation brought by the Mongols. Communications were restored and extended; a courier service operated from the Mediterranean to the China Sea. Caravansarais were brought back into use and east and west were bound as never before. Though Iran suffered under the iron grip of the Mongols, she nevertheless gained great advantages too. Trade prospered enormously from the suppression of tribal warfare and the new security on the trade routes. Most of the trade was overland, though an important fraction arrived via the southern parts. The Mongol Khans imported porcelains and silk and sent arms, copper, bronze goods and skins to the Far East. Merchants travelled easily between countries and artistic tastes and techniques were transplanted.

Under the Il-Khanid rule of Ghāzān there was an extensive reconstruction of towns (e.g. Tabriz). His successors, Oljaitū, aided by an able minister, Rashīd al-Dīn, built Sultāniya, for several decades the greatest market in the country. Roads were bordered and measured and many caravansarais were built, the remains of some of which may be seen today.

During the reign of Abū Saīd frontier revolts increased and Anatolia became independent. Iran was torn by internecine strife and the struggles of the last Mongol pretenders in the following periods brought all commerce to an end. The historian, Hamd Allāh Mustowfī, records the sorry state of the land in his Nuzhat-al-Qulūb (1340). In 1374 Timūr captured Isfahān and with his conquest came a measure of internal security. A record was made of existing caravansarais and some restoration was undertaken.

This improvement did not survive the Tīmūrid dynasty however, and rich caravans were not to cross Iran again until the succession of the Safavids in 1502. Almost immediately a serious blow was dealt to the Iranian economy, for in 1520 Megallan rounded the Cape of Good Hope and trade passed at once into the hands of the great maritime powers of the period. In the face of this setback, successful rulers multiplied their efforts to create safe communications and facilitate the passage of traders. There was an unparalled burst of activity. So many buildings were erected, so many bridges built and roads widened or paved that the least ruin is ascribed, a priori, to Shāh 'Abbās the Great. No route was without robust bridges, the meanest tracks were improved and routes across swampy land or across desert were paved with flagstones. Caravansarais abound, proof against the centuries, in the most remote parts of the land, from the burning coastal strip in the south, across the great central deserts to the green, damp Caspian.

The great routes begin at several points on the frontier, Bushire, Baghdād and the Black Sea ports, fanning out towards the productive provinces (Khūrasān, Sistān, the province of Isfahān etc.).

In general, most brocade and worked silk entered the European market through Russia and Poland, plain silk through Turkey, while skins, collected by the Dutch, were routed through the Indies.

Not all trade with the Far East died out. In 1637 Olearius, speaking of the numerous Ardebil caravansarais, remarks on the presence of Chinese merchants trading in lacquer and porcelain. Nevertheless, almost all imports by sea were controlled by powerful European companies at Ormuz and later Bandar-Abbās. These were mainly English and Dutch though some few were French.

By popular tradition 990 caravansarais are attributed to Shāh Abbās and the total number of the period is put at 3,000. While the latter is an exaggeration, the former number may well fall short of the truth. Chardin, however, may be believed when he reports that there were 162 mosques, 48 colleges, 1,082 caravansarais and 272 baths.⁽³⁾

This tremendous creativity did not survive the Safavid dynasty and commerce dwindled once more to some trading with Russia and through the southern ports, with the east of Europe. Some few caravansarais were built under the Zands (1750-1788) and in the Qājār period there was a renewal of commercial activity but trade was nothing like it had been in Safavid years. In the 19th century there was a great deal of construction. Vast caravansarais were built but the workmanship was poor and they were too hastily erected in most cases. Accordingly, little remains of most of them but broken walls. The final decline of the caravansarais was well under way. They acquired a rather seedy reputation and a new

comfort-loving class of traveller preferred to lodge at the Chāpar-Khāne (Post-stations) which served the revived and secure postal services. Despite the addition of more comfortable rooms and a makeshift attempt to raise their general level of comfort, caravansarais fell into a disuse that is surely rendered permanent, on main routes at least, by the enormously increased speed of modern communications. It is true that some remote caravansarais are still in use, but when one hears of a caravansarai being built these days, what is meant is a covered commercial area like an arcade or one passageway of a bazaar.

Outline history of the Iranian caravansarai

"Think, in this battered caravansarai
Whose portals are alternate night and day
How sultan after sultan with his pomp
Abode his hour or two, and went his way."

Khayyam.

As we said, no trace remains of Achaemenian caravansarais, the earliest recorded, so we can only guess at their form. That they were built of mud brick seems possible but their degree of sophistication is a matter of conjecture, bearing in mind their role which was largely limited to stabling mounts for post-riders. It seems likely therefore that they consisted of nothing more than a wall enclosing a courtyard, well and small dwelling-place for the liveryman and his family. From these or similarly humble beginnings evolved an architectural form that was to exploit to the full the Persian gift for combining function and beauty. The prime requisite was security, for internecine disputes and tribal wars were rife in unsettled times and during the rule of strong central governments the correspondingly prosperous caravans attracted attention from lawless elements. Caravansarais, then, often have the external appearance of forts, an impression enhanced by bastions at the corners and often turrets between them. There are examples of polygonal caravansarais, and even round ones, but the vast majority are rectangular in plan.

Many of the better examples consist of concentric units, an arrangement ideally suitable for both defence and for peacetime activities. The outer wall is usually austere, if not forbidding, and pierced by a single massive gateway in the centre of one wall. This was sometimes surmounted by a pavilion which sheltered guards to defend the gate in time of crisis or in peacetime provided accommodation for wealthier travellers.

Between this and the next wall, which formed the back of the living quarters, was a dark, narrow passage giving access to the great central courtyard at a few easily guarded points. In this dark restricted area horses and pack animals were kept, the shade and relative cool reducing the nuisance of flies and other pests, while the restriction made the animals less liable to stampede or theft in time of danger. It must be remembered that in many cases the lives of the travellers depended on their animals, some of the caravansarais being in very isolated regions. Around the central courtyard, cell-like living quarters were arranged. These normally comprised two rooms: one little more than a porch where one could do business, chat or simply relax and watch the proceedings, the other behind it to form a sleeping chamber and afford privacy. The rooms are always above the level of the court, usually two feet or so, another interesting refinement which gave a measure of protection against dust, prevented the pack animals from gaining access and formed, one may suppose, a useful platform from which to reload the animals. Apart from these, it provided a ready vantage point for the merchant. In the more elaborate caravansarais, the

rear rooms each had a fireplace and there were often larger rooms at the corners of the courtyard, even suites of up to six interconnected rooms. These last were used by wealthy or important persons of course, who sometimes had the opportunity of using one of the rooms which pierced the centre of each of the living area walls in the classic four iwan style which enhanced the symmetry of the whole. One of these, the qibla, would contain the mihrab but the others were sometimes used as rooms.

Essentially, then, caravansarais consisted of a large four-iwan courtyard surrounded by "cells", one or two storeyed and sometimes with a dome over ^{the} iwan. There are, however, many different types: some completely roofed in, as in colder parts of the country (e.g. the caravansarai at Shebli⁽⁵⁾ on the road from Qazvin to Tabriz), others, less elaborate, are merely courtyards lined with undistinguished buildings, usually two storeyed. Service varied too: some were well staffed and policed, others were for all to use as they pleased. In the majority of cases there was a single custodian and travellers were constrained to unload and stable their own beasts, light their fires and cook for themselves.⁽⁶⁾ In post-Achaemenian times caravansarais were made of stone or brick, unfired or fired, more often the latter. Thus there are some few remains from Sasanid times as we have noted. A good example is to be found in Kazarqn. Built of stone, three walls still remain. There

are twenty-six arched rooms around the courtyard and opening on to it. They are oblong, vaulted and interconnected. The only entrance to the caravansarai is in the east wall. This is a traditional style of caravansarai and has analogies with pre-Islamic palaces and is also found in Islamic caravansarais, e.g. Robat Karim.⁽⁷⁾

Early Islamic caravansarais were built of stone sometimes from the ruins of Sasanian buildings.⁽⁸⁾ Baths and sometimes kitchens were included but the spiritual side of life was cared for by small oratories and mihrabs, marking a radical change in the social function of the caravansarai, which had had a rather military purpose before Islamic times. They now shared or formed part of the changed religious life of the people and many of them were built without regard for the commercial routes, but catering for pilgrims en route for holy places, or they were attached to shrines and madrasahs. As Pope points out,⁽⁹⁾ a complex of madrasah, mosque, caravansarai, bazaar and bridge almost of itself makes a town.

Some beautiful examples remain from pre-Seljuq and Seljuq times especially in Kẖrāsān and on the Kẖrāsān route. A particularly fine Seljuq caravansarai was built at Sabzevar. Well described, it was said to contain 1700 rooms and to enclose within its walls a set of baths and shops.⁽¹⁰⁾ There are many fine examples too from the Il-Khanid period, particularly in the area of Tabriz which was the Il-Khanid capital.

According to historians and geographers, a great number of

caravansarais were built in the Azerbaijan area during Ghazān times, but there are not many remains of those.

The golden age of the caravansarai was undoubtedly during the Safavid period. In the preceding section we mentioned that so many were built in the reigns of Shāh Ābbās and his successor that he is given credit for the smallest remain. This is true, but the quality of the structures is no less impressive. Concerning the first point there is a further piece of historical corroboration in the words of Jenab⁽¹¹⁾, a Persian historian who wrote under the pen name of Al-Isfahani. He states that there were 142 caravansarais in Isfahān in the Safavid period. Concerning the second we have Chardin's splendid description of Shah Abbas' caravansarai at Kashān, which he called the finest in Persia. The royal inn without the city, he says, "is the fairest not only in Kashān but in all Persia". Thomas Herber⁽¹²⁾, an English traveller of the period, agreed and added that it was both large enough and fit enough to lodge the court of the greatest potentate in Asia. A royal foundation, it was built by Shāh Ābbās the Great for travellers to rest in free of charge, to express his charity as well as magnificence. Many travellers from earliest times used caravansarais as we would use modern hotels, and the books of their experiences are full of interesting and illuminating details and drawings. Among travellers there were very mixed elements. In addition to merchants and their retinues there were many pilgrims who were often in need of such benefaction. In fact most caravansarais in Safavid times were on the pilgrim route (from Isfahān to Khqrāsan) and there were sometimes several almost

exclusively pilgrim caravans on the road at the same time.

An extremely important institution which came into being in these times was the "waqf". The word itself means donation, but in this context it means the devoting of the land and the erecting of buildings, bridges, baths, hospitals, shops, caravansarais, even the planting of trees for public shade. Many caravansarais were put up under the waqf in Safavid times and, despite all writings to the contrary and apparent ignorance of the fact, the practice continues to this day. This institution was maintained over a number of centuries, and inscriptions recording the names of benefactors were sometimes placed within buildings favoured by a donation.

After the Safavid period, caravansarais took on an increasingly commercial aspect. Even later there was a tendency for caravansarais to specialise in buying and selling cloth for instance, or in fruit or jewels. There is a manuscript in the British Museum⁽¹³⁾ which gives a list of about 40 caravansarais built by Shah ^{Ābbās} and his successor and family, and interesting information about the commodities bought and sold at each caravansarai.

In modern times the term is applied to arcades as we have seen. Though some remote caravansarais are still serving useful functions, the exchange of ideas, opinions and techniques which formed perhaps the greatest single lasting benefit of these buildings, is a thing of the past.

(7) Professor Luci van den Berge, Iranica Antiqua, vol. 1, 1961, pp. 167-170.

(8) The best example of this, caravansarai Bisuton, is near Kermanshah. This caravansarai is called Qadimi (old) and is situated in the foot of the mountains of Bisuton on the road to Kermanshah.

The caravansarai is oblong, 85 x 80 m. and has 63 chambers around the courtyard with the single entrance on the east side.

In the Sasanid period this place was prepared for the erection of a palace. Materials were gathered, a small section was built but it was abandoned at the time of the Arab invasion.

At the time of Azazad-Dāwlah 338/949 the caravansarai was built on the same site using the Sāsānian cut stone and other materials.

Since 1964 the Irano-German expedition has been excavating this site as well as other sites in Bisuton. During the excavation in the caravansarai the expedition found pottery dating from the 10th - 14th centuries.

There have been many varied and colourful suggestions as to the original function of this building. Different writers have affirmed it to be an early Islamic mosque, Sasanid palace, Mongol chapar-khaneh and an early Islamic caravansarai; but according to historians like Hamdolah-Mustawfi, Azazad-Dāwlah built this building as a caravansarai when he was ruling in Kermanshah.

This caravansarai was rebuilt in the Il-Khanid period and was in use until the Timurid period.

(9) Survey of Persian Art, vol. 3, p. 1246.

(10) Fraser, Narrative of a journey into Khorasan, (London 1825), p. 383.

(11) M. Ali-Jenab, Al-Isfahan (Tehran), pp. 58-59.

(12) Sir Herbert Thomas, Travel in Persia, pp. 218-219.

(13) Slona 4094 B.M.

CHAPTER II

Caravan Routes and Caravansarais

Basically, of course, a route can be described as merely a path between two inhabited nuclei. Its upkeep, depending on historical factors, will be regulated by its social or economic importance. Iran, both by virtue of her own cultural donation to the world and her geographic position between east and west has long recognised the importance of secure and well kept roads. Although we know that the history of trade and travel in Iran goes back to remote antiquity, the camel caravan, a part of the world's lore served for centuries as the main method of transport. Gradually, however, a fast communication grew up and a network of roads spread across the land. This growth went largely hand in hand with the growth of a strong centralised government. At the height of the Persian empire Iran's communication system was justly famous and secure and well kept roads were an essential element of the prosperity of the country. The situation might be called cyclic: *ceteris paribus*, economic prosperity of the country through internal and external trade depended on secure routes, the strength of the government likewise depended on economic prosperity and rapid communication with the outposts of the empire. In the 14th century, for example, guards were stationed along all major routes and local governors were required to make good any losses by attack on caravans passing through their districts. At the time of Shah 'Abbās such was the security of the highways

that travellers who visited Iran in the 17th century have testified that people could travel with as much safety as at noonday in the most civilised town in Europe. Penalties for ambuscade were severe; infringers of the laws were tracked down at virtually any expense and put to death by torture.

As has been already mentioned the early routes were still little more than tracks, but gradually surfaces were improved and even in the mountain passes wide ladder-like steps were hewn out of bare rock. Shah 'Abbās I fostered a type of road called Sangi-Farsh (stone carpet), a stone pavement laid upon a high embankment of earth. Sections of this type of road may still be seen south of Teheran and in some parts of the Caspian region.

The importance of these works and the effort put into them may perhaps be better appreciated by a detailed description of some of the more famous routes.

The Royal Route may be termed the precursor of the whole system. It was built in the Achaemenian period by Darius the Great and ran from Susa through Mesopotamia and Asia Minor to the city of Sardis, a distance of about 2,500 kilometers. This constituted a three month journey for a traveller on foot, but a system of mounted couriers then evolved permitted the whole route to be traversed in as little as fifteen days. Officials were thus kept in touch with the desires of the court and the court, in its turn, knew at once of unrest or opportunity for economic exploitation all along its length. The mounted postal relay system introduced

in this period for the first time carried on in one form or another right to the twentieth century and was based on a series of rest houses located at convenient intervals where royal messengers could rest and obtain fresh mounts. These stations (chapār-khāneh), the basis of the caravansarai unit, became a prime structure in Persian history and culture. Herodotus states that there were 111 such caravansarais between Susa and Sardis and adds that on another route, the 500 kilometer stretch between Lidy in West Anatolia and Phrygia, there were twenty caravansarais, which is an average of one every twenty-five kilometers. The influence of the royal route in widening the horizon of the provinces through which it ran must have been considerable and its importance in the eyes of contemporary Greeks is shown by the prominence given to it in the earliest map of the Ionian Geographers.¹ "The royal road had achieved its fame not only because it was the road of a great king's empire that had been created in the span of a single generation, nor because it was important for the king's couriers or the transit of goods for trade but because along its 1677 miles flowed the ideas and traditions of two cultures from east to west and from west to east..... We owe something to the royal route of Persian kings."²

The Silk Route, perhaps even more famous than the royal route was created at the beginning of the Christian era and ran from China to the Mediterranean sea. It started at Kansu by Qumul Turfan and the cities north of the Celestial Mountains. Running west it branched at the Land of the Seven Rivers, one branch leading to the steppes north of the Caspian and the Black sea, the other veering

south to Kharazim and into the north of Iran. As well as carrying such goods as silk, pottery, and spices from the Far East to the markets of the Western World, this route was largely responsible for bearing most of the decorative motifs of Sasanian art beyond the confines of Iran. By means of it Sasanian textiles became well known through Eurasia. Its greatest benefit in economic terms and also the principle reason for the ceaseless conflict between Iran and the Roman Empire, was the import of both raw and finished silk from China. Undoubtedly, at the period this was Iran's greatest single source of wealth. To protect this valuable trade many caravansarais were erected along the route, our earliest description of which is by Naṣīr-Khusraw in his book Safar Nameh who recounts his journey from Marve by way of Sarakhs-Nishapur-Bistam-Damghan-Semnan-Ray-Qazvin-Sarab-Saidabad-Tabriz-Marand-Khoy-Lake Van which may be said to correspond to the silk route. 3

The cultural aspects of the route are inestimable. Iran's cultural influence was paramount in the regions situated along the route, as far east as the Indus river and west to the Mediterranean world.)

Caravan Routes from Azerbaijan

The province of Azerbaijan has been an important communications bridgehead since earliest times. Across its territory ran the two principal lines of communication from Europe to Asia, one from the Black Sea through Trebizond, Ezerum and Bayazaid and the other from Tiflis and Baku in the Caucasus, converging at Tabriz upon the great trade entrepot of Iran and the East. In ancient and medieval times

the routes from the Mediterranean and Asia Minor were by the Black Sea to Trebizond and thence to Tabriz, or across the Caucasus to Tabriz, or across the Syrian desert to Baghdad and thence to Basra and southern Persia, or from Baghdad into central Persia by way of Kermanshah, Hamadan, and Qazvin. So great was the importance of Tabriz as an entrepot for caravans bearing goods from India, China and central Asia for the Byzantine Empire, Venice, Genoa and the west generally that as early as the 13th century Venetian and Genoese consuls were established in Tabriz, where the bazaars extended over a greater area than probably any city in the east.

The cities of Azerbaijan vied for the position of capital. First, at the time of the Abbasids it was Ardabil. Under the later caliphs, Tabriz took this position. After the Mongol invasion the honour went ^{to} Maragheh, then Tabriz again, then Sultanieh and again, under the first Safavid ruler, Tabriz became the capital. It was at Tabriz that Marco Polo came into Persia on his way to the court of the great khan in central Asia, and it was at Tabriz that Clavijo came from Trebizond in 1404 on his way through to the court of ^{Timur} at Samargand. Marco Polo has left an account of the great and apparently universal prosperity of the merchants of the city. But though Tabriz was for so long the chief trading centre of Asia we have seen that from period to period other cities of Azerbaijan have held the laurels. Ibn Battuta, a Muslim traveller in the 14th century, described the Ghazan bazaar as "One of the finest bazaars I have seen the world over" and Sultanieh, which flowered under the Il-khanid rulers and the

famous minister Rashid al-Din, was once the focus of the five great roads in Iran. The Mongol road system which went through Azerbaijan to the north-western frontiers started from the new capital Sultanieh and forked right and north across the Safid Rud (white river) to Ardabil and thence to Bajarvan, the capital of Mughan, and left to Tabriz and on to Lake Van. The system has been described by Hamdullah Mustawfi (8th century H.) who describes the road from Tabriz on to Arjaish on Lake Van and from Tabriz east to Bajarvan which went via Ahar and crossed two passes. Along this line, he says, the Wazir Ali Shah built a number of caravansarai. The main roads from Sultanieh may be classified as follows:-

1. Western: to Zandjan, Gilan, the Caucasus, Arminestan and Asia Minor ending at the Mediterranean.
2. Eastern: First to Abhar and then to Kharagan, thence in two branches, one to Saveh and Ray, the other from Eshtehard via Ray to Khorassan.
3. North-Eastern: from Qazvin, Alamout, Taleqan and Tankabon to the Caspian region.
4. Southern: to Hamadan via Mount Zangan.

According to geographers and historical accounts many caravansarais and robat were built on these routes. Unfortunately, the great majority have disappeared and the few that remain are in poor condition. However, traces of the following caravansarais can still be seen:

Caravansarai Sarcham. Il-Khanid Period - between Tabriz and Sultanieh.

"	Marand .	"	"	-	"	Tabriz	"	Jolfa.
"	Jamal-Abad.	Safavid	"					
"	Jam	"	"					
"	Shebli	"	"	-		south of Tabriz		
"	Guilak	"	"					
"	Nikpay	"	"					
"	Neri	"	"					

The following Safavid caravansarais, which were in the same area, have been destroyed and have disappeared:

Caravansarai Julfa (consists of 2)

"	Asad-abad (consists of 4)
"	Mirza-Sadeq
"	Khan-Ardabil
"	Qara-chaman
"	Zanjan-sultan (consists of 3)
"	Turkaman-village
"	Mianaj
"	Eizeh
"	Sakzaveh
"	near Sultanieh
"	Yajiub
"	Kushak-reya
"	Doqeh

Hamadan Routes. Hamadan, capital of the ancient Medes and a principal residence of Cyrus the Great, was in ancient times a

centre of the old caravan routes, east to west from central Asia through Qazvin to Baghdād, and north through Kurdistān to Lake Rezaeih. To the south there is access both to Qom itself, an important centre of communications, and through Luristan to Susa and the Persian Gulf. Although it fell during the Arab conquest Hamadan remained a provincial capital until the later Seljuq period, when with the removal of the Seljuq court from Baghdād it became the capital once more, albeit for only fifteen years. One of the fine buildings of this period Gūnbad Alaviyān is still visible. During the Mongol invasion Hamadān was pillaged and destroyed, a fate it suffered a second time by Tīmūr's hand in 1386 A.D. Under the strong central government of Shah Abbās the great Hamadān rose and prospered once more and it is still today one of the major cities. An interesting early account of the city is given by Ibn-Hawqal in the 10th century, who describes Hamadān as a fine large city over a league square which had been rebuilt since the Muslim conquest and adds that the surrounding district was very fertile and the markets of the town filled with merchandise.⁴ Muqaddasi adds that the town possessed no less than three rows of markets and that in one of these stood the great mosque, an old and imposing structure.⁵

The roads from Hamadān may be itemised as follows:-

1. Northern: a road ran from Hamadān to Zanjan dividing there into two branches, one to Tarem and another to Miāneh. The road to Tarem also branched; one fork went to Khalkhāl and on to Ardabil and the other to Sefid Rud, Gilan and finally Baku. The way from

Zanjān to Miāneh divided into three branches at Miāneh:

- a. the northern route to Ardabil, Moghān, Baku and Darband.
- b. the north western route to Ujān, Armenistān, and the Black Sea, and finally into Asia Minor.
- c. the western branch went to Marāgheh and thence south of Lake Rezaieh to Musel, Halab and the Mediterranean.

2. Western: from Hamadān to Asadabād, Kangawar, Bisutun, Kermanshah and finally Baghdad.

3. Southern: to Nahāvand and Buroujerd.

4. South Eastern: from south of Buroujerd to Gulpaygān and Isfahan.

5. Eastern: from Hamadān to Mazandarān where it divided into two branches one of which went to Ray and the other to Saveh and Qum.

6. Qazvin Route: commanding as it does the great road to the east along the Elburz to the holy city of Mashād and thence to Afghanistan and India, Qazvin has been an important caravan centre from the earliest times. From there roads go north through the Elburz to Rast and the southern shores of the Caspian, north-west to Tabriz, Turkey and the Caucasus, west to Hamadān, Kermānshāh and Baghdad and, previously, through Saveh to Qum and on in three divisions towards the Persian Gulf.

7. Khōrāsān Route or "Shi'a Pilgrim Road": The Khōrāsān road has long served as an important line of communication between east and west, constituting one of the great links between Mesopotamia

and Transoxania and the Far East. Along this route, in the fourth century B.C., passed Alexander in his progress from Hamadān to Afghānistān and India. Along it too have passed Parthian troops, the Sasanian court and the Arab conquerors.

The route started from the Khūrasān gate and, traversing the plane and passing over numerous well built bridges ran to Halwan at the foot of a pass leading up to the Iranian highlands. Here it entered the Jibāl province and after a steep climb entered Kermānshāh ⁶. Crossing the province diagonally north-east the road reached Hamadān ⁷ and on to Rayy ⁸. Thence it ran almost due east through Qumis forming a narrow thread between the Māzandarān Mountains and the great desert to the south. It entered the province of Khūrasān near the town of Bistām from where it went to Nīshapur ⁹, Tus and Marv beyond this it crossed the desert to the banks of the Oxus and further Bokhāra and Samarqand in the province of Sughd. At Zamīn, a short distance east of Samarqand the road forked, the major branch proceeding to Tashkent and finally to the Chinese desert. This great route still constitutes the modern post road crossing Persia. When Sultānieh became the capital of the Il-Khanid dynasty, the road system was altered in part to accommodate the move but all that this entailed was a link road north from Hamadān direct to Sultānieh which took the place of Rayy as the centre point of the road system in this area. In the Safavid period the Khūrasān route became very important for Shi'a pilgrims and innumerable caravansarais were erected by the Safavid kings, most of which have disappeared

although some few remain.

It is convenient to list the caravansarais of the Khurāsān route, state by state.

Caravansarais of the Kermānshah region

Caravansarai	Sar-i-Pul-Zahab	Safavid
"	Karand	"
"	Shāh-Abād	" at Shāh-Abād
"	Mahī-Dasht	" at Mahī-Dasht
"	Bisutūn	" at Bisutūn
"	Bisutūn	so-called Qādimi (old) early Islam Mongol.
"	Dezag	"

There are also Safavid caravansarais at Hamadān and Qazvīn (the latter built by Shāh Tahmāsp). From Teheran and Rayy the following caravansarais should be mentioned.

Caravansarai	Ain-o-Rashid	Varamin
"	Eiwan-e-Keif	near Garmsar
"	Lasgird	
"	Dehnamak	

After passing Semnān the road entered Qumis province, the caravansarais of which afforded shelter for pilgrims before reaching the holy city of Mashad^h the capital of Khurāsān.

Caravansarai	Ahwan	Caravansarai	Bedasht
"	Semnān	"	Miami
"	Quoche	"	Mian Dasht (3 caravansarais)
"	Amir-Abad	"	Elahak
"	Damghan	"	Abbas-Abad

Caravansarai Sadr-Abād

- " Mamun (son of Harūn-al-Rashīd)
- " Mazinān
- " Mehr
- " Dahāneh-Kolidar
- " Qadamgah
- " Fakhr-Dawod
- " Sherif-Abād (2 caravansarais)
- " Sartakht Langar (which was the last stage to Mashad^h).

Mustōwfi relates that there was a road from Nishāpur to Mashad^h and thence by way of Sarakhs to Balkh, that this was a Mongol road, and that the following caravansarais were situated on it.

Caravansarai Mehi

- " Robat Sharaf
- " Sangbast
- " Khakistar.

Mazandaran, Gilān and Gorgan.

Favoured by fertile land and abundant rainfall, the province of Mazandarān, fringing the south of the Caspian sea, has long been a populous and politically significant region. Together with Gilān, Media and Parthia it formed the satrapy of Darius the Great, being then known as Tabaristān. The easier life which generated a large population made it a strong adversary and it was the last portion of the Sasanian kingdom to fall to the Arab invaders. The earliest known capital of Mazandarān was Āmul, which Ibn-Hawqal describes as a populous city and larger in his day than

Qazvin. In later years the capital became Sārī. Maqaddasi writes of Sārī as a well-favoured and thriving city with famous markets and cloth manufacturers.¹⁰ At the time of the Mongol conquest the name Tabaristān was replaced by Mazandaran which it has been called ever since. Mazandaran benefited greatly from Shah Abbas' attachment to the region which was his favourite resort. Signs of his interest are still in evidence though unfortunately they are few; there is the famous causeway which crossed the whole of Mazandaran and there are pleasure gardens and bridges in the neighbourhood of his once extensive palace at Ashraf. Such indeed was his attachment for Mazandaran that in 1621 A.D. he had a road built across the Elbq̄rz mountains to facilitate his progress from his capital at Isfahan.¹¹ Other highways are not very numerous. Istakhri mentions that there were routes from Ray northwards across the great chain to Āmul, westwards from Āmul along the coast to Chalus to the frontier of Gilān and eastwards from Āmul to Gorgan (Astarabad).¹² They also mention routes from Gorgan north to Dihestan then from Bestām in Qumis to the capital of Kharazm, eastwards from Gorgan into Khūrasān through Bejnurd-Qochān to Mashad^h and from Gorgan via resting places at Kurd Mahlah, Now-Kandah, Ashraf, Sārī, Āmul, Lahijān and Rast. One of the major routes in the Safavid period was that between Gorgan and Mashad^h, which constituted in fact, the pilgrim route for the people of the Caspian. According to Sani-Al-Daulah¹³ the following robats were erected in the 16th and 17th centuries along the route from Gorgan to Mashad^h.

Robat	Shahr Gorgan (City of Gorgan)
"	Fors
"	Dahaneh-Gorgan
"	Dahaneh-Dasht
"	Qara-Pil
"	Eshgh
"	Sankhawst
"	Quli
"	Qarache Robat
"	Nasir Abad
"	Sultan-Maidan
"	Hasan-Abad
"	Chanbar-Ghrbal
"	Sayyid-Abad
"	Shanqoleh (the last stage before Mashad ^h).

Isfahan Routes

Known to the Greeks as Aspadan, Isfahan has been inhabited since early times and has been a great cultural centre since before the Arab conquest. In the 17th century Isfahan was perhaps the glory of the world; it was the first known example of serious town planning. Laid out about a large and magnificently adorned square, its streets were planted with trees for shade and bordered by runnels of fresh water to cool the air. Contemporary English travellers described it as a most beautiful city and larger in area than London, which caused them much wonder. Before reaching

this peak as the new Safavid capital under Shāh Abbās the Great, Isfahān too had suffered the vicissitudes of war and the assaults of the Seljuq Turks, Chāngīz Khān and Timur but its position in the centre of Iran and on the most convenient east/west trade route have preserved it to this day as an important centre for trade. Because of this geographic position, caravan routes to the north, south-east and west were numerous. A convenient list of them may be given as follows.

1. Northwards: a road ran from Isfahān to Murch-Khort and then to Kashān where it divided into two branches one of which went to Khar and Khūrasān and the other to Qum. At Qum the way divided once more into two branches, one to Ray, Damāvand, Haraz Valley and Āmul and the other to Saveh, Qazvin, and Hamādān.
2. North-westerly: a road ran from Isfahān to Hamādān and Luristān.
3. South-westerly: a road ran from Isfahān to the city of Kurd and after crossing the River Karūn on to Susa.
4. Southwards: from Isfahān to Linjān, Behbahan and Shiraz.
5. Eastwards: from Isfahān to Nāīn, Yazd and Kermān.¹⁴

A great number of caravansarais were built along these routes by the Safavid rulers and the city and region of Isfahān appear to have been the richest in caravansarais of all Iran. Unfortunately, most of these have disappeared and it is difficult to estimate their former numbers with any great accuracy as historians and travellers have mentioned widely varying numbers in their books and diaries. Those names that we still know, however, are redolent both in their number and sonority of this golden age of the caravansarai. First,

caravansarais in Isfahan itself:

Caravansarai	Madar-Shah	Caravansarai	Mahabadyan
"	Mokhles	"	Mordary-Koshan
"	Now (New)	"	Natanzian
"	Mongem	"	Saghrchian
"	Sarutqi	"	Abbasi
"	Naqsh-Jahan	"	Mirza Hedayat
"	Halali	"	Bazar-Araban
"	Khorassani	"	Borya Bafan
"	Bazarche-Boland	"	Jaddeh
"	Maqsud Bayk	"	Halal
"	Sh ^h kh-Ali-Khan (so-called Chale Siah)	"	Khorassanian
"	Farsh-Bafan	"	Kansarian
"	Moshteh-Malan	"	Pir-Agili
"	Maqsud-Assar	"	Ali-Qoil-Khan
"	Fathieh	"	Laleh-Shah-Safi (Khajeh Mahramm)
"	Tavileh	"	Yar Baba
"	Mohabbat-Ali-Baik	"	Mostowfi
"	Anar-Forushan	"	Dargazinan
"	Araban	"	Laryan
"	Mahmud-Bayk	"	Yazdian
"	Kalleh-Pazan	"	Kashian (There are 2 caravansarais here one called Kashian and the other Kohneh, new and old)
"	Qazwinian		
"	Garchi-Bashi		
"	Ardestani, Ha	"	Meskaran

Caravansarai	Bazar-Sarajān	Caravansarai	Berehnegan (Seven Caravansarais)
"	Bigdeli	"	Hakim Mohammad
"	Zaman-Bayk Nazer	"	Paydar
"	Abarqoyān	"	Baygom
"	Sallakh-Khane-Shah	"	Mirza-Isma'il
"	Moultanian	"	Mirza-Kochak
"	Molla-Ali-Bayk	"	Aiy Temor-Baik
"	Berang-Fouroshan (Rice Seller)	"	Armenian-Jolfa
"	Mirza Safi	"	Bovanatian
"	Ghorchian		

Caravansarais in the Isfahan region:

Caravansarai	Mahyar	Caravansarai	Kos-Kosar
"	Amin-Abad	"	Antium
"	Gaz	"	Near Passargad
"	Passangan	"	Pul Gar
"	Yazd-Khwa'st	"	Near Shiraz
"	Qumisheh	"	Maqsud-Beg
"	Mirza-Reza	"	Zavāreh
"	Sin	"	Yazd
"	Asupas	"	Abadeh
"	Urjan	"	Ardistan
"	Najen		
"	Dehbid		
"	Murch-Khurt (several caravansarais)		
"	Khan-Khurra		

And in the Kashān region:

Royal caravansarai of Kashān

Caravansari Vaziri

- " Qahrud
- " Aqa-Kamal
- " Aqa-Nura
- " Sinsin
- " Nassir-Abad
- " Sardahaneh
- " Gueber-Abad
- " Pul-Dallak (Barber bridge)
- " Houz-Sultan
- " Abe-Shirin (Sweet water) 3 caravansarais
- " Between Qum and Abe-Shirin (consists of 5 caravansarais)
- " " Qum and Saveh called Avaj.

Routes from Shiraz and Persepolis

There were three different routes from Shiraz to Isfahan in use during the Middle Ages. The westernmost bore right at Juwayn from the Arrajan road, and went to Bayda in the Marvdasht plain and thence by Kurad and Kalar to Symayran and Isfahan. ^{According to Le Strange} This route has been described by Ibn-Kurdādbih and Muqaddasi.¹⁵ The middle road led through the hill country, through Nayin and Yazd-Khwast to Isfahan. The easternmost of the three roads went north-eastwards to Istakhr and thence to Dihbid. At Dihbid the main route continued through Abarqu to Yazd and the branch, for such it was, forked to the left through Abadeh and joined the middle road at Yazd-Khwast

and proceeded through Kumishah to Isfahan. This eastern road, last described, was the road used for winter caravans and is still the usual postal road from Shiraz to Isfahan.

Other major routes from Shiraz and Persepolis are listed as follows:-

1. Westwards. From Persepolis a road ran crossing the river Kur to Bihbahan and Susa.
2. Southwards. From Shiraz to Kazeron and to Bushire.
3. South-eastwards. A road ran through Abad Shapur (Ali-Abad), Fasa, Darabgard and Tarim to Bandar-Abbas.
4. Eastwards. From Persepolis to Babak and from there to Rafsinjan and Jiruft.
5. North-eastwards. There were two separate north-east routes: the summer route to Yazd-Khwast and the winter route to Shahreza and from there by way of Linjan to Isfahan. Finally the famous royal route, after Susa, passed through Ramhoruz, Bihbahan, Fehliyan and ended in Persepolis.

The same unfortunate situation, vis-a-vis caravansarais, prevails at Shiraz as at Isfahan. There is no doubt but that many caravansarais which once graced the city and its environs have disappeared over the centuries. The following should be mentioned, however:-

Caravansarai	Surgestan
"	Surmaj
"	Khan-Kurra
"	Sivand (Between Sivand and Shiraz there are many minor caravansarais).

Shirāz - Bandar-Abbās

The principal route runs via Jahrom and Lar: the following caravansarais were erected on it:-

Caravansarai Pedārī Gur	Caravansarai Mouseer
" Baba-Hadjī	" Housin
" Mussaffari	" Bihery
" Pa-rah	" Kotal
" Kafar	" Kar (consists of 2)
" Mouchek	" Sham-Zangi
" Farahabād	" Tangeh-Dālān
" Jahrom (caravan town)	" Kūr
" Choqal (fox)	" Gichi (consists of 2)
" Moshiro-Al-Molk	" Bandar-Āli

Between Shiraz and Bandar-bushiré there were many Sasanian resting places and Islamic caravansarais - two notable examples being Kāzerom and Burazjān.

Kerman.

From Kerman the ancient caravan routes ran:

South to Bandar^Aabbas on the Persian Gulf

East to the Baluchistan and India

North to Birjand and on towards Turkestan

West to Shirāz and Yazd.

From Kerman also the modern road to Zahedān, which has been used since the Mongol invasion, leads south-east through Mahān, Bam and Mosratabad.

Caravansarais at Kerman are:-

Caravansarai Ganj-Ali-Khan

" Aliaga

" Vakil-Al-Moulk

" Kerman (so-called Kermanshah)

From Shirjan, a famous city of the province, there were the following routes:-

Eastwards, the great caravan route to Mokran ran to Fahraj on the desert border via Bam, Narmashiz and Rayin.

South-eastwards, the route ran to Jirft where it turned south through Valashgird to Hormuz.

Khuzistan.

The highway centred in Ahwaz, to which the traveller from Basra journeyed either by sea or by land. The road north from Ahwaz passed through Askar Mukram and Jondi Shapur to Shushtar where it struck westwards to Tib and then on to Nasit. From Jondi Shapur there was a route through the Lur mountains to Gulpaygan and then north-westwards to Isfahan. Also from Ahwaz two roads bore towards Ram-Hormuz, and continuing eastwards, the frontiers of Fars.

This has been a brief outline of the caravan routes and the location of the caravansarais that served them. It is of interest to remember that in very many cases the courses of these old routes have been followed in the highways of modern Iran and that the

modern traveller, speeding between city and town is passing over the same ground that was trodden perhaps a thousand years ago by merchants bringing to a wondering West the prized produce of the East. In some cases, of course, all that remain to mark an ancient trail are the stones or husks of deserted caravansarais. Even these long-abandoned ruins render to the trained eye mute tribute to the splendours of the age and the men that produced them.

Footnotes to Chapter II

- (1) Sykes, Sir Percy, History of Persia, London 1921, vol. 2, p.164.
- (2) Evelyn Lyle, The Search for the Royal Road, London 1966, p.198
- (3) Īrān-Shahr, (Persian text), UNESCO, Teherān, 1345 (1966), vol. 2 p. 1465.
- (4) Ibn-Hawqal, Al-Masālik Wal-Mamālik, Leiden, 1872, pp. 256-260.
- (5) Le Strange, G. The lands of the Eastern Caliphate, London 1966, p. 194. The writer was unable to check the primary sources since there were no copies of Muqaddasī available in London University Library. (For the publication they will be checked in Teheran).
- (6) From Kermānshāh a road went to Tabrīz and other towns of Rezāiyeh, with an extension to Ardabil.
- (7) From Hamadān going south-west there was a highway to Isfahān.
- (8) From Rayy going north-west there was a road to Zanjān from whence a train led up to the Ardail.
- (9) Nīshāpur, on the Khurāsān route was a focus of many branches: Southwards one went to Tabas, another to Qazvīn while south-east was the high way to Herāt whence Zarang in Sistān was reached.
- (10) Le Strange, op. cit., p. 370.
- (11) Filmer, op. cit., p. 315.
- (12) Istakhri, Masālik Va Mamālik, Persian text, Edited by A. Afshar, Tehran 1961, p. 174.
- (13) Ṣanī-Al-Dawlah, Matla' Al-Shams, Persian text, 1886, vol. 1-2, p. 122.
- (14) From Yazd the caravan route went:
 1. North-eastwards to Mashhad and Bukhara by way of Tabas.
 2. South-westwards to Abadeh on the Shiraz/Isfahan highway.
 3. Westwards to Isfahan and Tehran.
- (15) Le Strange, op. cit., p. 297.

CHAPTER III

Iranian caravansarais from the early Islamic period up to the end of the Timurid period

During the Sasanian dynasty, Iran had passed through one of the most splendid periods of her history. The empire of Iran under the Sasanian kings comprised not only modern Persia but the Mesopotamian valley as far as the southern edge of the Arabian desert. Its capital, Ctesiphon, was not far from present day Baghdad and mute testaments of its former splendour are still to be seen. This golden age was brought to an end by the Arab conquest but Sasanian influence remained for centuries. Indeed there are aspects of Iranian Islamic arts and architecture and building techniques which have their roots in the practices of thousands of years earlier. From the Achaemenian and Sasanian styles the Iranian Islamic architects inherited a sense for scale which enabled them to build splendid, occasionally colossal forms comparable in impressiveness to the greatest earlier models. In other arts, such as painting and metalwork, parallels of influence can be similarly traced.

Not only were earlier models and techniques studied by the new rulers, they also adapted existing buildings to their needs. Churches and temples were turned into mosques and other structures were added to and converted. They made use, too, of material taken from older buildings and ruins. This great social and

artistic upheaval was precipitated in 750 A.D. by the forcible assumption of power by the 'Abbāsids and the consequent moving of the capital to Baghdād, from whence there grew an entirely new style influenced by Iranian arts. Many Iranians and people of Iranian descent thronged the court and court ceremonial and dress took on a distinctly Iranian flavour. There is no doubt that the Arab conquerors were deeply impressed by their contact with a people so proud and possessing such a rich culture.

A remarkable degree of tolerance towards the Iranian heritage was shown at the court of the Caliph himself, a policy followed by relatively autonomous dynasties such as the Saffarids and Tāherids, Sāmānids and Būyids. This approval, sometimes only tacit, led to a conscious revival and burgeoning of Iranian art including literature. Iranian vaulting techniques in building were adopted and there was a similar borrowing of Sasanian painting and handicraft methods. Among the benefits bestowed on Iran herself was that the country was even ready to avail of secure communications. The Islamic empire dominated a vast and culturally diverse area. In time trade created a solid economy and provided the wealth to service it. A new era of building began, both secular and religious: mosques, colleges, bridges and caravansarais were needed and were built everywhere. The latter were among the most important public buildings in the Islamic world but they had a more religious aspect than they had previously, serving and being built by pilgrims and pious visitors to shrines. Their disposition had much in common with the plan of the madrasah, consisting of ivans, halls

laid out in a cruciform pattern. Often of enormous proportions, the caravansarais constitute one of the triumphs of Iranian architecture. Nowhere can we find such perfect accord of design and function. The first consideration was security. This had to be rethought and a special design evolved, since the usual defence arrangements of moat, barbican and machiollation would have been prohibitively expensive in such quantity. There is distressingly little knowledge about the caravansarais of the early period. There are no actual remains: some may have been levelled by earthquakes and others during the several bitter civil or religious conflicts. For the rest, very little research has been done and our knowledge of them is often imprecise, especially in structural detail. We do know, from travellers' memoirs, that they were no less than vital both for commerce and private travel. Both the extent and limitation of such information may be gauged by the following accounts. The traveller, Nāsir-i-Khusrāw, speaking of Isfahan, describes it as a city in an all-Iranian speaking land that he had seen. There were, he said, 200 bankers and fifty caravansarais. ¹

Istakhrī reports that about halfway between the Kārgs-Kūh and Siah-Kuh, on the desert road, stood the caravansarai called Dayar-al-Jiss which, he said, contained guides for the desert, stationed by the order of the Sultān. ² Further, tanks had been constructed there for storing water. Muqaddasī reports that these were never allowed to fall into disrepair and that there were shops for the sale of provisions. ³

Ibn-Hawqal, speaking of Nishāpur says, "in this market, streets where many caravansarais for the merchants and every sort of merchandise could be found, each in its own section, while cobblers, clothiers, bootmakers and men of every trade were abundantly represented." ⁴

The significance of such caravansarais in the desert is underlined by Nāsir-i-Kh̄srāw when he writes about the road from Nāyin-Tabbās:

"We reached the Robāt Zubayda which had fifty cisterns.

Without this caravansarai and its water, no-one could cross this desert." ⁵

Most of the caravansarais in the early Islamic period were built on the main east-west routes, one of the most important of which was the highway through the Jebal province, part of the great caravan route, commonly called Kh̄rāsān road which went from Baghdād to Transoxania and the Far East. ⁶ Entering the province at Halwān, this highway passed through it diagonally, coming first to Kermānshāh then to Hamadān, Saveh and North to Ray after which it passed eastwards out of Jebal province to Dāmāghān and Kh̄rāsān.

Under the Būyid dynasty (935-1055) in central Iran there developed somewhat different patterns: simultaneous with those in Khorasan under the Samanids and Ghaznavids, all dynasties were animated by the finest Iranian traditions. The energetic and able rulers, Fakhr-Al-Dāwlah and Azāzad-Dāwlah, undertook extensive building of which almost nothing remains. ⁷ According

to historians, however, many buildings were erected at Isfahan, Kermānshāh and Shirāz. Among them is a caravansarai built by Azāzād-Dōvlah on the road between Baghdād and Khōrāsān at Bisuton, near Kermānshāh. It was constructed from the ruins of Sasanian material and rebuilt by the Il-Khānids at the time of Sultan Ōljaitou. 8

All that remains now is the east wall and the entrance gate. Under the brilliant Samanid dynasty, which arose in East Khorasan, we discover a unique and consistent development of the Iranian artistic tradition. By the end of the ninth century A.D., there was in full vigour what can only be described as an Iranian renaissance, a rebirth which continued through the tenth century, one of the most exceptional and creative in Iranian history. Literature flourished as did all the arts and sciences. They were pursued with a seriousness and enthusiasm that is reflected in contemporary pottery, which for maturity and vigour, ranks with the world's greatest. This renaissance, initiated by the Sāmānids, was carried on by the Ghāznavids who, though warlike, inherited sophisticated tastes, architectural ambitions and enthusiasm for literature and art. Under the Islamic dynasty of the Ghāznavids, motifs from various sources, but principally Sasanian, were adopted and perpetuated. Ghazneh was the cultural centre: many buildings were erected there including madrassah, caravansarais and libraries and many poets and scholars came to live and work there.⁹ Among them was the scientist, Al-Bīrūnī and the world known poet, Firdausi, author of the Iranian epic

masterpiece, 'The Book of Kings' (Shāh Nameh).

Robāt-i-Mehī (or Chāhe) (pl. 1.2) a ruined caravansarai from the Ghaznavid period, still visible from the Mashhad-Sarakhs road, is said by some to have been built as a memorial to Firdausi after his death. It was first described by Andre Godard¹⁰ and has one courtyard, a rounded turret at each corner and in the centre of the northern, eastern and western walls there are projecting bastions. The width of the caravansarai is 228 ft. and its depth from the south-facing gateway back is 232 ft. The iwans in the east and west sides of the courtyard measure 13.9 ft. That in the north side is 14.3 ft across, as is the gateway. The facade of the whole entrance structure is 42 ft. long and reminds one of the entrance of Robāt-e-Sharaf, the Seljuq caravansarai. This facade also possesses the bulk of the decorative tilework still visible at Robat Mehī. Such decoration was important to the Ghaznavids, whose architecture provides a wonderful example of a period when the decoration seems to have been considered (almost) as important as the structure itself. Without excavation, a complete ground plan of the building will not be available, but the nearest approximate plans would seem to be those of Qasr-al-Hayr ^{Al-Gharbi} in Syria, dating from the eighth century, and the caravansarai of Dār-Khatan, probably early twelfth century, in Turkmenistan.¹¹ Though some scholars believe that this caravansarai must be later than Ghaznavid, according to the Hill and Grabar and comparison with other Ghaznavid constructions such as the minaret of Bahram-shah and minaret of Masūd III at Ghazneh both with brick

decoration, it seems certain that it can be ascribed to the Ghaznavid period.¹² This era of artistic enthusiasm and progress was inherited and capitalised on by the Seljuqs who came to power with the establishment of a dynasty by Toghrul-Beg. He and his successors, Alp-Arslān, Malik-Shāh and Sultān Sanjar, ably abetted by Nizām-al-Mulk, one of the greatest statesmen Asia has ever produced, embarked on successive building programmes.¹³ Their architecture was powerful and noble. They reverted to the iwan-hall and dome chamber layout of pre-Islamic Iranian architecture and developed a great number of architectural forms in religious buildings. Fortunately the secular structures of the period, on which there is most information, are the caravansarais. Apart from several minor caravansarais and those of the cold mountain regions (which were entirely covered) the caravansarais were always composed of a spacious courtyard with four iwans on the normal axes. The one through which access was gained was often topped with a dome, in fact a larger scale application of the classic four iwan style, paralleling the madrassah. They were constructed at every isolated station and often served as fortified hotels for the traveller.^{The Seljuqs and} The Ottomans built similar structures in Anatolia of which some have survived from the thirteenth and fourteenth centuries.¹⁴ These were vaulted and usually consisted of a number of halls with a domed inner courtyard and sometimes an oratory. A few ruined caravansarais remain from the Seljuq period in Iran, among them Robāt-i-Malik (pl.3) and Robāt Sharaf and the great caravansarai at Sabzevar on the Khorasan route. From these

once can see the high degree of craftsmanship attained by the builders and architects. One of the most outstanding was the caravansarai at Zaferanieh, which was built by a rich merchant who wished to perpetuate his name.¹⁵ It stood on the main east-west highway and formed a rectangle of about 150 yards by 95 yards. There was a tower at each corner and two on each side. In the centre of one wall there was a massive gateway, flanked on each side by nine arched niches. The oblong itself was divided into two compartments by a line of chambers and stabling space with a large arch like a gateway in the centre. The first of these compartments had ten arched niches and the gateway on two of its sides, and there were seven niches with a large blind archway on the other two. The second compartment was square and had eight niches and a gateway on each of its inside faces. The wall was coated on the outside with burned brick and lime and the arches with tile work and mortar. An interesting feature was the mosque to the right of the entrance. It had a k̄ufic inscription with the names of the first four caliphs. On the east wall of the caravansarai there was another inscription^{reading}

"The constructed during the reign of the great
Sultan"¹⁶

Although nothing remains of the caravansarai and no plan of it has been drawn, it once contained, according to J. Fraser, 1700 rooms plus baths and shops.¹⁷

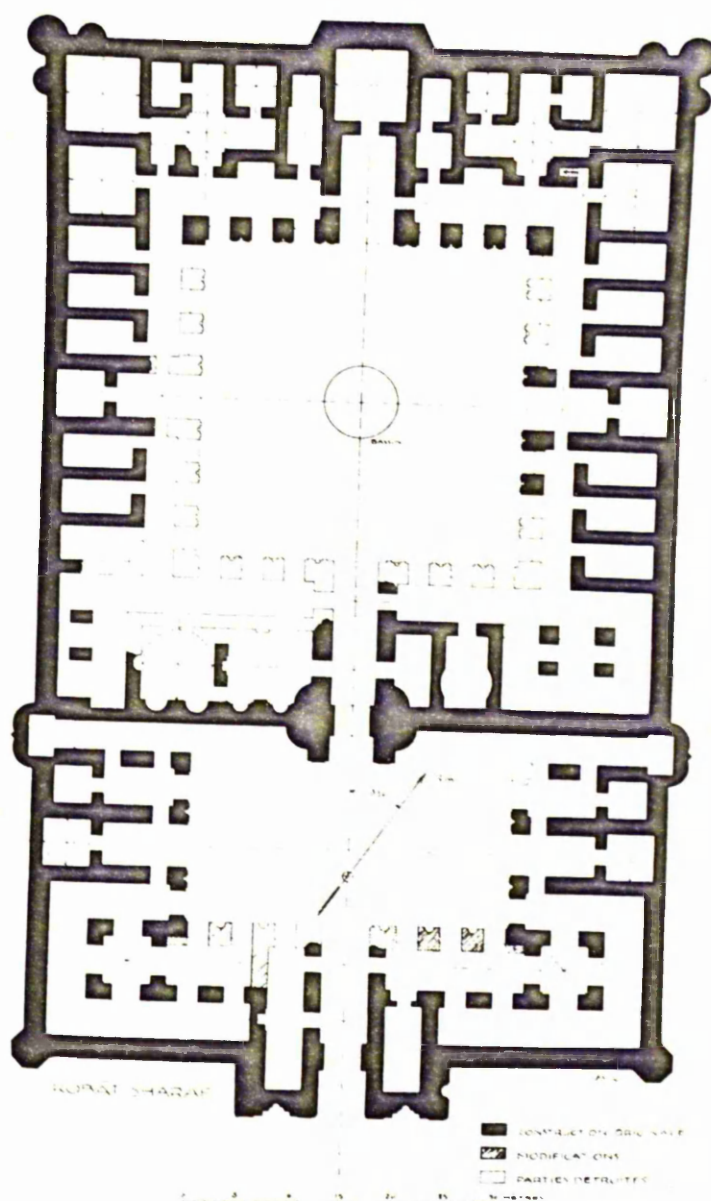
Another imposing Seljūq construction is Robāt-i-Malik to the north-west of Kh̄rāsān in the region of the Oxus. The one remaining section of wall suffices to indicate its massiveness and establishes

it as one of the most imposing Islamic ruins in Iran. It consists of a row of great pillars or piers connected at the top by arches; a narrow ornamental frieze marks the plain cornices. From Robat-i-Malik is demonstrated the Seljuq builders' preference for forthright and powerful forms. 18

Another Seljuq caravansarai, built in a desert area on the road between Nishapur and Marv, is Robat-i-Sharaf (Fig. 1. Pls. 4-7) 19 This is the only large and important caravansarai still extant from Seljuq times. It consists of two large, four-iwan courtyards each containing a fine stucco mihrāb. The second courtyard is somewhat larger and better finished than the other but no satisfactory explanation has been forwarded for this unless it is that the second was a loading and gathering bay. It contained a well or pool, which may lend substance to this interpretation. Be that as it may, the walls are 70 feet high, made of brick, and have bastions at each corner with two round bastions in the centre of the north and south walls, each sandwiching a pointed bastion between them. Except for the absence of turquoise tilework, the building is a veritable museum of ornamental devices of the period. There are dozens of different geometric patterns in brickwork as well as the usual decorated filling between the bricks. One niche in the second courtyard has decoration almost exactly similar to that in the squinch at the mausoleum of Arsalan Sadhib at Sangbast near Mashhad.

The decorative kufic inscriptions in stucco are also

Fig.I. Plan of
Caravansarai
or Rōbat Sharaf



paralleled at Sangbast. The caravansarai was probably built by Sharaf al-Dīn ibn-Tāher, for forty years governor of Khorāsān and later, Sultan Sanjar's minister. There is in fact, an interesting description mentioning the Sultan Sanjar, but it is dated 1154 - 1155 A.D. and probably refers to the first restoration work. ²⁰

These desert caravansarais are now largely forgotten and neglected, but 1000 years ago they were havens of peace, comfort and security, isolated and often splendid buildings in whose welcome coolness the weary traveller would rest for a time. When he left, his place was taken by an equally thankful traveller in a chain that spread across the land.

This mellow state of affairs did not endure, however, for in 618/1218 A.D., on the pretext of reprisal for a massacred trading mission, Chānghīz Khan and his army swept into Iran, pillaging and burning as they went. During this cruel invasion whole cities were razed to the ground, entire provinces were depopulated, and a heavy pall of smoke hung over the whole dountry. Of course building and all the plastic arts came to a standstill: the whole country reeled under the shock of Mongol barbarity. Little by little, however, when it seemed the country must surely lose its identity or become a waste of ruins and ashes, the old process of assimilation began. Slowly the unruly Mongol conqueror came under the sway of Persian culture and Islam.

Hulagu conquered Baghdād and put an end to the 'Abbāsīd

dynasty. In 1251, deeming the time right, he adopted the title Il-Khān and founded the Mongol Il-Khānid dynasty which rebuilt much of the devastated country. Hulagu himself started the reconstruction work and about 1260 built an enormous observatory, at great expense, in Marāgha. The ruins of the palace of his successor, 'Abaqā, at Takht-i Solaymān are still extant along with some other buildings, but it was not until the end of the century that the benefits of a strong central government were really felt to the advantage of the country as a whole. It is convenient to date the new golden era from the beginning of the reign of Ghāzan Khān in 1295. Not only were his court and capital city of Tabriz completely Persian and Muslim in character, but he himself was converted to Islam. It is generally held that this was a purely political move but be that as it may there is no doubt that his conversion was a major factor in the increasingly speedy assimilation of the erstwhile invaders. This energetic ruler and his equally able successor, Oljaitu, established and consolidated a legal system and introduced equitable taxes. Trade and culture exchanges prospered on roads guarded against deprecations by a permanent force of 10,000 men. A whole colony for the arts and sciences was built as a suburb of Tabriz by Rashīd al-Dīn, Ghāzan Khān's prime minister. Men of learning from all quarters of the world were housed in 30,000 dwellings. There were no less than 24 caravansarais in this community, many no doubt serving the same function as modern guest-houses. In time the 'estate'

was encircled again by the suburb of Ghazaniah which soon almost equalled the old city in size. Each entrance to this garden suburb was furnished with a caravansarai and bath house so that no merchant entering the city lacked conveniences. The bulk of the trade flowing from or through Tabriz was then linked with the east. (There are references to Chinese scientists working there and nearby irrigation projects were in the hands of Chinese engineers.) ²¹

Europe had been largely isolated since the Roman empire had fallen, but now travellers from the west began to trickle through to Iran once more. The routes they used are still the major modern highways of the area: Erzurum-Khoy Tabriz and from Trabzon on the Black Sea through lesser Armenia. ^{One of} The major route to India was (from Tabriz) via Yazd and Kerman. Paradoxically, at the height of its prosperity, Tabriz began its relative decline. Ghazan's successor, ^{" "} Oljaitu, transferred the Il-Khānid capital to Sultaniya and the finest artisans and merchants were ordered to transfer their residence to that place. Rashid al-Din who was also ^{" "} Oljaitu's prime minister, set about the construction of Sultaniya with the same zeal and energy he had shown in Tabriz, building thousands of houses, mosques and hospitals.

This city, of which so little remains, quickly became one of the foremost cities of the eastern world.

Merchants and goods came from all parts of the world: via the Persian Gulf from India, from China through Central Asia, and the West via the Black Sea parts. The five great roads of

Iran converged here, roads which, in the interests of the new prosperity were vigilantly guarded. In cases of pillaging, not only were the malfactors punished but also the whole district in which the crime had occurred. Records show that among the foreign community at Sultāniya, were groups from Venice and Geneva.

In the succeeding reigns of Hulagu and Abū Saīd the Il-Khānids consolidated the political power and influence of Azerbaijan, the province which contained successive capitals at Marāgha, Tabriz and Sultāniya, though the latter, not being on the highway, suffered perhaps the speediest decline of any dynastic capital and little remains today but the sunbaked shell of the once splendid mausoleum.

There are at least a hundred buildings including mosques, shrines and caravansarais, remaining from the Il-Khānid period, most of them dating from the reign of Abū Saīd. Many fine examples of course are in the capital province, but there are also good examples elsewhere. One of the finest is at Sīn (Fig.2. Pls. 8,9,10.), just over 20 Km. north of Isfahān.²²⁾ It is rectangular in plan and has a monumental entrance inscribed with the year of the construction, given as 730 A.H. (1330 A.D.).²³⁾

Another prime example dated the same year is at Sarcham, (Fig.3., Pls. 11, 12.) some 80 Km. from Zanjan, between Sultāniya and Tabriz.²⁴⁾ According to contemporary historians this was but one of two built on twin roads forking from Sarcham to Tabriz and Maragha.²⁵⁾ Of the other, nothing remains but the depleted

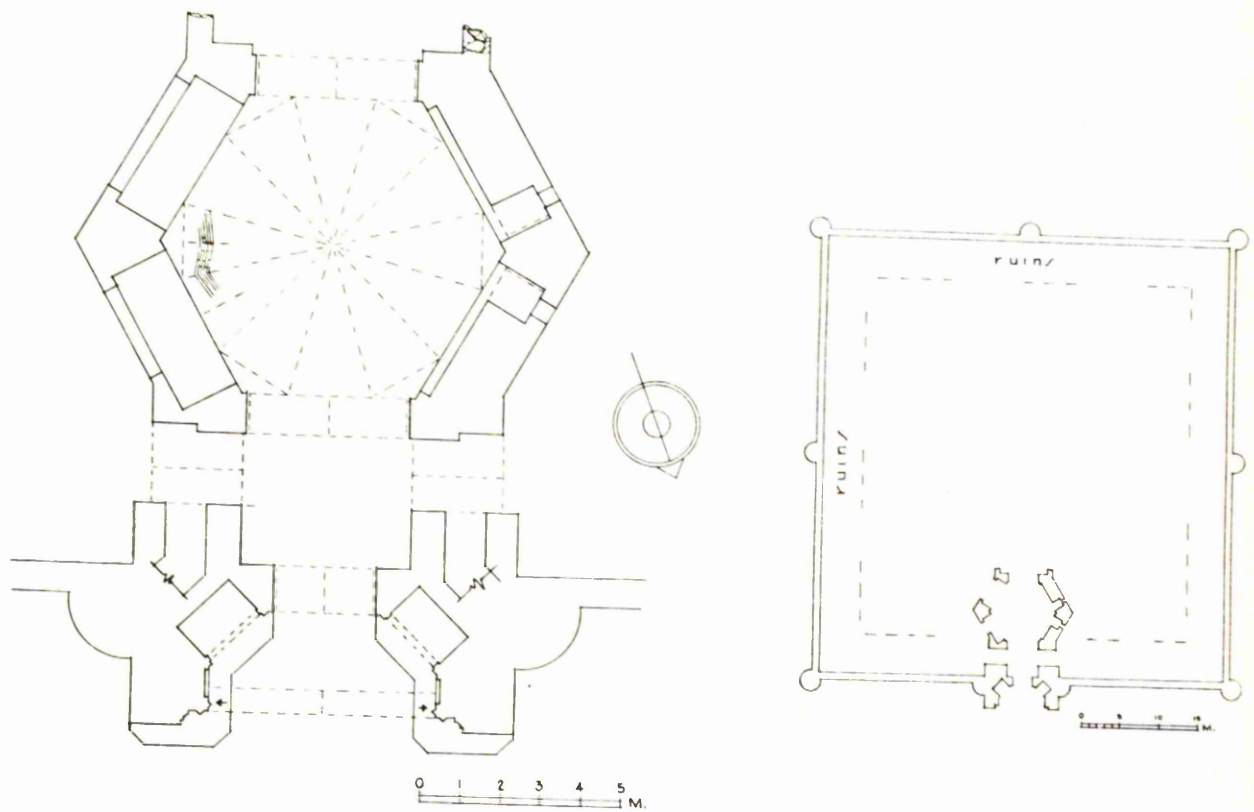


Fig.2. Plan of Caravansarai Sīn

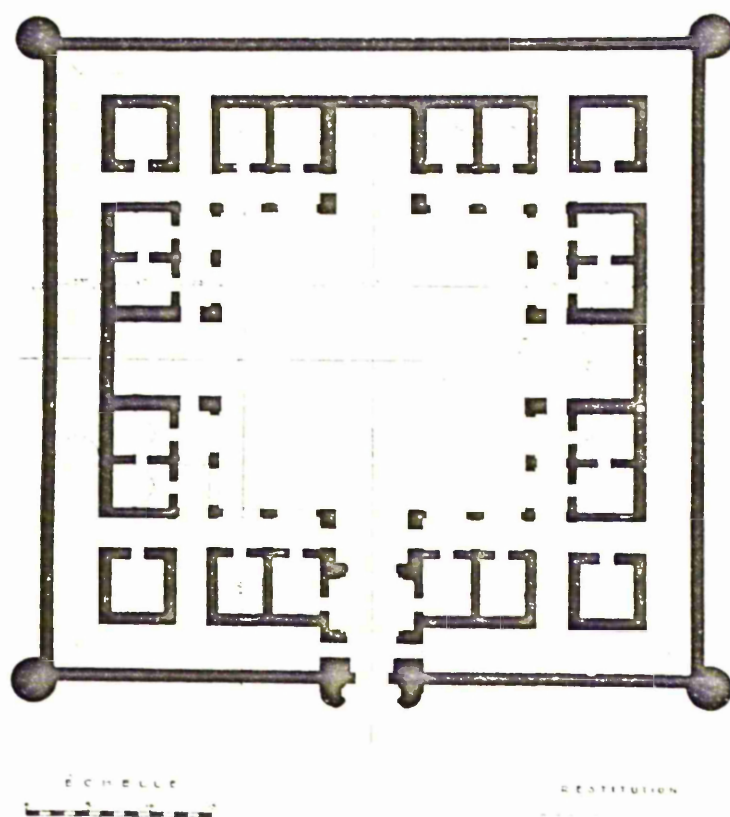


Fig.3. Plan of Caravansarai Sarchan

ruin of the second testifies to its quality when in use.

Influences from Syria, no doubt gained from the Il-Khānid contact with the crusaders, are, in my opinion, marked.

(Another example is at Takht-i-Sulayman. During the excavation by the Iranian and German expedition on the Palace of Aba-Qākhān a gothic capital was found. This was quite unusual in that district, and was probably brought from Syria.)²⁶

The style of the entrance doorway and inscription (the former in sandstone, the latter in marble) is almost duplicated on a building still extant in Aleppo.²⁷ The building itself is a straightforward rectangular structure enclosing a central courtyard and containing four iwans on the central axes.

The south iwan affords access through the main portal which survives in fairly good condition. Its corner bastions, vertical surfaces, transverse arch and stalactite vault are all typical features.

North of Marand, between Tabriz and Jolfa, there is another rectangular plan caravansarai with ten bastions and a great portal. Known locally as the caravansarai of Hulagu (Fig.4., Pls. 13-14), it may be judged to have been a fine specimen by the almost intact gateway as well as the large blocks of dressed sandstone which constitute the base courses.²⁸ The interior chambers are destroyed, but much of the decoration has survived, and the patterns are most sensitively executed relating with great feeling to the architectural forms on which they were applied. Again, typically of North-West Iran, there is the combination of stone and fired

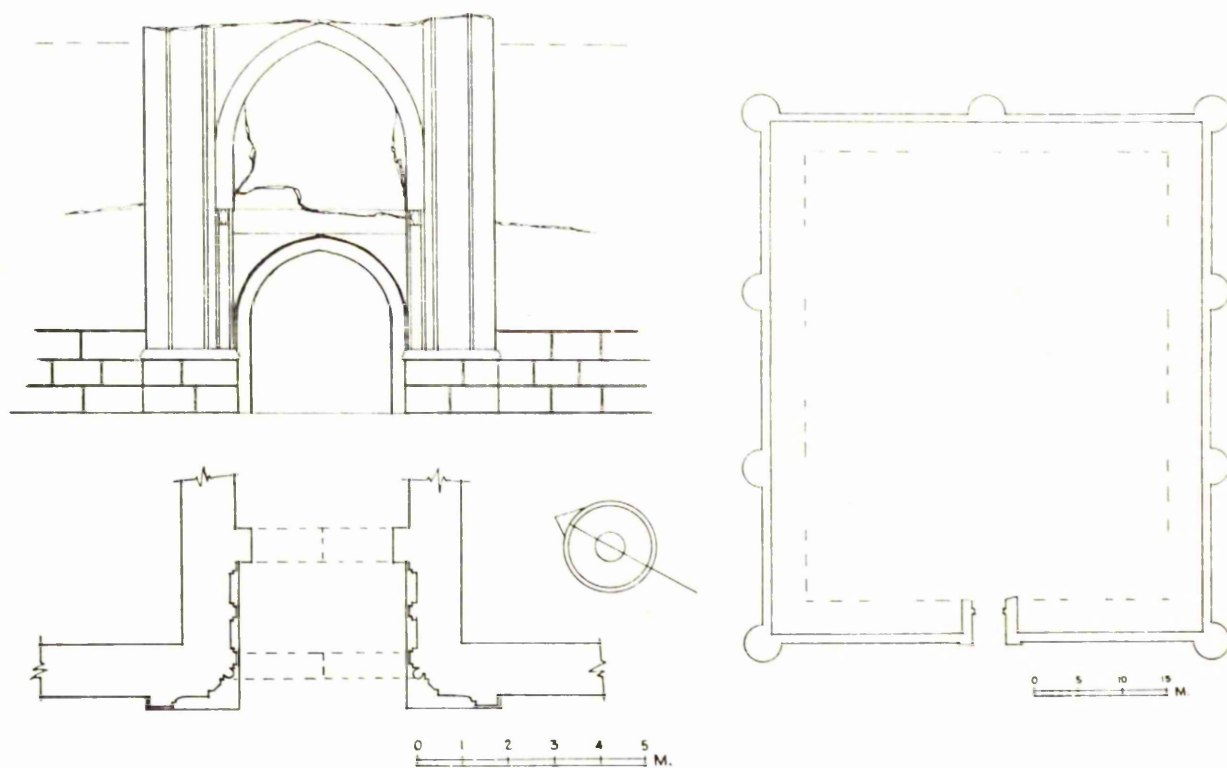


Fig.4. Plan of Caravansarai Marand

brick. South of the portal unit the outside wall remains to a height of about 4 metres. An extremely interesting example is in northern Azerbaijan. It is interesting for several diverse reasons: its period (it is one of the few remaining Mongol caravansarais), and its combination of ornamentation and robustness. Regarding the latter aspect, its solidity is probably due to the importance of the pass it served and guarded, the road to Jolfa 24 miles away and beyond to Armenia. The rectangular walls are largely intact, as are the corner bastions. The glory of the place is the entrance and arch; the former is entirely faced with the strips of baked brick inlaid with turquoise blue tiles in geometric designs. The gate is surmounted by an Arabic inscription in raised brick overlying blue tilework.²⁹

The architecture of this period cannot be said to constitute any basic advance stylistically, as it evolved from earlier Seljuq forms and may be considered a development of them. There was the same general use of baked brick for decorative geometric facings, and where stone was used it was generally limited to Azerbaijan, and often then only to the lower part of the building. Its extremely important contribution to the development of Persian architecture as a whole was the adoption of plasterwork for both internal and external facings. The plaster was often tinted red, blue, green or yellow, or combinations of these. This transfer to a colour based ornamentation speeded and almost certainly influenced the use

of glazed tiles. At first small pieces were used, generally of light and dark blue. Then white and black were introduced, the ornamented surfaces increasing until eventually both interiors and exteriors were covered in multicoloured faience. This technique was to become the hallmark of the Timurid and Safavid periods.³⁰

Timur, founder of the Timurid dynasty, and his successors, Ulug Beg, Shah Rukh and Baysongur, were keenly devoted to the arts and lovers of Persian art. In their reigns architecture reached unprecedented heights of lavish ornamentation and the painting of the period is a model followed to this day in Persia. In fact, the advance in and patronage of the arts make this one of the golden ages in Iranian history. Though Timur and Shah Rukh built principally in Samarqand they also endowed many Persian cities and the majority of the artists and artisans building for them were Persian. Unfortunately, the greater part of their architecture has disappeared³¹⁾ but from what remains and from contemporary accounts we can say that the basic structures owe very much to the architecture of preceeding periods and especially to that of the Mongols. Its great force and singularity lay in its sumptuous decoration. At this time Samarqand seemed the focal point of the civilised world. Architects, engineers and craftsmen flocked from every part of the far flung Timurid empire. Although Samarqand was, so to speak, the jewel in the Timurid crown, there was also extensive and impressive building in Iran. Many caravansarais were erected

and routes were maintained and improved for religious as well as commercial purposes. In June, 1404, Clavijs, the envoy of the Spanish king, passed through Tabriz, and Nishapur, to Samarqand to visit Timur and left much enlightening information. Speaking of Tabriz he says, "throughout the city there are fine roadways with open spaces, well laid out and round these are seen many great buildings each with its own main doorway facing the square, such are the caravansarais: and within are constructed separate compartments and shops with offices that are planned for various purposes. Leaving these caravansarais you pass into the market streets where goods of all kinds are sold, such as silk stuffs and cotton cloths, crepes, taffetas, raw silk and jewellery, for in this shop wares of every kind may be found. There is indeed an immense concourse of merchants and merchandise here. Thus, for instance, in certain caravansarais, those who sell cosmetics and perfumes for women are established and to be met with: the women coming here to these shops to buy the same, for they are wont to use many perfumes and unguents." He adds that he remained in Tabriz for nine days and "when the time for our departure had come, for us to set out on the journey forward, they brought us horses for us to ride; those that were the property of Timur himself, indeed not only for us, the Ambassador, but likewise for all our attendants with sumpter-beasts for our luggage. It is to be noted that from Tabriz all the distance to Samarqand Timur had

established relays of horses kept ready at command so that his messengers may ride on his missions at night and day without let or hindrance.

The post houses (will be found in some places only 50 while in others as many as 200) help to serve the highway all the way to Samarqand." 32)

Finally, when he journeys from Nishapur to Samarqand he sleeps in the great caravansarai which was the post station in the desert.

The end of the Timurid dynasty and the beginning of the Safavid period marks the start of the supreme age of the caravansarai. Under the Safavids it reached a pinnacle of unparalleled splendour, dizzily remote from its humble outpost origins. The finest examples, no less functional, rival in beauty the greatest achievement of man.

Footnotes to Chapter III

- (1) Nāsir-i-Khusraw, Safar Nameh, Persian text, Paris, 1881, p.92
- (2) Istakhrī, op. cit., p.186.
- (3) Le Strange, op. cit., p. 208.
- (4) Ibn-Hawqal, op. cit. p. 311.
- (5) Nāsir-i-Khusraw, op. cit., p. 94.
- (6) Among the early caravansarai on the Khurasān road was a brick caravansarai which was built by Harun-Al-Rashīd or by his son Mamun at Qumis province.
- (7) Mustawfi Hamdulāh, Tarīkh Gosideh, Persian text, Paris 1903, pp. 146 and 152.
- (8) See p. 22.
- (9) Encyclopedia of World Art, vol. VII, p. 301.
- (10) Godard, A., Athar-i-Iran, vol. IV, 1940, p. 73.
- (11) Derek Hill, "A long lost memorial to Firdawsi", The Illustrated London News, 13 August 1966.
- (12) Hill, D., and Grabar, O., Islamic architecture and its decoration, London 1967, p. 66.
- (13) In this period cities such as Khurasān and Kirman continued to flourish. Although we have little direct information on the economic condition of Iran at this time, according to historians there was security on the roads and also watchtowers, cisterns and caravansarais along the route.
- (14) Kurt Erdman, Das anatolische Karavanseray, Berlin 1961, idem Ars Orientalis, vol. I, 1954, pp. 77-94.
- (15) Fraser, op. cit., p. 383.
- (16) Pope, A.U., Survey of Persian Art, vol. III, p. 1246.
- (17) Fraser, op. cit., p. 383.
- (18) Pope, A.U., op. cit., p. 1279 and Pl. 272.
- (19) Godard, A., Athar-i-Iran, vol. IV, p. 13.
- (20) Behnam, A., Honar Va Mardom (Art and people), vol. 52, pp. 6-9
- (21) Wilber, N., Donald, The Architecture of Islam the Il-Khanid period, Princeton 1955, p. 18.

- (22) Sin is a small village north of Isfahan and was of some importance as a caravan station. With the construction by the Safavid of the elegant caravansarai Madar-Shāh, the Sin route lost its popularity in favour of the Gaz-Murch-Khrt route.
- (23) The inscription gives the name of the last Mongol ruler Abu Said and his minister.
- (24) Caravansarai Sarcham has described by Godard in Athab-i-Iran vol. I, pp. 152-3, and Wilber, p. 180.
- (25) Le Strange, op. cit., p. 231, and Godard, op. cit., p. 150.
- (26) Sarfaraz and Kiani, Takht-i-Sulayman, Persian text, University of Tabriz, 1968, p. 78.
- (27) Wilber, op. cit., p. 180.
- (28) This caravansarai was described by Wilber (p. 176-7), and from Dieulafoy we have a fine drawing of its portal entrance (pl. 13).
- (29) According to Wilber, Khanikof in 1857 visited this caravansarai while some part of the inscription remained (Wilber p. 176). In 1965 the present writer visited the building, which was in a very poor condition, and there was no trace of inscription.
- (30) Wilber, N. Donald, Iran past and present, Princeton University, 1958, p. 56.
- (31) Although no trace remains of caravansarais of the Timūrid period, according to historian Jafar-ibn-Hassan Jafari, who wrote the history of Yazd in the 9th century, there were some caravansarai built by local Timūrid governors. One of these was a beautiful caravansarai near the Yazd gate with 80 rooms and a spring, and at Dehak palace at Yazd there was a caravansarai with 35 rooms, beautiful domes and a marble pool which was unique.
- (32) Calvijo, Embassy to Tamerlane 1403-1406, London 1923, pp. 152, 155, 192.

CHAPTER IV

IRAN AT THE TIME OF THE SAFAVID PERIOD

The Safavid period was one of the most famous and glorious of the native dynasties of Iran since the introduction of Islam. It took its name from Shaikh-Safi-al-Din-Ishāq, from whom its founder, Ismail Safavi was the sixth descendant.¹ The family had long been settled at Ardabil as hereditary spiritual instructors of the people, and Ismail, after the death of his two older brothers, was crowned in Tabriz in June 1501 A.D. while still young. By the year 1510 A.D. he won Shirvan, Azerbaijan and Iraq from his enemies and so consolidated the Safavid dynasty, making his capital at Tabriz.

Although the Shia doctrine had always been popular in Iran, Shah Ismail was the first ruler to make it the state religion.² He encouraged it with great success particularly in the north. He virtually extinguished the Sunni doctrine in Iran, causing perpetual warfare with the Sunni Ottomans. The supremacy of Shi'ism in this period in Iran united the people of the country and of each generation, to fight for a common cause.

Shah Ismail died in 1524 A.D. Shah Tahmasp, the second Safavid king, ruled from 1524 to 1576 A.D. He succeeded in keeping the eastern frontier secure but in the west he had several inconclusive wars with the Ottoman ruler, Shah Suleyman. To escape the Ottoman menace Shah Tahmasp transferred the capital

from Tabriz to Qazvin.

In this period the European countries were also being threatened by the Turks and wanted to make an alliance with Iran against this common enemy. Although the idea appealed to both sides and an agreement was reached, it did not become effective because of the difficulties of communication.

In the year 1544 Humāyūn, the Mughal who had been driven from his country, came to Shah Tahmasp's court and the Iranian ruler helped him to recover his throne in India.³ Humāyūn's stay in Iran was the start of an interesting period in which Persian art and Indian art exchanged ideas, each one reflecting the ideas of the other.

In 1562 A.D. while Shah Tahmasp was ruling, Anthony Jenkinson, the first English traveller to visit Iran, came to the court at Qazvin, along with his English companions, to present a letter from Queen Elizabeth. His aim was to establish commerce between Iran and England and this was successfully achieved using a route through Russia.⁴

Shah Tahmasp studied painting and was a calligrapher of some note.⁵ He encouraged the arts and ^a few new buildings were erected in his time, especially in Qazvin, the capital. He died in 1576 A.D. Ismail II and Mohammad Khodabandeh were his successors, followed by Shah Abbas the Great.

Shah Abbas was born in January 1571 and died in Mazandaran 1629 after a reign of 42 years. When he came to power the Ottomans were in control of Azerbaijan and ^{The} Uzbeks in the east,

who had invaded Kh̄rāsān and were in possession of Herat and Mashhad. Faced with this double threat by the Turks, Shāh Abbās the Great signed a peace treaty in Constantinople, most unfavourable to Iran. Shāh Abbās then entrusted the reorganization of the army to Allāh Verdi-Khān, on the lines suggested by Robert Sherly.⁶ He then drove the Uzbeks out of Kh̄rāsān and once free of that threat in the east he turned westward and defeated the Ottomans, recovering Azerbāijān, Armenia and Georgia.

Sir Robert Sherly's visit to Iran was the beginning of a period of good communication between Iran and Europe. Diplomatic relations between India and Iran were also developed by Shāh Abbās. In 1622 the Shah joined a British naval force in the Persian Gulf to drive the Portuguese from the island of Hurmoz, and he encouraged British and Dutch merchants to trade at Bandar-Abbās, making it the principal centre for the export of silk.⁷ Shāh Abbās was one of the most famous figures among the Safavid rulers, and the equal of any ruler in the long history of Iran. The years of his reign were magnificent and well documented, particularly in the accounts of foreign travellers who visited his court. According

To Wilber
Sir Anthony Sherly wrote of him, "His person then is such as well-understanding nature would fit for the end proposed for his being excellently well-shaped, of a most well-proportioned stature, strong and active; his colour somewhat inclined to man-like blacknesse, is also more black by the sunnes burning: His furniture of mind infinitely royal wise, valiant, liberall,

temperate, merciful and an exceeding lover of justice, embracing royally other virtues as farre from pride and vanitie as from all unprincely signs or acts." 8

The capital was moved from Qazvin to Isfahan in 1597-8 and Isfahan soon hummed with activity in the field of arts and crafts. Shah Abbas enriched the city with palaces, mosques, gardens, bridges and caravansarais. He improved communications by much construction of roads, notably the coast road through Mazandaran.

The Shia religion, established by Shah Ismail as the state religion, remained and Shah Abbas the Great made Mashhad the principal centre for Shia Moslem pilgrims. He built a great number of caravansarais along the pilgrims' route from Isfahan to Khurasan. In 1629 when Shah Abbas was dying, he ordered that Sum-Mirza, son of Safi Mirza, should be proclaimed his successor.

The new monarch took the title of Shah-Safi and his reign of thirteen years was one long series of executions. Shah-Safi died in 1642 and was succeeded by his son, Abbas II, then only 10 years old, and the country was ruled by his ministers for some years until Abbas II was old enough to rule. During his reign the country was peaceful and art and architecture flourished. To him we owe a stately quadrangle which is a particularly fine example of Safavid architecture and ceramic work. 9

Safi, the oldest son of Shah Abbas II, was twenty years old at the time of his father's death. He was crowned under the

title of Sulayman (1667-1694). The decline of the dynasty proceeded placidly under the new monarch who was voluptuous and unwarlike. Throughout Sulayman's long reign probably the most magnificent of his many foreign embassies was one from France, terming themselves "General and Ambassadors from the Great King of Europe".^{I0} He was an enlightened and tolerant monarch and welcomed the ambassadors of all the European powers, even of Russia whose habits disgusted him. Shah Sulayman continued the tradition of the family at Mashhad and repaired the golden dome which had been damaged by an earthquake,^{II}

He also Built a number of caravansarais in the Kermanshah region.^{I2} His health was always poor, but he reigned for 29 years until he died and was succeeded by his son, Sultan-Husain in 1694 A.D. Sultan Husain was a weak prince who permitted ecclesiastics to conduct all his affairs of state. Those who refused to conform to the state religion of the Shia were persecuted and this fatuous policy provoked the hostility of the Afghans who held Qandahar for Persia, so that in 1709 Mirwais, governor of that province, proclaimed his independence.

Mahmud Mirwais's son invaded Persia in 1722 and beseiged Isfahan. Famine compelled the city to surrender and Mahmud deposed Sultan-Husain but died soon afterwards. In 1729 A.D. the brother and successor of Mahmud was expelled from Persia, and Nader Quli (founder of the Afshar dynasty, 1736-1747) placed Tahmasp II of the Safavi family on the throne. Shortly afterwards he demoted him as being unfit to reign and caused his son, then

only eight months old, to be proclaimed ruler under the title of Abbas III. The child died soon afterwards and in February 1735 Nadir Shah Afshar assumed the royal title and extinguished the Safavid dynasty after 234 years of great and magnificent rule.

Edward Brown writes that the appearance of the Safavid dynasty was important not only for Iran but for Europe too. 13 Being a native Iranian dynasty it led to a revival of the Iranian national spirit, affecting all aspects of culture. Shah Abbas in particular, was very worthy to take his place by the side of his famous contemporaries, Sulayman of the Ottomans, Akbar Shah of India, Charles V of the Holy Roman Empire, and Elizabeth and Shakespeare of England.

In the sixteenth century the artistic culture of Iran entered a new period of splendour and magnificence. Under the enthusiastic Safavid dynasty art reached the acme of its manifold expression in textiles, in ceramics, in painting and above all in architecture, of which many glorious examples remain to be seen in Iran, especially in Isfahan.

In architecture Iranian tradition went back to the Old Period. Plan forms, structural methods and materials used were all continuations of the work of earlier periods. Under the Sasanians the use of the arch as the central element in construction was developed. The transition from the elliptical to the pointed arch which came to distinguish the city gate, the mosque, the

portal, the long bazaar aisle, the entrance to the caravansarais and giving supremem distinction to the bridge of Isfahan, was probably a development of the ninth century, and it was in Iran that it attained its highest and fullest expression. The Iranians developed the arch, the vault and the dome considerably and showed how to bring them into harmonious relationships together.

There are three main groups of Safavid architecture; religious, domestic and public. As already mentioned, religious architecture continued in the old tradions, while civil architecture followed the classic forms and attempts at town planning acquired a new importance.

With the encouragement of the Safavid ruler in the capital and the governors in the cities, public buildings such as roads, bridges, bazaars, madrasahs and caravansarais increased. The roads no longer exist but innumerable caravansarais scattered through the country attest to Shah Abbas the Great's desire for a reliable system of communication. Almost nothing remains of early Safavid buildings in Tabriz, and in Qazvin, the former capital. The two great palaces that Shah Ismail built at Khoy and Qazvin, disappeared. The one at Qazvin was last seen in 1681 by European travellers. The only remaining examples from which to judge the work of the first Safavid ruler are a few religious monuments of little significance. There is, however, a superb example of Khashi decoration, restrained and richly harmonious, at Sava on the Mihrab of the Masjad-i-Jameh¹⁴. This

mosque was erected in the early sixteenth century on the traditional court and four iwan plan with a beautiful prayer hall and dome chamber.

When Shah Tahmasp transferred his capital from Tabriz to Qazvin he built a mosque, a palace and a caravansarai. The caravansarai has been described as a royal guest house for important visitors with at least 250 rooms. 15

Real building activity started in the time of Shah Abbas the Great. He was quite different from other Safavid rulers. His planning was ambitious and he demanded rapid and impressive results. This attitude did not encourage the minor arts, but his imperious temperament was well suited to the encouragement of architecture and under him a new style evolved. His immediate predecessors seem to have been content to refine and preserve the Timurid architectural style as they found it, simple and fundamental. Shah Abbas did not reject these traditions, but using the Timurid architectural heritage, he encouraged all forms of advanced interpretations of its structure, forms and decoration.

At Isfahan, Shah Abbas undertook the construction of a new imperial city adjacent to the ancient town. Apart from making Isfahan the architectural wonder of the world, he embellished Shiraz, Ardabil, Tabriz and other cities with fine structures. The first stage of the work established the main lines of the general plan and saw the erection of the buildings essential for the domestic, civil and religious requirements of the court.

The second stage began early in the seventeenth century. Newly-built structures were elaborated and larger and finer buildings were constructed. Around the great Imperial Square were ranged a palace, the Imperial Mosque, a smaller mosque and a monumental entrance to the covered bazaars.

To the west of the square was a spacious garden area strewn with royal palaces and pavilions, pierced by a wide avenue which led across the river via a new bridge to the garden palaces on the opposite side. The city was enclosed within mud brick walls and held some 600,000 people and 162 mosques, 48 colleges, 1802 caravansarais and 273 baths. Of the many splendid and spacious buildings which distinguished Isfahan in the day of Shah Abbas the Great, those which remain with something approaching their original character are the Allah Verdi - Khan and , the Chehel Suton Palace, the Ali-Qapu Pavilion, the Masjid-i Shah and Sheikh-Lotfollah and a portion of the bazaars. The last four were grouped in the Maidan Shah or Royal Square which has come to enjoy world renown as one of the most imposing and noble areas of its kind in the world. It has been praised as such ever since Chardin and Tavernier, the great French travellers did so.

After Shah Abbas' reign, building activity was not so hectic as before, but the erecting of public and religious buildings continued in the same style. In this period ministers

and governors sponsored and encouraged building projects, both for the protection and welfare of the people and because they liked to think that they would be remembered in history by so doing. The ministers and governors in Isfahan, for example Ganj-Ali-Khan, governor and town planner at Kirman, Shāykh Ali-Khan in Kermānshāh, and Sarotqi in Isfahan, sponsored many buildings including madrasahs, caravansarais and others with unusual mosaic decorations and had their names inscribed on the buildings. Many travellers, merchants and missionaries came from Europe to Iran and have left fascinating accounts of these monuments in the cities, villages and by the roadsides.

Under the Timurids and Safavids the use of mosaics in architectural decoration reached an unprecedented level of perfection. Graceful arabesques, colourful floral forms, imitation medallions and cartouches, friezes of ornament and exquisite inscriptions were combined into tapestry-like patterns of glowing colour with a predominance of cobalt blue. Motifs found in such work were undoubtedly transmitted largely through manuscript illumination, but were used also with uncommon virtuosity in pottery decoration. Flat surfaces, curved vaults, iwans, domes and even minarets were often covered with an uninterrupted decoration of faience mosaic completely hiding the masonry of both exterior and interior. The observer is blinded by the enormous richness of such decoration and is no longer aware of the underlying structure. The task of cutting and fitting and assembling many thousands of small glazed

pieces which, on a single building, might take several years, finally proved to be too slow and so costly that it was superseded by a different method giving a similar effect. In this technique, called 'haft rang' or 'seven colours', the details of a large decorative panel were painted with as many as seven different pigments on square tiles and the colours were then fired on the tiles in a single operation. 16

In architectural decoration great importance was given to calligraphy and this was transformed into an art of monumental inscription, with particular success in Kashi.

The caravansarai as a structure in the Safavid period reached its most highly developed stage. This was the golden age of Iranian caravansarais, particularly in the time of Shah Abbas the Great, and later. As a result of the growth of religious enthusiasm and of commerce a great number of caravansarais were erected both in the cities and across the pilgrim and trade routes. Those in the cities were geared to cater more for commercial travellers than for pilgrims. These caravansarais are often located near or contiguous to famous shrines or madrassahs in the large cities. Some are close to the bazaars or may be attached to one of the famous bridges. They were located not only in the commercial cities like Isfahan which Chardin reported as having 1802 caravansarais.¹⁷ Many were built on convenient sites between major centres. The caravansarais also brought security and a resting place for pilgrims and travellers in the desert and on

the caravan routes.

'Vaqf' or 'donations' was another important means in the Safavid period for erection of public buildings such as bridges, madrassahs and caravansarais. There are many with inscriptions usually written on the entrance or on a gateway of the caravansarai giving the names of 'vaqef' or 'donators'. Many caravansarais were put up under the vaqf in Safavid times and despite all writings to the contrary and apparent ignorance of the fact, the practice continues to this day.

As Arthur Upham Pope said, caravansarais constitute one of the triumphs of Persian architecture.¹⁸ Nowhere can we find a more complete accord of function and structure. The standard plan for Safavid caravansarais was a traditional iwan. They may be ^{Octagonal}, square or rectangular, small or big but all are essentially concentric with the outer wall quite blank, allowing access only through a single and easily defended portal. The central court is surrounded by open arcades like a mosque or madrassah, the middle of each side sometimes being emphasized by a larger arch or even a vault. In effect this is the conventional four-iwan plan.

The poorer caravansarais were hardly more than mud walls, but these were few or have disappeared. As a rule they are walled with brick, sometimes unfired but usually fired, and many are true fortresses with a bastion at each corner and sometimes one midway along each wall. The lower part is usually decorated with carved stone. The gate is strongly made and more often than

not is crowned with a pavilion, which in times of trouble sheltered guards while defending it, and in times of peace provided spacious quarters with full vistas for wealthy or important travellers. In the colder north the caravansarais are sometimes entirely enclosed and a very large one built by Shah Abbas stands in the Tabriz region. The arcades are sometimes two rooms deep and often equipped with a fireplace for cooking and for warmth in winter. They are not at ground level but are elevated several feet to prevent the pack animals from gaining access to the living quarters, while loading and unloading.

Most of the apartments consist of two rooms, one a sort of porch opening on to the court and commanding a full view, and one behind a single door for privacy and rest. In the better caravansarais, each room has its own fireplace. Special large rooms are provided for more important personages, frequently built in the centre of each side or in each corner, and there may be from two to six rooms in an intercommunicating group. There is usually a second storey with the same sort of accommodation. The flat roofs serve as terraces for sleeping out on in summer in the Iranian fashion, a most welcome provision. In some of the Safavid caravansarais baths and kitchens may be included and lavatories are usually in one of the corners of the courtyard.

In some of the caravansarais there were small oratories and a mihrab. Other amenities sometimes supplied in more elaborate structures include a bazaar catering for the common travellers' needs and possibly supplying provision for trade between merchants.

Normally there was a staff to maintain a measure of authority and provide services and materials as required but many caravansarais are completely open and as free as air.

Thus the caravansarais which had a long history since Achaemenian times became, in the Safavid period, some of the most important buildings which can be found, as Chardin describes in his book.

Much of our knowledge of the court of Shah Abbas and of the magnificence of his times is largely due to the hospitable and kind reception which that notable monarch and his successors of the Safavid dynasty offered to foreign travellers and embassies and to the observant members of these who have left extensive accounts of their visits.¹⁹

Footnotes to Chapter IV

- (1) Encyclopedia of Islām, London, 1934, vol. 4, p. 55.
- (2) Encyclopedia of Islām, op. cit., p. 56.
- (3) Honar va Mardom (Art and People), vol. 88, pp. 14-18
- (4) Īrān-Shahr, op. cit., vol. I, p. 439.
- (5) Wilber, N. Donald, Iran past and present, Princeton, 1958 p. 68.
- (6) Īrān-Shahr, op. cit., p. 438.
- (7) Wilber, op. cit., p. 67.
- (8) Wilber, op. cit., p. 68.
- (9) Chehel Sutūn in Isfahān.
- (10) Sykes, Sir P., A History of Persia, London 1930, vol. II, p. 213.
- (11) Sanī Al-Dawlah, op. cit., p. 128.
- (12) See p. 132.
- (13) Browne, G. Edward, A History of Persian Literature in Modern Times, (A.D. 1500-1924), Cambridge, 1924, p. 3.
- (14) Meshkati, M., Fehrest Banahai Tārikhi va Amaken Bastani Iran (A bibliography of historical and ancient monuments of Iran), Teheran, 1345 (1966), p. 238.
- (15) Encyclopedia of World Art, vol. XII, p. 624, Also see Pl. 71
- (16) Wilber, op. cit., p. 71
- (17) Chardin, op. cit., p. 134.
- (18) Pope, A.U., Persian architecture, London, 1965, p. 238.
- (19) The prehistoric and historic remains of the Iranian plateau attracted European travellers to Iran as early as the 17th century. Among these are to be numbered the Sherley brothers, Sir Thomas Herbert, Pietro Della Valle, Chardin, Tavernier, Father Raphael, Thevenot, Fryer, Cornelius de Brun and many others.

This by no means exhausts the list of famous envoys and travellers who with the spread of the fame of Persia abroad, particularly in the 16th, 17th and 18th centuries, came in ever increasing numbers to admire and record with remarkable fullness the architectural and social achievements of Iran.

The books of their experiences are full of interesting and illuminating details and drawings.

In addition many travellers used the caravansarais as we would use modern hotels.

Tavernier, the French traveller, visited Irān more than nine times between 1632 and 1668 A.D. and left very interesting information on the court of Shāh Sāfi, Shāh Abbās II and Shāh Sulaymān and on Šafavid caravansarais. He compares Iranian caravansarais and those of the Ottomans, and says that the Iranian ones are much more impressive and more comfortable than those of the Ottomans. (Safar-Nāmeḥ Tavernier, Persian Text, p. 123.)

Caravansarais of the Safavid Period

It is clear from the previous chapters that, unlike in Anatolia, few caravansarais have survived from pre-Safavid times in Iran.

It is very fortunate that under the nearly two hundred and fifty years of Safavid rule they erected an ever increasing number of such buildings all over the country. Because of the subsequent Afghan invasion at the beginning of the 18th century, and the wars with the Ottomans and the Russians on one hand, and natural catastrophies (like earthquakes and floods) on the other, some of these Safavid caravansarais have either completely disappeared, or are in a very ruined state. Yet, those that survive, or are in comparatively good condition, provide us a sound basis to study the development and the various types of these buildings.

These caravansarais cannot be studied in isolation either in time, or without connecting them with other Muslim buildings, particularly with Islamic buildings of Iran. The origin of the various monuments of these caravansarais that are going to be discussed in this chapter can be traced back to pre-Safavid times. That is the main reason why a brief survey of earlier caravansarais seemed to be desirable.

Safavid caravansarais have to be examined both from the architectural and also from the decorative point of view. As for the architectural examination, it is first of all their ground plan that has to be taken into consideration. According to their ground plan

the following types can be distinguished:

1. Caravansarais with four iwans and a central courtyard which is either square or rectangular;
2. Octagonal caravansarais;
3. The so-called "mountain type" that is without central courtyard; and finally,
4. Miscellaneous caravansarais.

1. Caravansarais with four iwans and central courtyard

It should be mentioned here that this first type of caravansarai with the four iwans and central courtyard goes back to pre-Islamic times. The earliest known example of the cruciform groundplan with four iwans is in the palace at Assur dating from Parthian times, ca. first - third century A.D. As it has already been recalled, the Parthian palace plan served as a model for monuments of Sasanian and Islamic periods such as mosques, madrasahs and caravansarais. It is worthwhile before describing the first type to go back to pre-Islamic times and mention a few examples of Sasanian caravansarais which were built on the central courtyard plan.

There are three such caravansarais known to us: Konar-Siah, Gach-Darwazeh and the caravansarai or Robat Anushiravani.

A survey of the caravansarai of Konar-Siah (Fig.5 Pl.15) was made by Professor Van Den Berge⁽¹⁾. The building is square, 35 x 35 m. built of stone, and three walls still remain. There are 26 arched rooms around the courtyard and opening onto it. The only entrance to the caravansarai is in the east wall.

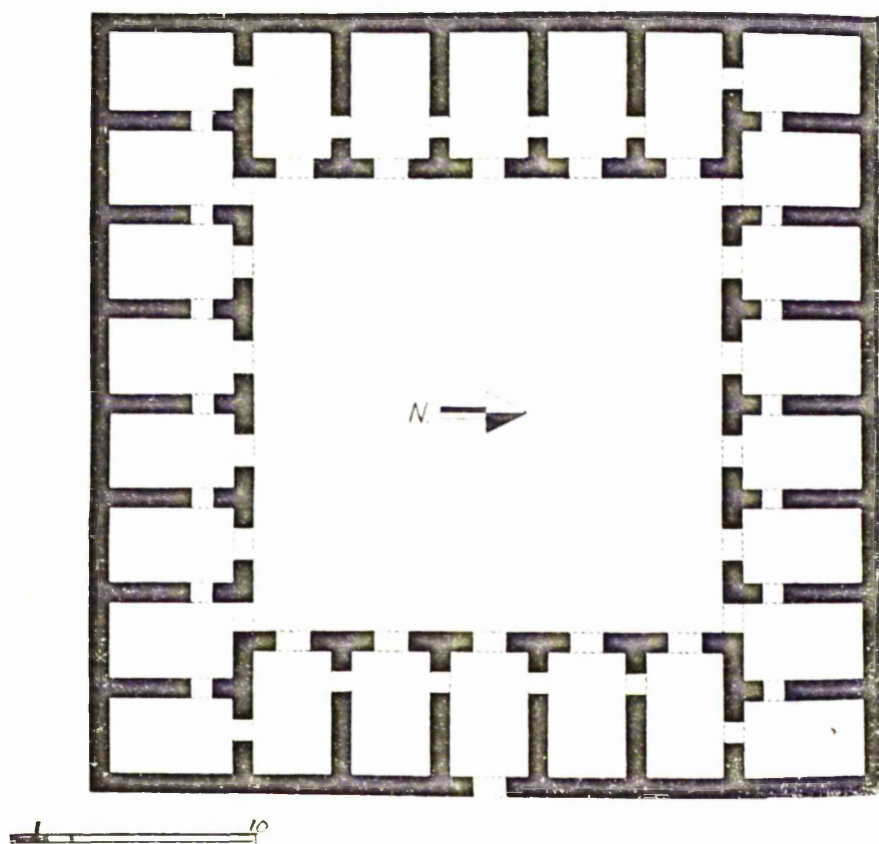


Fig.5. Plan of Caravansarai Konar-Siah

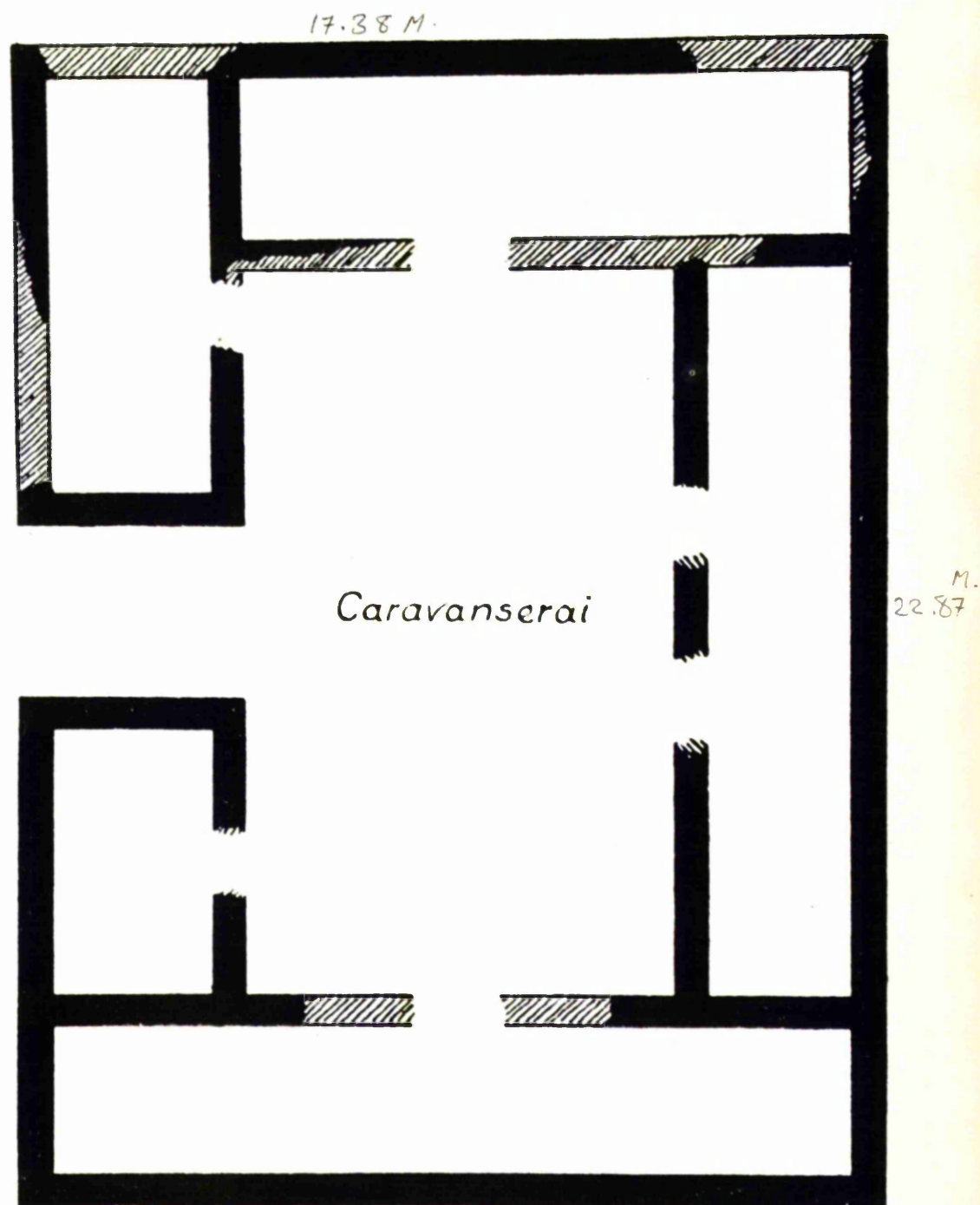
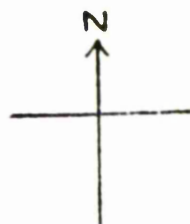


Fig.6. Plan of Caravansarai Gach-Darwāzeh



The second such caravansarai, that of Gach-Darwazeh (Gypsum-gate), is located near Kazerun. The survey of this caravansarai was made by Sir Aurel Stein⁽²⁾. The measurements of the caravansarai are, 22.87 x 17.38 m. (Fig. 6, Pl. 16). Its walls are of rough stone set in mortar, two feet thick. Nowhere do they rise more than two feet above the ground and for the most part their foundation can be traced. The entrance, eleven feet wide, led into an open court and was flanked by two apartments. The other three sides of the court may have served for stabling.

The third building, the caravansarai of Anushiravani also dates from the Sasanian period and consists of a square enclosure 85 x 85 m. with a single entrance through its northern face (fig. 7, Pl. 17). There are 22 chambers around the courtyard and the structure is of stone, brick, cement and mortar. A

The earliest caravansarai with identical ground plan, with a central courtyard and four iwans, is the Qalah-Sangi (stone fort) between Rayy and Qum. It is square, approximately 60 x 60 m. (Fig. 8, Pl. 18).

The caravansarai Qalah-Sangi was studied by H. Schindler who dated it from Sasanian times,⁽³⁾ but Siroux believed that it was erected during the Seljuq period⁽⁴⁾. Comparing it, however, with the Robat or caravansarai Anushiravani near Semnan which has a number of features in common, leads one to believe that it was probably built in late Sasanid or early Islamic times. Recently at Bisuton near Kermanshah an oblong building measuring 85 x 80 m. with 63 chambers around the courtyard was discovered and dated as an early Islamic caravansarai. (Pl. 19)

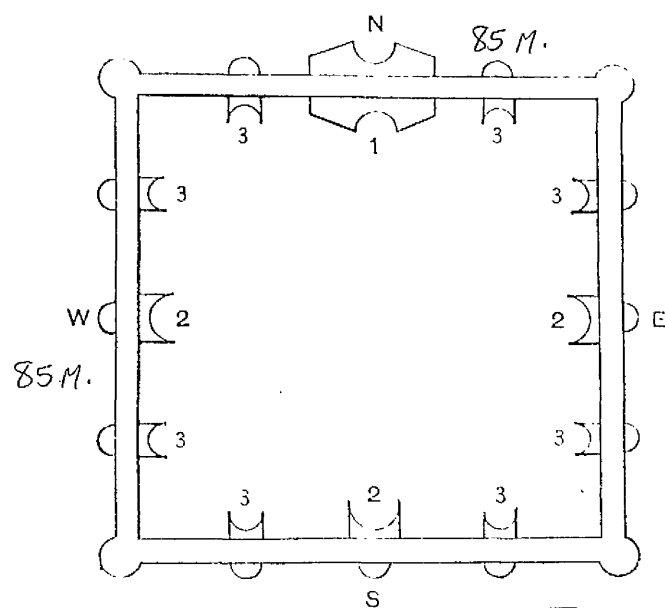


Fig. 7.

RIBAT OF ANUSHIRVAN AT AHUAN

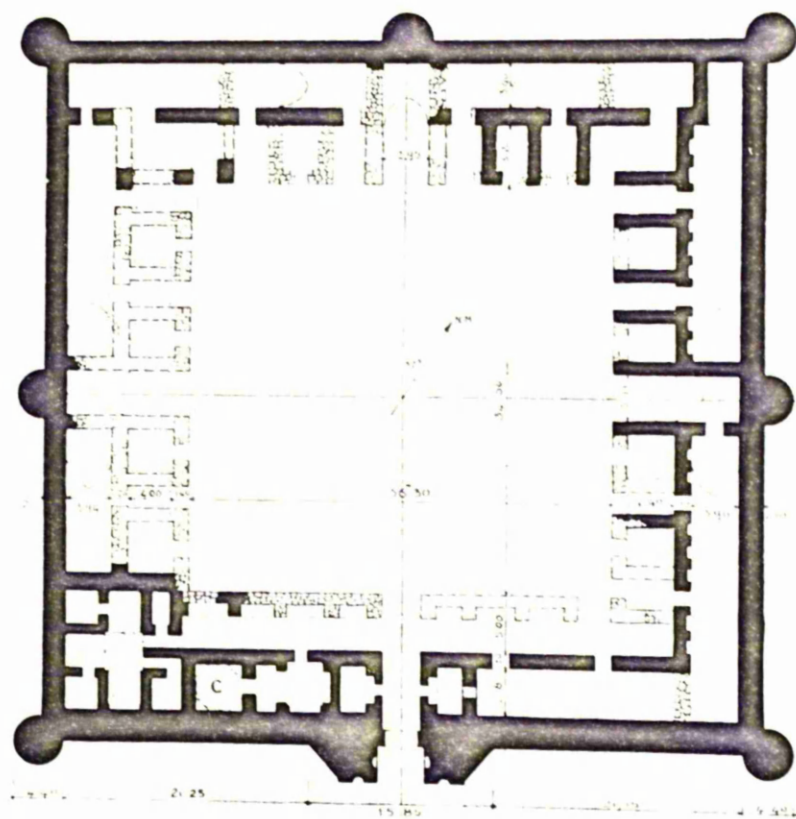


Fig.8. Plan of Caravansarai Qaleh-Sangi

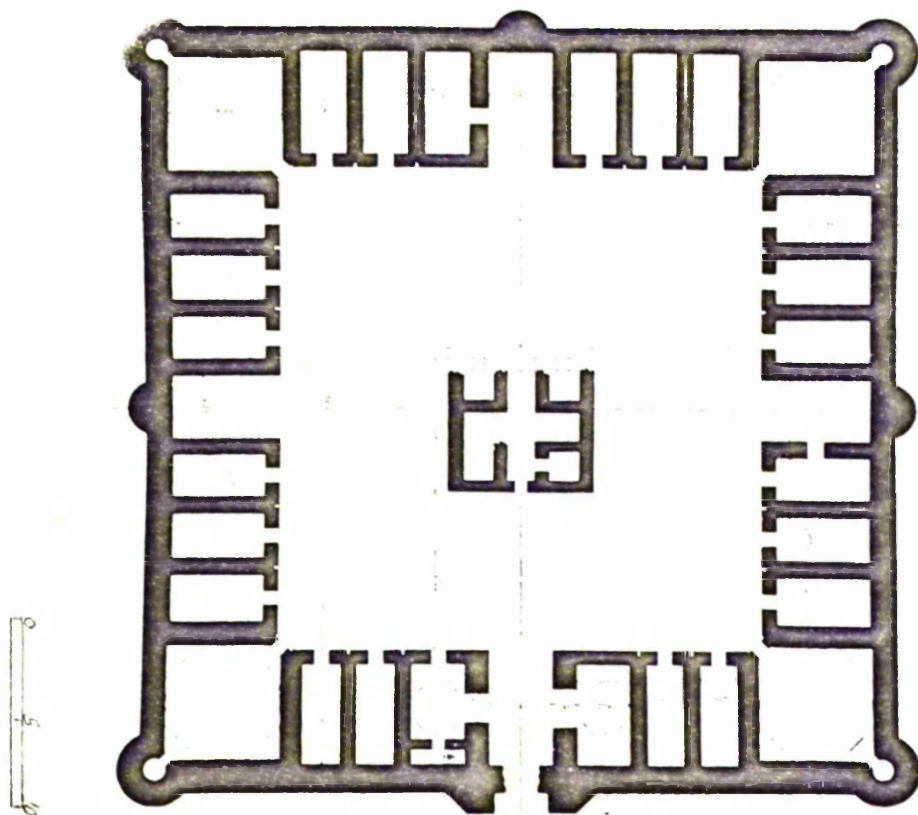


Fig.9. Plan of Caravansarai or Robat Karim

The next example in chronological order is the caravansarai or Robat Karim, dating from the 10th century, which is located near Shahriyar southwest of Teheran.^B The building is square, 60 x 60 m. (Fig. 9, Pl. 20) and built of stone.

As for other pre-Safavid examples, there is the caravansarai or Robat Mehi (Pl. 1.2) from Ghaznavid times, and Robat Sharaf (Fig. 1, Pl. 4-7) which was erected in the same form with a central courtyard and four iwans during the Seljuq period.

During the Il-Khanid period the same form continued, and the caravansarais of Sarcham (Fig. 3, Pl. 11-12) and Marand (Fig 4, Pl. 13-14) in Azerbaijan region and Sin (Fig.2, Pls 8-10) in Isfahan remain from that period.

Turning to the Safavid period, this first type became most popular and increased in number in most parts of Iran. Although these caravansarais are all either square or rectangular in plan, they differ considerably in both internal and external details (e.g. gateways, towers, stabling arrangements, etc.). It is convenient to describe Safavid caravansarais separately by city and region. In this way we shall be able to consider more easily the cause of erection from both the commercial and religious point of view.

We begin with the Safavid caravansarais in Isfahan, the capital of Safavid Iran.

Summary:

"I had seen nothing so beautiful as Isfahan all the East"

Piетро Della Valle.

"Of all notable cities of Middle East none exceed in the

sheer beauty of those buildings still remaining as testimony of its splendours, the noble city of Isfahan".

H. Filmer.

Such descriptions can be found in the books of most of the travellers who saw Isfahan and other cities at the time of the Safavid dynasty. When Isfahan became the new capital, massive building activities started under the aegis of Shah Abbas himself. With his encouragement people such as wealthy merchants erected a great number of public buildings.

Both Chardin and Piетро Della Valle reported that Shah Abbas was not above going to see rich merchants in person and asking them to erect public buildings.⁽⁵⁾ Even in present times people still wonder at many splendid and spacious public buildings which distinguished Isfahan in the days of Shah Abbas and his successors. "Isfahan nesfe jahan", it was said, "Isfahan is half the world". If it is not still half the world, as Henry Filmer said, it is yet half and more of Persia. According to historians, geographers and travellers, a great number of caravansarais were built in Isfahan and in its area during the Safavid period. In the course of time most of these caravansarais have fallen into ruins and have disappeared and some of those that remain are not in good condition. However, this was undoubtedly the golden period of caravansarais.

In the following pages we will describe some of the Safavid caravansarais in Isfahan State.

In this first group of the Safavid caravansarais with central courtyard and four iwans is the building at Mahyar.

Mahyar is situated some 52 Km. south of Isfahan, and in the Safavid period consisted of above 1,000 houses and was a flourishing commercial centre. Mahyar was the last stage for the big caravans before reaching Isfahan and a convenient day's journey for such a rallying and the gathering of provisions. The importance and traffic of this caravansarai may also be judged from the presence of a bazaar, mosque, bakery and coffee room. The sole relic of this prosperity is a remarkable caravansarai, which has been described by travellers as the finest erection of its kind in Iran. The caravansarai was visited by a number of European travellers, like Chardin, Le Brun, Dieulafoy, E. Flandin, P. Coste and Morier, some of whom like Morier⁽⁶⁾ and Flandin-Coste⁽⁷⁾ have left us interesting information and beautiful illustrations.

The building is oblong measuring 89 x 82 m. (Fig. 10, Pls 25-9), and its exterior consists of a monumental portal entrance (approx. 16 x 20 m.), mosque, coffee room and niches in both sides of the entrance.

One of the interesting aspects of this building is its monumental portal entrance. This type of entrance appeared in Iranian architecture in pre-Safavid times, and the best example is the entrance of Masjid-i Jamia Varamin 726/1325 which was erected during the Il-Khanid period. With the construction of the caravansarai Mahyar this type of entrance influenced the Safavid religious buildings, e.g. Masjid Shah of Isfahan 1026/1617.

Entering through this massive gateway but actually outside the caravansarai is a bazaar running the whole width of the facade.

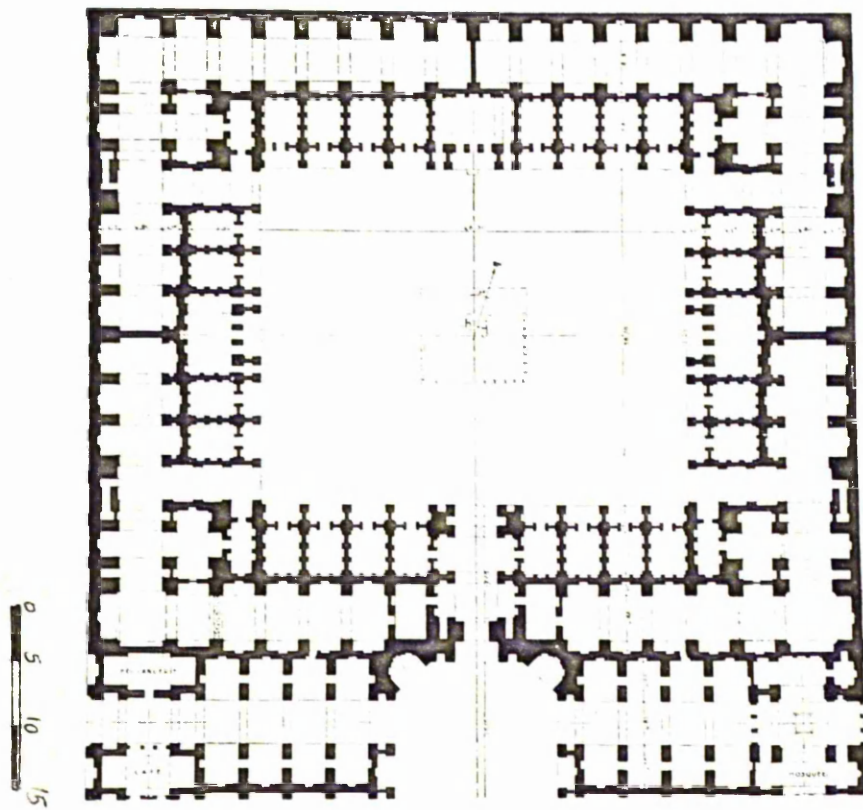


Fig.10. Plan of Caravansarai Mahyar

It has a bakery and coffee room on one side and, on the other, a small mosque which shelters a central bay with a pool for ablution. There are also many shopkeepers' stalls. In fact the front part of the caravansarai (before the gateway) was independent with a separate entrance. The interior consists of an open courtyard, stables, niches and chambers. Four iwans with flanking arcades establish the facades of a large rectangular court, 48.30 x 38.70 m. The chambers are behind the arcades, and stables behind the chambers. Each arcade is four metres long and two metres deep. On the north, west and east of the building there are three iwans measuring 9 x 8 m. All the chambers are of the same size measuring 4 x 5 m. The caravansarai has four long stables, the entrances to which have been placed on the small sides of the courtyard. The floor is of brick. The structure displays the combination of brick and stone (brick on a base of stone). The caravansarai was decorated with faience tiles (kāshī), but in the course of time most of it disappeared. The decorative parts consist of:

1. The facade with several forms of kāshī, of which almost nothing remains;
2. Above the gateway there was originally an inscription which was replaced at a later date by stalactites;
3. Brick design in the upper parts of the internal courtyard.

The caravansarai of Mahyar has been dated differently by scholars and travellers. Meshkatī dates it from the time of Shah Sulayman.⁽⁸⁾ According to Curzon, the caravansarai was built by the mother of Shah Abbas and restored by Shah Sulayman.⁽⁹⁾

Siroux attributes its foundation to Shah Ismail, 907-930/1502-1524, the founder of the Safavid dynasty.⁽¹⁰⁾

The concensus of opinion seems to attribute the caravansarai to Shah Ismail and the present writer shares this view. However, he believes that the bulk of the structure can be attributed to the reign of Shah Sulayman.^D This belief is ^{also} based on social and historical interpretation

. The building was repaired several times, in the Qajar period, and recently (two years ago) by the archaeological office of Isfahan.

In the same area we find the next example at Yazd-Khwast. Yazd-Khwast is located some 85 miles south of Isfahan on the Isfahan-Shiraz road.

The building was visited by a number of travellers and scholars. Tavernier spent one night there in February 1665 on his way to Shiraz.⁽¹¹⁾ Texier left us a beautiful illustration.⁽¹²⁾ Morier wrote of it saying that "a caravansarai an elegant building erected near 200 years ago by a pious queen of Safi race".⁽¹³⁾ In the present century M.B. Smith has mentioned it in Ars Islamica under the title of "Three monuments at Yazd-Khawst"⁽¹⁴⁾, and finally R. Ettinghausen has translated its inscription and published it in H. Field's book.⁽¹⁵⁾

The caravansarai is located between a river and the vertical wall of a cliff. The building is built on a four iwan plan and is square, measuring 65.90 x 65.90 m. (Fig. 11, Pls 30-31).

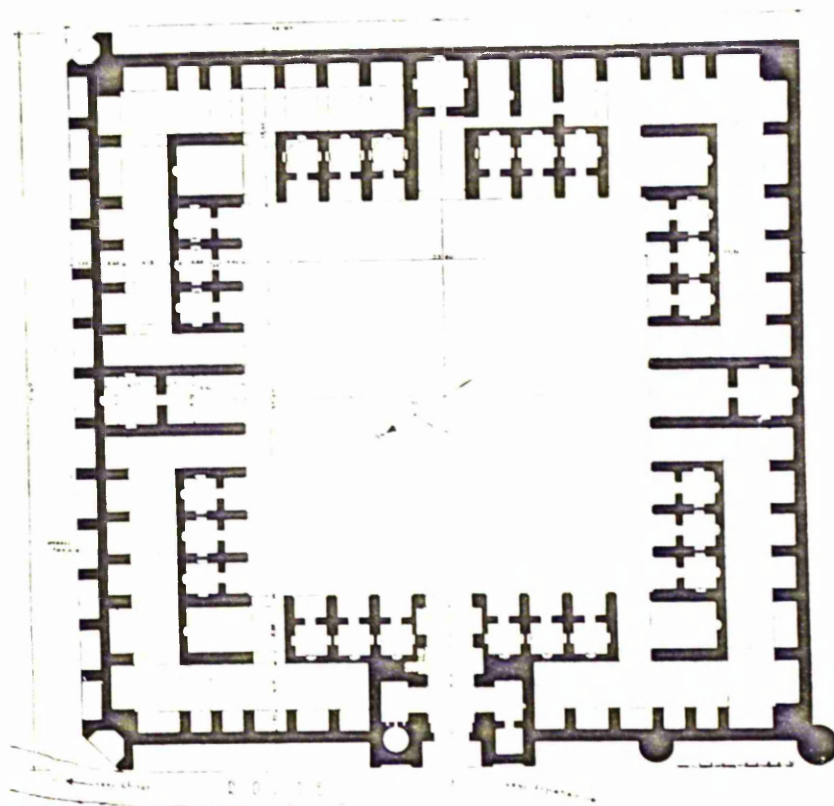


Fig.11. Plan of Caravansarai Yazd-Khwast

Its exterior consists of a portal entrance opposite the bridge, two towers on the south face of the entrance and fourteen blind niches on the north side of the building. Since there was very limited space between the front part of the gateway and the bridge, the fourteen blind niches were added during the Qajar period for facilitating the housing of animals. The portal entrance which is simple with two blind niches flanking it, stands on the west face of the caravansarai and forms a rectangular projection broken by a high arcade of which the tympanum shelters three bala-khaneh windows.

The interior consists of an open courtyard, iwans, stables, arcades and chambers. The courtyard is square, measuring 35 x 35 m. The chambers are also square, 2.65 x 2.65 m. and covered with domes. The three deep iwans (6.90 x 4 m.) lead to three square rooms which are in contact with the outside wall. The structure has four stables, each one with two entrances, one near the corner, the other next to the big iwans on the north and south sides. The stable guards were allotted the classical gallery cells and the alcove which all open onto the passage. Materials used in building were stone, brick and mosaic. Above the doorway of the main gate there is a beautiful inscription in faience mosaic appearing in wide white letters on a blue background and framed in its entirety by a border decorated alternately with small lozenges and squares. The inscription is in Arabic written in the large Thulth characters, typical of Safavid Iran. (Pl. 31.)

The beginning of the text assures the protection of travellers. Near the end it includes the following passage:

"In the day of the great Sultan and the most generous Khāqān, the propagator of religion, descended from the pure Imām, the dog of Alī's threshold, son of Alī-Tālib Abbas-Al-Housini-Al-Mosavi-Al Safavi-Bahādur-Khān, may God prolong his kingdom and his Sultanate." The calligrapher Mohammad Reza Imāmī Isfahānī was one of the best known calligraphers of the Safavid period, and he is credited with having provided the inscriptions for many religious buildings and royal palaces in Isfahan. E

The caravansarai was repaired during the Qajar period.

In the same area, some 40 Km. south east of Yazd-Khwāst, there is another building locally known as the caravansarai of Shurgestan. The caravansarai was visited by travellers such as Curzon⁽¹⁶⁾ and Bradley-Birt⁽¹⁷⁾, and both dated it to the time of Shah Abbas I. The building is square in shape, 62 x 62 m. (Fig. 12), and its external and internal arrangement is very similar to Yazd-Khawst. At present the caravansarai is in a very ruinous state.

For the pursuit of our purpose there are also other examples in the same district, such as Rivado-Bāstān and Zawāreh.

The caravansarai of Rivado-Bāstān stands between Nayin and Isfahan. In shape the building is nearly square (Fig. 13), and measures 48.18 x 47.70 m.^F Its exterior consists of a portal entrance, five niches on each side of the entrance, and four towers. The entrance, decorated with niches, projects a little from the main facade. The coach passage is bordered by two large alcoves, intended for the guards. The stairways leading to the second storey (bala-khaneh) are set into the excess thickness of the masonry. There are hollow towers at each corner and three semicircular

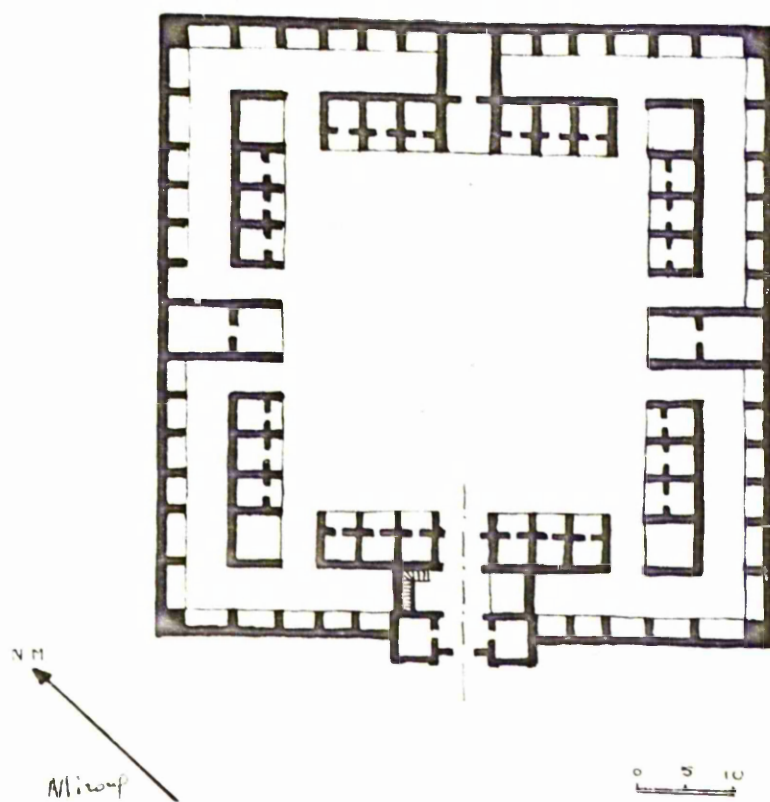


Fig.12. Plan of Caravansarai Shurgestan

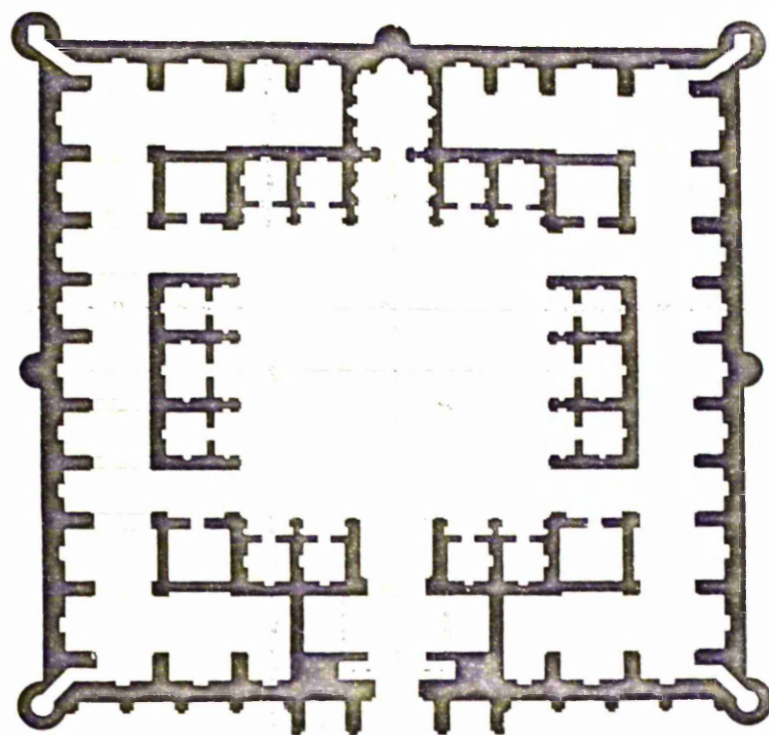
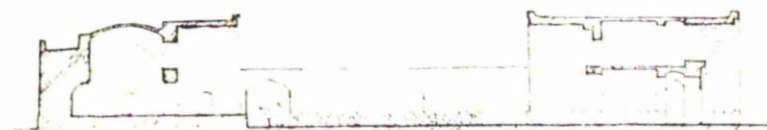


Fig.13. Plan of Caravansarei Rivado-Bostan



intermediate towers in each of the south, west and east walls. An open courtyard measuring 21.10 x 20.20 m., three iwans, chambers, two large stables and a single row of cells which served as a storehouse for merchandise complete the interior of this caravansarai. There are twelve chambers (eight in the north and south, four in the west and east) around the courtyard all the same in size, measuring 2.75 x 2.75 m. Opposite the entrance is the main iwan (4.85 x 4.85 m.) which ends in a large rectangular room. The measurements of the interior arcades are different, south and north are 1.18 x 3.36 m., and west and east are bigger, 1.80 x 3.60 m. The building has two large stables (as at Mahyar), each one having two entrances at the corners. The caravansarai was built of stone and brick. No inscription survives, but compared with the other caravansarais in the same region it can be attributed to the reign of Shah Abbas I.

Caravansarai Zawareh. The city of Zawareh is situated in the north east of Națanz. During the Sasanid period Zawareh was the centre of a rich province, and after the coming of Islam, especially during the Seljuq and Safavid periods, a number of religious buildings were erected.

With the construction by Shah Abbas I of a road from Zawareh to the Caspian region via Varamin, numerous caravansarais and cisterns were built along the route, some of which still exist today. The caravansarai of Zawareh is located outside the town, and was built at the time of Shah Abbas I. The building is small in size and its shape is an oblong of 45.45 x 42.40 m. (Fig. 14, Pl. 32). The exterior consists of a portal entrance, six blind arches on either

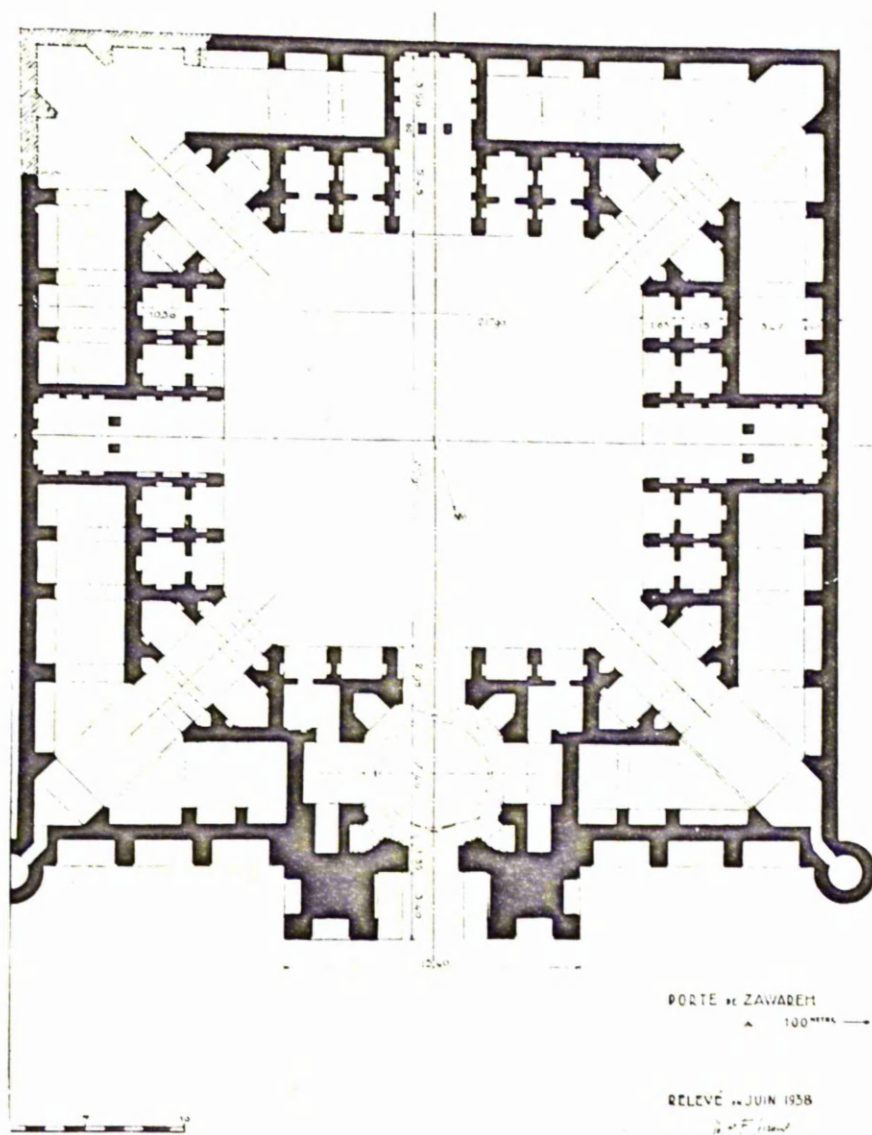


Fig.14. Plan of Caravansarai Zawareh

side of the entrance and a tower at each of the two corners of the facade. The main gate is replaced by an octagonal rotunda rising at such an angle that the bala-khaneh rooms open onto a terrace. The towers at each of the two corners are decorated with a wide frieze in brick laid in herring-bone pattern.

An open courtyard, arcades, iwans and stables complete its internal aspect. The courtyard is a square of 21.90 x 21.90 m., at the four corners of which are the entrances to the four stables. Around the courtyard are arcades behind which are the chambers. All the chambers are square and measure approximately 2.15 x 2.15 m. There are three long galleries in the south, west and east sides of the courtyard measuring 9.50 x 9.50 m. which were used as storehouses for merchandise.

The whole building is in rough cast brick of earth mortar lightly plastered, as is the base.

Although no inscription survives on the caravansarai, it can be attributed to the reign of Shah Abbas I for the following reasons; its similarity to the caravansarai of Natanz (e.g. the exterior and interior arrangement) which dates from the time of Shah Abbas, 1029/1619 and from the consideration of the fact that the road was built by Shah Abbas and the building was probably erected at the same time as the road was built.

Finally it should be mentioned here that the plan of the caravansarai of Zawareh was one of the best plans of the Safavid period from the point of view of arrangement.

m For further examples of Safavid caravansarais we turn to the north of the Isfahan district, which is one of the richest and most

important areas for such buildings. Amongst these is the outstanding caravansarai of Madar-Shah, which was built by one of the best masters of Isfahan. The building is located at the village of Madar-Shah, some 41 kilometres north of Isfahan⁽¹⁸⁾.

The structure is oblong in shape, measuring 82.50 x 72.50 m. (Fig. 15, Pls 33-4), and is built with remarkable precision. There is a portal entrance on either side of which are fourteen niches; towers at each of the four corners and two semi-towers on the short end walls complete its external aspect. The vestibule, surrounded on all sides by a stone seat, leads directly to two chambers intended for the guard and, in one of its cut corners, to the bala-khaneh stairway; the bala-khaneh, hardly habitable, is rather more like a tribune. The facades are raised by scalloped curves at the top of the walls which give an appearance of greater height.

The interior of the caravansarai consists of an open courtyard, arcades, iwans, chambers and stables. Four iwans with flanking arcades establish the facades of a large rectangular court which measures 49.60 x 40.60 m. The arcades of the court are large; 4 m. wide and 2 m. deep. Behind them are chambers, all of which are of the same size (approximately 4.30 x 4 m.). The three main iwans are also large, about 7 x 5 m., and the iwan opposite the entrance leads to a domed vestibule. The vaults are simple tunnel vaults but of a perfect curvature. In the west and east sides of the courtyard there are two stables, which could be reached from the four corners of the building. Near the cut corners, on the long sides of the court, four entrances lead into four galleries of

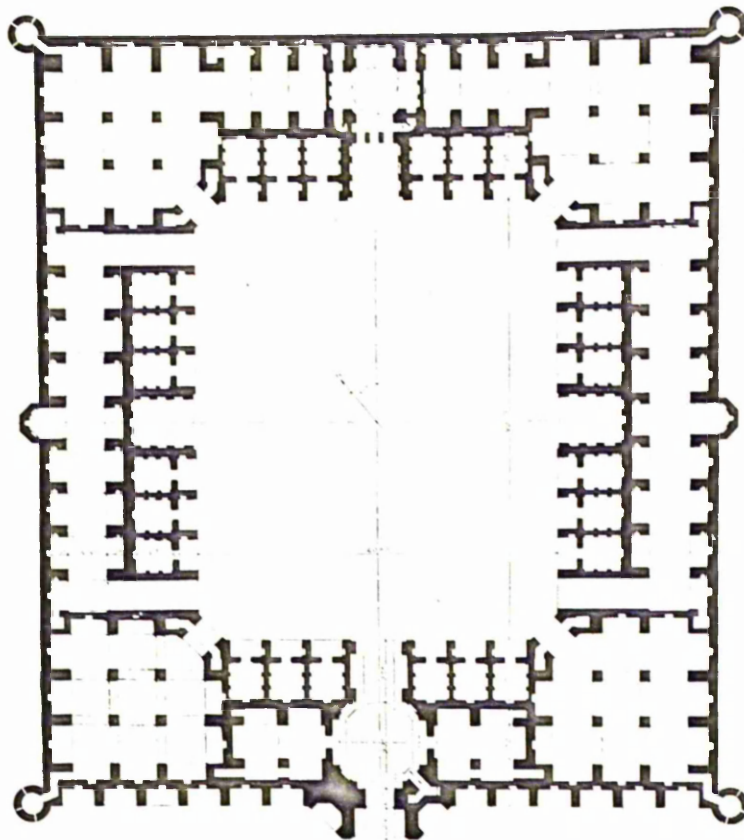


Fig. 38.

Fig. 15. Plan of Caravansarai Madar-Shah



of the ordinary type. It is very likely that all these galleries were built as warehouses for important travellers.

The structure displays the common combination of stone and brick; cut stone base course surmounted by upper walls of fired brick. As originally erected the caravansarai must have been one of the finest caravansarais in Iran. Siroux says that it was in this place that the diplomatic trains would make their last halt; there the ambassadors donned their official dress and received the guard of honour. At dawn the uniformed convoy would move off and from the top of the hill would see spread beneath them the dramatic vision of the royal city.⁽¹⁹⁾

As the caravansarai of Madar-Shah has a number of features common to the caravansarai of Jamal-^{Abad} (dating from the time of Shah Abbas II), both buildings were presumably built at the same time. The whole structure is in good condition and at present is occupied by the army and used as barracks.

Some 18 kilometres north of Isfahan on the old highway between Isfahan and Teheran is situated the village of Gaz. Gaz has a mosque and a minaret of Seljuq period and a caravansarai of the Safavid period. The caravansarai is located along the road which for centuries was the main route leading north from Isfahan. The modern road follows a different route and the village and its monuments are in a now rather unfrequented area.

Among the travellers Morier lodged in this caravansarai in February 1808, on his way from Isfahan to Teheran, and has left us interesting information.⁽²⁰⁾

Caravansarai Gaz is built on the four iwans plan and measures 96 m. long by 83 m. wide.^G The exterior of the building consists of a portal entrance, external walls, niches and towers. The splendid portal is 11 m. high and is decorated with faience mosaic. There is also mosaic decoration on the upper part of the entrance and in the blind arches which flank both sides of the portal. At each of the four corners of the caravansarai there is a brick tower and a stone plinth. The external circumference of each tower is 9 m. and its height is 6 m.. In the middle of the vestibule there is an interesting hall surmounted by a round brick dome. The length of the vestibule, from the entrance to the open courtyard is 22 m. Four iwans with flanking arches establish the facades of a large rectangular court 50 m. long and 40 m. wide. There is a series of chambers for travellers behind the courtyard arches (Pl. 35). Each chamber measures 3.60 m. long and 3.50 m. high. Each arch opens into one chamber but each iwan leads to three chambers. At each of the four sides of the interior, behind the iwans and chambers, there are stables and a warehouse. The building materials are cut stone, brick, lime and plaster.

This very fine caravansarai dates from the time of Shah Abbas I, and is still in good condition.

Not far from the caravansarai of Madar-i-Shah stands the royal and luxurious caravansarai of Sheikh Ali Khan. This building is known locally as caravansarai Chaleh-Siah and is located 50 Km. northeast of Isfahan.

Both caravansarais Madar-Shah and Sheikh Ali Khan from their luxuriousness seem to us to be solely intended for royal or diplomatic

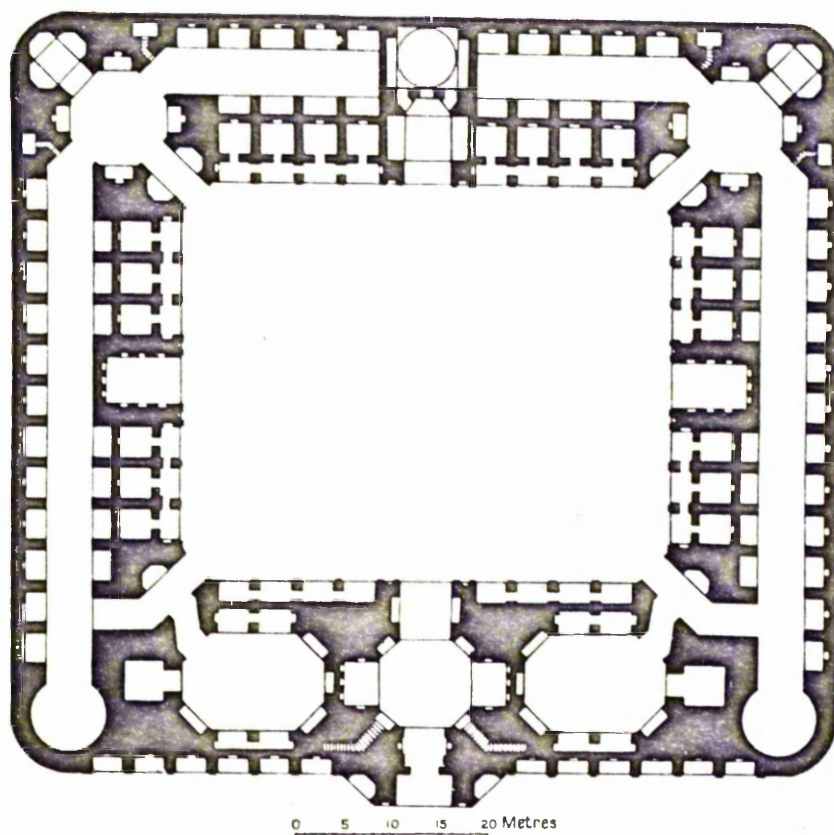


Fig.16. Plan of Caravansarai Chaleh-Siah

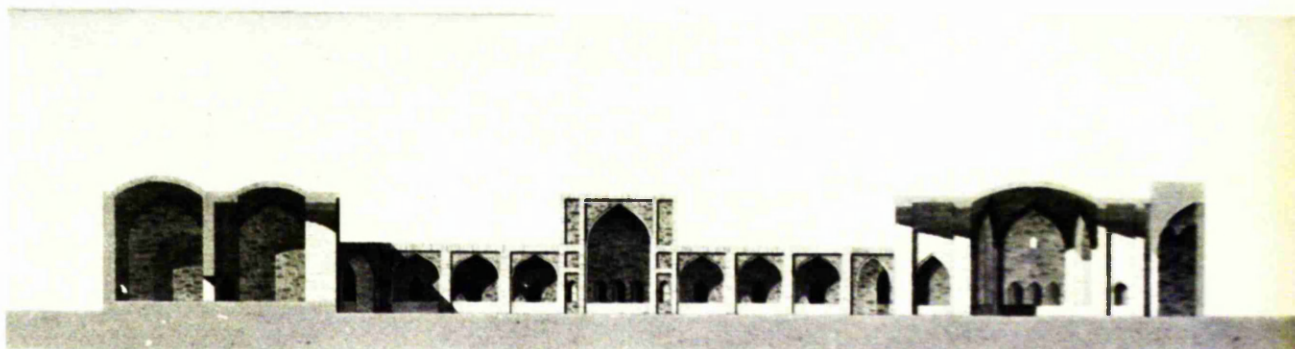


Fig.17. Sketch of Caravansarai Chaleh-Siah

trains. The caravansarai was erected by Shāikh-'Alī-Zangāneh in 1098/1686 when he was prime-minister at the court of Shāh Sulymān Safavī. This remarkable structure, of which we have beautiful drawings by Texier (Fig. 16-17) is square in shape, 80 m. long by 80 m. wide, and built on the four iwans plan. The portal entrance is on the south side and there are six niches to each side of the portal. Inside the entrance there is a vestibule and a large hall which leads into the courtyard. On each side of the vestibule, but not communicating with it, there are two small courtyards, which were probably built as a warehouse for diplomatic guests or for housing the mounts of the important members of the party. The building includes four iwans located on the cross axes of a central court which measures 50 m. long and 38 m. wide.

There are 22 arches inside the courtyard behind which are the chambers. All the platforms both inside and outside are built of stone, and the courtyard is paved with large stone slabs. At each corner of the caravansarai there is a covered warehouse and a stable. The roof of the building is built of two layers of brick and the walls are also of this material.

In the upper part of the portal entrance there are three stone tablets bearing inscriptions. The first inscription reads: "At the time of Shāh Sulaymān this robāt was erected by Shāikh-'Alī-Khān in 1098/1686."

The second inscription, which takes the form of a poem written in Nast'alīq, also gives the date of erection.

The third inscription is again writted in Nast'alīq script on a

small tablet, in the east part of the entrance. It says:

"Amal-Ostad-Tāher valad Ostād Rezā Isfahānī" (the builder is Tāher, son of Rezā Isfahānī). H

Some years before the fall of the Safavid dynasty, at the time of Shāh Sultān Houseyn, a collection of magnificent buildings were added to Isfahan. These structures, as admirable as any others in Isfahan, include a royal bazaar, the Farah-Ābād palace, a madrasah and a caravansarai.⁽²¹⁾

This caravansarai, one of the truly outstanding caravansarais in Iran, impressed many travellers like Pierre Loti, Gobinu, Flandin and Cornelius Brun, the last named of whom lodged in this caravansarai in the ninth year of the reign of Shāh Sultān Houseyn⁽²²⁾.

When the famous Madrasah of Shāh Sultān Houseyn was under construction the caravansarai, the entry fees to which would meet the expenses of the theological students, was also planned. For this reason both were built at the same time.

The caravansarai is located on the east side of the madrasah with two main portal entrances one in the north side, opposite the royal bazaar, and the other in the south side, opposite the garden. This caravansarai is rectangular (Fig. 18, Pls. 36, 37, 38, 39.), 128 m. long and 93 m. wide, and built on the four iwans plan. The building has two storeys and more than 140 chambers. Both the madrasah and the caravansarai are buildings with dignity, charm and personality.

This monument fascinated many travellers in the 18th and 19th centuries, some of whom, especially Texier and Coste, have left us descriptions and illustrations⁽²³⁾. It has recently been repaired

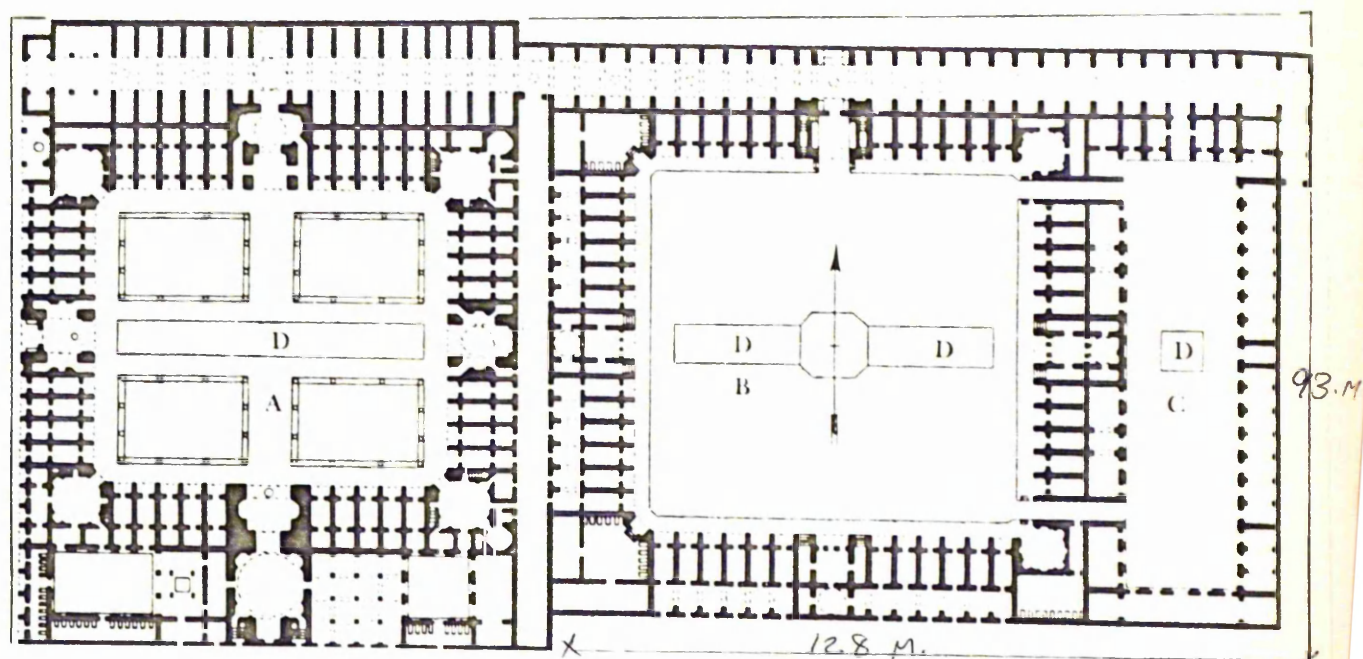


Fig.18. Plan of Caravansarai and Madrasah Madar-i-Shah

and turned into the Mehman-khaneh (hotel) Shāh 'Abbās.

For a further investigation of the first group of Safavid caravansarais we turn to Azarbijan province.

Summary: Azarbijan province, the native region of the Safavid dynasty, has always been important from the point of view of communication. The principal cities of Azerbaijan, Maragheh, Ardabil, Sultaniyeh and Tabriz, rose one after the other to the position of provincial capital. As a result of commerce and trade a great number of caravansarais were erected in this province throughout the history of Persia, especially during the Il-Khānid and Safavid periods.

Travellers from Marco Polo, Clavijo and Tavernier onward have spoken of the fine caravansarais erected during the Il-Khānid, Timurid and Safavid periods. Tavernier, speaking of his journey from Tabriz to Isfahan, says: "Usually the journey from Tabriz to Isfahan takes 24 days. The first day passes through difficult mountainous terrain until we reach a magnificent caravansarai, built by Shāh Safī, which is one of the best in Iran." i

Wilhelm von Freygang gave us the following description: "Upon my way from Tabriz, I saw two caravansarais, erected by Shāh 'Abbās the Great: they are considered as masterpieces of Asiatic architecture. Both are in nearly the same style, are of the same size, and have suffered very little from time. I admired their porches in particular; these are of colossal size, and the workmanship reminded me of the great structures of the ancient Romans".⁽²⁴⁾

Tavernier recorded some 25 caravansarais between Jolfa and

Zanjān which have been mentioned in Chapter II: Caravan Routes and Caravansarais.

Most of the Safavid caravansarais in Azarbaijan province have been destroyed but a few (e.g. Jamal-Ābād, Jām and Guilak, all with four iwans and open central courtyard) have survived, though they are in poor condition.

Caravansarai Jamal-Ābād. The village of Jamal-Ābād is situated some 30 Km. east of Miyaneh on the road between Zanjān and Tabriz. The village is notable for the ruins of a once imposing caravansarai dating from the time of Shāh 'Abbās II (1065/1654).

In this building Tavernier lodged on his way from Tabriz to Isfahan and mentioned it as a new caravansarai which had been erected recently.⁽²⁵⁾ Also according to Filmer, Chardin stayed overnight in 1672 only a few years after its erection.^J It is built on the four iwans plan, and is rectangular in shape, measuring 60 x 50 m. (Fig. 19, Pl. 41).

Its portal entrance is on the south side, and each side of the portal is decorated with five blind arcades. There are four hollow towers at the four corners and three semi-towers on the west, east and north sides. The vestibule is in the same style as that of Caravansarai Jām, its beautiful cupola rising in such a way that the chambers (bala-khāneh) are divided into two separate sections, an upper floor and the dome. The entrance hall is spacious, measuring 7.20 x 7.20 m. and contains two oblong alcoves (approximately 2 x 2.50 metres) which lead to two large rectangular rooms. These rooms were probably used as warehouses. A rectangular courtyard measuring 29.45 x 22.80 m., arches, chambers and stables form its interior

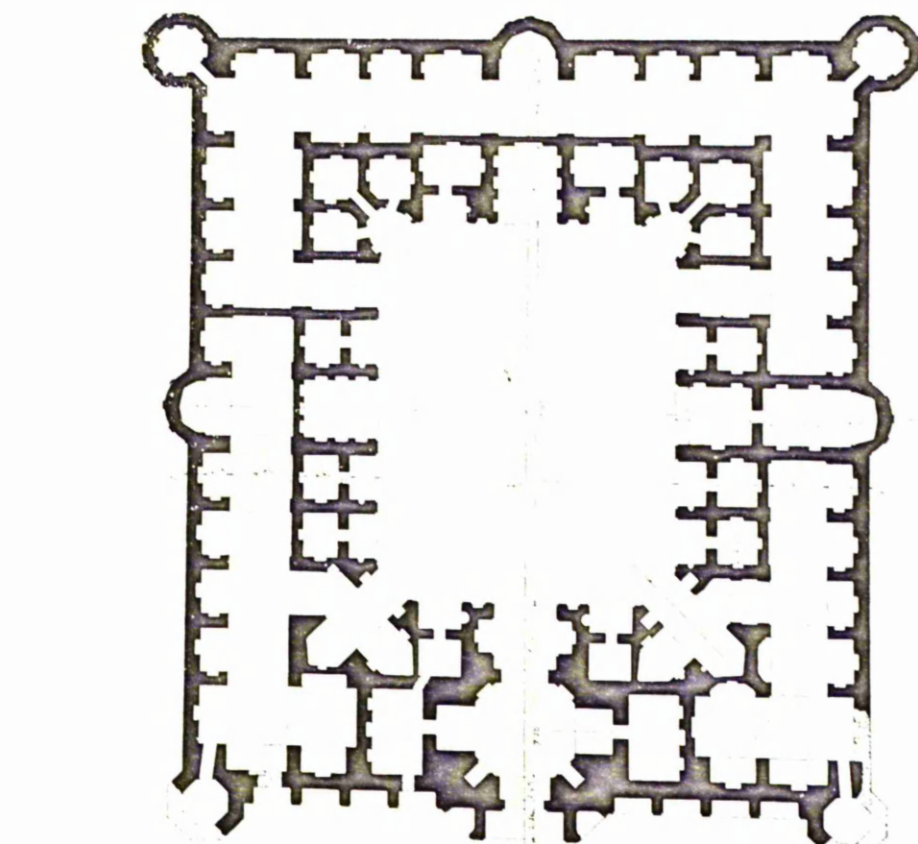


Fig.19. Plan of Caravansarai Jamal-Abad

aspect.

The internal arrangement of the building is different from our previous examples. The three iwans are not of the same size, the north iwan is 6.10 x 4.50 m. and the west and east are each 5.88 x 4.50 m. Only the west iwan leads to a large rectangular room, which measures 8.64 x 4.50 m. The chambers are also of varying sizes. Some are square and some are oblong. The entrances of the three stables are placed differently: the south side stables are placed so that their entrances cut the corners off while the stable in the north of the courtyard has two separate entrances.

These rather unusual arrangements can be attributed either to the idea of its builder or to the necessity of the cold climate. If we accept the latter reason, this plan undoubtedly forms the beginning of a new style and influenced the planning of caravansarais in cold and mountainous regions.

The building is made of brick and its condition is poor. There is an inscription set into the entrance which gives the date of erection and the name of the founder. Filmer gives a complete translation of the inscription in which the monument is called "robāt-Jenāb-Dasht" and is said to have been built by Olgu, lord of the royal court.⁽²⁶⁾

This inscription is in the form of a poem which, translated literally, reads:

"In the reign of 'Abbās, Shāh-in-Shāh of the world

Olgu, the Amīr of his court,

Who is second to 'Abbās in equity and justice,

Built the inn on the edge of the desert at Jamāl-Ābād
 May the structure of his fortune remain perpetually firm
 Since they laid the foundation of this house of prayer for the Shāh;
 When this inn was completed as a result of the muscular strength
 And efforts exerted by the best master of masonry".

Similar in ground plan to Jamāl-Ābād, but with much better internal and external arrangements is a building which is located on the road between Tabriz and Marand. The monument, known locally as Caravansarai Jām, is rectangular in shape measuring 57.80 x 48.90 m. (Fig. 20, Pl. 42). K

Its portal entrance stands on the south face and is decorated with fourteen blind arches. There are four hollow towers at the four corners and one semi-tower on the north side of the building. The vestibule rises to a beautiful cupola at such an angle that the bala-khāneh rooms are divided into two separate sections, an upper floor and dome. The entrance hall is spacious, circular, and contains two square alcoves which lead to two large rectangular rooms. The interior of the caravansarai is oblong in shape, measuring 29.40 x 20.20 m. Its interior, unlike that of Jamāl-Ābād, is very well arranged; here all the chambers, arches and stables are of the same size. The main iwan is on the north side of the courtyard (opposite the entrance hall), and leads to a large rectangular room extending to the outside wall. There are twelve square chambers round the courtyard, which measure approximately 3 x 3 m. It has two long stables, reached from the four corners of the courtyard. The building is of large fired bricks. The columns are covered with

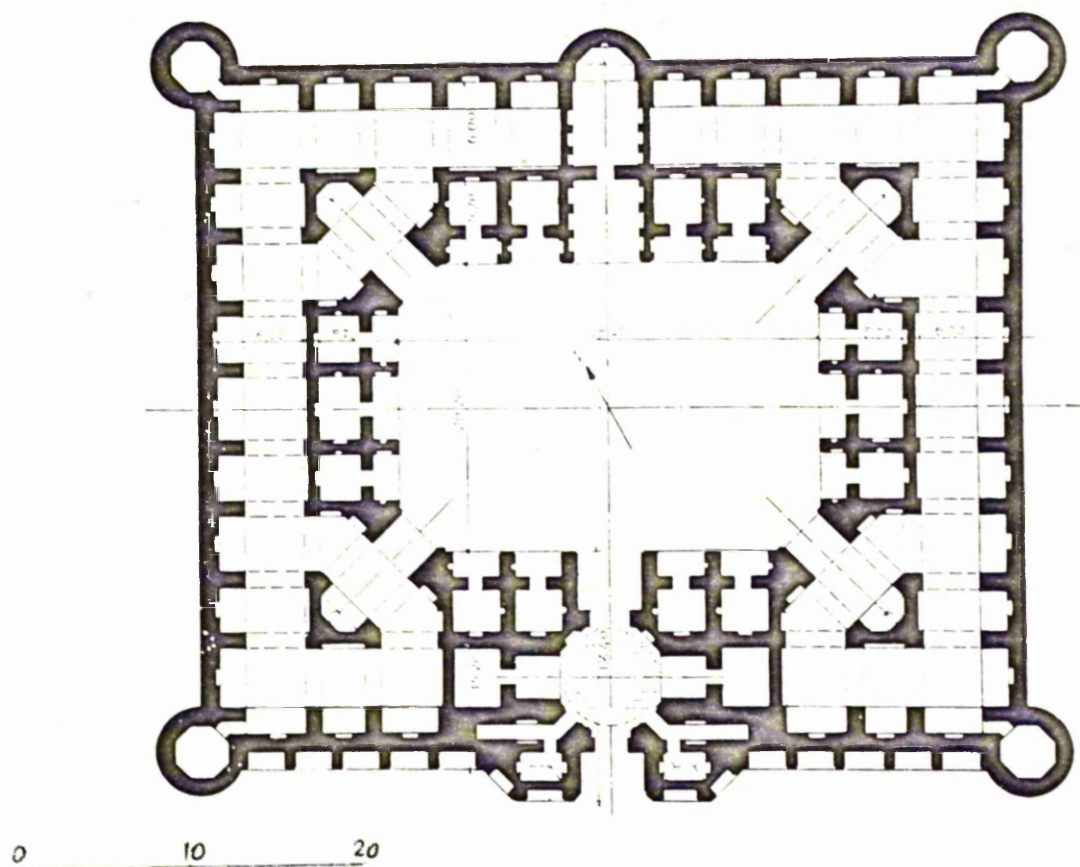


Fig.20. Plan of Caravansarai Jam

limestone tiles. No inscription survives on the caravansarai, but as already mentioned it has a number of features in common with Caravansarai Jamāl-Ābād in the same area and is thus attributable to the reign of Shāh 'Abbās II. At present the building is in very poor condition. Furthermore Morier lodged in this caravan in the early 19th century, on his way from Isfahan to Tabriz, and left us a short description of the building⁽²⁷⁾.

In the same area on the main Tabriz road there is another caravansarai, so-called Guilak. The structure is rectangular and its outside measurements are 56 x 45 m. (Fig. 21, Pl. 43). The exterior of the monument consists of a simple gateway, which is flanked by ten niches, four corner towers, two semi-towers on the north wall and two in the west and east. The gateway is sheltered by a wide arcade which forms a porch.

The courtyard is also rectangular in shape measuring 31.50 x 22.46 m. The three axial iwans are of the same size, measuring 4 x 5 m. They lead to three large rooms which extend to the enclosing wall.

There are four stables whose entrances, like those of Caravansarai Mahyār, are on the four sides of the courtyard. The construction is of brick on a base of stone.

The region of Kāshān, south of Azarbaijan, provides us with further material for the study of the Safavid caravansarai.

Summary: The city of Kāshān has been an important centre since pre-historic times, noted for its fine carpets and porcelain. The famous Sialk Tappeh shows some of the earliest evidence of Iranian art and culture.

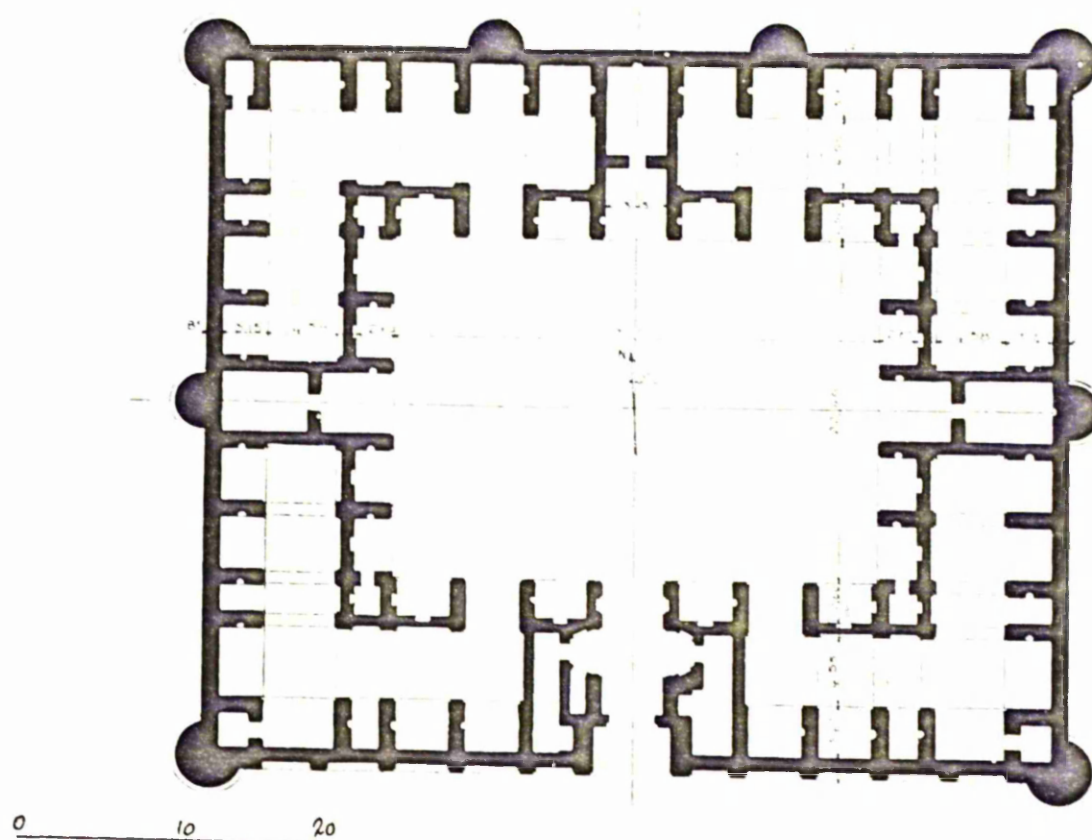


Fig.21. Plan of Caravansarai Guilak

The city was favoured by the early Safavid rulers partly on account of its championing of the Shi'ah sect. Shāh Tahmāsp erected public buildings there as well as in his capital of Qazvin. Shāh 'Abbās I visited the city in 1000/1591 to encourage building and industry; his minister in Kāshān, Ata-Khazra Nahāvandī (assassinated 1016 A.H.) erected many public buildings including caravansarais.

Some feeling of the splendour of the city can be had from the reports of visitors in Safavid times who recount that after Isfahan, Kāshān was the most important centre of activity and wealth. (28)

(Pl. 44.) Thus Kāshān very soon became one of the foremost cities of Iran. Both Tavernier and Morier recorded some 23 caravansarais in Kāshān and on the Kāshān-Isfahan and Kāshān-Qum roads. M Unfortunately in 1194/1780 there was a severe earthquake in Kāshān and most of its buildings were destroyed.

After the Safavid period none of the ruined buildings were repaired. According to H. Naraqī, most of the half ruined Safavid monuments were completely demolished in the Qājār period and numerous new caravansarais were erected in their place (29).

Thus most of the remaining caravansarais belong to the Qājār period, and there are only a few existing Safavid structures in Kāshān, and on the Kāshān road. The following monuments should be noted, although they are in rather poor condition: Qāhrūd (30), Natanz, Houz-Sultan and Passangān.

It is worthwhile before describing the caravansarais on the Kāshān roads to mention the royal monument in the city of Kāshān

although completely disappeared.

Among the most impressive Safavid caravansarais was the royal caravansarai of Kāshān. This structure was erected by Shāh 'Abbās between 1000 - 1016. No trace remains of this royal building, which in later Safavid times was already partly in ruins as a result of negligence. Tavernier complains of the neglect of this remarkable caravansarai at that time, and writes that after its erection the people had built five good comfortable caravansarais but had not looked after what was, perhaps, the best of all. N

Although nothing remains of this royal inn, there are still a few illustrations (Pls. 45-6) in the books of travellers as well as lengthy descriptions. For example, Thomas Herbert, Chardin, Tavernier, Le Brun and Dieulafoy give plentiful information about the royal caravansarai.⁽³¹⁾

Near the city of Natanz about 2 Km. from the present road there are the remains of a remarkable caravansarai of the time of Shāh 'Abbās I; unfortunately it is in ruins.⁰ The building was perfectly symmetrical, and rectangular in shape measuring 67.50 x 58.70 m. (Fig. 22, Pls. 47-8). Four towers, one at each corner and the main gateway flanked by six niches on each side complete its external aspect. The interior consists of an open courtyard, iwans, internal arcades and stables.

The courtyard is rectangular, 37 x 28.90 m., and is surrounded by 20 chambers for travellers. The three iwans lead to three oblong rooms which extend to the outside walls. All the chambers are square and of the same size.

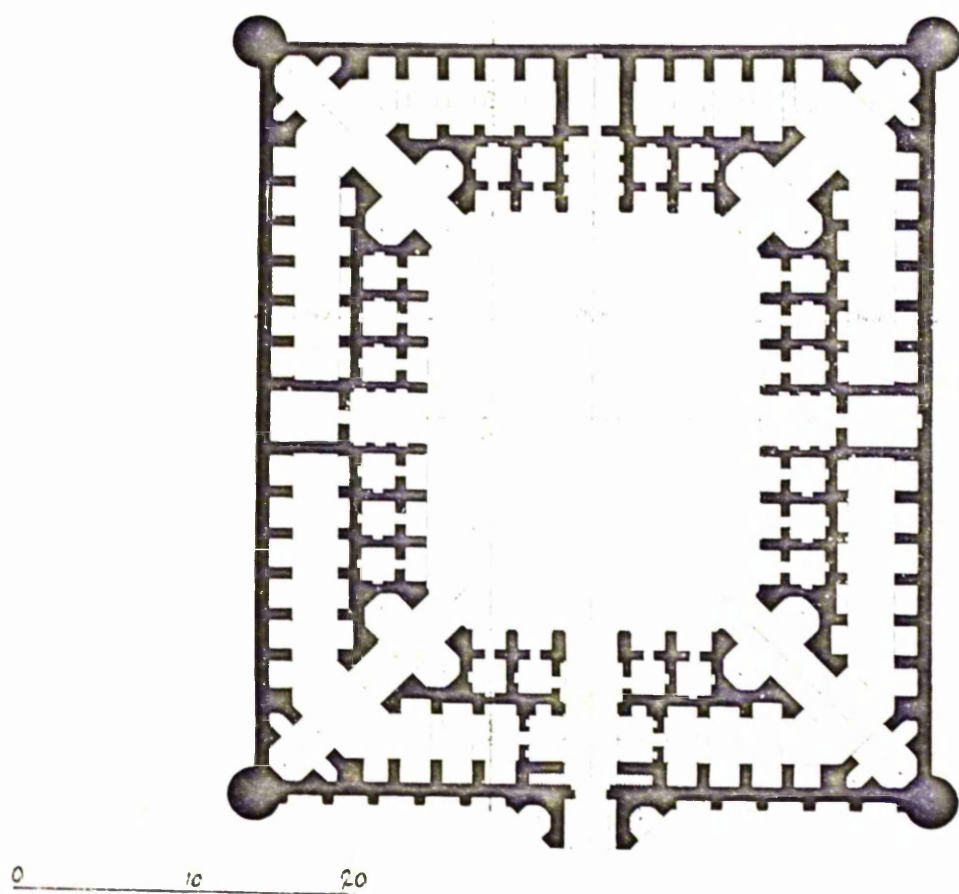


Fig.22. Plan of Caravansarai Natanz

It has four stables which are reached from the four corners of the courtyard. The whole construction is of particularly fine brick-work on a base of cut stone. There is a beautiful inscription above the main doorway written in Thuluth. Unfortunately the caravansarai is used as a farm without great regard for its high architectural merit. Half the inscription has disappeared and what remains is scarcely decipherable. Until recently the inscription had not been studied, but a few years ago Dr. M. Bayani, Professor at Teheran University, published and translated it in the Majalleh Honar va Mardom (Art and People)⁽³²⁾.

The inscription states that the caravansarai was built at the time of Shāh 'Abbās I by Āqā-Mirzā, son of Assadollah Housini Burzi Natanzī, and dates it to 1029/1619.

In the southern part of Teheran on the road to the cities of Saveh, Qum and Varāmīn, a number of caravansarais were erected in the Safavid and Qājār periods. One of these is the caravansarai Houz-Sultan; in fact it consists of two caravansarais, one belonging to the Safavid period, and the other one, attached to it, dating from Qājār times.^P The Safavid caravansarai of Houz-Sultan is oblong in shape (Fig. 23, Pl. 49), 40 m. long and 33.80 m. wide. Its interior consists of an open courtyard, one iwan opposite the entrance, niches and stables. There are eight niches round the court and one room behind the iwan. The four stables are placed in a series of cells, and their entrances are at the four corners of the court.

The structure is built of a combination of brick and stone.

No inscription survives on the caravansarai, but because of its location on the road, which was built by Shāh 'Abbās I, it was

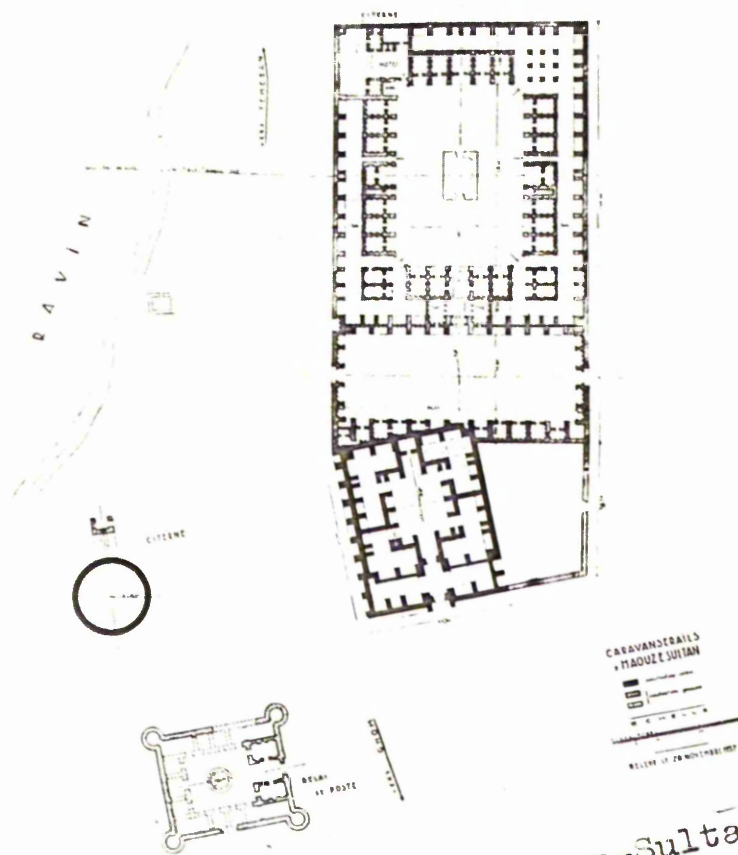


Fig.23. Plan of Caravansarai Houz-Sultan

probably erected at the same time as the road was built. Finally the building was repaired in Qājār times when its internal arrangement was altered.

The caravansarai of Passangan is another building located between the cities of Kāshān and Qum. The monument was visited by a number of travellers and scholars. Some beautiful sketches and drawings have been preserved from Pascal Coste⁽³³⁾ and Dieulafoy⁽³⁴⁾.

K. Muller wrote of it: "The caravansarai was built by a rich merchant of Qazvin (Hājī Mohammad Bāqer) in 1807 and is the contemporary of two other caravansarais, Khan Jeta and Khan Nasrijuh in Iraq!"⁽³⁵⁾

Siroux compared it with the caravansarai of Guilak, and dated it before the time of Shāh 'Abbās I⁽³⁶⁾. Finally Meshkati dated it as a caravansarai erected in the 13th/19th century⁽³⁷⁾. Q

The structure is square in shape measuring approximately 50 x 50 m., and is built on the four iwans plan (Fig. 24, 25, Pl. 50). Its facades are decorated with niches, and there are four decorative towers at four corners of the building. The portal entrance is simple, and the lower and upper parts of the gateway are decorated with four blind arcades. The entrance hall leads to two oblong rooms whose only entrance is through the hall. Opposite the entrance is the main iwan which extends to the outside wall, and the east and west iwans lead to two square rooms. There are sixteen arcades around the courtyard. There are four stables around the courtyard, of which each has two entrances. The whole building built in fired brick rests on a base of rivaie boulders.

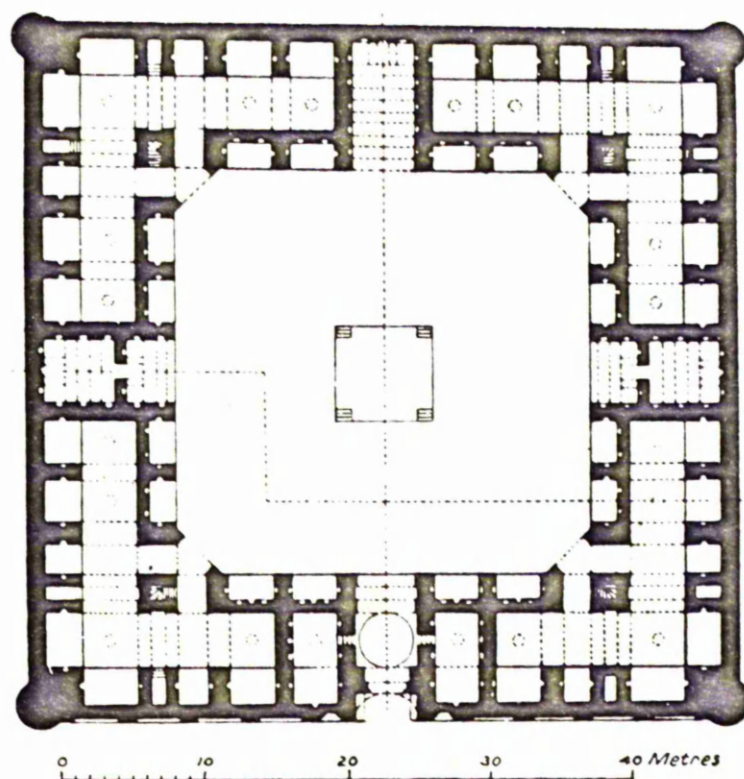


Fig.24. Plan of Caravansarai Passangan

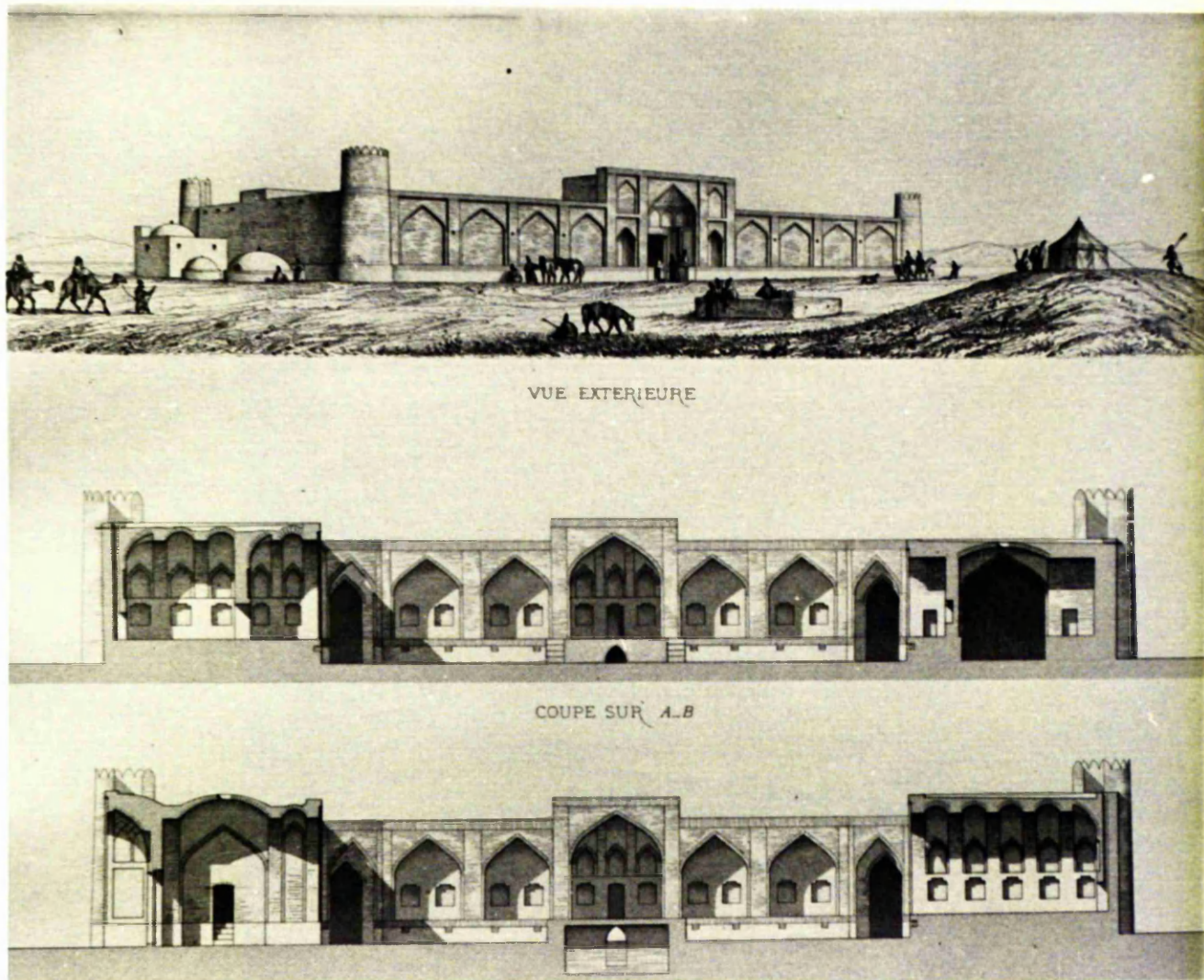


Fig.25. Sketch of Caravansarai Passangān

To continue our study of the first group of Safavid caravansarais we leave the Kāshān region for the Kermānshāh district and the Khqrāsān route.

Summary: Because of its position on the main route between East and West, Kermānshāh state has been an important province since earliest times, and many testimonies of its richness through different periods still remain⁽³⁸⁾. After the advent of Islam in Iran its importance increased, for to the flow of merchants and traders the movement of pilgrims to Baghdad and the holy cities in Iraq, Karbala, Najaf and Kazemain, was added. The Kermānshāh-Baghdad road was in fact a main Shiah pilgrim route, as many as 200,000 pilgrims per annum being recorded in the early part of this century. During the early Safavid period there was little erection of public buildings, due to the dynasty's struggle with the Ottomans, but with the reign of Shāh 'Abbās II (1643-1677) and the governorship of Sheikh-Ali-Khān-Zangāneh there was a resumption of building activity which continued into the reign of Shāh Sulaymān (1667-1694) at whose court the Sheikh was a minister. Sheikh-Ali-Khan erected a number of caravansarais on the Kermānshāh-Hamadān and Kermānshāh-Baghdād routes, the majority of which have been destroyed. Among these may be counted: Qase^R-i Shirin, Sahneh, Sonqor, Pataq, Karand, Sar-Pul-Zahab (Pl. 51) and Avage (Pl. 52).

A few, however, such as Bisuton, Mahi-Dasht, and Shāh-Ābād still remain although they are not in good condition. These caravansarais, all erected during the period 1642-1694, are probably ascribable to the same builder. R

Caravansarai Bisuton (so-called Ganj-Āli-Khān). The village

of Bisuton stands at the foot of Bisuton mountain (Pl. 53) some 38 Km. north of Kermanshah and is the site of a splendid series of remains and monuments dating from nine different periods⁽³⁹⁾.

The caravansarai is located in the south of the village and is known locally as Caravansarai Sheikh-Ali-Khān, having been erected by him when he was governor of Kermānshāh at the time of Shāh Abbās II.

In plan it is very similar to Caravansarai Mehi-Dasht, another caravansarai of the region, being built on the four iwan plan. It is rectangular, 83.60 m. long and 74.50 m. wide. The exterior ornamentation consists of a portal entrance flanked by seven arches on each side, and two arcades in the upper part of the facade. The vaulted main entrance portal leads into a round, brick-domed vestibule. On both sides of the vestibule are platforms of cut stone, and both sides lead to the second storey (upper part of the entrance) and the roof of the caravansarai.

The interior consists of an open courtyard, iwans, arcades, chambers and stables. Four iwans with flanking arcades establish the facades of a large rectangular court. The iwans are flanked by one-storey arcades, which on the east, west, north and south sides open into 47 chambers. At each of the four corners of the caravansarai there is an entrance to the stables. The east iwan leads by seventeen stairs to the roof of the building. The central courtyard is of earth covered with small stones (sang-i-farsh) and has a water pit in the middle. The structure displays the common combination of Sasanian stone and brick, though in this case the cut stone base course is surmounted by upper walls of stone.

An interesting point is that the Safavid builders of this

caravansarai (as well as other caravansarais and bridges) used Sasanian cut stone upon which the signature of the Sasanian stone cutter is still visible.

An inscription set into the west side of the entrance relates that the caravansarai was erected by Shāikh-Ali-Khān at the time of Shāh 'Abbās II. Years later when Shāikh-Ali-Khān became Prime Minister at the court of Shāh Sulayman (1667-1694) he donated some land near this caravansarai towards the cost of repairs; the deed of endowment is dated 1093/1682. (Pls. 55-9).

The next example is a building which is known locally as Caravansarai Mahi-Dasht (Fig. 26). This monument, situated in the north east part of the Mahi-Dasht plain, is in an abandoned condition. The structure is square, 70 x 70 m. and built on the four iwans plan. The portal entrance is on the south side and leads into a domed vestibule which in turn opens into the shallow south iwan (Pl. 63). The plinth entrance portal is built of cut stone which begins at the east and west arcades and continues as far as the beginning of the vestibule. There are five double arches to each side of the entrance and two decorative arches as alcoves, (Pls. 60, 61). From within the portal two small arcades each one metre wide and two metres high lead into domed chambers. The upper part of the portal entrance, reached by twelve stairs, contains on the road side two chambers and one iwan which are matched for the sake of symmetry on the courtyard side. From the south iwan thirteen stairs lead to the roof of the caravansarai. Each side of the south iwan has three big arcades which have other iwans for symmetry. The foundation of this building is Sasanian cut stone

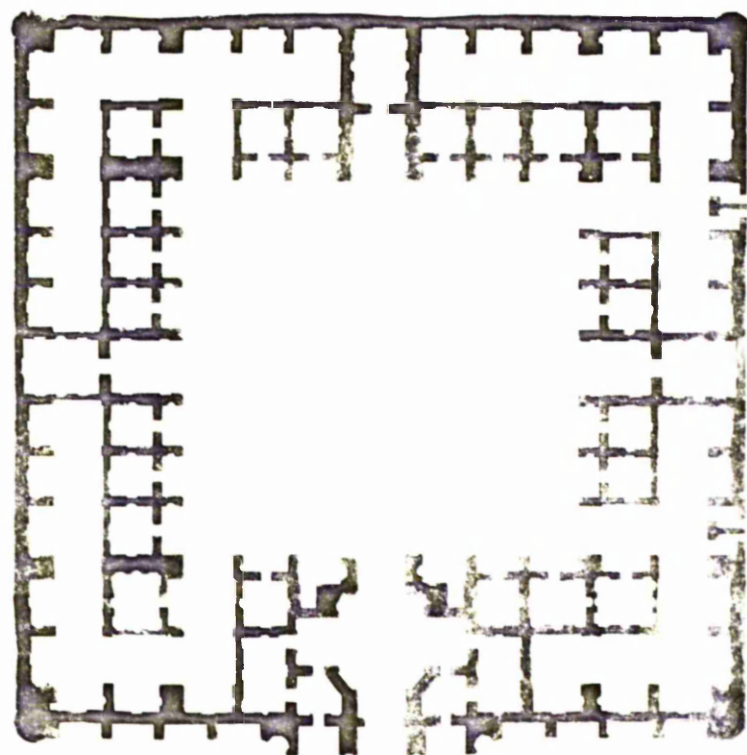


Fig.26. Plan of Caravansarai Mahi-Dasht

and the rest is built of brick, lime and plaster.

The caravansarai of Mahi-Dasht has a number of features that are common to the caravansarai of Bisuton and it appears certain that the two caravansarais were erected at the same time and under the direction of the same builder. Originally the caravansarai bore an inscription from the Safavid period but this has been replaced by another inscription dating probably from the Qājār period, at which time it was repaired.

The present inscription is set above the entrance and is written in Nast'aliq on a stone measuring 90 x 50 cm. It reads:

"At the time of Nāsir Al-Dīn-Shāh Qājār and the prime minister Mirzā-Āqā-Nūrī, this robāt which was abandoned has been repaired for the comfort and rest of pilgrims.

Amal Hājī Jafar Meamar-bashi (architect) Isfahani, date of repair 1275 A.H."

In the north east part of the city of Shāh-Ābād, some 70 Km. west of Kermānshāh on the old route from Shāh-Ābād to Sār-Pul-Zahāb, there is a building which is locally known as the Caravansarai of Shāh-Ābād.

As originally erected the caravansarai must have been one of the finest in Kermānshāh province. It consists of four iwans with an open central court. The entrance, on the south side, is more fully developed than is the case with those of other caravansarais in Kermānshāh; six pieces of carved cut stone form a zigzag portal that is at once striking and powerful. The entrance chamber is built in the form of an octagon and roofed with a large round dome supported on four squinches and four spandrels. The upper entrance

platform which was built as an alcove is one metre deep. From the vestibule, stairs lead to the second storey (bala-khāneh), an arrangement duplicated in the north iwan. There are five arcades in each side of the portal entrance and two decorative round towers in the east and west walls. Its interior consists of an open courtyard set with arcades, behind which are the chambers. The north iwan is fourteen metres wide and from it the second storey can be reached through two small arches.

The structure displays the combination of stone and brick so common in the Kermānshāh region (i.e. a cut stone base course surmounted by upper walls of brick). The foundation of the building is of Sasanian cut stone and the courtyard floor is of earth.

On the upper part of the entrance there is a blank space measuring 80 x 50 cm. which was probably the site of a Safavid inscription. Of this, however, no trace remains. An inscription marking the restoration of the caravansarai in the Qājār period has been damaged but fragments state that the monument was restored at the time of Nāsir-Al-Dīn-Shāh Qājār. The general condition of the caravansarai is poor (Pls. 63-4).

There are a considerable number of examples on the Khorāsān route, The Shi'a pilgrim road, which are relevant to our investigation.

Summary: The Khorāsān road has a long and ancient history constituting as it does one of the great lines of communication between Mesopotamia, Transoxiana and the Far East. This regular east-west commercial traffic was augmented in Safavid times by the increasing flow of pilgrims to the Imām Rezā Shrine in Mashhad and

to the holy cities of Qum and Rayy.

The multiplicity of caravansarais on this route can be put down to two reasons: one was the readiness of Safavid rulers and pious people to serve this holy traffic, and the other the scarcity of water on parts of the trail, particularly in the east⁽⁴⁰⁾.

With reference to the first reason, it may be borne in mind that many of the caravansarais, particularly between Qumis province and the city of Mashhad, were built for religious reasons alone.

Most of the caravansarais on the Kẖrāsān road are now in ruins, although some were repaired during the Qājār period.^S In addition, many were built after Safavid times, particularly in the Qājār period, which were mainly located between Semnān, Shāhrūd, Sabzewār and Nīshāpūr (Qumis province)⁽⁴¹⁾.

The following is a description of the major Safavid caravansarais, beginning with those in the section between Semnān and Mashhad. Most of these caravansarais have never been published and no photographs were available of the majority of them. Travellers have given brief information on some of these buildings but their descriptions are not very informative. T

Caravansarai Miān-Dasht

Miān-Dasht village is located some 60 Km. west of Shāhrūd on the road to Mashhad. In fact there are three caravansarais in the village, one of which was erected at the time of Shāh 'Abbās the Great and the other two in the Qājār period. All three caravansarais are built together, forming, in effect, a complex unit.

The Safavid caravansarai is small in size, rectangular and built on the four iwan plan. It measures 30 m. long by 15 m. wide. The

monumental portal entrance is on the east side of the building. From the vestibule there is access to the upper part (bala-khāneh) and to the stables. The four sides of the open courtyard each contain three chambers for travellers. The structure is of brick and, as is the case with several other caravansarais in this region, was repaired in the year 1291/1874 by a rich merchant. (Pl. 65). The name of Shāh 'Abbās the Great is recorded in the inscription on the massive portal.

The two other caravansarais in the complex are of the same plan but are larger (one measures 70 x 50 m. and the other one is approximately the same size) but the caravansarai of Shāh 'Abbās is undoubtedly the nucleus of the unit.

There are three cisterns in the vicinity of the caravansarais and according to Sani-al-Dāwlah the three caravansarais could lodge and cater for 2,000 pilgrims. U

Caravansarai Mian-Dasht has impressed many travellers. Jackson writes of it:

"I cannot forget the glare of the Persian sun as we reached the great caravansarai of Mian-Dasht - an ancient settlement which can boast of its extreme antiquity, of its capacious accommodations for the caravans that pass under the high portal of its hostelry (due again to Shah Abbas) and of its isolated position in the midst of the plain, arid and glowing, despite the hills that border it south and north." (42)

O'Donovan lodged at the Caravansarai Mian-Dasht and wrote of it:

"Nothing can be more delightful on a sultry day than to pass from

the burning head and glare of the stoney plane into the cave-like coolness and dim light of these long arcades and vaults. Another and much larger building has since been added, but at what time I could not ascertain. Its first courtyard forms an immense square in front of the older caravansarai, and is divided from a second of similar dimensions by a row of buildings which join the ramparts at both ends. The inner side of the rampart is lined with a row of vaulted rooms each having a shallow arched vestibule in front. The latter, from the free circulation of air through it and its consequent coolness, is the place preferred by summer travellers for lodging. The row of central buildings has a second storey closely resembling the castment in European fortresses, with a long dim corridor; and throughout the walls, floor and roof are of solid brickwork, impervious alike to rain and sun."⁽⁴³⁾

Caravansarai 'Abbās-Ābād

'Abbās-Ābād is located between Shāhrūd and Dānghān and contains a caravansarai and a fort, both built by Shāh 'Abbās I. In 1600 A.D. the Shāh transported a band of Christian Georgians to this place, his design being to have them form part of the bulwark against the Turkoman.

The caravansarai is square in form, 60m. x 60 m., and built on a four iwan plan. There is a portal entrance flanked by arches in the east face of the structure. The four iwans are located on the cross axes of a central court and the connecting arcades establish the facades of the open courtyard. On each side there are ten arches, each one opening into a chamber.

In summer a small stream enters the caravansarai from the west

side, replenishes a pool in the middle of the courtyard, and flows out to the east.

The structure is strongly built of brick and plaster. In 1237/1821, during the Qājār period it was repaired by a wealthy merchant and contains an inscription giving this date and the name of its benefactor. (Pls. 67-8).

X Caravansarai Ahwān

This caravansarai is situated 18 Km. west of Semnan on the main Khorāsān route and comprises two structures, one of which belongs to the Sasanian period and the other to the Safavid.^V The latter is located at the western end of the street, on the north side of the main road. (Pl. 66).

The caravansarai includes four iwans, located on the cross axes of the central courtyard. The portal entrance is on the south side and the vaulted main entrance leads into a domed vestibule which in turn opens into the shallow south iwan. The interior courtyard measures 55 m. x 50 m. On the cross axes of the central courtyard are four iwans and there are 32 chambers behind the courtyard arcades. Behind all the chambers are stables. The floor is of earth and the walls are built of fired brick. A Thuluth poem appears on a marble stone set above the entrance, which states that at the time of Shāh Sulaymān in the year 1097/1685 the robāt was erected for pilgrims who were on their way to the tomb of Imām Rezā in Mashhad.

When A.V.W. Jackson visited the caravansarai in 1903, it was still being used by the merchants and pilgrims who travelled this route. (44)

Caravansarai Miyāmī

Caravansarai Miyāmī is located some 60 Km. west of Shāhrūd and is built on the four iwans plan. There is a portal entrance in the northeast wall with towers and ten arched niches on either side of the entrance. The vaulted main entrance portal leads into a domed vestibule, which in turn, opens into the shallow iwan. The upper part of the portal entrance has two chambers, matched symmetrically on the opposite side. The enclosing walls of the caravansarai have seven towers, one at each corner and one in each of the walls, except that with the gateway.

The interior consists of an open courtyard, chambers and stables. Four iwans with flanking arcades mark the boundaries of a rectangular courtyard and behind the arcades there are eighteen chambers. At each of the four corners of the caravansarai there is a domed stable.

Beside the caravansarai there is a cistern which was probably built at the same time as the caravansarai.

The inscription over the entrance states that the caravansarai was built by Amīr Dīwān at the time of Shāh Abbās II, in the year 1064/1653.

Caravansarai Mazinan

Mazinan village, located near the town of Sabzewar on the road to Mashhad, was once a place of considerable importance. The large caravansarai of the same name was built on the outskirts of the village in the reign of Shāh 'Abbās II, It is rectangular, 72 m. long and 66 m. wide, and built on the four iwan plan. The portal entrance is on the north side and is flanked by six arches on either

side. The upper part of the north iwan (bala-khaneh) contains two chambers. On either side of each iwan there are six linked chambers. There is a stable at each corner of the caravansarai. The floor is of earth, and it is built of fired bricks.

Caravansarai Mazinan was repaired by a wealthy merchant in 1283/H (Qājār period) and has an inscription written in Thuluth set into the entrance. It states that the caravansarai was erected in the year 1074/1663 at the time of Shāh 'Abbās II, by Hājī-Mo'in Isfahānī.

Caravansarai Qūsheh

This caravansarai, located at Qūsheh near Shāhrūd on the way to Kẖrāsān, was erected by Shāh Abbās the Great between 1578 and 1629 A.D. It is smaller than the other caravansaraais in the district, measuring 33 x 23 m. and built on the four iwan plan. Although this caravansarai looks octagonal, it is in fact rectangular in plan.

The exterior consists of a portal entrance, towers and arched niches. The portal entrance is to the east, and opposite it is a cistern which was built at the same time as the caravansarai. There are seven towers in the enclosure walls of the caravansarai (two in the east, three in the west and one each in the south and north walls). In the middle of the vestibule is a vault from which there are four passages to four sides. One leads to the outside of the caravansarai, one to the courtyard and the other two to the stables which stand behind the chambers. One chamber in the upper part of the entrance opens onto the outside of the caravansarai.

The interior consists of a four iwan open courtyard with fourteen chambers. The building materials are brick and plaster. In the Qājār period this caravansarai was repaired by a wealthy merchant, but at present it is in ruins.

The following caravansarais on the Khorāsān route between Teheran and Mashhad were erected during the Safavid period. Unfortunately they have been badly neglected over the years and have fallen into disrepair; many, indeed, are in very poor condition. Therefore, they will be mentioned only briefly.

Caravansarai Iwān Keif

This caravansarai which was probably erected by Shāh 'Abbās is situated southeast of Teheran and has been in ruins since the early Qājār period.

Caravansarai Deh Nāmak (Salt Village)

Deh Namak is situated between Garmsār and Semnān. The caravansarai is square, with a portal entrance in the south flanked on either side by seven niches. The interior consists of an open court and has one iwan. There are 24 chambers around the court and four stables behind the chambers. This caravansarai was repaired by a merchant during the Qājār period.

Caravansarai Be Dasht

This caravansarai is built on the four iwan plan and has a portal entrance in the south side. The caravansarai is rectangular and measures 36m. x 33m. It has a marble inscription written in poetry which gives the date of erection as 1055/1645.

Caravansarai Elāhak

Elahak is the name of a village some 60 Km. west of Shahrud.

This caravansarai is square in form and its enclosure walls are strengthened by eight half round towers. It is believed to have been erected by the founder of the Safavid dynasty, Shāh Ismā'īl, 1502-1524 A.D. This caravansarai is built on the four iwan plan and has twenty-two chambers and four stables.

Caravansarai Mehr

This caravansarai was erected by Shāh 'Abbās II, and completely destroyed in early Qājār times. In the late Qājār period the clergy of Sabzewar built a new caravansarai using the remains of the original. A fragmented inscription which remains from the Safavid period states that Caravansarai Mehr was erected by Haji Mo'īn Al-Dīn Isfahānī in the year 1075/1664. (This caravansarai and that at Mazīnān were erected by the same builder and are dated one year apart.)

Caravansarai at Turuq

Turuq is situated 7 Km. west of the holy city of Mashhad. In fact Turuq was the last stage before Mashhad, the capital of Khorāsān. There are three caravansarais at Turuq: one dating from the time of Shāh 'Abbās, one from Shāh Sulaymān and the third from the Qājār period.

The caravansarai of Shāh 'Abbās has been destroyed, and with its materials a new caravansarai was built in the Qājār period. Near the Qājār caravansarai is the caravansarai which was erected by Shāh Sulayman; it is square in form measuring 48 x 48 m. An inscription states that this caravansarai was erected by Kermānī at the time of Shāh Sulaymān for the comfort of travellers and

pilgrims. It is dated 1080/1669.

In summary: many caravansarais were erected along the Khorāsān route, in cities such as Sabzewar, Shāhrūd and Nīshāpur and in villages but very few have survived. However, considering the location and inscriptions of those that remain we can say that the purpose of their erection was religious rather than commercial.

There were also other pilgrim roads leading to the holy city of Mashhad; these exist today and are still used by pilgrims.

One of these was the road from Astarābād (Gurgān) to Mashhad which starts from the Caspian region and leads by way of Bojnurd and Qūchān to Mashhad. Again for religious reasons numerous caravansarais were erected along this road by Governors and wealthy private individuals. According to historians some fourteen caravansarais were erected along the Gurgān-Mashhad road in the early 16th century⁽⁴⁵⁾. Most of them have completely disappeared, probably as a result of their construction in mud brick, and the few which were built of solid quarry-stone were in poor condition even in the Qājār period. However, two of the latter caravansarais, built half way between Gurgān and Mashhad have some sections at least in reasonable repair. These are Sankhawst and Quli, which are some 30 Km. apart.

Caravansarai Sankhawst

Sankhawst (or Sankhaws) is a village of Asfarayn, some 55 Km. west of Bojnurd city. The caravansarai is located some 8 Km. north of the village, and is built on the four iwān plan. Interesting features are its construction in stone and its Mihrab and bath. (Fig. 27, Pls. 69-70).^W The whole structure occupies an oblong area

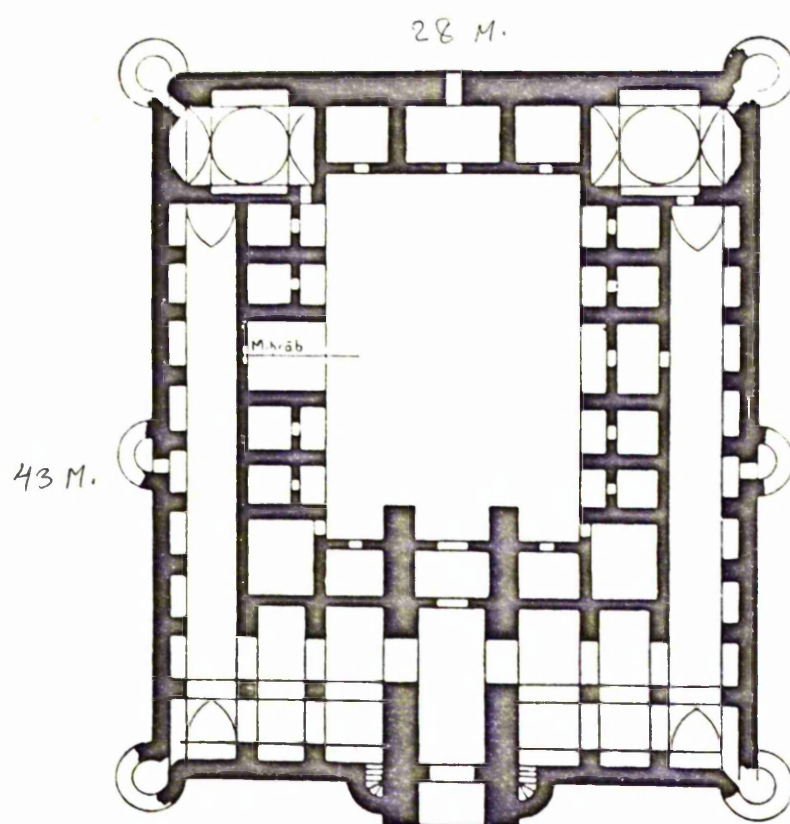


Fig.27. Plan of Caravansarai Sankhawst

43 x 28 m. The exterior of the caravansarai consists of a deep entrance and towers. The entrance was constructed of blocks of sandstone, accurately cut and joined without cement. There are four round towers, one at each corner, and two semicircular towers at the midpoints of the two long sides. Six staircases lead to the roof by way of the four corner towers and the gate towers. The front part of the caravansarai has two storeys. The interior consists of an open rectangular courtyard, oratory, bath and stables.

There was a Mihrāb in the back wall of the southern iwan, and a bathroom in the southwest corner. The open courtyard has a row of living units grouped around it with iwans behind which are stable units. Along the two longer sides there are two galleries 40 m. long with pointed niches (for the grooms). There was once a frieze with letters of non-glazed square slabs of chalkstone with a Nastālī script relief. The building is of quarry-stone cemented with mortar. E. Diez pointed out that when originally erected, this caravansarai must have been one of the best caravansarais in the region, and on account of its strong material and ornamentation was able to withstand the elements for centuries, while all the other buildings in the region, being made of mud brick, had since disappeared. (46)

Caravansarai Qulī

Only some 30 Km. from Sankhawst caravansarai there is another caravansarai known as Robāt Qulī. The caravansarai is located 3 Km. away from the village of the same name. It has a number of features in common with Caravansarai Sankhawst. Robāt Qulī is built on the four-iwan plan and measures 60 m. long by 50 m. wide.^X The exterior

consists of a portal on the east side, a tower at each corner and two towers at the midpoints of the long sides of the caravansarai. The interior consists of an open oblong courtyard, iwans, chambers and stables. Behind the iwans are chambers and there are two stables 50 m. long built along either side of the caravansarai. The importance of this caravansarai lies in its building material which is solid quarry-stone cemented with mortar. It had a very nice inscription written in Thuluth, and the date of erection was probably in the early Safavid period.

A final example of this four-iwan caravansarai from the Safavid period is in the Kermān region in the southeastern part of Iran.

Summary: Kermān city and the surrounding region owe their progress and development in Safavid times to Ganj-Ali-Khān, Governor and town-planner. This gifted man, who for 30 years was governor of Kermān, was closer than anybody to Shāh 'Abbās, and erected a large number of public and religious buildings in Kermān and its region.

Travellers like Tavernier spoke of the caravansarais in the Kermān region. When Tavernier travelled from Isfahān to Kermān he wrote: "Usually the journey from Isfahan to Kerman takes 25 days; most of the roads are earth and sand, and very tiresome; the only thing on the desert roads to console and give hope to the travellers are the caravansarais and cisterns".⁽⁴⁷⁾

Worthy of special mention are the caravansarai and mosque known as Ganj-Ali-Khan, which were erected at the same time and are joined

together (as are the madrasah and caravansarai Shah Sultan Housin in Isfahan). The mosque is located in the northeast part of the caravansarai of which, in fact, it forms part. The famous artist and calligrapher 'Alī-Rezā-'Abbāsi made a remarkable inscription in this caravansarai which unfortunately has largely been destroyed. The inscription gives the date of erection as the year 1007/1598. Ganj-'Alī-Khān also built another caravansarai on the road between Kermān and Tabas.⁽⁴⁸⁾ There is an interesting and reputedly true story about Shāh 'Abbās and Ganj-'Alī-Khān, which proves how important to the Safavid rulers and their governors was the comfort and security of travellers along the roads.⁽⁴⁹⁾

These monuments in different parts of Iran which we have discussed above form the majority of the Safavid caravansarais which were erected on the four-iwan plan with a central courtyard. As mentioned before, the first group of Safavid caravansarais were built along the roads, in villages, small towns and even in the middle of the desert. In the course of time most of them have fallen into ruin.

Finally it should be mentioned that among those which have disappeared was the Royal Caravansarai of Qazvīn. Although no trace remains of this building, a fine illustration of it has been preserved in the travellers' books. (Pl. 71). According to historians this caravansarai was built by Shāh Tahmāsp when he transferred his capital from Tabriz to Qazvīn. The caravansarai has been described as a royal guest house for important travellers with at least 250 rooms.

2. Octagonal Caravansarais

Although most Safavid caravansarais are built on the four iwans plan with open courtyards, there are a few which were built on an octagonal plan. Octagonal caravansarais should be examined, both from the architectural and from the functional point of view.

The history of octagonal buildings goes back to pre-Safavid times. From the beginning of Islamic times religious monuments such as Imām-Zādehs, mausoleums, towers, and military buildings like fortresses were built on hexagonal, octagonal and polygonal plans. The earliest surviving Islamic monument, the Qubbat al-Sakhra in Jerusalem (72/962) is built in an octagonal form. The first known Islamic mausoleum, the Qubbat al-Sulaibiya at Samarra (third A.H./ ninth century A.D.) has an identical plan. From Iran the best and earliest examples of this type were erected during the Seljūq period. These are the Gunbad-i Jabaliyah in Kermān and the Gunbad-i Sheykh Junayd in Yezd.

After the Seljūqs, during the Il-Khānīd period, structures in octagonal shape became more widespread, and many buildings were erected, such as the magnificent mausoleum of Sultaniyah and the Gunbad-i Imām-Zādeh Ja'far in Isfahan. During the Safavid period also octagonal buildings were erected as religious monuments, and standing mausoleums of which Khajeh Rabi'a, the Qadamgah in Khorāsān and the mausoleum of Akhund in Kermān are the best examples. Unfortunately we have no evidence of caravansarais of octagonal shape before the Safavids, and the erection of caravansarais on an octagonal plan probably began in the Safavid period.

Octagonal caravansarais were apparently only built in Iran. According to Müller, this type of caravansarai is entirely a Persian style which has never been seen elsewhere, for instance in Mesopotamia or in Anatolia.⁽⁵⁰⁾

Among the Safavid octagonal caravansarais only three have survived, of which two are in poor condition. These three buildings are located in the same area, on the road between Isfahan and Shiraz, and are known locally as Caravansarais Amīn-Ābād, Deh-Bīd and Khān-Khurra.

When we consider the location and architectural aspects of these three octagonal caravansarais, we can say that the purpose of their erection was military rather than commercial or religious.

The caravansarai of Amīn-Ābād is located between Shāhrezā and Ābādeh, and measures 58 x 58 m. (Fig. 28-29, Pls. 72-73). Its external form which repeats the form of the courtyard within does not prevent the presence of iwans on the normal axes. At each of the eight corners of the building there are towers. The portal entrance is flanked by six blind arcades in both sides, and forms a rectangle broken by a high arcade of which the tympanum shelters the three bala-khāneh windows. The vestibule is long, and leads on either side to chambers of varying sizes.

The interior of the building consists of an open octagonal courtyard, iwans, chambers and stables. The main characteristic of this octagonal caravansarai and the caravansarai of Deh-Bīd is the adaption of the courtyard and four iwans whose symmetry is suited to superimposition on an octagon.

There are three rectangular iwans, behind each of which is a

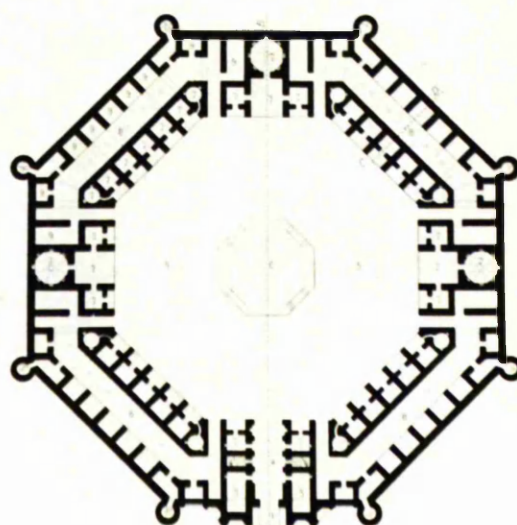
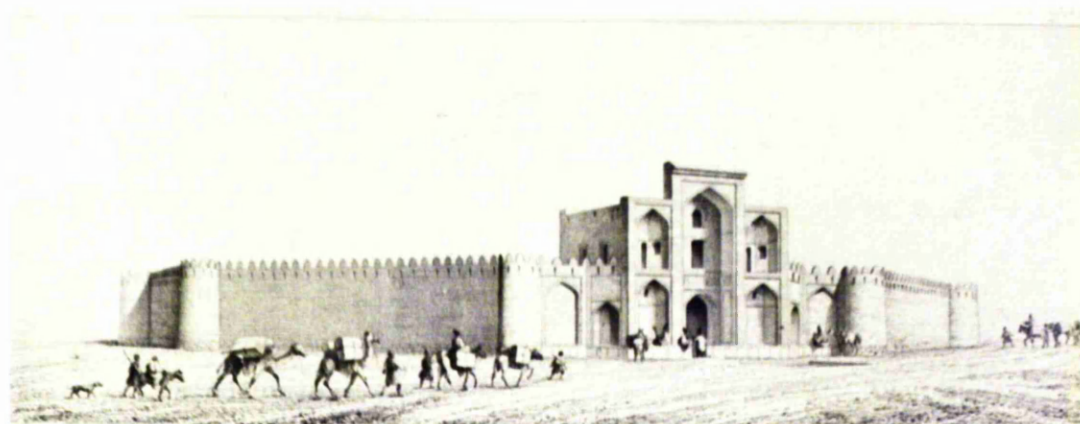


Fig.28. Plan of Caravansarai Amin-Abad

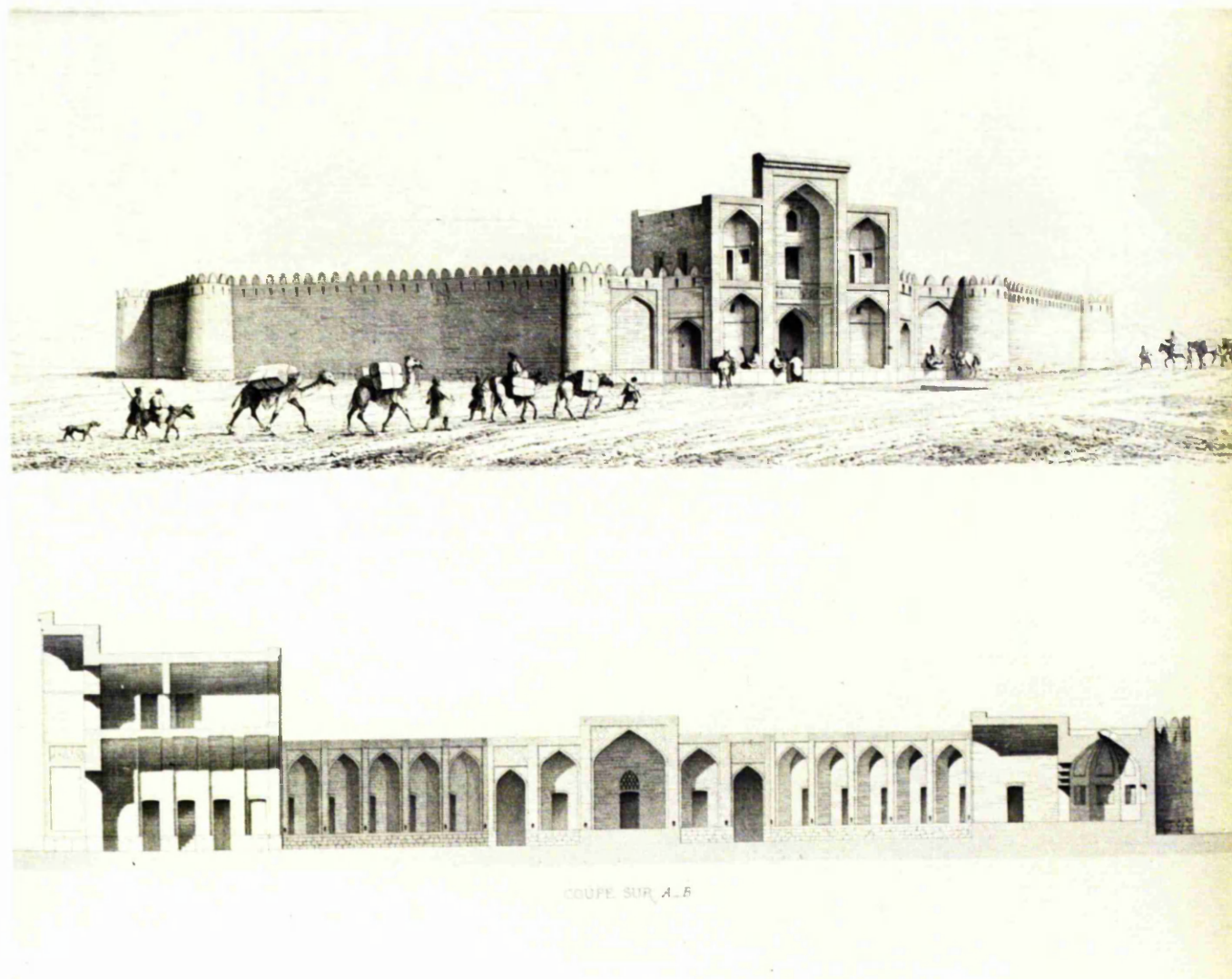


Fig.29. Sketch of Caravansarai Amin-Abad

room with an eight-panelled roof which is open to the sky. Also on each side of the three iwans there are small rooms which give access both to the chamber corridor and the stables. There are 26 chambers around the courtyard all of which are identical in size. The building has four stables, each of which has two entrances. The surrounding walls are smooth and stand 6.50 m. high. The caravansarai is built of stone and brick, and the courtyard paved with broken stone.

Since its erection the structure has been visited by travellers and scholars and the following descriptions from their observation have been left to us.

Tavernier in his last journey from Isfahan to Shiraz wrote: "On the first of March 1665 we passed a building called Amin-Abad, which was built by Imam Quli Khān governor of Shiraz".⁽⁵¹⁾ Curzon says: "The building at Amin-Abād was built as a fortified place against the freebooters by Daud Khan, brother of Imam Quli Khan, the celebrated governor-general of Fars under Shah Abbas, and in 1815 the whole place was rebuilt for the protection of wayfarers, the walled enclosure including a mud fort, a caravansarai, a mosque and a bath."⁽⁵²⁾ F.B. Bradley-Birt writes: "At Amin-Abad there is a large fort like a caravansarai which was originally built by Daud Khan". Müller compares the facade of this caravansarai with the caravansarai of Bisuton which he dates to the time of Shāh 'Abbās II. Finally from Pascal Coste we have some beautiful illustrations.⁽⁵³⁾

Similar in plan to Amin-Abād, and in the same area, we have another example of the octagonal caravansarai which is known locally

as the Caravansarai of Deh-Bid. This building has fallen into decay, but from Texier we have a beautiful sketch⁽⁵⁴⁾. The monument is located near Pasargadae on the road to Shiraz.

The measurements of the caravansarai are 67.60 x 66.60 m. (Fig. 30-31). The building's gateway is simple and flanked by niches on each side. At each of the eight corners of the structure there is a tower, the distance from each to the next being 22.70 m. The vestibule is 14.15 m. long and 4 m. wide and leads to rooms of varying sizes on both sides. An open octagonal courtyard measuring 42.45 x 42 m., three iwans, 26 chambers and four stables complete its internal aspect. In fact the internal arrangement is exactly the same as in our previous example, except in that here the three iwans are square in shape, lead to square rooms and have no entrances into the side chambers. The building materials consist of stone and brick.

The third caravansarai is located between the city of Ābādeh and Deh-Bid, and is called Khān Khurra.

The building has been visited by some travellers and scholars. Morier wrote of it: "We rested for the night at Khan Khurra, a poor caravansarai now but once, by the appearance of its walls, a respectable building."⁽⁵⁵⁾ Diez and Glück with hesitation dated it to the 18th century.⁽⁵⁶⁾

The caravansarai of Khān Khurra is smaller than Amīn-Ābād and Deh-Bid, and also in its internal arrangements not like the two aforementioned buildings. The chambers are square and covered by cupolas; the iwans lead to rooms which touch the outside wall. It has four stables, each having an entrance at four corners. The

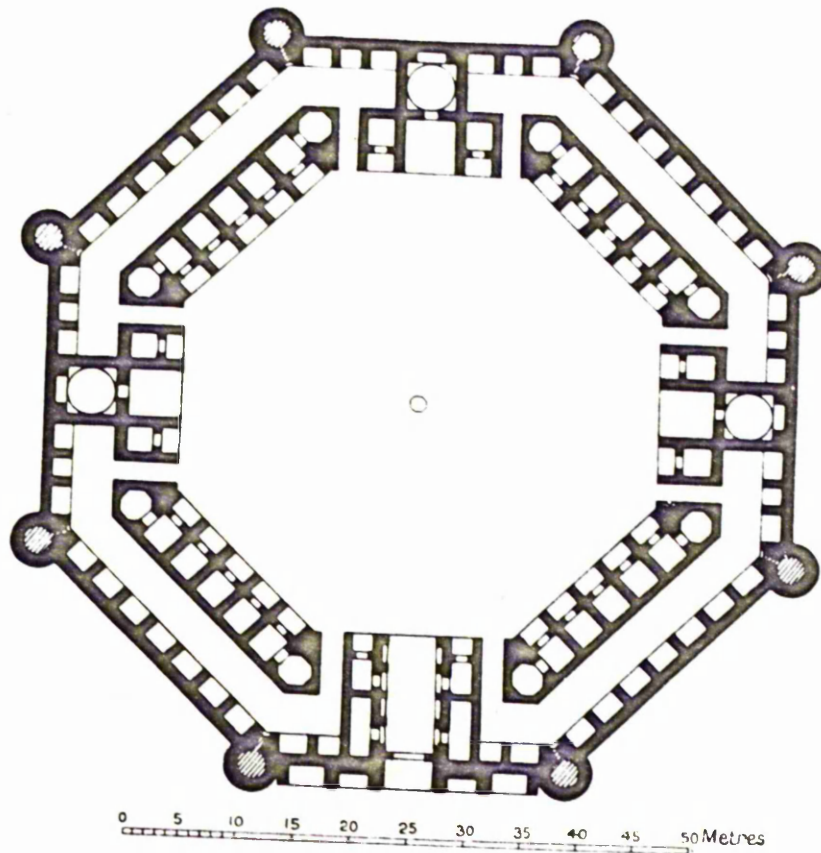


Fig.30. Plan of Caravansarai Deh-Bid

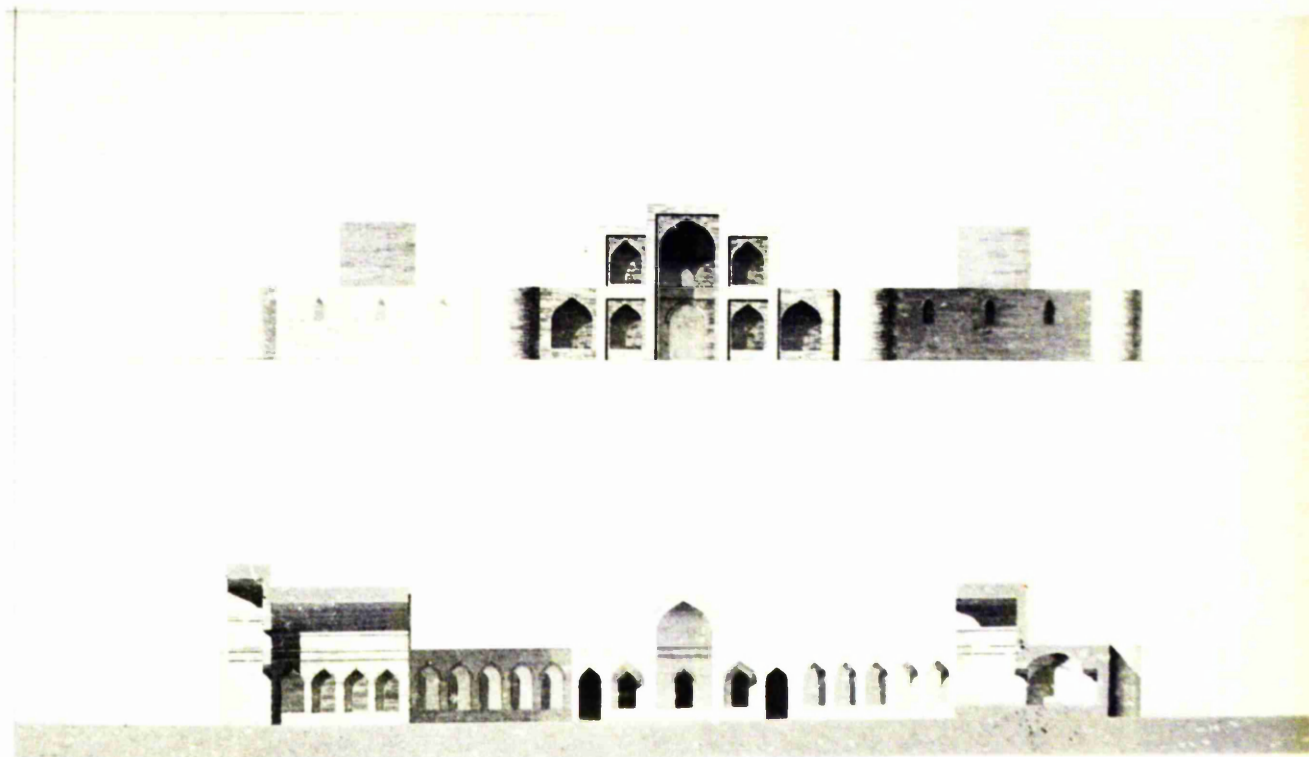


Fig.31. Sketch of Caravansarai Deh-Bid

structure displays the combination of stone and brick (Pl. 74).

Godard judges that these three octagonal caravansarais were built at the same time and are attributable to the talents of the same builder⁽⁵⁷⁾. No inscription survives on these three monuments, but comparing the gateways of two of the buildings (Amīn-Ābād and Deh-Bid) ^{and} the caravansarais of Yazd-Khawst and Shurgestān, both dated from the time of Shāh 'Abbās, they were probably erected at the same time. At present one of these caravansarais is occupied by the army and used as barracks.

3. Mountain Caravansarais

The third type of Safavid caravansarai under examination is the so-called "mountain type". This type of building, which was built only in mountain passes, for reasons of geography and climate had very little commercial interest. These structures were primarily designed to offer warmth and shelter to travellers on cold winter nights and to receive caravans overtaken by storms, common enough occurrences in winter. Because of the different function they served, these caravansarais differed in structural features from those erected in the plains and cities. Mountain caravansarais rarely had a courtyard and most of them were completely roofed-in, vaulted, sometimes half buried in the earth, and almost entirely made of stone. The explanation for this uncommon type is undoubtedly the extreme severity of the winter in mountain regions.

During the Safavid period, especially at the time of Shāh 'Abbās I, a number of this type of building was erected in the mountainous regions.

Most of the mountain caravansarais have been destroyed, but a few in Azarbaijan province and the Damavand region have survived, though they are in poor condition.

Our first example of this type is a building on the main Tabriz road at the foot of the northern side of the hill of the same name, and known locally as Caravansarai Sheblī^Y. This fine monument was erected at the time of Shāh Safī (1628-1642). The building covers an area of approximately 250 square metres (Fig. 32-33, Pl. 75) and is completely covered by a series of cupolas supported by arches which divide the interior into a number of spacious chambers. A great arched bay protects the door and at the same time encloses the upper pavilion and gives access to a cupola-covered vestibule. The cut-off corners of this hall all lead to little rooms (one of which was the custodian's) with the exception of one which leads upstairs to the pavilion. The centre room, which is a vast octagon, is surrounded by successive galleries covered with pendentive domical vaults pierced for light. A great arcaded portal is the main feature of the facade. The stables consisted of a rectangular circumambulatory with the corners cut off. The outside surfaces of this passage are pierced with deep bays for the merchandise and in the corners there are four large open chambers. At each corner of the caravansarai there is a tower.

A brief inscription over the entrance describes the building as the work of Darvish Hamdollah Mohtag followed by a line naming Yousof son of Shāh Malik of Isfahan as the benefactor. It is dated 1051/1640, probably the date of construction.

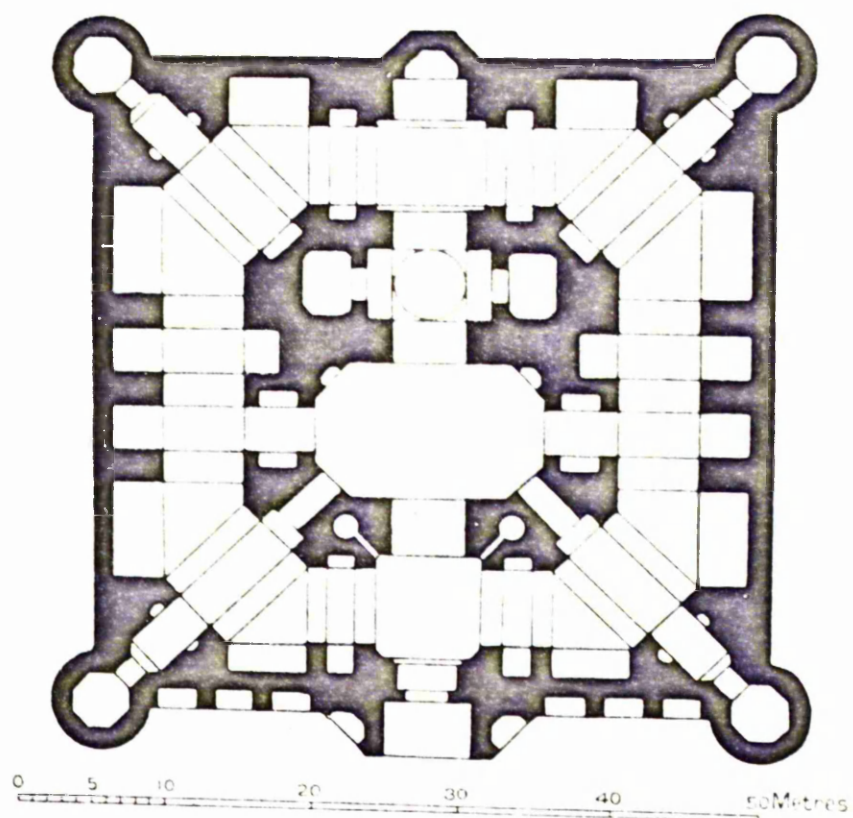


Fig.32. Plan of Caravansarai Shebli

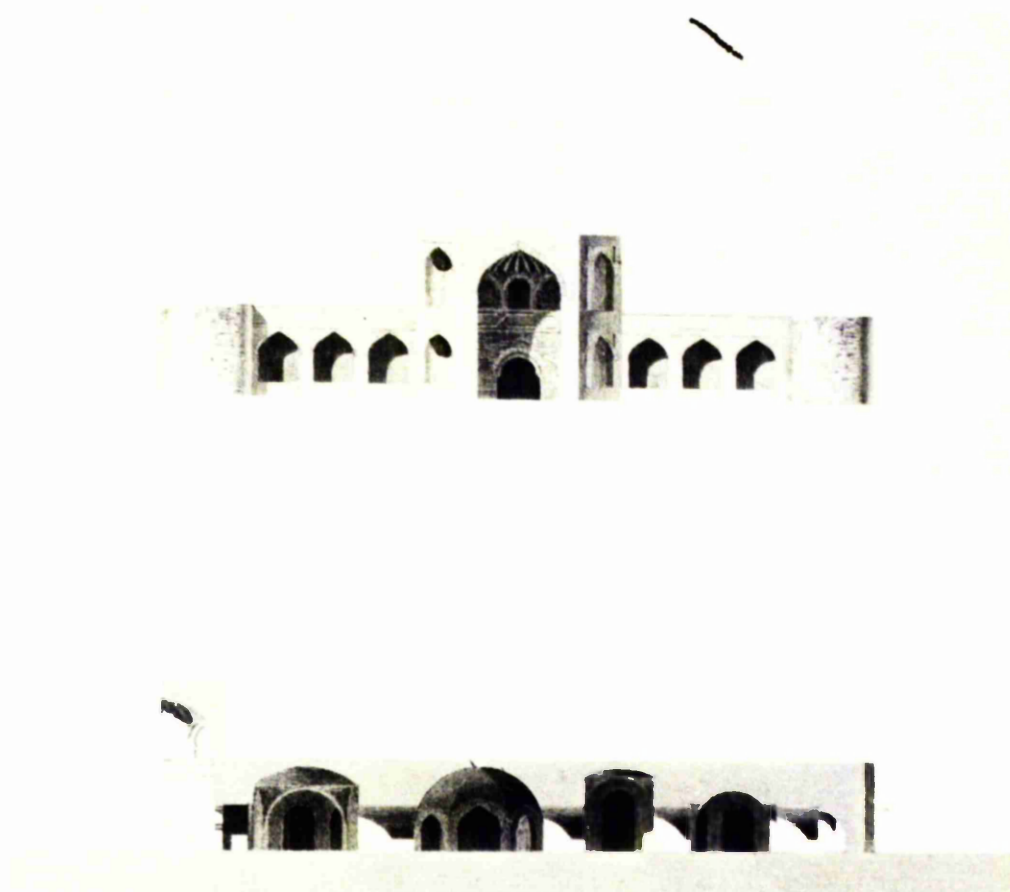


Fig.33. Sketch of Caravansarai Shebli

Another mountain caravansarai in the same area is the so-called Caravansarai of Nerī, which is located some 48 Km. west of Ardabil on the road to Tabriz. This building is composed of three parallel galleries (Fig. 34, Pl. 76), the two outside ones being used as stables. The whole is surmounted by a cupola used for surveillance and pierced by a ventilation hole. On either side of the caravansarai there is an enclosed area where sheep and other animals were coralled.

Other examples in the Azarbaijan province are the following buildings, which have been studied recently by Dr. W. Kleiss, and from whom we have beautiful plans⁽⁵⁸⁾. These ruined caravansarais are located between Ahar and Tabriz and attributed to the Safavid period. The first monument stands 21 Km. from Ahar on the road to Tabriz and is square in shape, measuring 36 x 36 m. (Fig. 35).

The exterior of the caravansarai consists of a simple gateway, four towers at the four corners, a semi-tower at each side of the gateway, and two in the south and west walls. The entrance leads to a long vestibule approximately 4 m. wide, which extends to the outside wall. This long vestibule is covered by five brick barrel-vaults, and either side leads to rooms of varying sizes. There are six rooms measuring 13 x 14 m. in the north, and eight rooms measuring 13 x 3.50 m. in the south, the last room being divided into two small rooms.

With a similar ground plan to our previous example is another building, which is situated some 27 Km. west of Ahar. The caravansarai is rectangular in shape, measuring 35 x 30 m. (Fig. 36). The entrance of the building leads to a long vestibule on either

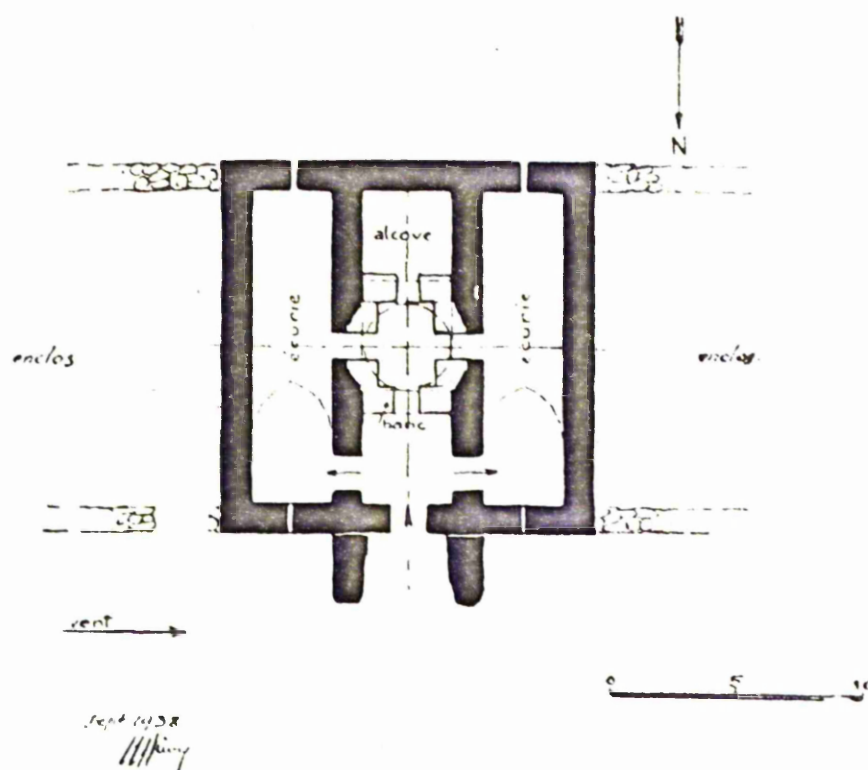


Fig.34. Plan of Caravansarai Neri

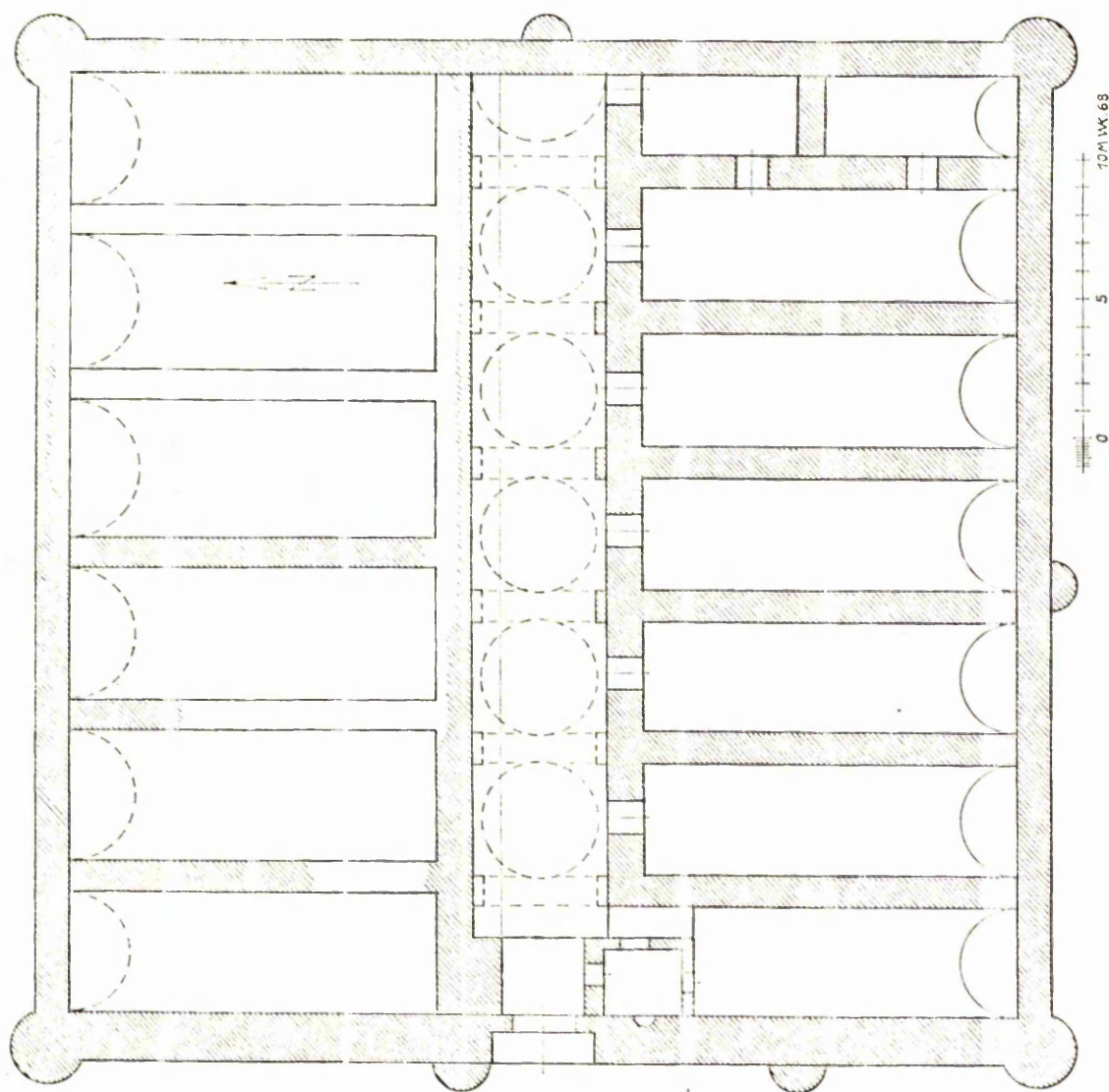


Fig.35. Plan of Caravansarai between Ahar and Tabriz

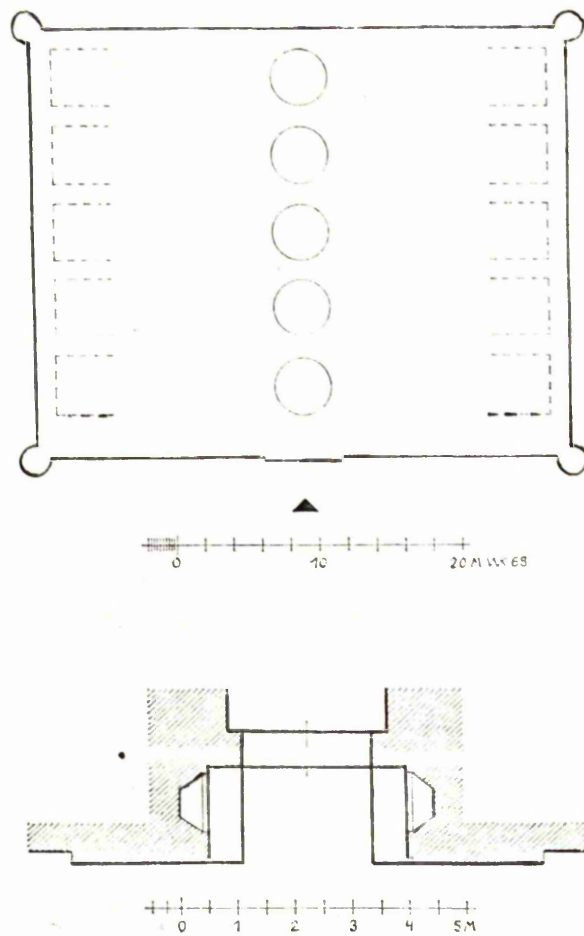


Fig.36. Plan of Caravansarai between Ahar and
Tabriz.

side of which are ten rooms. The vestibule is again covered by five cupolas.

Some 34 Km. west of Khoy we have another example of a mountain caravansarai. This building is located at a place known locally as Koturtal. It is nearly square in shape, measuring 27.25 x 26.18 m. The entrance is on the south face, and leads to long galleries. (Fig. 37).

The interior consists of several rooms of varying sizes, some of which are square and some oblong in shape. There are two long stables in the east and west sides. The building material consists of broken stone.

There are also other examples in the south part of the Caspian district, of which a complete study was made by Siroux⁽⁵⁹⁾. The three following caravansarais are in the Damavand region on the road from Teheran to Amul, commonly known as the Haraz route, the shortest road from the capital to the Caspian sea. These buildings are known locally as Imāmzādeh Hashem, Pulor and Gambucht and are situated at places of the same names.

The caravansarai of Imāmzādeh Hashem is symmetrical and comprises a central travellers' area enclosed on three sides (Fig. 38, Pl. 77) by stables and on the other by the entrance area. The main entrance portal is protected by a porch and the living area is covered by four cupolas resting on a central pillar.

The caravansarai Pulor is a square measuring 12.50 x 12.50 m. (fig. 39), and consists of three alcoves for bales of merchandise and the rest area which is protected from the wind by a partition

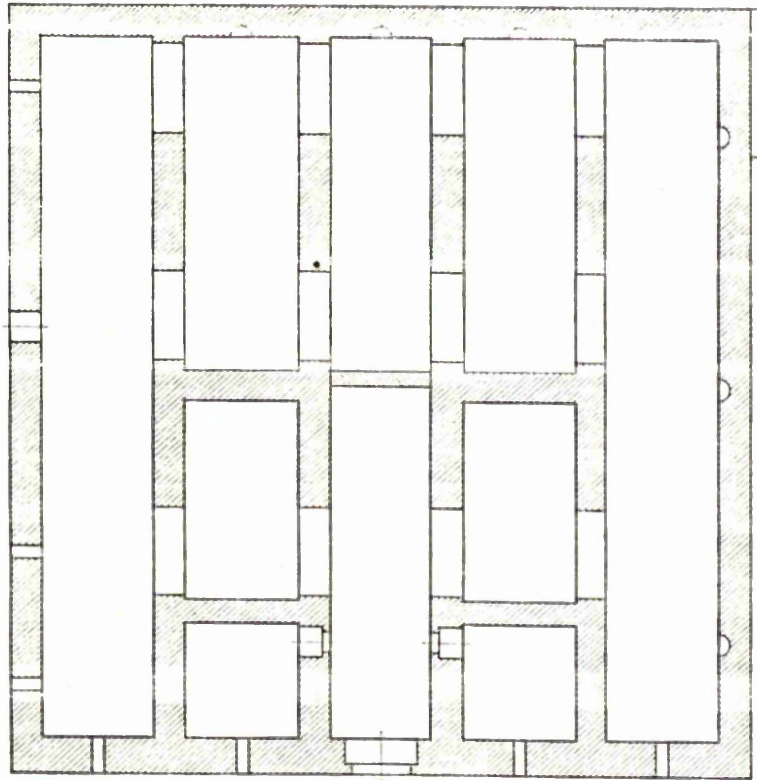


Fig.37. Plan of Caravansarai in Koturtal

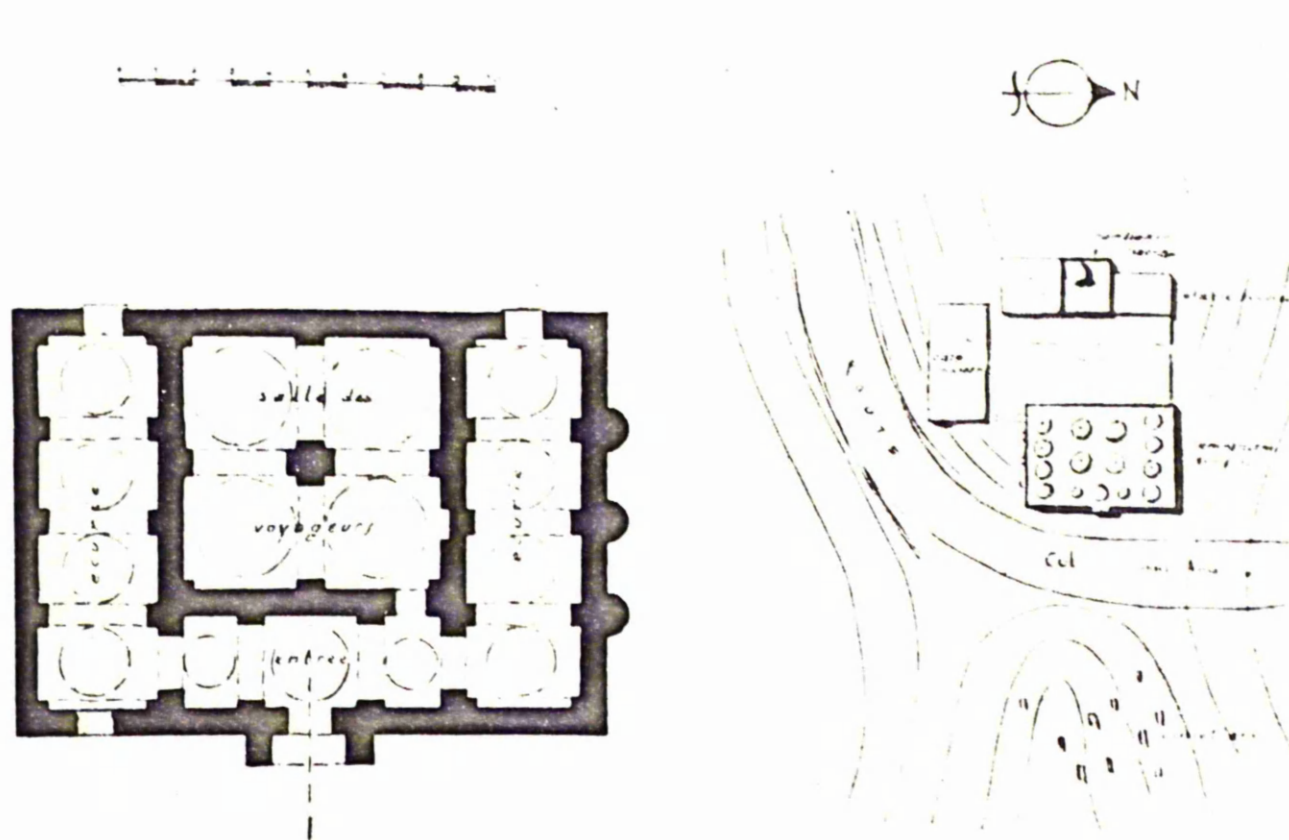


Fig.38. Plan of Caravansarai Imam Zadeh Hashem

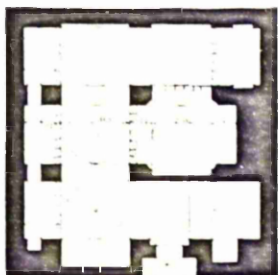
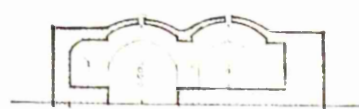


Fig.39. Plan of Caravansarai Puloor

between it and the entrance. The building material consists of irregular slabs pointed with chalk and plaster. Although at the present time no inscription survives on the caravansarai it certainly dates from the time of Shāh 'Abbās I, as was proved by an inscription that has since disappeared.

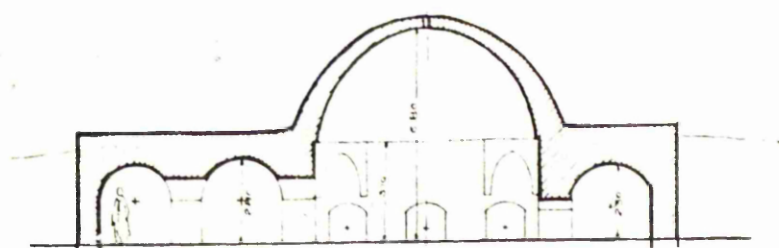
The caravansarai Gambucht is oblong in shape measuring 18.40 x 15.30 m. (Fig. 40), and consists of a central rotunda and four tunnel galleries for the animals. A fifth gallery acts as warehouse space and as a hall. The central room has four large chimneys. Three dividing walls are pierced by low openings which allow an exchange of heat to and from the stables but which are too low to permit the intrusion of animals. The building material consists of schist blocks which in the arches and vaulting are laid in even layers in the manner of bricks. z

4. Miscellaneous Safavid Caravansarais

These types of caravansarai, which were also erected during the Safavid period, are noteworthy for their structural features and functional aspects. Miscellaneous caravansarais were built everywhere, in the cities, on coastal routes and in the middle of deserts.

Caravansarais on the coastal routes such as in the Caspian region in the north and the Persian Gulf in the south were more commercial in purpose, but unfortunately since they were made of wood often almost nothing remains.

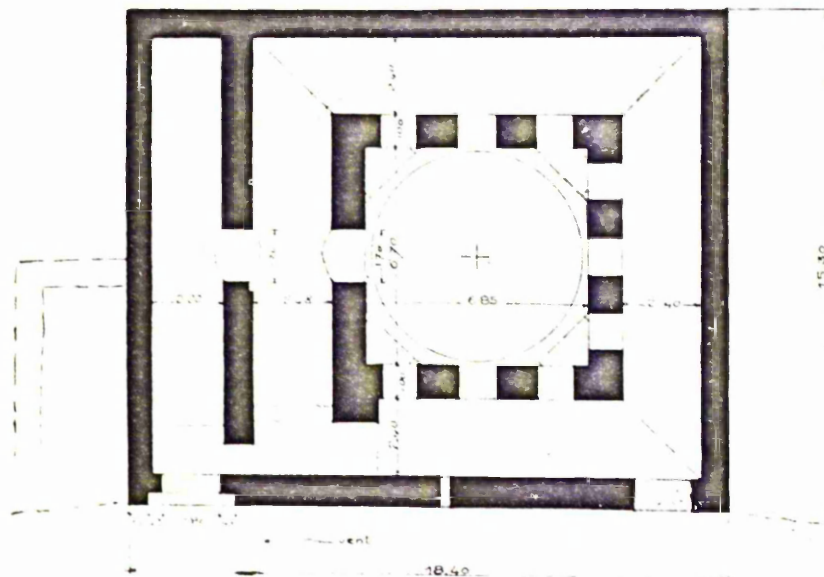
Desert caravansarais were small in shape and made of mud brick.



construction en pierre.



Fig.40. Plan of Caravansarai Gambucht



Usually they had no stables, but for ventilation had openings of all sizes.

Because of the paucity of such remaining caravansarais it is difficult to judge the cause of erection, but the writer suggests the following reasons:

- 1) Geographical and economic.
- 2) The builder's personal ideas.
- 3) Foreign influences.

In fact this type of caravansarai was not uniform and examples are neither numerous in design or number. However, the following are descriptions of a few caravansarais of these different types.

The first example of these types is a building in Sabzewar. The monument known locally as Caravansarai Sabzewar was erected by Shāh 'Abbās I. According to Müller, the structure is similar to Mesopotamian caravansarais⁽⁶⁰⁾. The caravansarai is oblong in shape and is located in the west part of the city by the Shāhrūd gate. Its portal entrance is on the north side and opposite the entrance hall there is a set of double rooms (Fig. 41, Pl. 7-8). The upper dome is supported by four squinches. There are six chambers in the longer sides and three in the shorter.

Each chamber has a small narrow entrance hall. In each corner there is an entrance to the stables, and in one corner a platform for the Charwedār-bāshi (leader of the caravan). The building material is brick.

The next example is in the province of Azarbaijan, some 10 Km. west of Jolfa. The caravansarai is located on the banks of the Aras river and is called Shāh-'Abbāsī. Tavernier saw this caravansarai

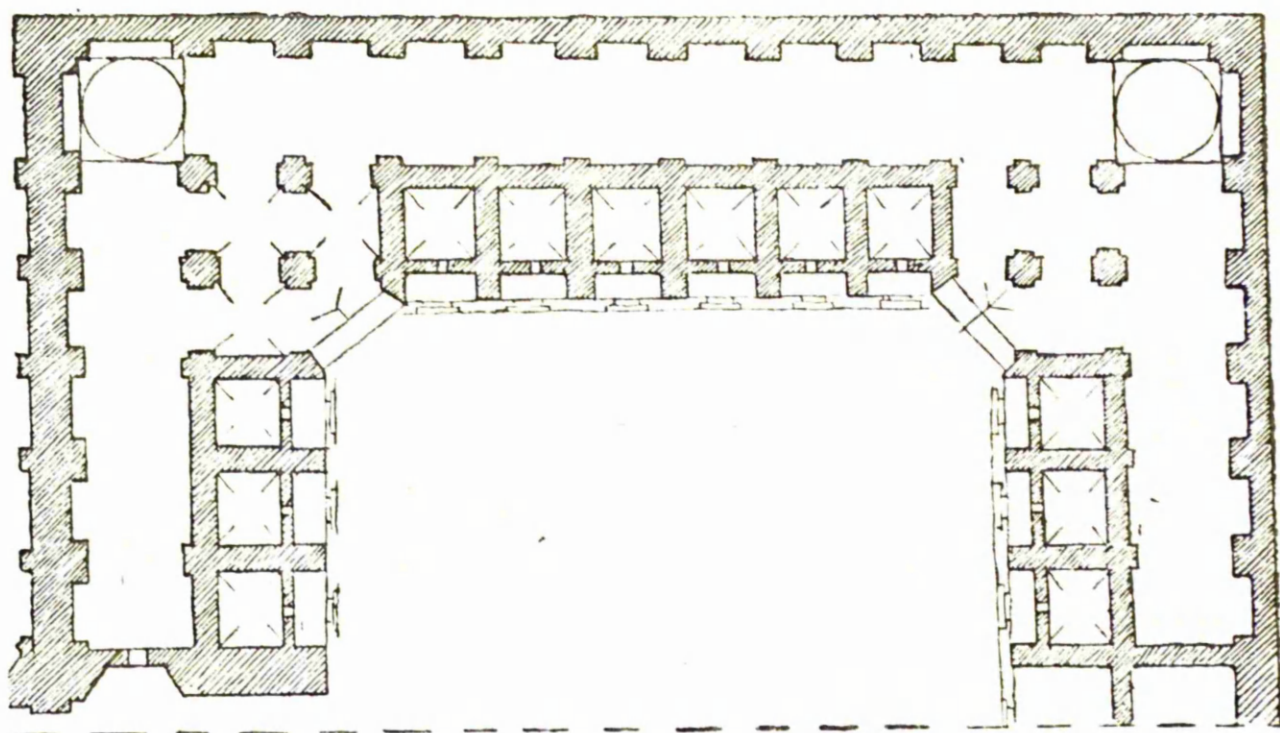


Fig.41. Plan of Caravansarai Sabzewar

on his way to Tabriz, and wrote of it:

"One of the Armanians, who emigrated from Jolfa to Isfahan by the order of Shah Abbas the Great was a person named Khajeh Nazar. This man became very important at the court of Shah Abbas and Shah Safi, and was appointed magistrate of Jolfa in Isfahan. Afterwards for his native land (Jolfa of Azarbaijan) he built two caravansarais on the banks of Aras river, which cost him 100,000 Aku." (61)

The caravansarai is oblong in shape measuring 60 x 40 m. (Fig. 42), and the entrance is opposite the river. The interior of the building consists of several living rooms on the entrance side and stables on the west and south side of the courtyard. East of the caravansarai there is a ruined bridge, which is contemporary with the caravansarai. The building materials are stone and brick.

Some 60 Km. west of Tabriz on the road to Ahar, near an old bridge, there is a building which is known locally as the Caravansarai Vinar. It is rectangular in shape measuring 37 x 25 m. (Fig. 43).

The exterior of the building consists of a simple gateway and two towers at two corners. The entrance leads to an octagonal vestibule. There is an oblong room on each side of the vestibule, measuring 4.50 x 3 m.

The interior consists of an open courtyard measuring 22 x 14 m., and five stables. All the stables are the same in size, being 14 m. long and 3 m. wide. The caravansarai is built of stone, and because of its barrel vaulting and stonework probably belongs to the Safavid period.

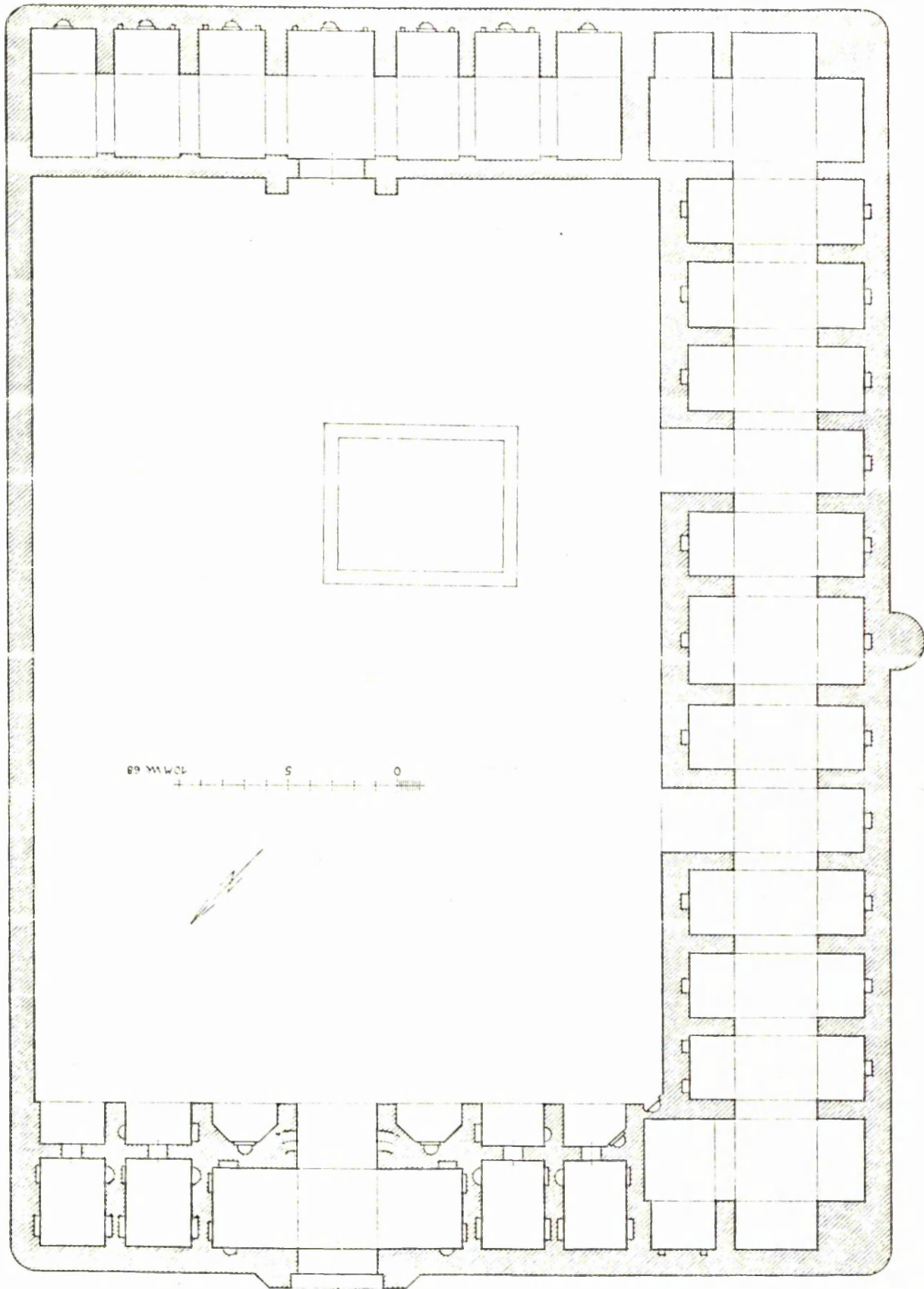


Fig.42. Plan of Caravansarai Shāh Abbāsī

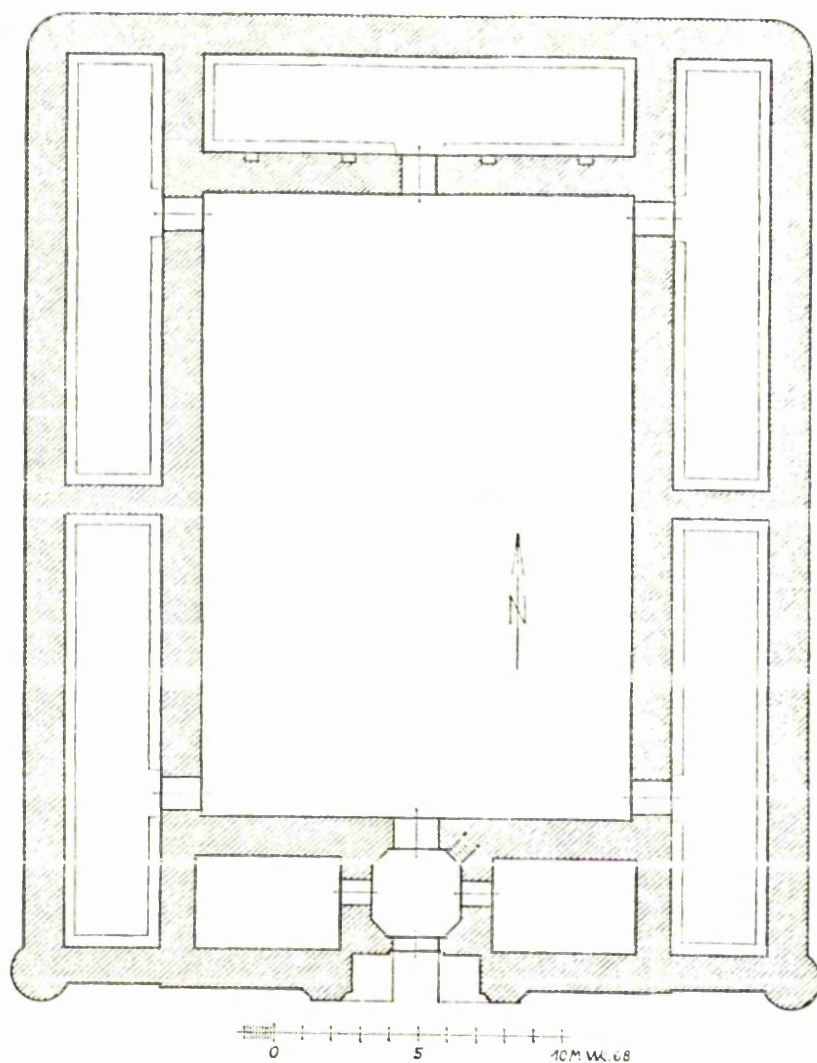


Fig.43. Plan of Caravansarai Vinar

As a result of the Afghan invasion, from the end of the Safavid period until the Zand dynasty (1750-1796) there was hardly any building activity.

During the Zandiyeh period, especially with encouragement from Karim Khan, some religious buildings such as mosques and caravansarais were erected.

The Qajar period (1796-1925) brought a renewal of commercial activity, but trade was nothing like in Safavid times. In this long period, for reasons of trade and religion, many caravansarais were built along the roads and in cities. The structural features and plans of the Qajar caravansarais were exact copies of those of Safavid times, but the workmanship and materials were rather poor. For example, the Caravansarai of Ardakan (Pl. 44) is similar to the Caravansarai of Zawareh. It is square in shape, measuring approximately 60 x 60 m., with an open courtyard of 34.70 x 34.70 m., and four stables. Another Qajar caravansarai, known locally as Caravansarai Moushiri (Fig. 45) has a number of features in common with the Safavid caravansarai of Madar Shah. The building is square in form, measuring 80 x 80 m.

In addition it should be mentioned that among the Qajar caravansarais are some which were built with remarkable precision, for instance Caravansarai Amin Al Dowleh in Kashan (Pl. 46), Caravansarai Haji Ali Aqa in Kerman, and Caravansarais Manzarieh, Sabzewar, and Khan Zinan (Pls. 79-84).

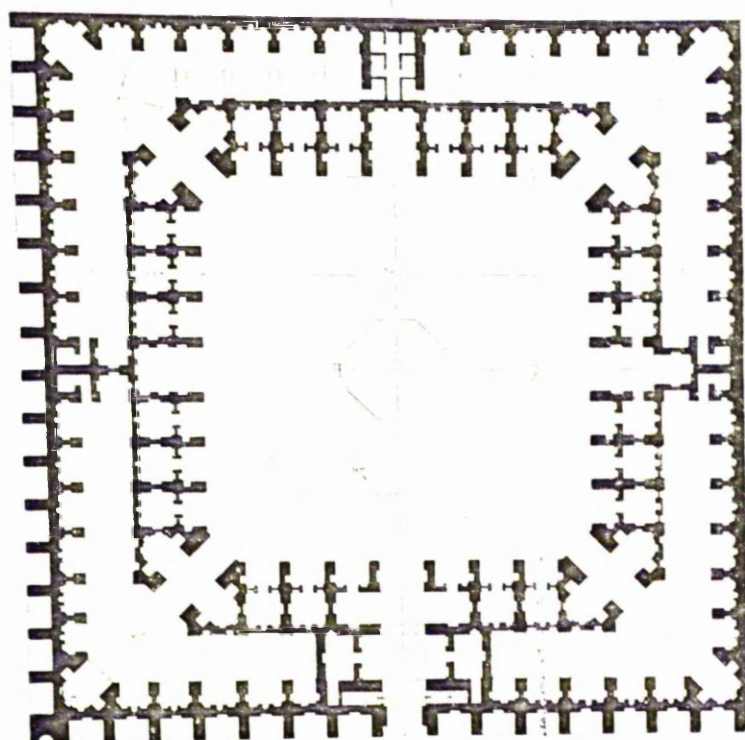
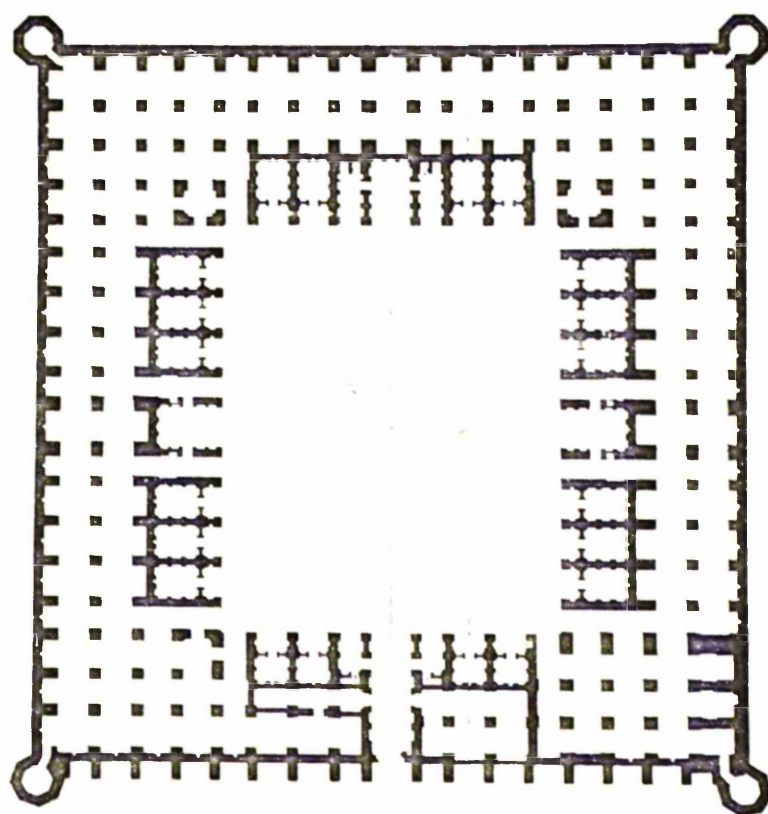


Fig.44. Plan of caravansarai Ardakan.





0 5 10 15

Fig.45. Plan of caravansarai Moshiri.

Footnotes to Chapter V

- (1) Iranica vol. I, 1961, pp. 167-170.
- (2) Sir Aurel Stein, Old routes of Western Iran, London 1940, p. 119.
- (3) H. Schindler, Journal of the Royal Asiatic Society XII, p. 312.
- (4) Siroux, p. 51-2.
- (5) One of these caravansarais which was erected by Shah 'Abbās's request is caravansarai Maqsūd-Assar. According to Chardin, Maqsūd Assar was a rich grocer whom Shah Abbās went to see in his shop. He is reputed to have said: "I believe you are a virtuous and rich man and undoubtedly your wealth is your reward from God...."

"I shall be very grateful if you will build a public building during your life time."

Maqsūd-Assar accepted Shah 'Abbās' request, erected a caravansarai which cost him 3000 Toman (£150) and presented it to Shah 'Abbās.

Chardin also gives some interesting information about this caravansarai: he describes it as one of the finest caravansarais in Isfahan.

The caravansarai is square, 137 x 137 m., two storeys and has 24 chambers on each side. The portal entrance is decorated with mosaic, and both sides of the entrance contain shops for merchants. The second storey has an iwan, generally used by merchants and their families. The floor is carved with beautiful carpet stone, there is a pool with a jet of water in the middle (as well as four pits at four corners). There are some aphorisms on the portal entrance such as:

For travellers two things are necessary
first money for need, second a sword for safe-keeping
and guardianship.

If you want success, travel at night; for day is the
revealer of secrets and night is a loyal guard.

etc.

(Voyages de Chardin, Persian text, Teheran 1966, p.97)

(6) J. Morier says "At Mahyar is a fine caravansarai built by the mother of Shah 'Abbas. It is a very extensive building, consisting of one front court, on the right and left of which through lofty arches, are rooms and stables for the convenience of travellers. The front of the principal gate is inlaid with green lacquered tiles and neat cut brick. It opens into the large square, in the centre of which is a platform of the same shape. On the right of the exterior front is the cistern over the orifice of which is thrown a platform with a pillar at each corner. The general structure is of brick, except some of the better rooms, in which fine blue stone is used".

Morier, A journey through Persia,..., London 1812, p. 157.

(7) E. Flandin and Pascal Coste, Voyage En Perse, Paris 18⁴⁶
Pls. LXVI-LXVII.

(8) N. Meshkati, Bibliography of Iranian Monuments, Teheran, 1345/1966, p. 46.

(9) Curzon, op.cit., vol.2, p.61.

(10) Siroux, p.58.

(11) Tavernier Safarnameh, Persian text, Teheran 1336/1957, p.750.

(12) Texier, Description De L'Armenie, La Perse et La Mesopotamie, Paris 1852, Pl. 89.

(13) Morier, p. 153.

(14) Ars Islamica Vol VII, p. 104.

(15) H. Field, Contribution to the Anthropology of Iran, Chicago 1939, Vol.2, pp. 568-9.

(16) Curzon, Vol. 2, p. 69.

(17) F.B. Bradley-Birt, Through Persia from the Gulf to the Caspian, London 1909, p. 245.

(18) There is another caravansarai in the city of Isfahan, the so-called Madae-i-Shah, which was built by the mother of Shah Sultan Housin (1694-1722).

(19) Siroux, p. 79.

(20) "After having travelled about six miles further, we came to a very handsome caravansarai. It is situated on the right of the road, and, with its bath and reservoirs on the left, was built by the mother of Shah Abbas. The structure has suffered less than any other which we have seen by the injuries of time and man. It is built

of brick on a foundation of the same fine blue stone, which we had so much admired at Mahyar. The front is ornamented with an open brick-work, and with neat mosaic. The portico is crowned by a superb dome, and leads into the square court; the sides of which contain the rooms for travellers. Behind are vaulted stables with much accommodation."

Morier, *op.cit.*, p. 175.

(21) The handsome madrasah Mada-i-Shah in Isfahan is a striking demonstration of the continued artistic vitality of the country. It was undertaken in about 1118/1706 about a century after the death of Shah 'Abbās, by his amiable but feeble descendant, Shah Sultan Housin. This combined mosque, college and caravansarai which he dedicated to the mother of the Shah, is the last construction in Persia that in any sense deserves the qualification 'great'.

Pope, A.U., A Survey of Persian Art, Oxford, Vol. 3, p.1213.

(22) Honarfar, L.A., A Treasure of the Historical Monuments of Isfahan, Persian text, Isfahan 1965, p.711.

(23) The caravansarai is entered through a high arched portal at the north end of the Chahar-bagh wall. This leads through a bazaar to the caravansarai area itself, which lies beyond the madrasah court and is even larger. Half way down this entrance corridor is a blind portal decorated with handsome mosaic faience which backs up to the northeast iwan, being thus on the same axis as the sanctuary and mihrab. Evidently the northeast iwan was planned to open through this door, thus offering a superb vista of the sanctuary portal, just as the northeast iwan of the Majid-i-Gawhar Shah is pierced to give access to the shrine of Imam Reza. But if this was the plan it was not altogether fortunate. The clanging of camel bells, the collisions and shouts of caravan drivers, and the din of motely bazaar and caravansarai crowds would not have mingled well with the orisons of the faithful in the adjoining iwan.

Coste, *op.cit.*, pp.17-28.

(24) Freygang W.V., Letters from the Caucasus and Georgia, London 1823, pp. 353-4.

(25) Tavernier, p. 73.

(26) Filmer, p. 215.

(27) "We came to a caravansarai situated amid very picturesque

scenery just at the bottom. The right wing, and many other parts of this edifice, were falling into ruins. It contains a square area of two hundred and sixty paces of an admirable and solid construction; the work of Seffis, strongly contrasted with the comparatively miserable buildings of the present day in Persia. The fine arches of the domes attest the excellence of art in the age of its erection. The interior arrangements are very good: on each side of the square are rooms each with a fire-place, and in the centre of the whole is a large square compartment, divided into a variety of chambers of all descriptions, with recesses for horses.

All this is built of a fine brick, with a strong foundation, and occasional reliefs of stone. At the foot of the whole building, at close intervals, are stones cut for the convenience of tying up cattle."

Morier, op.cit. p. 272.

(28) Thomas Herbert who saw Kashan in 1628 writes:

"This noble city is in compass not less than York or Norwich, about four thousand families being accounted here. The houses are fairly built, many of which are pargeted without any paint: the mosques and hummums are in their cupolas curiously ceruleated with a feigned turquoise: the bazaar is spacious and uniform, furnished with silks, damasks, and carpets of silks, silk and gold and of coarse thrummed wool; no part of the world having better or better-coloured. Here also stores of spices and other merchandise. Besides, the people here (the fruit of industry) be more civil, no less active, and as trim and rich in their attire as I could observe in any other part; and, by reason they allow few to be idle, here are full manufacture of silks, satins, and cloth of gold curiously wrought and coloured, no better in the world, and in such plenty that one Cartwright, an English merchant who was there about the year 1600, spares not to aver that there was then more silk brought in one year into Kashan than broadcloths are into London."

Travels in Persia 1627-1629, p. 218.

(29) Majalleh Honar va Mardom (Art and People) 29, p. 24.

(30) Qahrud is located on the old caravan road from Kashan to Isfahan (12 Km. south west of Qamsar). There is a ruined caravansarai from the Safavid period (probably Shah Saffi), and from an inscription on the front, appears to have been erected by Meer Saqi one of Shah Abbās's generals.

(31) Thomas Herbert writes about the Royal Caravansarai of Kashan:

"The caravansarai in this city is very noble - nay, I may say an unparalleled fabric of that kind, by many degrees preceding all other caravansarais we saw in Persia; this being both large and fit enough to lodge the court of the greatest potentate in Asia. A royal foundation it is, being built by Abbas for travellers to repose in gratis, and to express his magnificence as well as charity. The whole building is grounded with marble rising from the ground six foot; the residue is brick airified in the sun, pargeted and adorned with knots and fancies of Arabic characters, in azure, red and white colours laid in oil, after the mode of Persia. It is a perfect quadrant: for each angle from one another are two hundred paces, the whole eight hundred. In the umbilic of this court is a square tank filled with crystalline water. This royal inn has also adjoining it such gardens as rather exceed that want to display the founder's munificence."

T. Herbert, p. 219.

Chardin gives very interesting information about the Royal Caravansarai of Kashan which he regarded as the finest in all Persia:

"The royal inn without the city is the fairest not only in Kashan, but in all Persia. It is four square, every front withinside being 200 geometrical paces and two stories with an antechamber.... It (i.e. the antechamber) is 8 foot deep, paved with white marble, almost as transparent as porphyry. The stories on the sides contain 15 chambers. The other apartments consist of one chamber, 15 foot long and 10 broad, high and vaulted, with a chimney in the middle and a square portico before, 10 foot wide covered with a half dome. The second storey was contrived like that below, with a balaster 4 foot high, that let in the light and ran round the structure. The entrance is under a high and a magnificent portal adorned with mosaic work like all the rest of the building. Upon the sides runs a portico, which served as a resting place during the day time. The fountain in the middle of the court is raised about 15 foot." There is a poem on the entrance portal which, translated freely, affirms that: 'Man is but a traveller in this world'."

Langles (Ed.), Chardin, Voyages, Paris, 1811, III, pp. 1-2.

Tavernier, another French traveller, who saw Kashan on his way to Isfahan, describes the industries of the city (silk weaving, brocade-work and copper-work) and the caravansarai of Kashan. He writes:

"There are many caravansarais in Kashan, and all are large and comfortable. One of these, however, is particularly, and it is there that I lodged on my last journey to Asia. The caravansarai is square, 100 x 100 metres, two storeys high and has 120 chambers."

Tavernier, p. 89.

It was also described by Le Brun in 1704 when it was "principally frequented by the natives of India". As early as 1637 Olearious, in the embassy of the Duke of Holstein, had likewise remarked upon this caravansarai which doubtless led him to comment upon the city as "one of the most popular and most eminent for trading of any in Persia, and the best built of any we were yet to come to, whether in regard to its private houses or its palaces and caravansarais". He adds that there were always a great number of foreign merchants in the city, especially Indians.

As has already been mentioned no trace remains of this Royal building, but according to Filmer a photograph taken of the capitals of the colonnade forming part of the under structure of the caravansarai reveals unmistakable Indian influences in the architecture of the edifice. These interesting circumstances constitute further evidence of the catholicity of that remarkable monarch, Shah Abbas, to whose kingdom workers in pottery were brought from distant China and to whose court ambassadors were sent by most of the crowned heads of Europe. (Filmer, p. 128)

(32) A. Afshar, Majalleh Honar va Mardom (Art and People), Teheran, vol. 30, pp. 31.

(33) Pascal Coste, Pl. LXV.

(34) Dieulafoy, op.cit., p.97.

(35) Muller adds: "After the portal entrance there are many stables, three iwans and many chambers. The iwan opposite the entrance rises from the floor to the roof the problem of corners is solved by making the entrance into chambers ... Next to the gate which is situated in a barrel vault are two niches, one above the other, the lower used as a commercial stall next to the main gateway on the inside as in Khan Jatan are two cut off rooms which may only be entered through the entrance path.

(K. Muller. Die Karavansarai Im Vorderen Orient., Berlin 1920, pp. 15-16)

(36) Siroux, p. 62.

(37) Meshkati, p. 158.

(38) The state capital, Kermanshah city, was once a flourishing commercial and industrial centre and has been known to historians and travellers since the earliest period of recorded history.

(39) Archaeologically speaking Bisuton is an important and remarkable area. Its remains consist of:

- | | |
|----------------------------|--|
| 1. Pre-historic cave | 6. Sassanian monuments |
| 2. Median worship house | 7. Early Islamic caravansarai |
| 3. Achaemenian inscription | 8. Il-Khanid city |
| 4. Sulokid statue | 9. Safavid caravansarai and bridge (Pl.54) |
| 5. Parthian stone cutting | |

(40) Kermanshah, in the west part of the route, has adequate water and a correspondingly lower number of caravansarais.

(41) The following is a list of Qajar caravansarais: Baba Qudrat - Torup - Sharif Abad - Fakhr Davud - Qadamgah - Nishapur - Sherab - Dahaneh - Zaferanieh - Ribat Sar Oushideh (covered ribat) - Sabsevar - Ribud - Mehr - Shahrud - Sadr Abad.

(42) A.V. William Jackson. From Constantinople to the home of Omar Khayyam, New York, 1911, p. 205.

(43) O'Donovan, The Merv Oasis, London 1882, p. 419.

(44) A.V. William Jackson, op.cit., p. 156.

(45) These are named in the Chapter Two 'Caravan Routes and Caravansarais.

(46) E. Diez, Churasnische Baudenkmaler, Berlin, p. 85.

(47) Tavernier, p. 115.

(48) The road between Tabas and Kerman was difficult, passing in its entirety through the Lut desert. Ganj Ali Khan built a caravansarai and cistern in the middle of the desert; later Vakil Al Mok added another caravansarai and cistern.

(49) When Ganj Ali Khan was the governor of Kerman a great number of public buildings were erected on his orders, but some people of Kerman reported to Shah Abbas, untruly, that Ganj Ali Khan had taken their land and their money for his projects. To investigate, Shah Abbas travelled alone to Yazd and then onto Kerman. Before reaching Kerman Shah Abbas lodged in the city of Gowashir and investigated the complaints against Ganj Ali Khan. Shah Abbas decided that the complaints were untrue and that Ganj Ali Khan was an honest man. He decided to return to Isfahan but the weather broke and he had to stay

at Baghin, which was the first stage from Kerman to Isfahan. In that village Shah Abbas asked a man called Shikh-Housin to let him stay for a night in his house.

The following day when Shah Abbas was leaving he told the Shikh that he had written a letter and he asked him to see it was delivered. The letter was to Ganj Ali Khan and explained the circumstances of the Shah's visit. Shikh Housin gave the letter to Ganj Ali Khan, who, when he had read it, immediately set off after Shah Abbas, catching up with him in 100 Km. from Yazd. The Shah was resting in the shadow of his horse.

Ganj Ali Khan invited him to Kerman, but the Shah replied that when he was near him there was no need to go to Kerman, this place is as Kerman for the Shah, and that if he wanted the Shah to be satisfied and happy he should build a caravansarai on that spot so that after 100 Km. travelling in the desert people would have a place for rest. Later Ganj Ali Khan built a remarkable caravansarai and named it Kermon-Show (Kerman of Shah).

Bastani-Parizi, Majalleh Barrasihay Tarikhi, Vol. I, Teheran 1968, pp. 32-34.

- (50) K. Muller, op.cit., p. 27.
- (51) Tavernier, op.cit., p. 650.
- (52) Curzon, op.cit., p. 64.
- (53) Pascal Coste, Pl. LXVI.
- (54) Texier, Pl. 87.
- (55) Morier, op.cit., p. 148.
- (56) H. Gauck and E. Diez, Die Kunst Des Islam, Berlin, 1925, p. 550.
- (57) A. Gudard, The Art of Iran, London 1962, p.294.
- (58) W. Kleiss, Archaeologische Mitteilungen Aus Iran, Berlin 1969, Vol II, p. 53-63.

- (59) Siroux, p. 35.
- (60) K. Muller, p. 29.
- (61) Tavernier, p. 62.

Appendix footnotes to Chapter V

- (A) For the date of caravansarai Anūshirvānī it should be mentioned that the vault of īwān (pl. 17) shows its later reconstruction. The foundation and building materials are Sasanian. The ground plan which is illustrated (Fig. 7) is not a complete plan.
- (B) Godard, A., The art of Iran, London, 1965, p. 295.
- (C) Curzon, op. cit., vol. 2, p. 61.
- (D) In that bulk the front part with monumental portal entrance is not included. The writer is of the opinion that at the front part was erected at the time of Shāh Ismā'īl, and the rest was completed at the time of Shāh Sulaymān.
- (E) Like Madrasah Jaddeh Buzurg (Groundmother's college) in Isfahan 1058/1648.
- (F) Siroux, op. cit., p. 61.
- (G) Honarfar, L., A Treasure of the historical monuments of Isfahan, Isfahan, 1965, p. 192-3
- (H) See the inscription (Appendix P.)⁽³³⁴⁾
- (I) Tavernier, Safar Nameh, Persian text, p. 73.
- (J) Filmer, op. cit., p. 215.
- (K) Siroux, op. cit., pp. 78 and Pl. VIII/I.
- (L) Siroux, op. cit., p. 22.
- (M) Tavernier, pp. 73-78, Morier pp. 174-184.

(N) Tavernier, p. 87

(O) Mr. A. Ashār briefly described this caravansarai in the Honar va Mardom, vol. 30, pp. 31-2.

(P) Both Safavid and Qājār caravansarais described by Siroux, pp. 67 and 89,

(Q) The writer believes that the caravansarai Pāssangān was built in late Sfauid time and repaired at the Qājār period, and also the ground plan of this caravansarai is similar to those of Shurgestān and Yazd-Khwāst. In addition, according to Naraqi, Chardin stayed in t is building and wrote of it:

"There are many caravansarais in this road, and we had a rest in a goodcaravansarai, which was built by Aqā Kāmāl a rich merchant."

(Naraqi, H., Āthār-i-Takīkhi shāhrestānhāi Kāshāh and Yazd, Persian text, Tehran, 1348/1969, p. 316.

(R) These caravansarais and also the early Islamic caravansarai in Bisrutyn, so-called Qādīmī, were studied by the writer in 1967.

(S) In addition some of these caravansarais which are located in Qumis province, have been described briefly by Sanī Al-Dawlah, in Matla-Al-Shams, vol. 3.

(T) Most of these caravansarais were visited by the writer during 1965-67, and most of them are in a ruined state. For the inscription of some of these caravansarais see appendix pp. 329-348

(U) Sanī Al-Dawlah, op. cit., p. 240.

(V) The caravansarai of Sasanian is so-called Anūshirvānī, (p.89 fig 7 and Pl. 17).

(W) The caravansarai Sankhwast for the first time described by E. Diez in Churasische Baudenkmäler, p. 85.

(X) Sanī Al-Dawlah, op. cit., vol. I, p. 122.

(Y) This caravansarai is described by Filmer, P.²¹⁷⁻⁸ and Siroux, p. 40-1.

(Z) In addition most of the mountain caravansarais in the Caspian region and/in Azarbijan province was visited by the writer during 1964-7. few

CHAPTER VI

The British Museum Manuscript on Safavid Caravansarais in Isfahan

There is a manuscript in the British Museum listing about 40 caravansarais built by Shāh 'Abbās and his successor and family⁽¹⁾. Although the names of some of these caravansarais have been recorded by travellers (e.g. Chardin and Tavernier), nowhere can we find such detailed information nor the correct nomenclature of the caravansarais. The manuscript is undoubtedly one of the most important sources of evidence and information about Safavid caravansarais in Isfahan.

The following is a close translation of the manuscript:

Caravansarai Shāh

This caravansarai was built by Shāh 'Abbās and is at the crossing of the Qaisariyah, (Royal bazaar), opposite the mint house. It has approximately one hundred upper and lower chambers. The upper chambers are occupied mostly by goldsmiths, enamellers and jewel engravers. Craftwork from Tabriz and rugs and hand woven goods from Ardabil are bought and sold there as well as a great variety of other goods. Some Isfahani merchants have chambers there and it is frequented by the Malik-Al-Tojjār (very rich merchants). In the yard in the middle of the caravansarai wealthy Indian dealers gather. Every night four men keep watch over the caravansarai.

Caravansarai Tavīlah (stable)

The Caravansarai Tavīlah which is next to Caravansarai Shāh is occupied by Indian merchants dealing in all kinds of Indian cloth.

It has two doors, one opening into the Qaisariyah and the other to the chintz sellers bazaar.

Caravansarai Muhabat 'Alī Beg

This caravansarai, known as the caravansarai of Lāleh Beg (tutor), is occupied by goldsmiths, jewellers and pearl sellers. In the season of red and yellow roses (spring) these flowers are bought and sold there. In the time of Shāh 'Abbās the Great all goods coming from India such as fine cloths were brought to this caravansarai; now one finds goldsmiths and jewellers there.

It has nearly fifty upper and lower chambers the majority of which are occupied by Indians dealing in cloth.

Caravansarai 'Pomegranate Sellers'

This caravansarai is a halting place for traffic in pomegranates and pomegranate essence from the city of Ardistan. It is so called because only the above goods are bought and sold there.

Caravansarai 'Arabs'

The Caravansarai 'Arabs' which is next to the caravansarai 'Pomegranate Sellers' caters for all merchandise coming from Baghdad as well as goods from Bahrain such as Yemeni pearls, amber and coral. Goods from Baghdad include linen, Baghdadi shoes (a type of wooded heeled shoe), aba (loose sleeveless cloak open in front), horse mantles (cloths thrown over the backs of horses), prayer rugs and miscellaneous goods.

Caravansarai Mahmūd Beg

This caravansarai is situated opposite the caravansarai

'Pomegranate Sellers' and behind the 'English house'. Goods from Qazvīn and Māzandarān, products of Kermān and Abarqūh and bowls, cups and saucers made in Mashhad are bought and sold there.

The products of Kerman consist of bowls, plates, saucers and teapots.

There are also goods from Uzbakestan such as musk and paper from Samarqand.

Caravansarai Kalleh-Pazan (i.e. those who dress and sell the head, feet and tripe of sheep).

This caravansarai is further up from the caravansarai Mahmūd Beg and near the Jarchi Bashi mosque. It is called (Kalleh-Pazan) because such people used to occupy it in former times. At present it trades in all goods from Gīlān such as red fish, lime and a kind of cloth which is used for making tunics or gowns.

Caravansarai Qazvīnī

This caravansarai is near the Jarchi Bashi mosque and trades in goods from Qazvin and patterned woollen cloth for women's petticoats.

Caravansarai Jarchi Bashi

The caravansarai of Jarchi Bashi is opposite the caravansarai of the Qazvīnīs and in this caravansarai Jewish merchants from Shīrāz stop and sell their merchandise. The goods of Shīrāz consist of brazil wood, dye, dried ginger, pepper, cinnamon, cardamons and coffee. The Jewish merchants may not settle in any other caravansarai nor may merchandise from other caravansarais be bought and sold here. This rule was laid down by Shāh 'Abbās the Great.

Caravansarai Ardastānī

In this caravansarai is sold Ardastānī coarse cloth, linen and women's chaudors (veils).

Caravansarai Nemāward

This caravansarai built in the Nemāward depression deals in goods from Qum and here merchants from Qum unload their goods. Their merchandise consists of soap and muslin. It was built by Shāh Safī's mother. Traders from Kāshān and Natanz bring such goods as dried fruit, sultanas, red raisins and prunes. Carpets made in Mahālāt are also sold there.

Caravansarai Mahābād

From the village of Mahābād a village of Kāshān traders bring muslin, lining cloth, dried apricots and prunes.

Opposite this caravansarai is the caravansarai Mahabadian.

Caravansarai Mordar-Koshān (slaughterers)

Above the caravansarai Mahabadian is the caravansarai Mordar-Koshān which is where donkey, horse and camel skins are sold. People called carrion collectors skin such dead animals, trade in the hides, and sell the meat to the poor. The bones of the animals are loaded onto donkeys and thrown into the plain of the Zoroastrians which causes crows to gather and hawking for the Shah.

Caravansarai Natanzi

This caravansarai was built by Isma'īl Qahbe-Chi (tea shopkeeper) at the time of Shāh 'Abbās the Great. Everything found in this

caravansarai is brought by merchants from Natanz and consists of sultanas, senjed (a kind of tree resembling the mountain ash) and its fruit and Natanzī cloth.

Caravansarai Sa qar-Chian

This caravansarai is situated in the shoe makers bazaar and is the preserve of tanners. They tan only the skins of donkeys and horses and after tanning them they dye them any required colour e.g. red, yellow, green or orange.

Caravansarai 'Abbāsī

Caravansarai 'Abbāsī is near the Maidan Kohnah (old square). It is a large old caravansarai used by cloth weavers. In the time of Shāh 'Abbās a man called Zahre Mar Sultān who set himself up as a petty tyrant used this caravansarai as his territory. He was executed by Shāh 'Abbās for his many cruelties.

Caravansarai Bavanatiyan

This large caravansarai is also known as the caravansarai Mirza Hadayat. It stocks goods from Shīrāz and Bavanat (a village in the Shiraz district). The goods from Shīrāz are lemon juice, orange juice, fresh dates, glassware and water pipes. The goods from Bavanat are green raisins, black sultanas and cooking fat.

Caravansarai 'Arab Bazaar'

This caravansarai is near the Maidān Kohnah (old square). Traders from Mahallat stop there. Their goods comprise patterned tablecloths and carpets from Mahallat. Carpet weavers from Jauchqan also reside there.

Caravansarai Buryabafan (straw weavers)

This is the only caravansarai where weavers (of matting) are to be found. Here are produced all the mats which are laid down in mosques and hammams (public baths).

The manuscript refers to the following caravansarais in the Maidān Shāh:

Caravansarai Maqsūd Assar

Maqsūd Assar was a rich man respected by Shāh 'Abbās who called him 'father'. He owned about twelve shops and a caravansarai, now all in ruins. The caravansarai we are speaking of was built by Maqsue Assar and given to Shāh 'Abbās as a present (he later gave it to his daughter). It is situated near the Maidān Shāh and is unique in all Iran, containing laid-out gardens. Merchants from Lār, Hormūz, Nairyz and Behbahan live there. The goods of Lar are coffee and tobacco.

Caravansarai Jaddeh (Grandmother)

This caravansarai has two entrances, one of these opening on the Maidan and the other on the crossing of the Sarutqi bazaar. Sellers and sewers of English cloth have their shops there and have made yards on both sides of the crossing, which they share with Armenians from Aleppo. One part of the caravansarai is given over to Sunni Indians and most of the rich merchants from India stop there. Also stocked in this caravansarai are all the goods that come through Bandar Abbas. The caravansarai was built

when Sarutqi was prime minister.

Caravansarai Hallāl

This caravansarai is beside the Naqshe Jahan square and was built by Shāh 'Abbās II in his own name. It was called the Hallāl caravansarai because Shāh 'Abbās built it from his personal fortune (his lawful money) and ordered that the food and clothing of the Shah should be bought from its rent. Here we find traders from Turkey dealing in paper, silver and other goods.

Caravansarai (it has no name - translator)

This caravansarai is situated behind the coppersmiths' bazaar and used by traders of Qara Beg. Their merchandise consists of slaves, girls and boys from Georgia and Russia who are bought and sold there. In no other caravansarai are white or black slaves sold. Such is the Shah's command.

Caravansarai Khorassani

This caravansarai is situated at the end of the dyers bazaar and consists, in fact, of two caravansarais; one built at the time of Shah 'Abbas the lesser and another older one. The Khurasan merchants deal in skins from Bokhārā, felt from Mashhad, turpentine and prunes from Bokhārā and carpets and jajim (a type of rug) from Khurasan.

Caravansarai Khansarī

This caravansarai is sited in the carpenters' bazaar. The Khansar merchants stop there and deal in dried nuts and fruit

such as sultanas, apricots and apples as well as a kind of paludeh (sherbut) which is made from grape syrup and crushed walnuts and almonds.

Caravansarai Paran Chili

There is a caravansarai at the opening of the bazaar warppers known as the caravansarai Paran Chili. At the time of Shāh 'Abbās the Great, Turkish merchants used to unload there but since Shāh 'Abbās II built Caravansarai Hallāl these merchants now unload in the latter.

Caravansarai 'Alī Qoli Khān

This caravansarai is in the bazaar. At the crossing of the bazaar there are two yards and the caravansarai is situated between these and the small caravansarai called Temcheh. This caravansarai caters specifically for Indians and there are no Muslims here or in this part of the bazaar. Good cloth can be bought here.

Caravansarai Khajeh Moharram

This caravansarai is near the 'English' or 'Dutch' house and traffics in goods brought from Yazd such as pomegranates, figs and rose water.

Caravansarai Yār Dābā

This is used by Indians and is also the slaughter house for the butchers in the Maidan.

Caravansarai Mostawfī

This caravansarai is near the foot of the Tower of Skulls.

Here are to be found many wealthy Indians, mostly merchants, who buy goods to sell them in other cities.

Caravansarai Sarutqi

This is situated at the foot of the Tower of Skulls and is where chintz makers work.

Caravansarai Dargazīnī

This caravansarai is a halting place for mast (yoghurt) which is brought from Dargazin in the spring.

Caravansarai Laryan

This caravansarai lies behind the Qaisariyeh square and is the location of grocers shops.

Caravansarai Yazdī

Here most of the rich drapers have chambers and fine goods such as brocades and high quality cloth can be found.

Caravansarai Kāshānī

This consists of two caravansarais. One is the old caravansarai of the Kashani merchants and the other, much newer, is near the English house. Both sell goods from Kashan, such as brocade.

Caravansarai 'Coppersmiths'

This caravansarai is situated near the coppersmiths' bazaar and behind the mental hospital which is built in the same form as the caravansarai.

Caravansarai 'Slaughter-house'

Sheep and hens are killed here and used in the Shah's kitchen.

Caravansarai Bazaar Sarrajan

Here merchants from Yazd unload and sell Yazdi lining cloth and Yazdi figs.

Caravansarai Zaman Beg Nazer

This caravansarai traffics in all goods coming from abroad.

Caravansarai Abarqueiyan (Abarquis)

In this caravansarai water jugs and bowls made in Abarqūh are bought and sold.

With a wealth of personal and often unexpected detail, the manuscript draws a vivid picture of the variety offered by the caravansarais. It also evidences their regional arrangement; a characteristic that still obtains, in the 'sarais' (passage, bazaar, arcade) of present day Iran (cf. Yazdi sarai in Teheran). In earlier times this regional aspect was so highly developed that a caravansarai would be used to discover news of relatives etc. from the town or region in whose products it dealt.

Footnotes to Chapter VI

- (1) Anon. a paper roll 9' x 5 $\frac{1}{2}$ ", written in cursive Nasta'liq, 18th century. Slona MS. 4094 B.M.

The Iranian caravansarai has been shaped by many pressure, geographical, political, economic, military and religious. Different periods have lent their own emphasis to these factors, however, and the particular needs or events of an historical period have influenced both the manner and place of construction. Thus, for example, strong central governments have used them as bastions of their authority; the emergence of holy cities has brought them about as resting places to serve pilgrims; and commerce has dictated their erection to provide safe lodgings on the often hazardous trails.

The structure has also been known under many different names (Khān, Robāt, Inn and Caravansarai) but it is unlikely that these ever reflected its differing aspects. Rather the different names are applied to structures serving the same basic function: the secure lodging of travellers.

From contemporary references, bearing this definition in mind, there is no doubt that the earliest caravansarais were the Achaemenian Chāpār-Khāne-s (Post-Stations). Of these there is no trace due, in all likelihood, to their construction in baked mud. A few ruined examples have come down to us from the Sasanian period and the four iwans and central courtyard type had already been evolved (cf. Qalch Sangi Konar Siah, Anushiravani). This plan was adopted by builders in the Islamic period and became the classic form employed in caravansarais, madrasahs and mosques.

The typical caravansarai is, then, a square or rectangular structure. It is one or two storeys high, with galleries or cells, or both, and bounds an open courtyard. The buildings which form the facade on each side of the court consist of a domed hall (iwan) flanked by accommodation for travellers, the whole being backed by a stabling area. The two major spatial forms to which these buildings owed their impressive monumental character are the dome and the iwan. The dome developed naturally and independently in Iran without any foreign influence. The problem of transition from square to circle was solved by squinches as it had been before the Islamic period in the Zoroastrian fire temples of the late Parthian and Sasanian periods. Corner towers are also typical and there are sometimes semi-towers in the three non-portal sides. The portal entrance is commonly flanked by blind arches and the interior facades are generally arched. Exceptions to this general scheme are relatively few. There are, however, some octagonal caravansarais and a few, in particularly cold regions of the country, which were completely roofed over.

Most caravansarais are constructed with a cut-stone base course surmounted by upper walls of red fired brick. The floor is sometimes of earth and sometimes covered with small stones (sang-i-farsh).

Mosaic decoration is rare and used only in the most luxurious caravansarais, but in general a stone inscription is set into the entrance wall, which gives the date of erection, the name of the founder and/or the name of the person who repaired it.

Caravansarais were erected in cities, along the trade and pilgrim routes and in the deserts. Some of these were public /

property (Vaql) while others belonged to individuals. The urban caravansarai falls into two main groups; those in which travellers and pilgrims could lodge free of charge, and those in which trade was conducted. Of the two types the latter are the more handsome and commodious and have secure doors to the apartments. Such 'commerce' caravansarais were a distinct destination, either for the natives of a certain region or country or for traders in a particular merchandise. Desert caravansarais vary in number from area to area according to the route served and the aridity of the region. These were more often built as a result of endowments than others, due to the smaller possibility of good financial returns.

In Iran, most caravansarais are popularly attributed to Shah Abbas I whose name is justly associated with the golden age of the caravansarai. As Morier says:

"Nothing indeed can equal the truly royal establishments which Shah Abbas the Great maintained throughout his dominions for the accommodation of strangers".

Nowadays hotels, or Mehman-Khanehs have taken over the function of providing accommodation from the caravansarai. City caravansarais are still in use, but only for trade, and when one hears of a caravansarai being built these days, what is meant is a covered commercial area like an arcade or one passage of a bazaar. After 2500 years, the caravansarai still exists but has lost all aspects but the economic.

List of Safavid Rulers

908-1149 H. / 1502-1736 A.D.

	H.	A.D.
Shah Ismail	908-931	1502-1524
Shah Tahmasp	931-984	1524-1576
Shah Ismail II	984-986	1576-1578
Mohammad-Khodabandeh	986-996	1578-1587
Shah Abbas the Great	996-1039	1587-1629
Shah Safi	1039-1052	1629-1642
Shah Abbas II	1052-1078	1642-1667
Shah Sulyman	1078-1106	1667-1694
Shah Sultan Hosin	1106-1135	1694-1722
Tahmasp II	1135-1144	1722-1731
Abbas III	1144-1149	1731-1736

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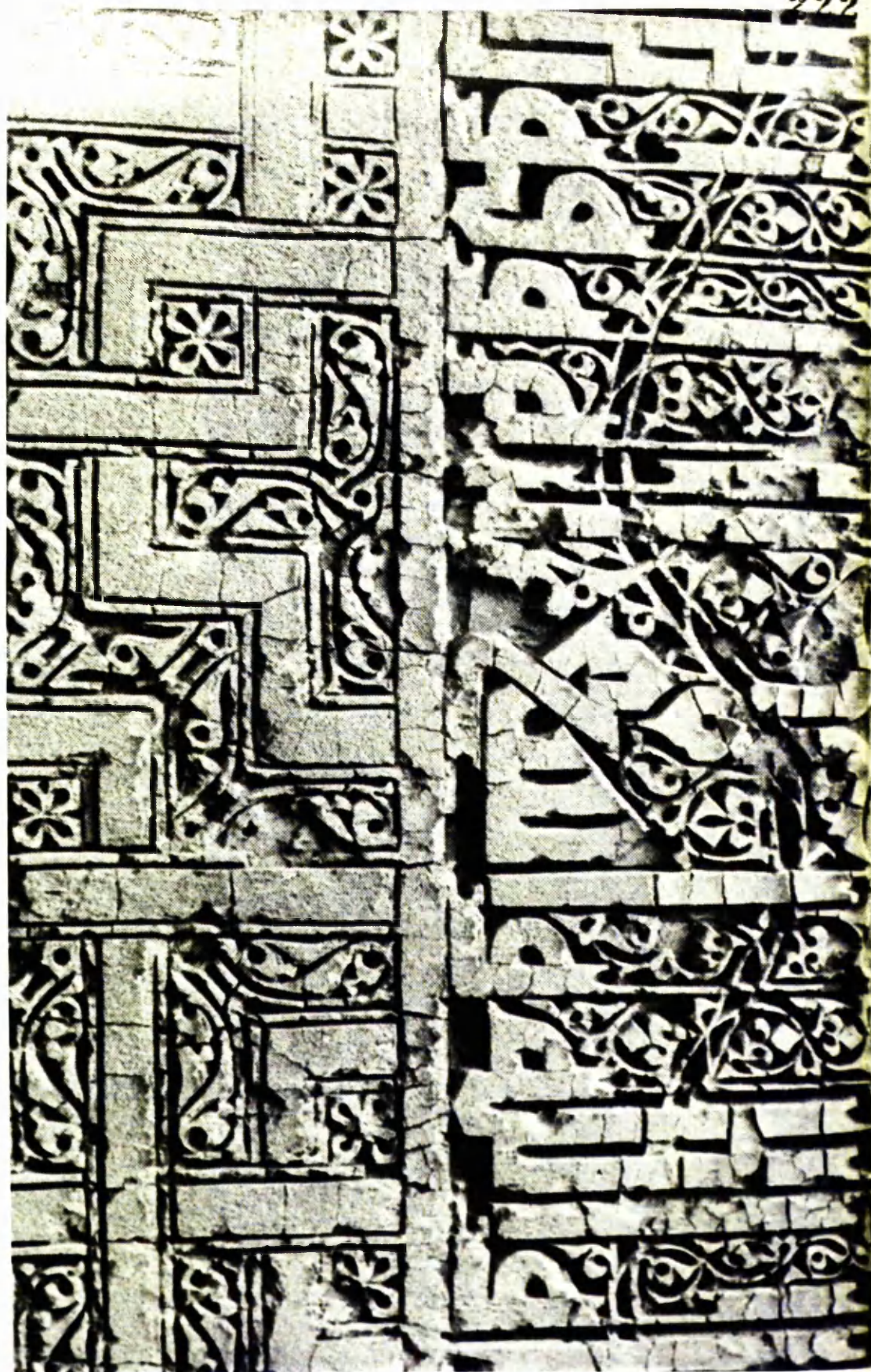
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- Pl. 44. The city of Kashan.
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- Pl. 46. Caravansarai Amin-Al-Dowlah. Kashan.
- Pl. 47. Caravansarai Natanz. Inscription.
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- Pl. 57. Caravansarai Bisuton. General view.
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- Pl. 60. Caravansarai Mahi-Dasht. Entrance facade.
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- Pl. 72. Caravansarai Amin-Abad. Portal entrance.
- Pl. 73. Caravansarai Amin-Abad. Courtyard.
- Pl. 74. Caravansarai Khan Khurra. Interior view.
- Pl. 75. Caravansarai Shebli. General view.
- Pl. 76. Caravansarai Neri. General view.
- Pl. 77. Caravansarai Imam Zadeh Hashem.
- Pl. 78. Caravansarai Sabzewar. Corner of Barrel Vault.
- Pl. 79. A caravan in a caravansarai. Naïen.

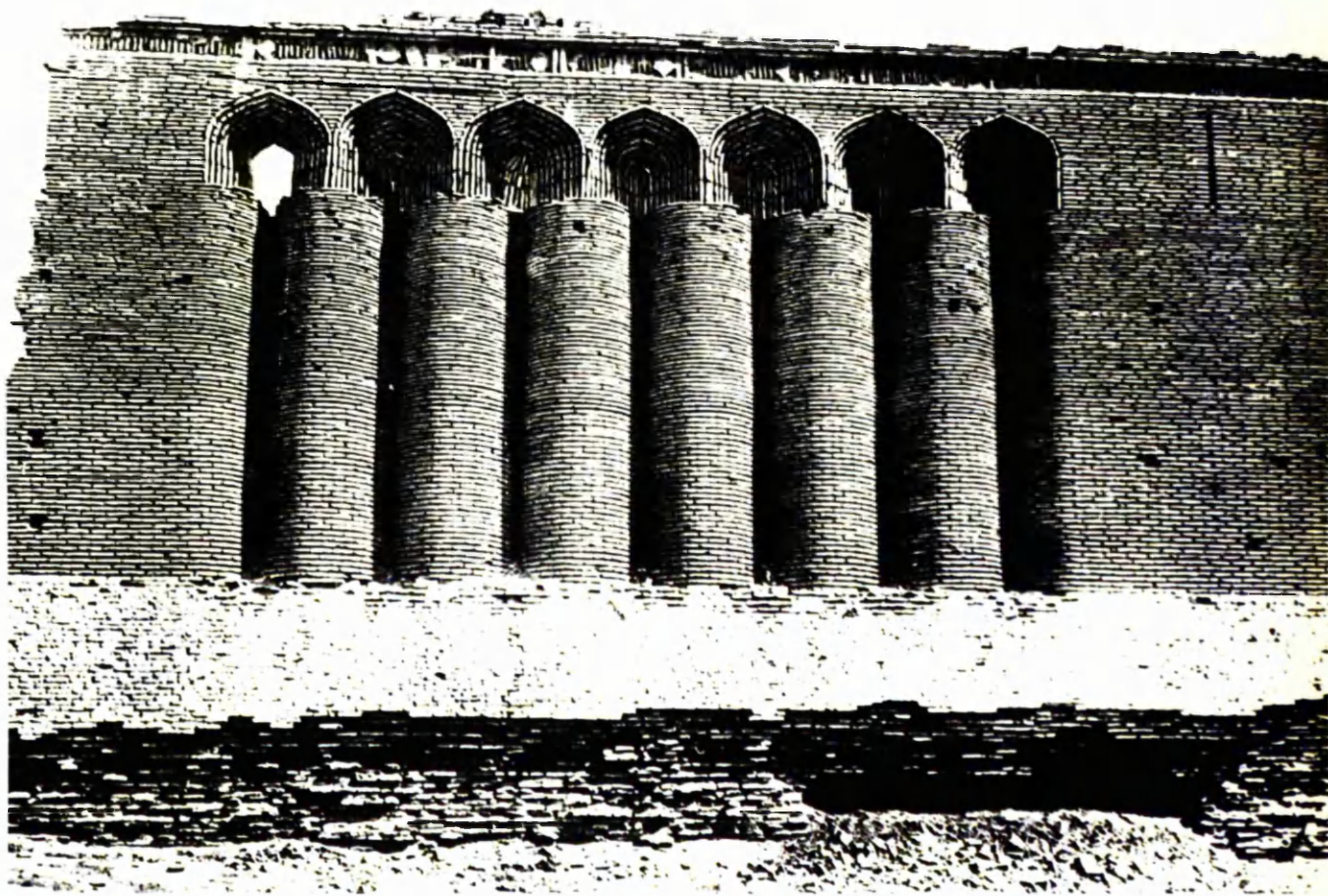
- Pl. 80. Caravansarai Hous-Sultan. Portal entrance. Qajar period.
- Pl. 81. A caravansarai in Yazd.
- Pl. 82. Caravansarai Manzarieh.
- Pl. 83. Caravansarai Khan-Zinan. Fars. 19th century.
- Pl. 84. Caravansarai Sabzewar. 19th century.



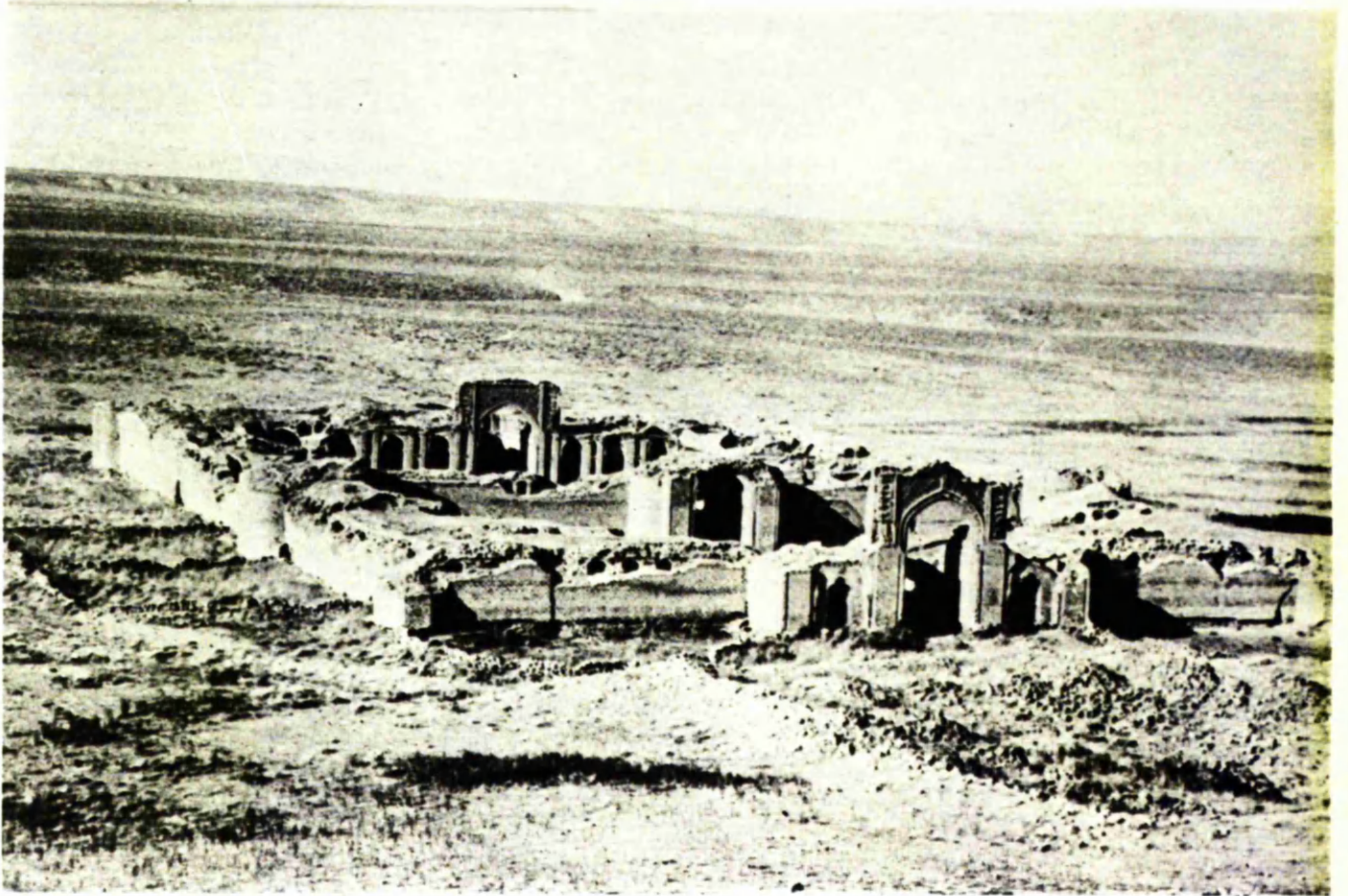
Pl.I. Caravansarai Mehi: Portal entrance



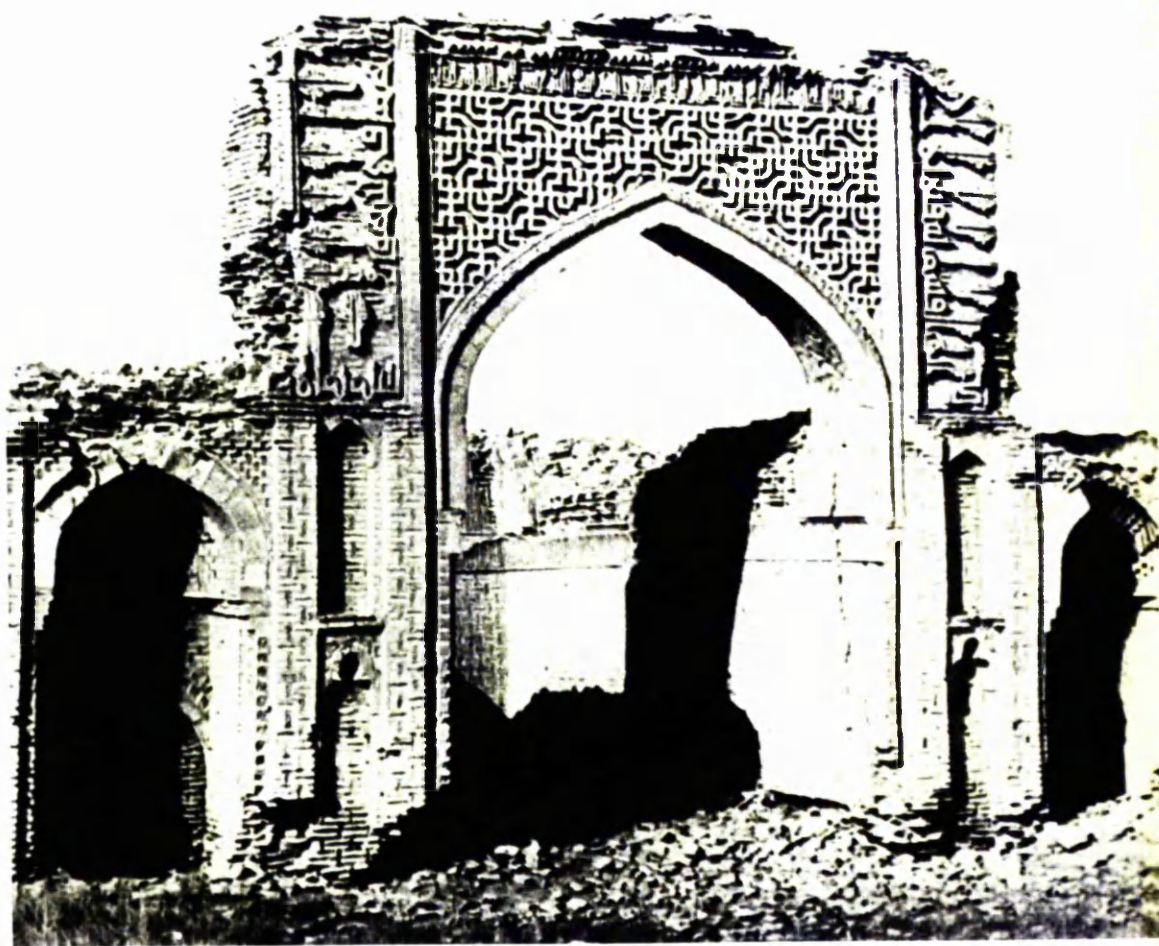
Pl.2. Caravansarai Mehi. Detail of entrance porch decoration.



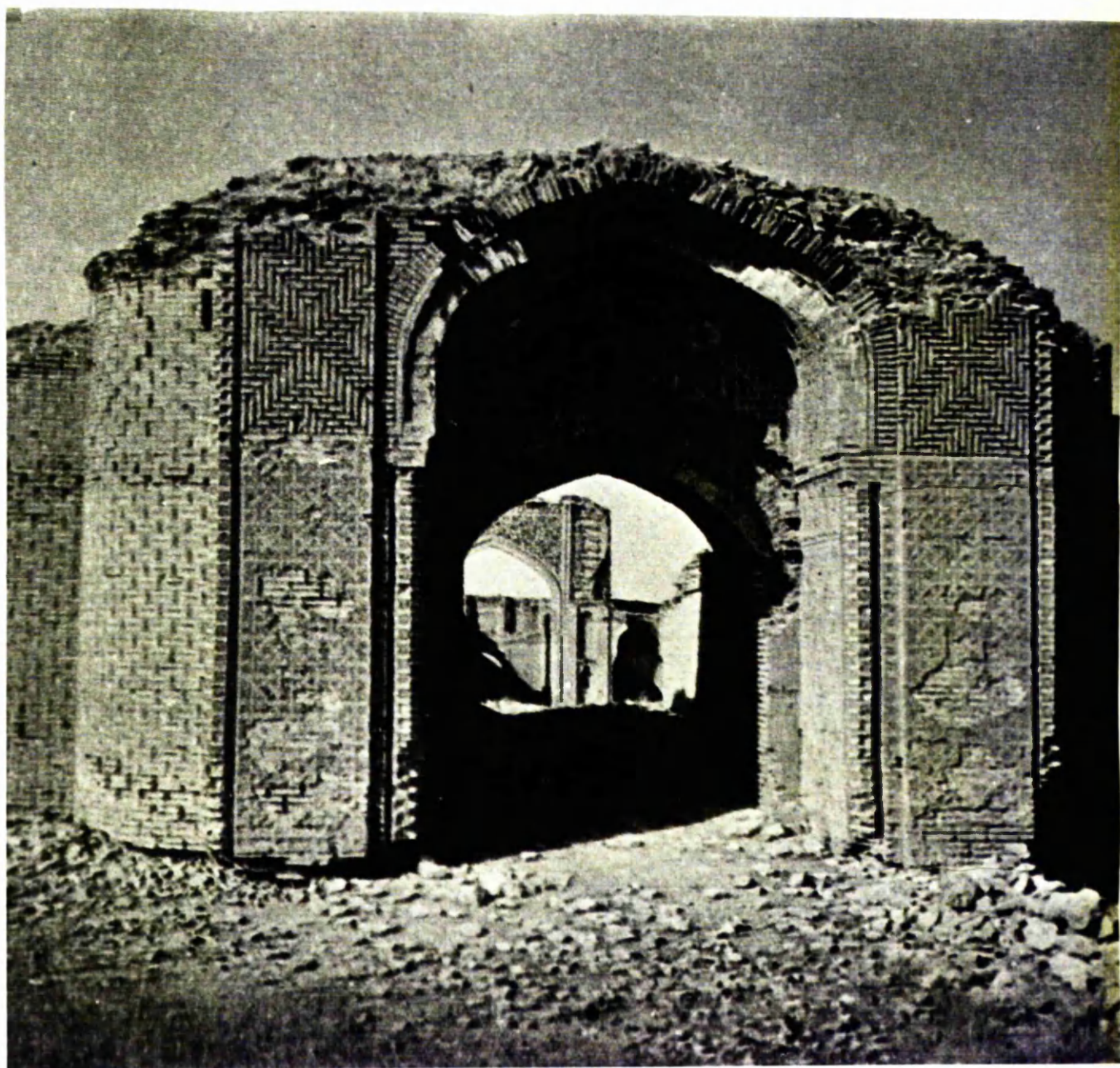
Pl.3. Robat Malik.



Pl.4. Robat Sharaf. General View.



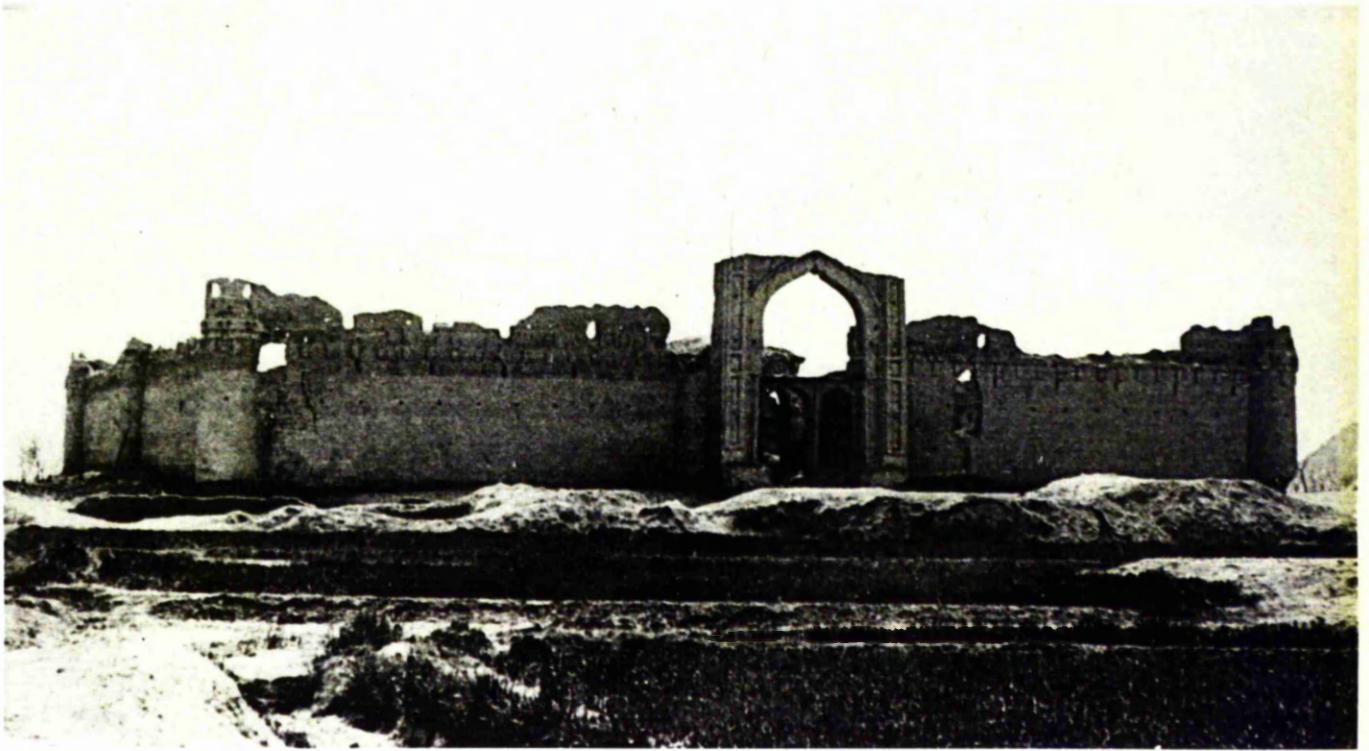
Pl.5. Robat Sharaf. The third archway.



Pl.6. Robat Sharaf. Gateway of second courtyard.



Pl.7. Robat Sharaf. Squinch in house-mosque of second courtyard.



Pl.8. Caravansarai Sin. General View.



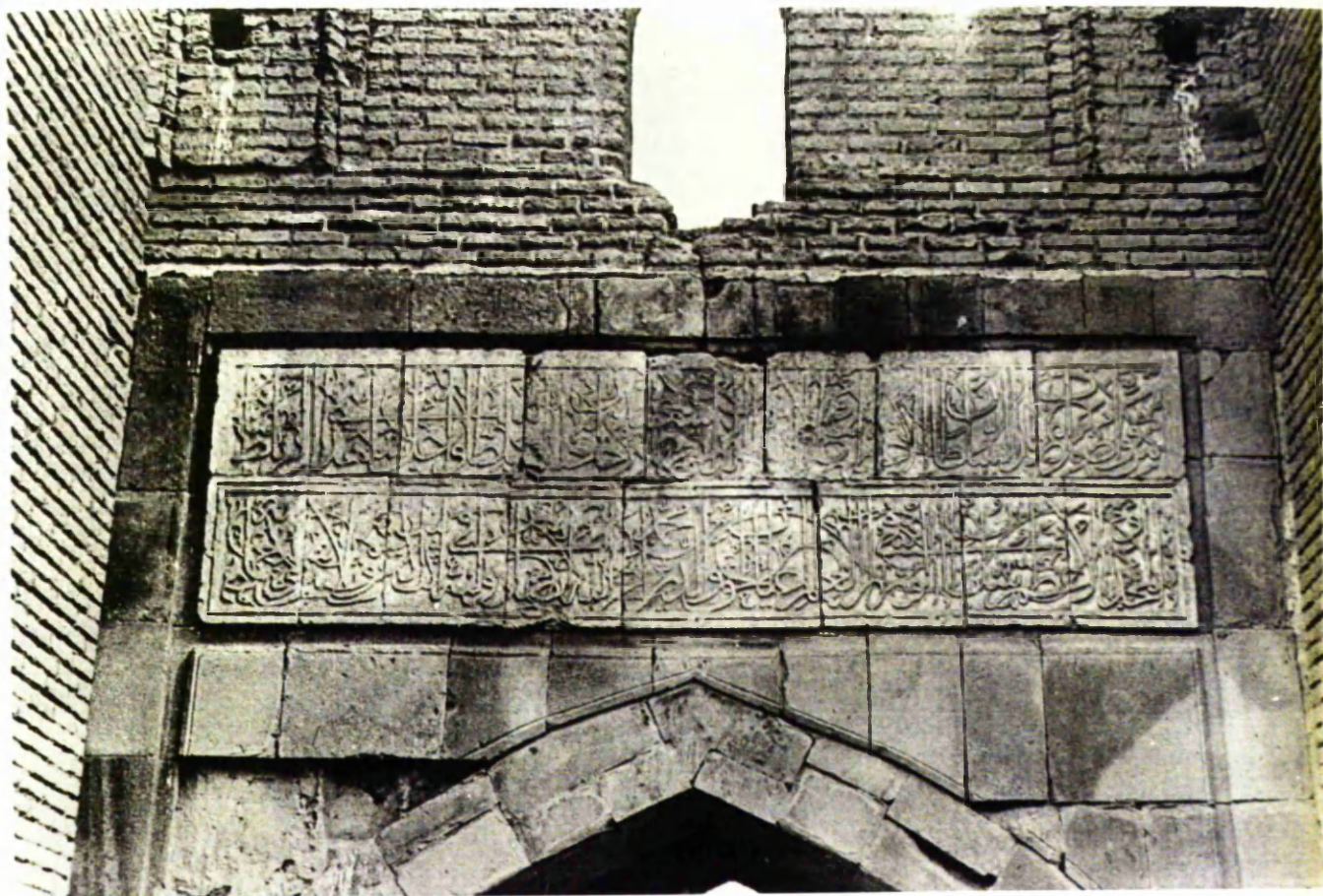
Pl.9. Caravansarai Sin. Vault at a corridor crossing.



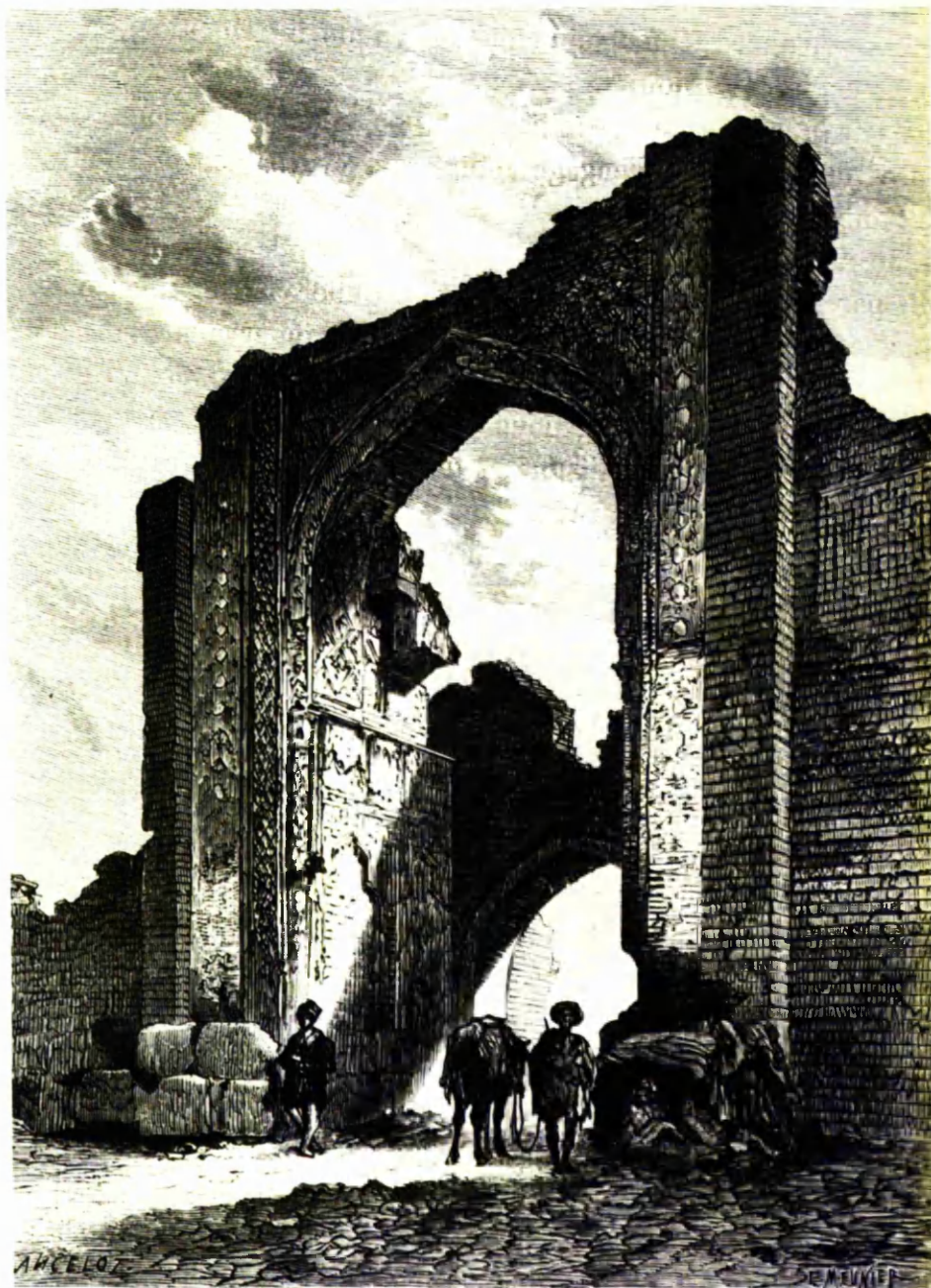
Pl.10. Caravansarai Sin. Entrance Gac decoration.



Pl.11. Caravansarai Sarcham. Portal entrance.



Pl.12. Caravansarai Sarcham. Inscription over the entrance portal.



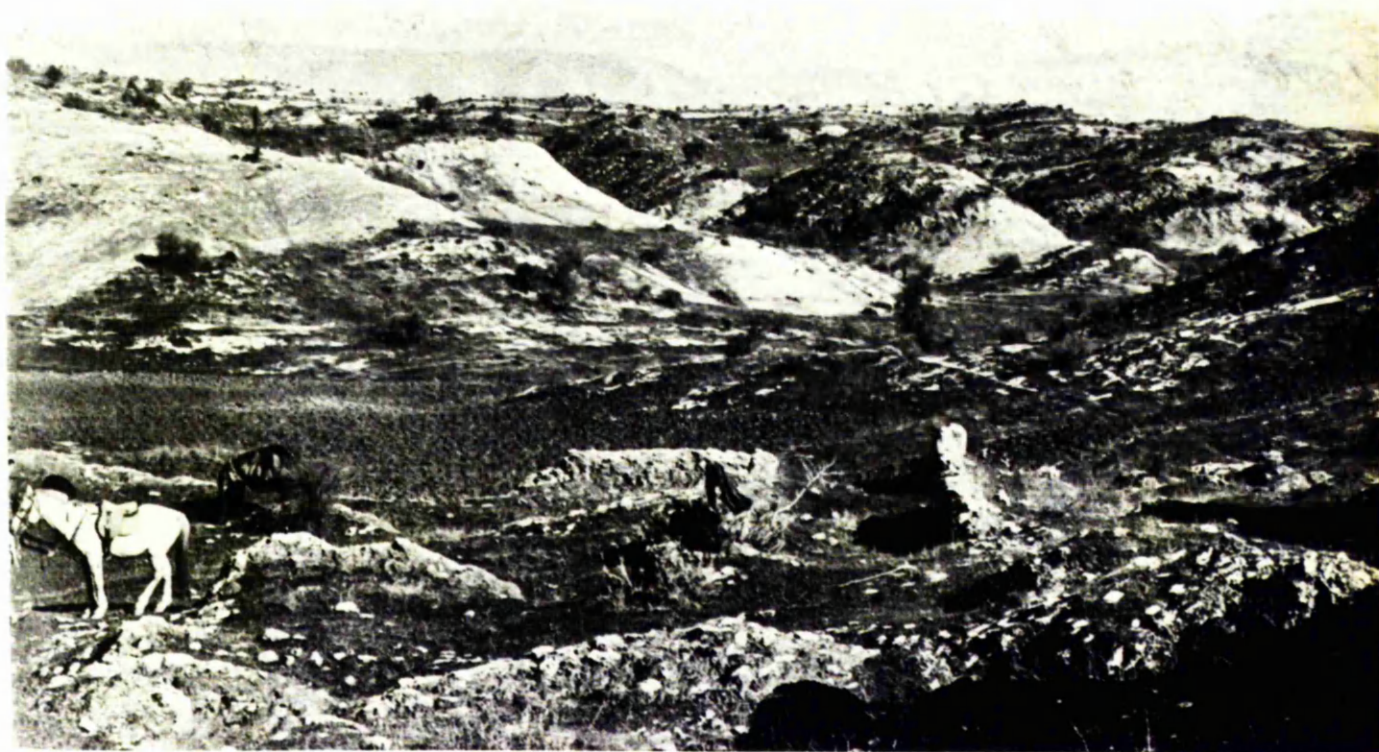
Pl.13. Caravansarai Marand. Portal entrance.



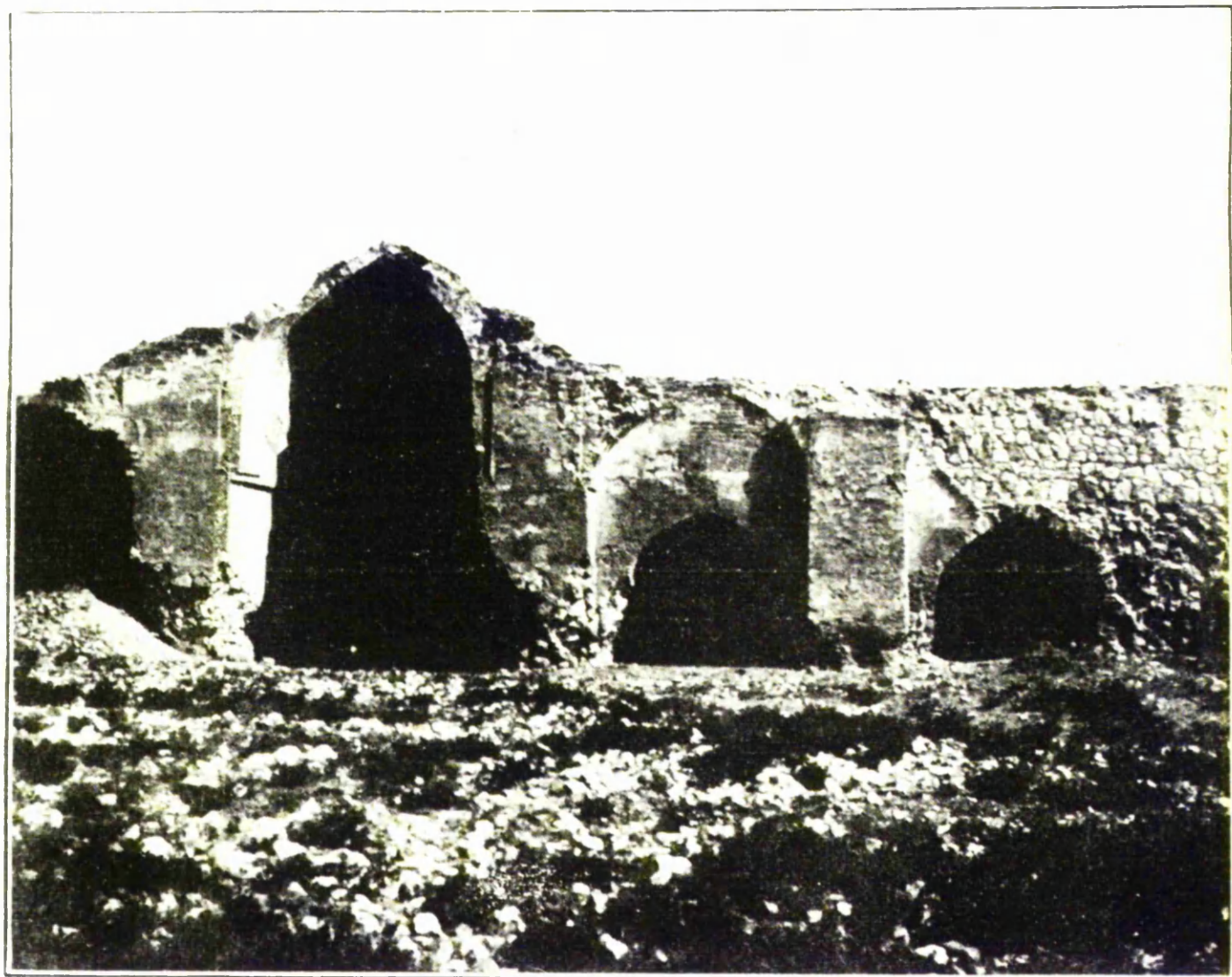
Pl.14. Caravansarai Marand. Portal entrance.



Pl.15. Ruined caravansarai at Konar-Siah.



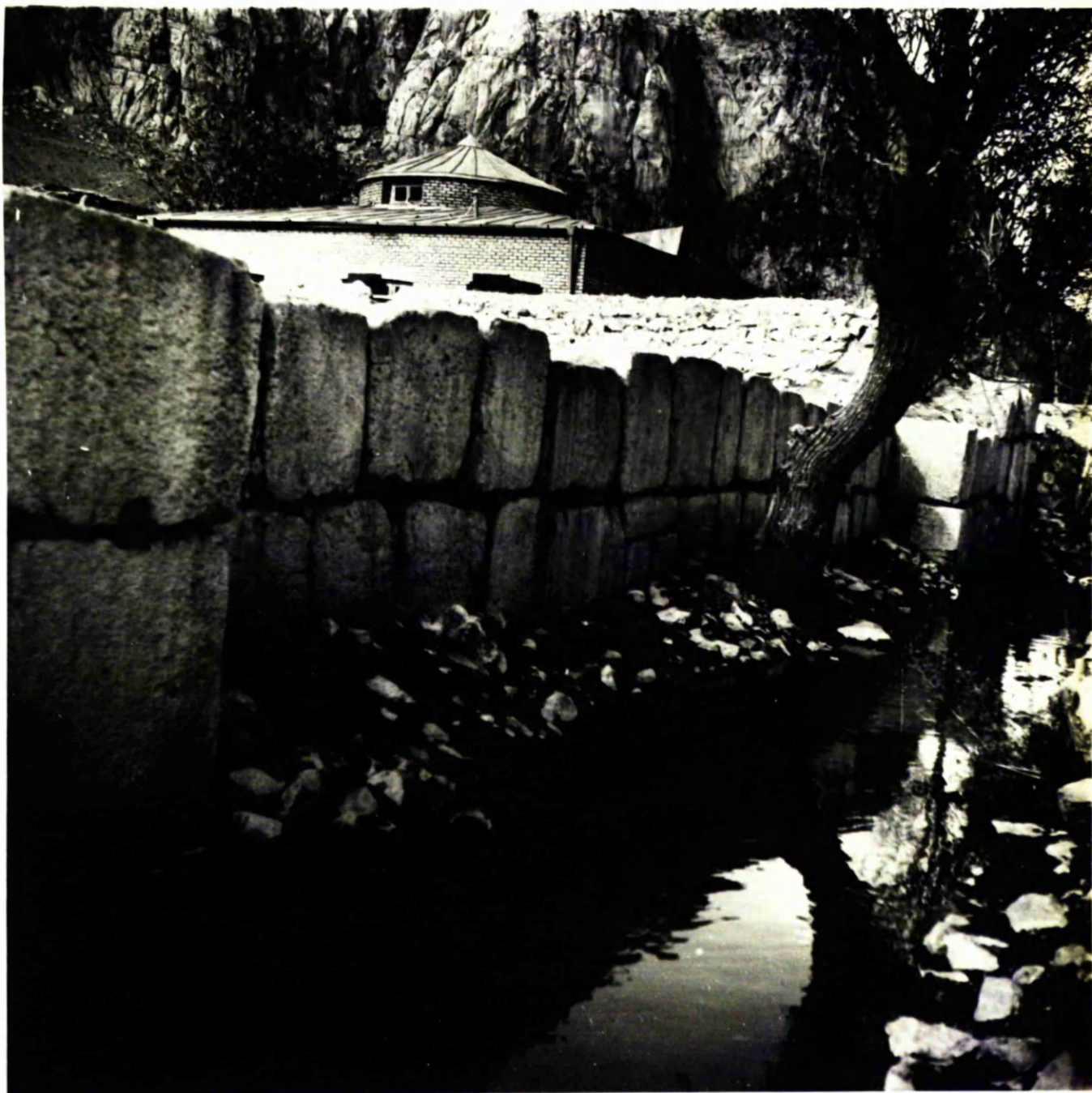
Pl.16. Ruined caravansarai of Gach-Darwazeh.



Pl.17. Ruined caravansarai or Robat Anushiravani.



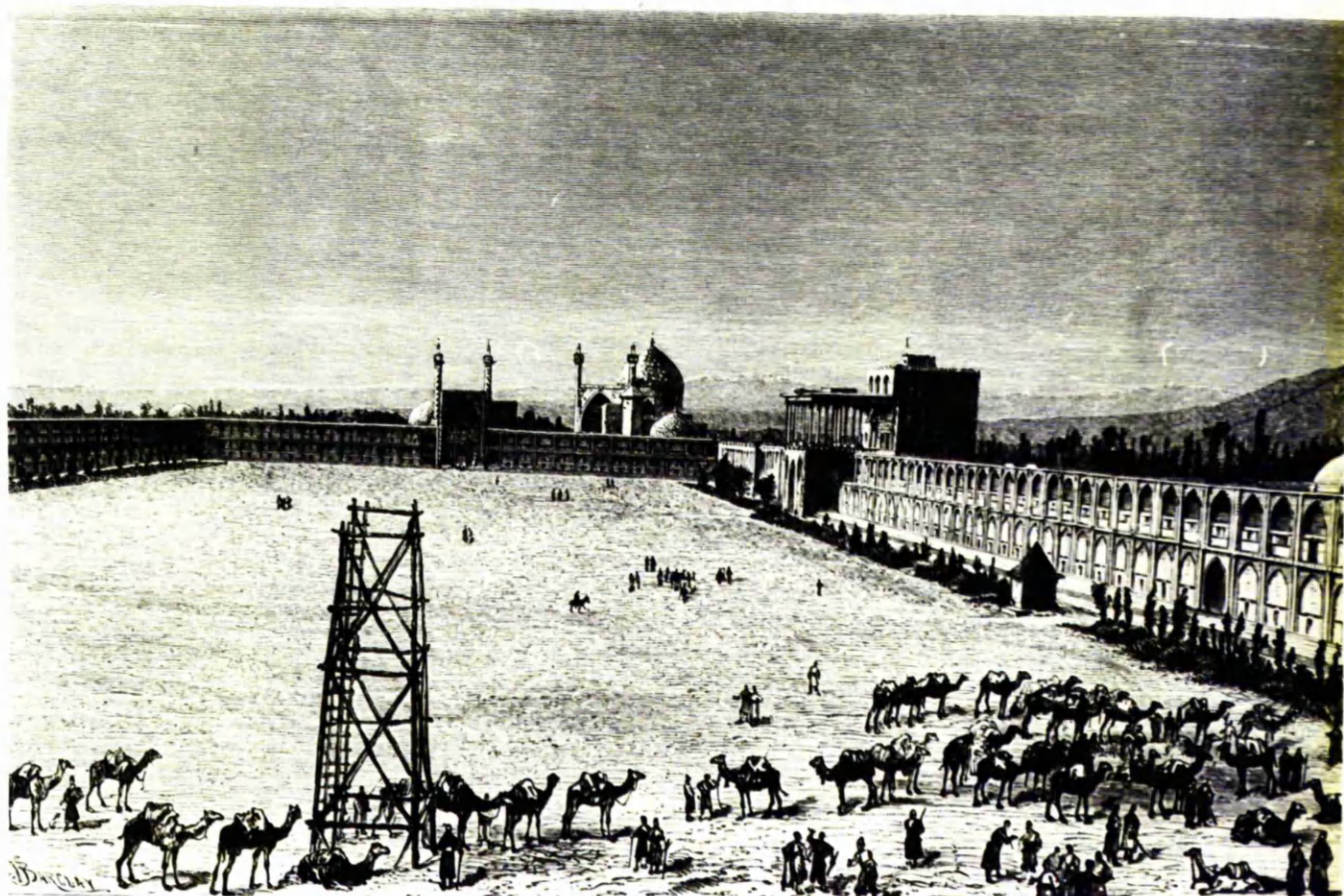
Pl.18. Caravansarai Qaleh-Sangi. Exterior view.



Pl.19. Caravansarai Bisuton. East wall.



Pl.20. Caravansarai or Robat Karim. North west corner.



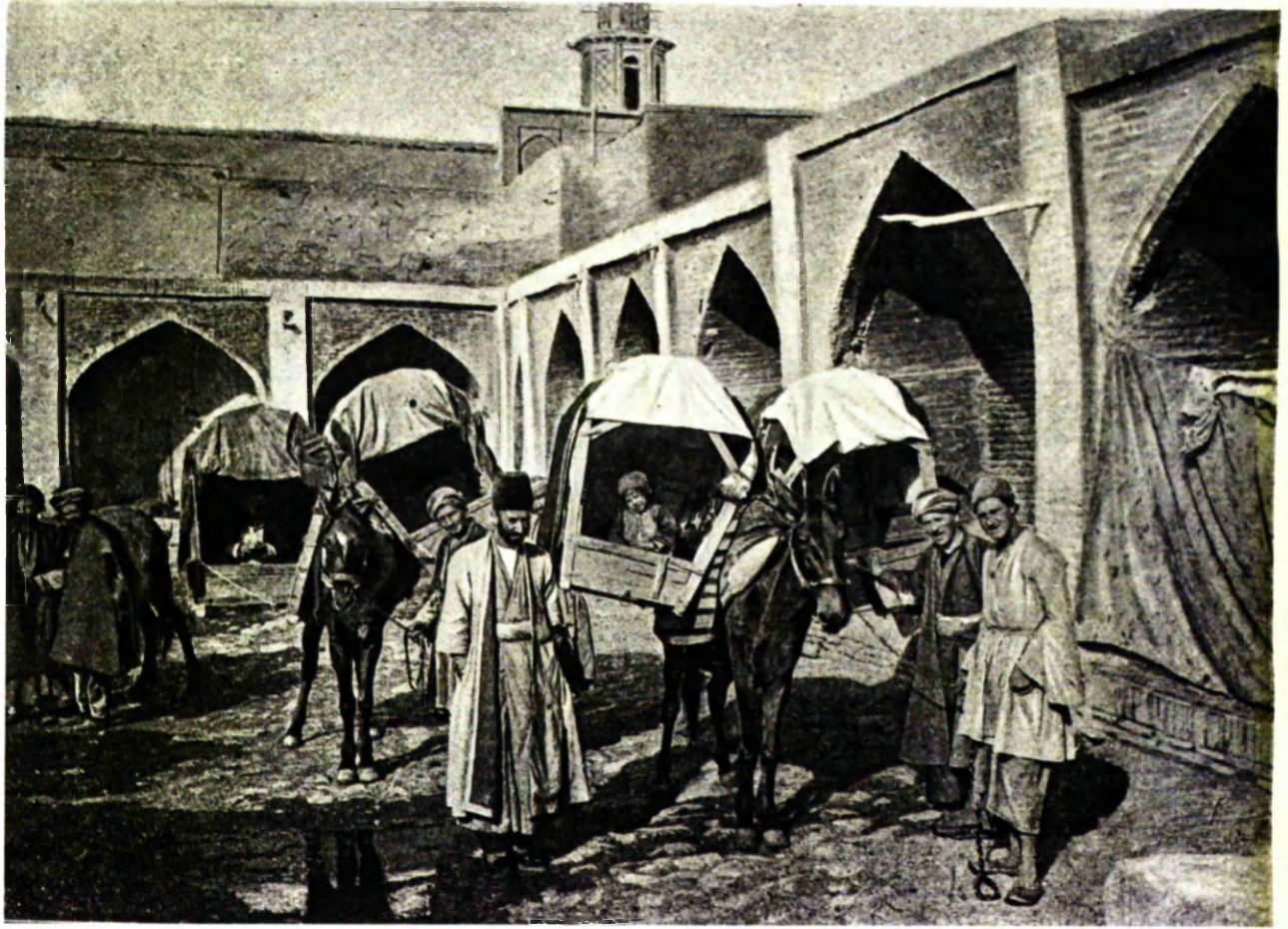
Pl.21. Isfahan. Maidan Shah.



Pl.22. A caravan in Isfahan.



Pl.23. A caravan on the road.



Pl.24. A caravan in a caravansarai.



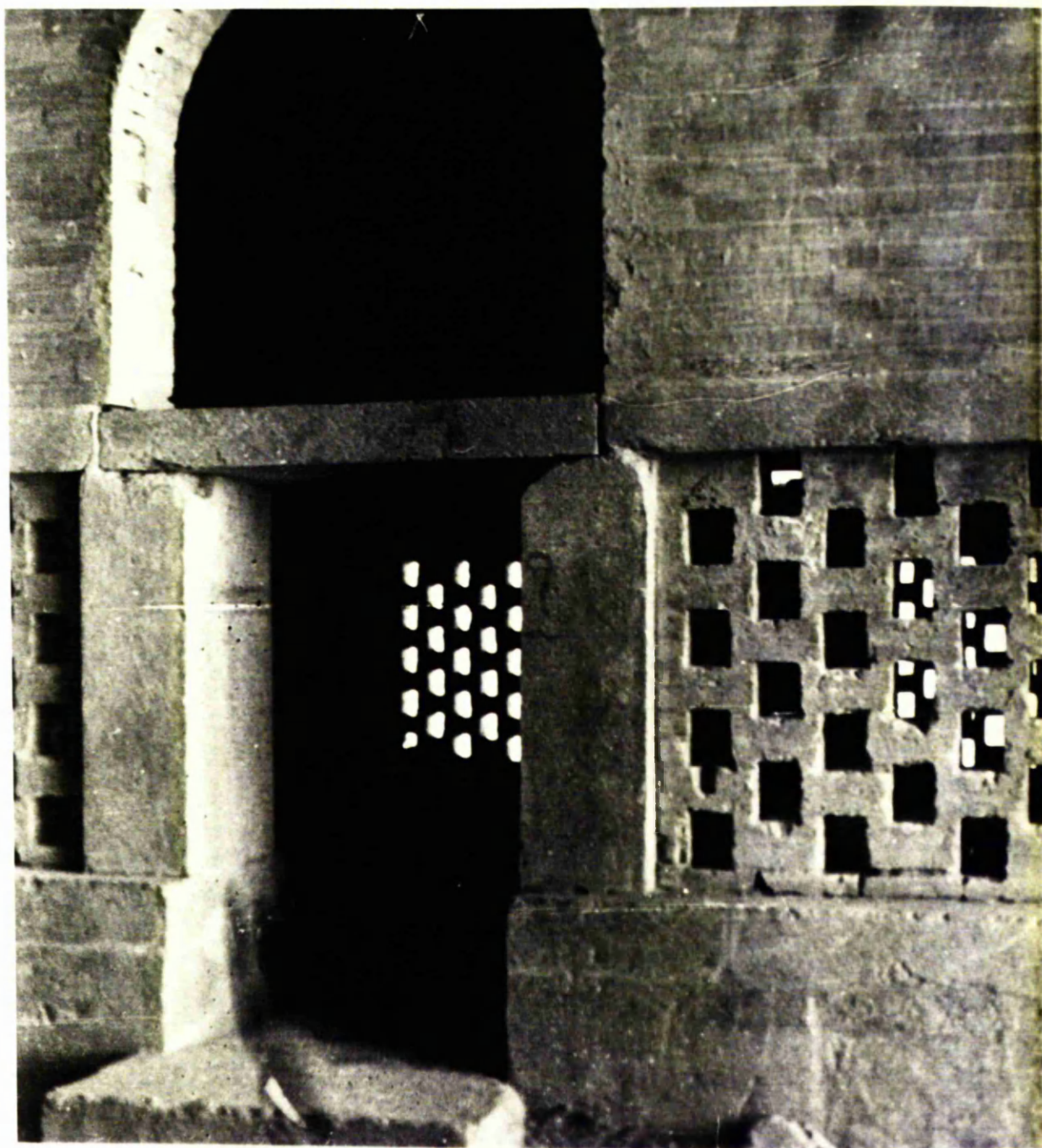
Pl.25. Caravansarai Mahyar. General view.



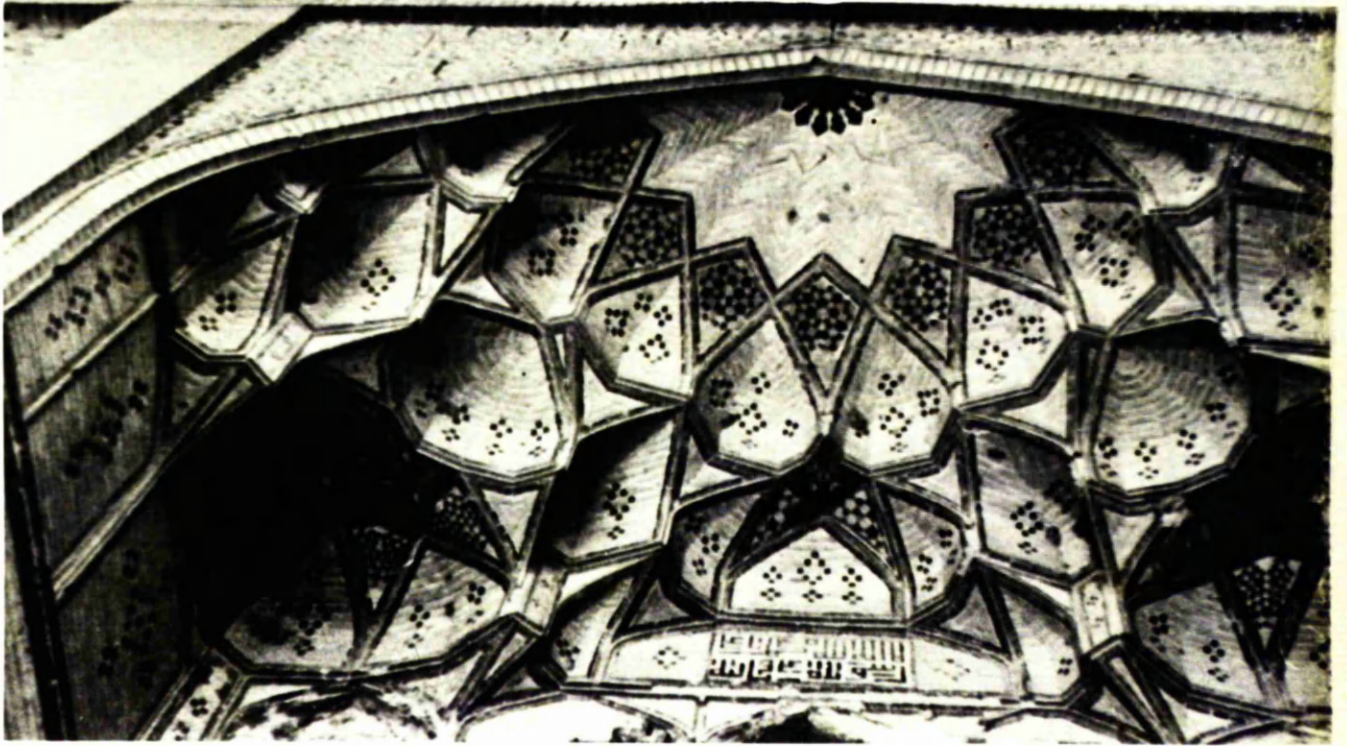
Pl.26. Caravansarai Mahyar. Interior.



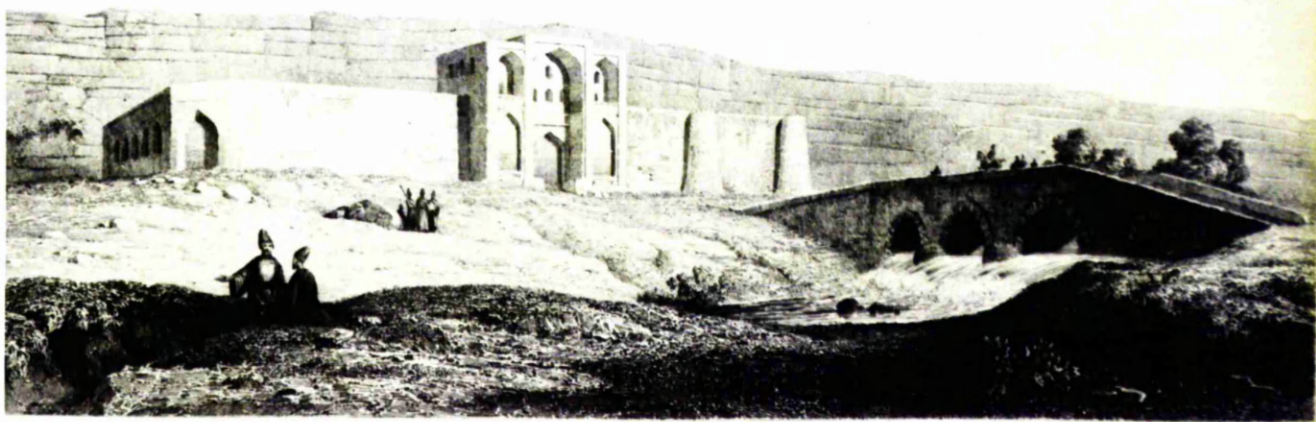
Pl.27. Caravansarai Mahyar. Interior.



Pl.28. Caravansarai Mahyar. Entrance to the chamber.



Pl.29. Caravansarai Mahyar. Decoration over the portal entrance.



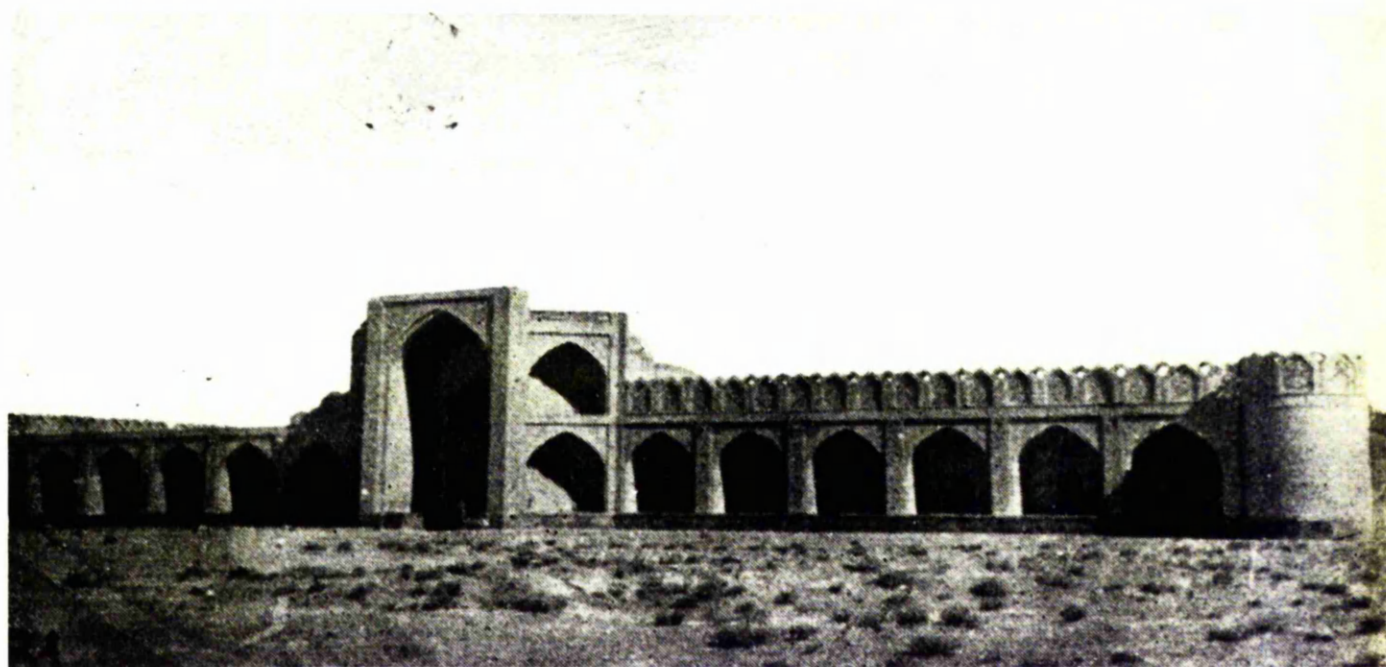
Pl.30. Caravansarai Yazd-Khawst. General view.



Pl.31. Caravansarai Yazd-Khawst. Inscription.



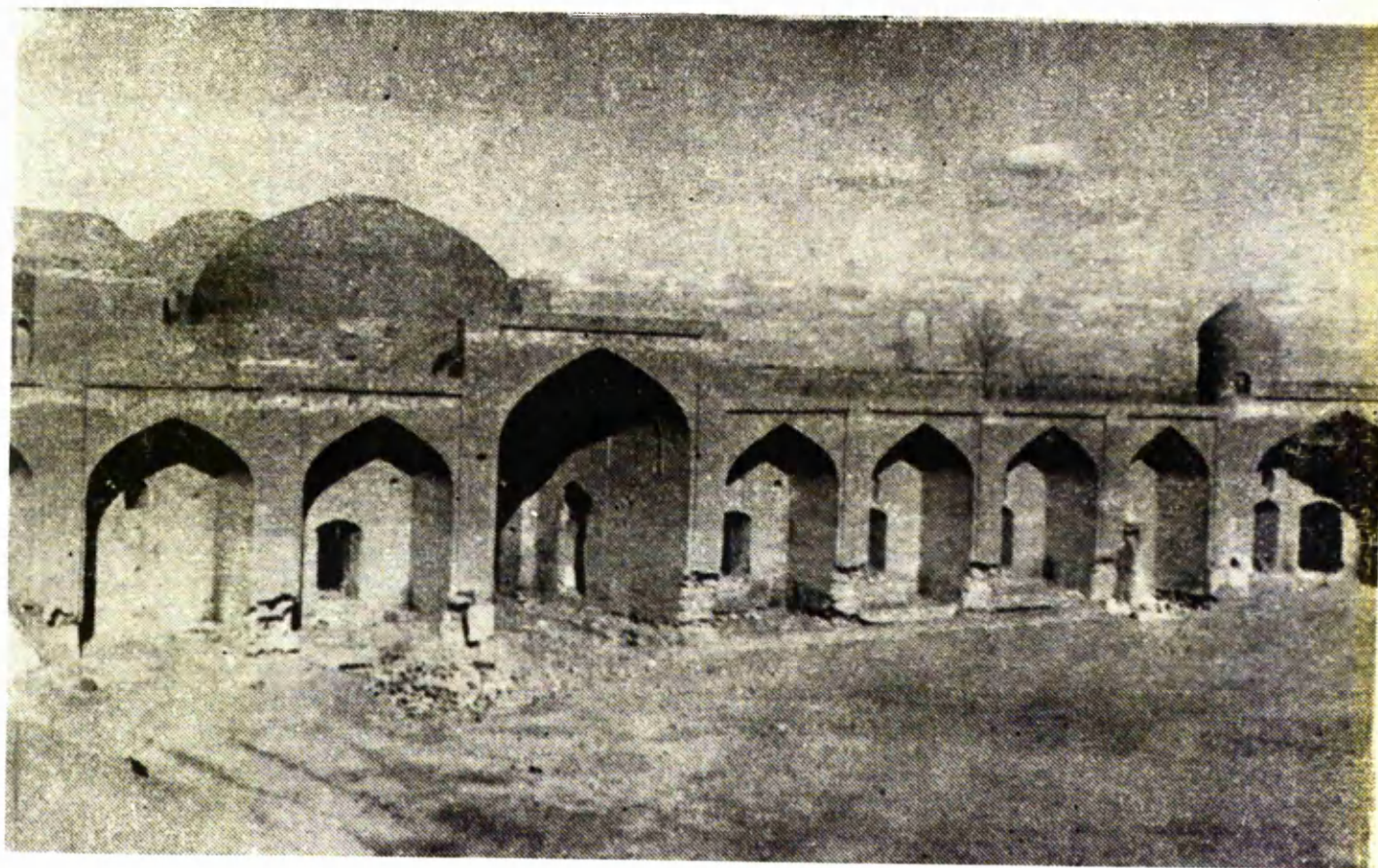
Pl.32. Caravansarai Zawareh. Vestibule from the courtyard.



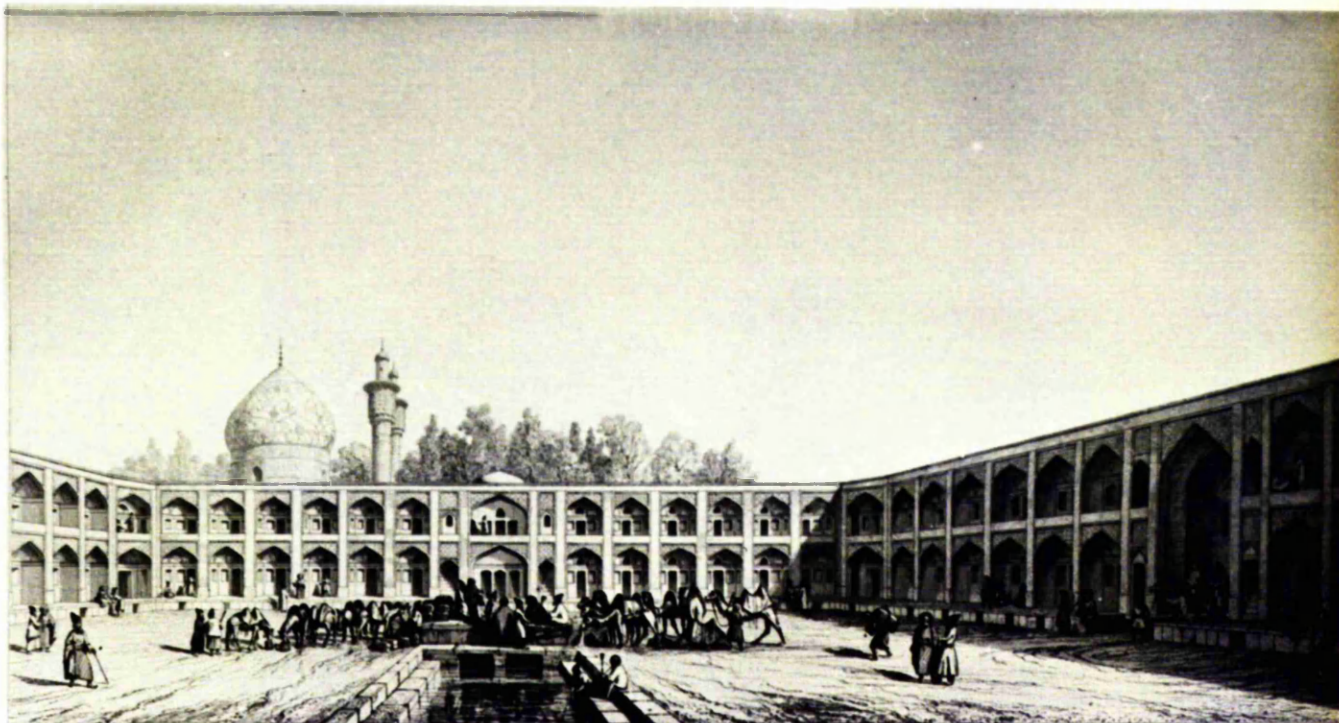
Pl.33. Caravansarai Madar-Shah. Portal entrance.



Pl.34. Caravansarai Madar-Shah. Vestibule from the courtyard.



Pl.35. Caravansarai Gaz. Interior view.



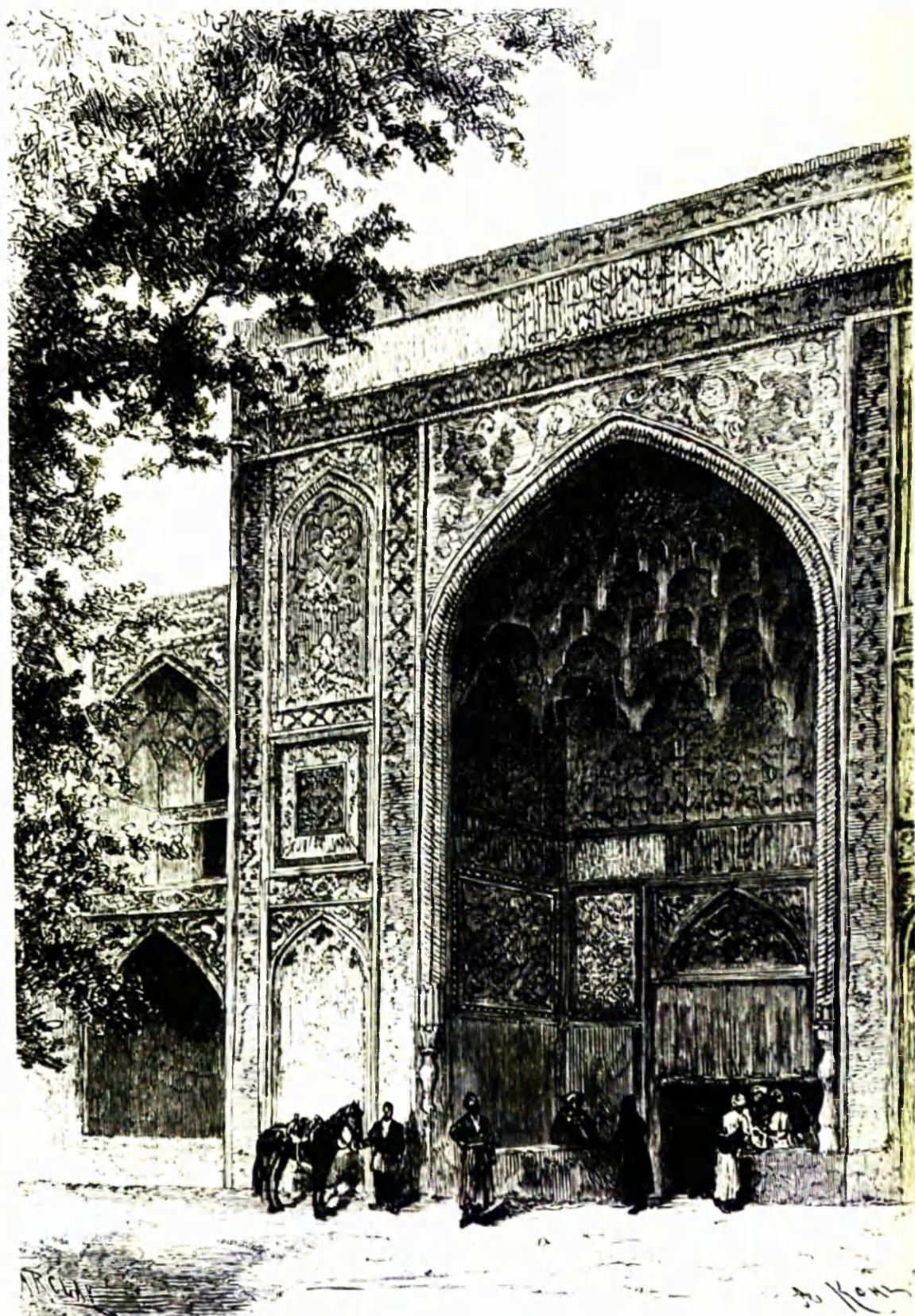
Pl.36. Caravansarai Madar-i-Shah.



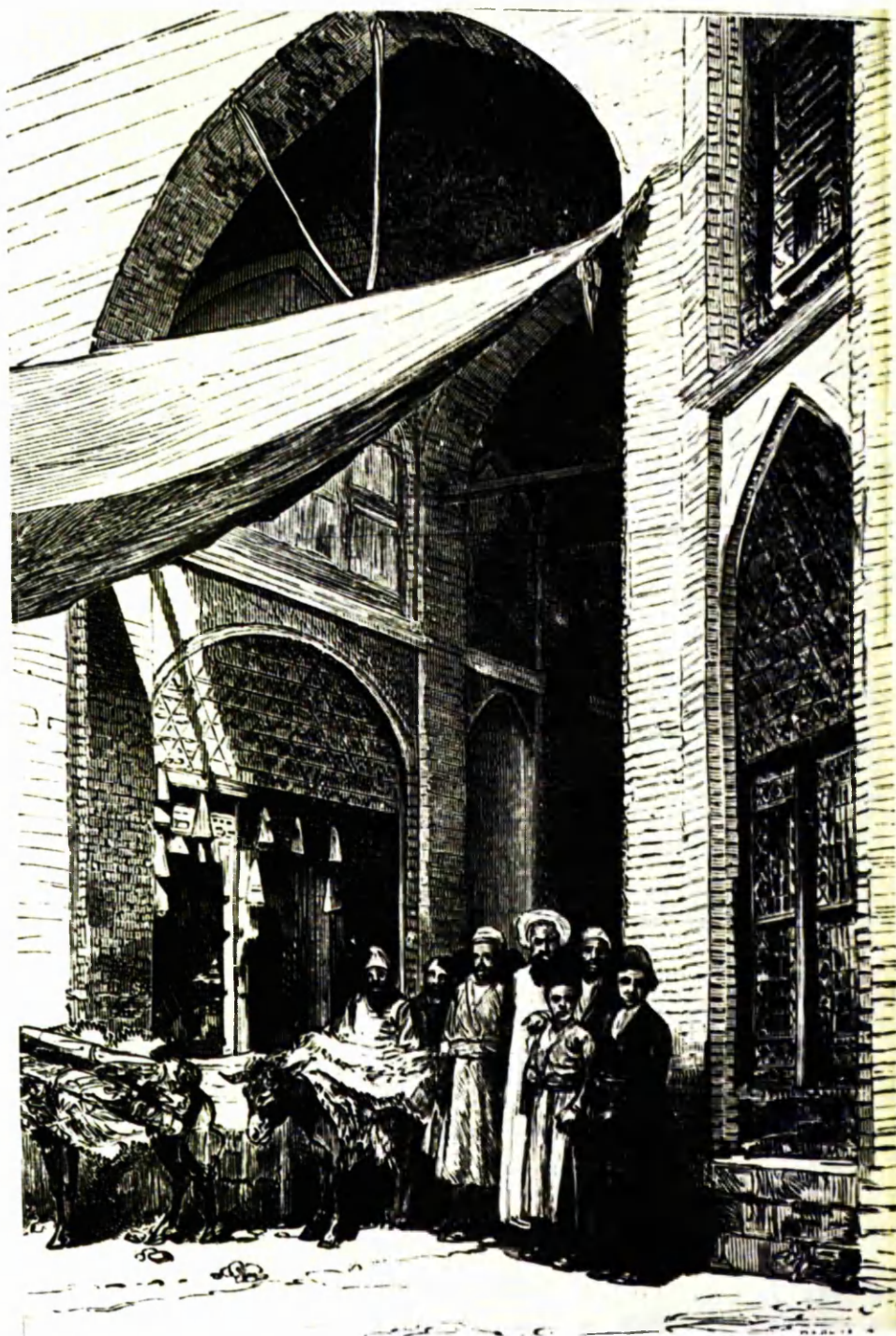
Pl.37. Caravansarai Madar-i-Shah. Entrance to the courtyard.



Pl.38. Caravansarai Madar-i-Shah. Interior view.



Pl.39. Madrasah Madar-i-Shah.



Pl.40. Armenian caravansarai in Jolfa.



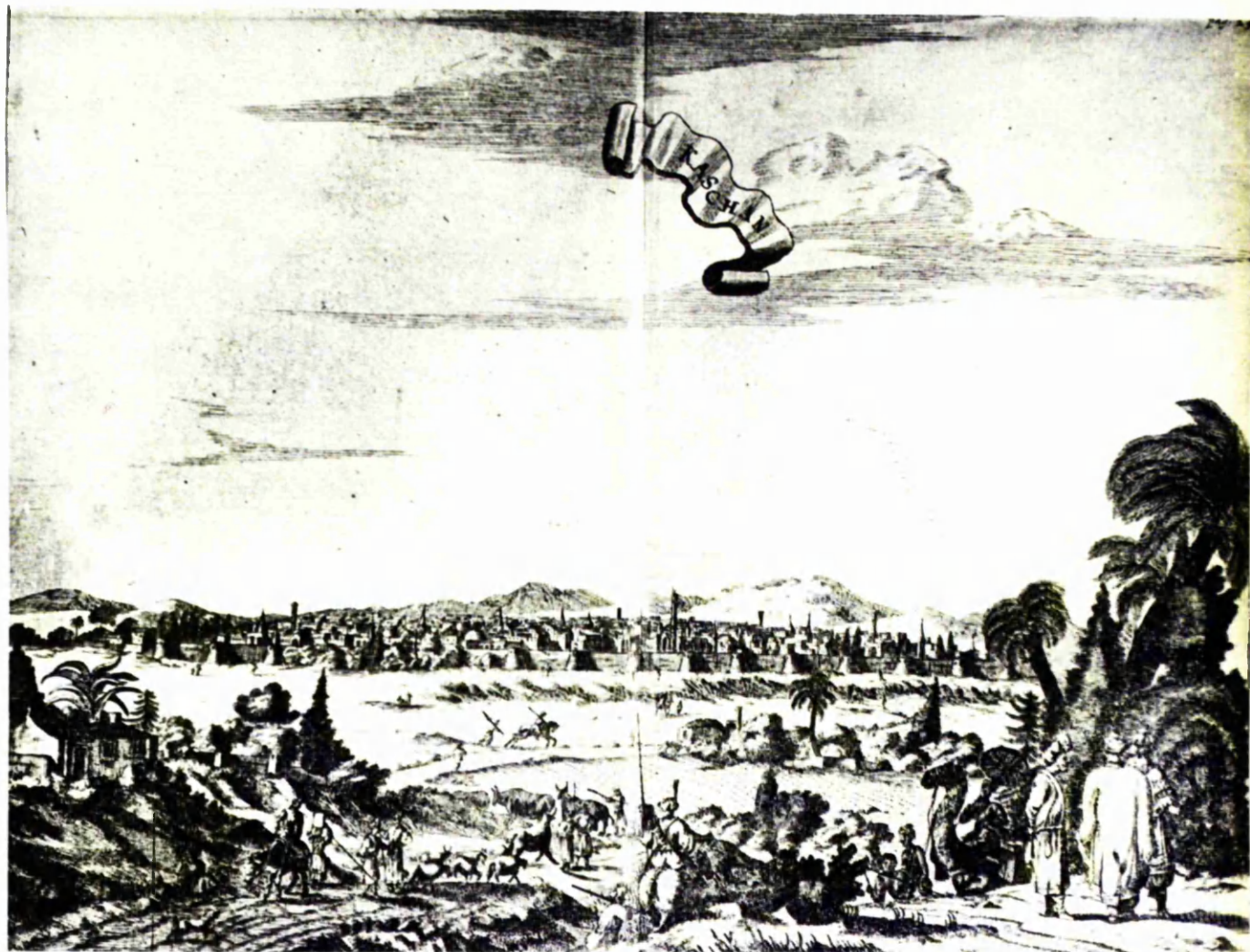
Pl.41. Caravansarai Jamal-Abad. Portal entrance.



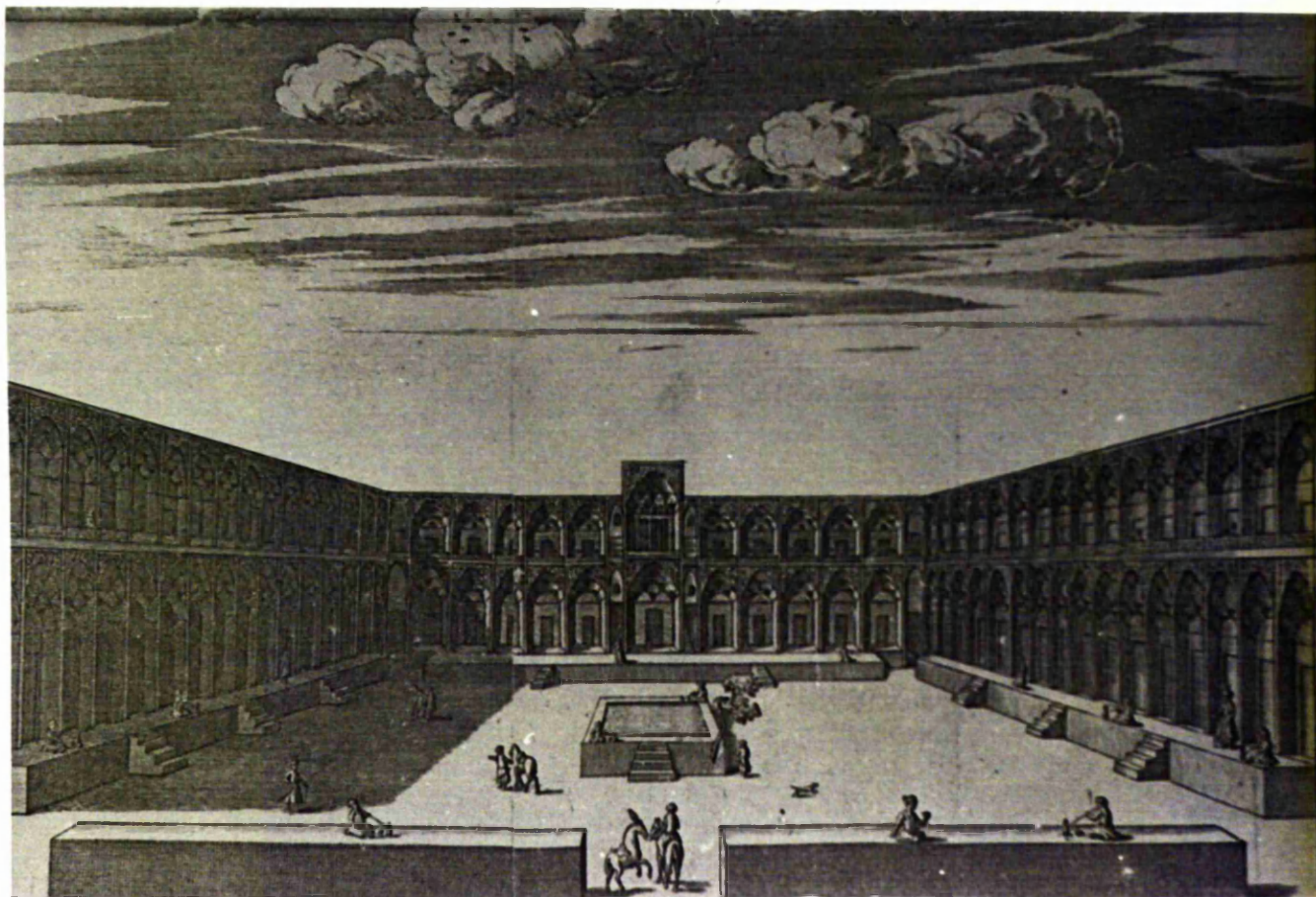
Pl.42. Caravansarai Jam. Portal and exterior view.



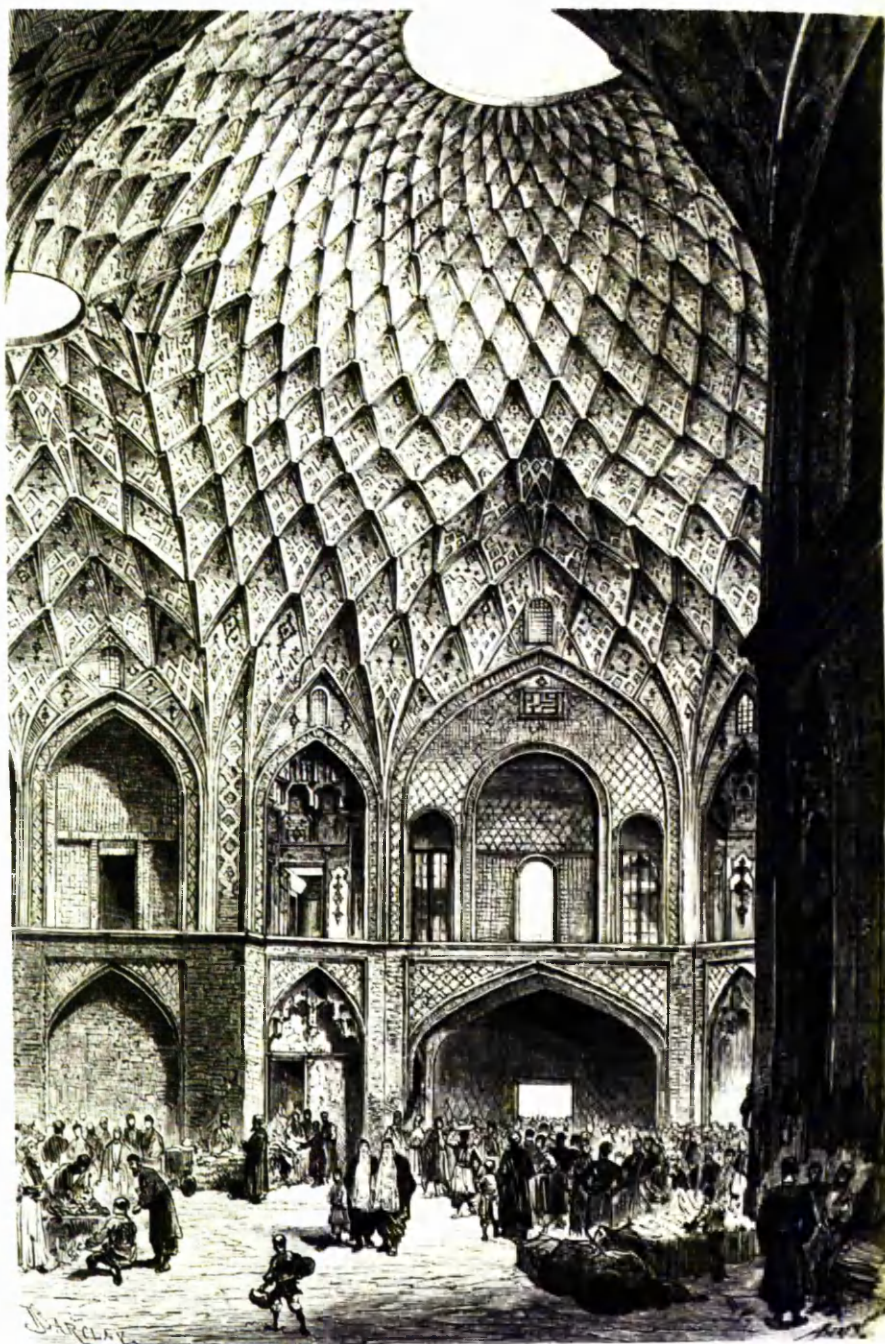
Pl.43. Caravansarai Guilak. Portal entrance.



Pl.44. The city of Kashan.



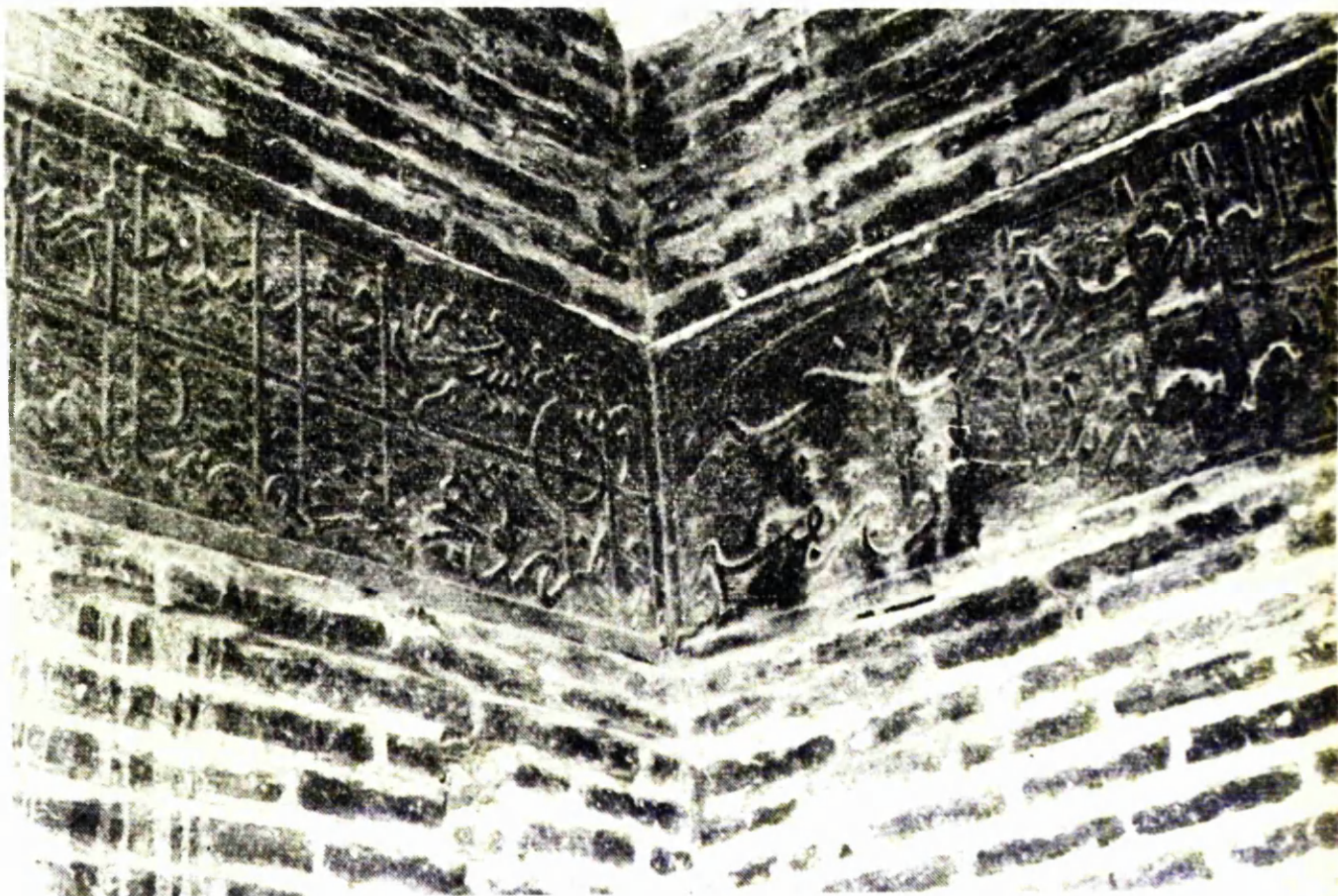
Pl.45. The Royal caravansarai of Kashan.



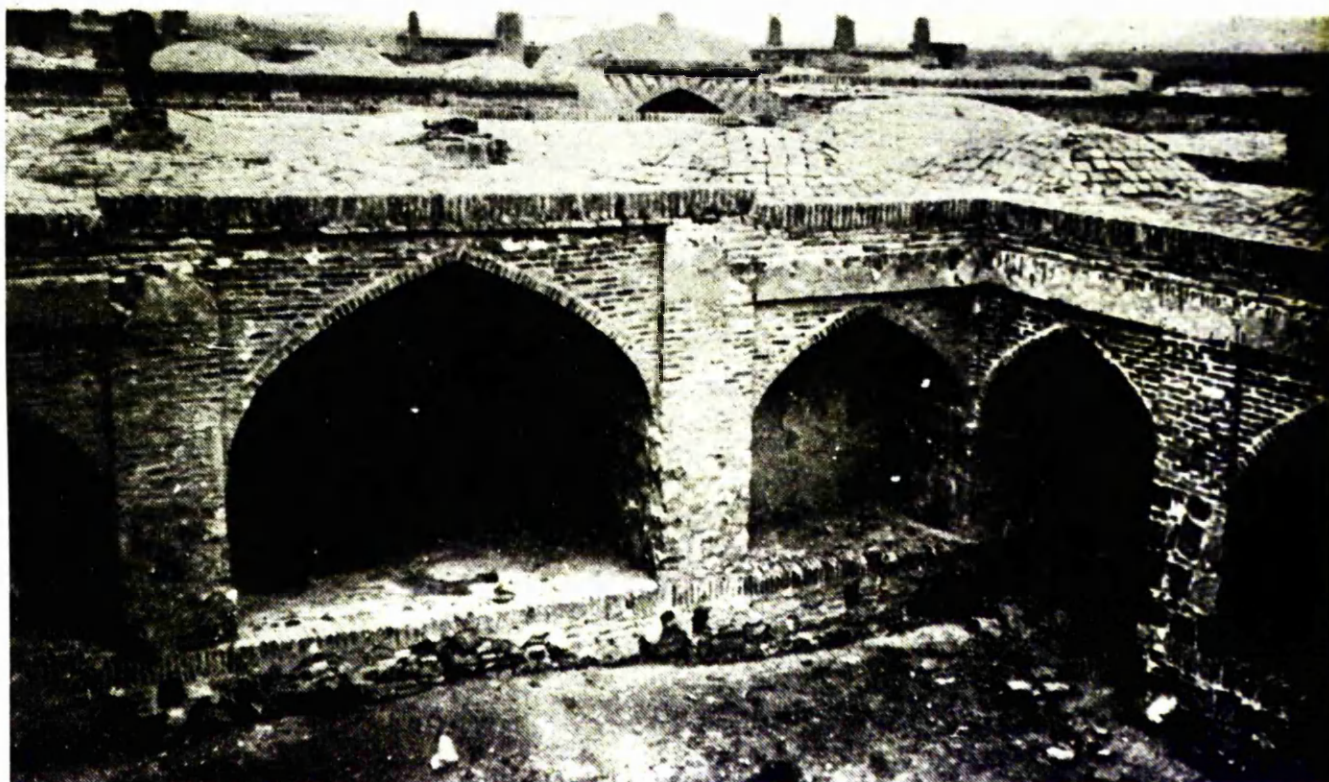
Pl.46. Caravansarai Amin-Al-Dowlah. Kashan.



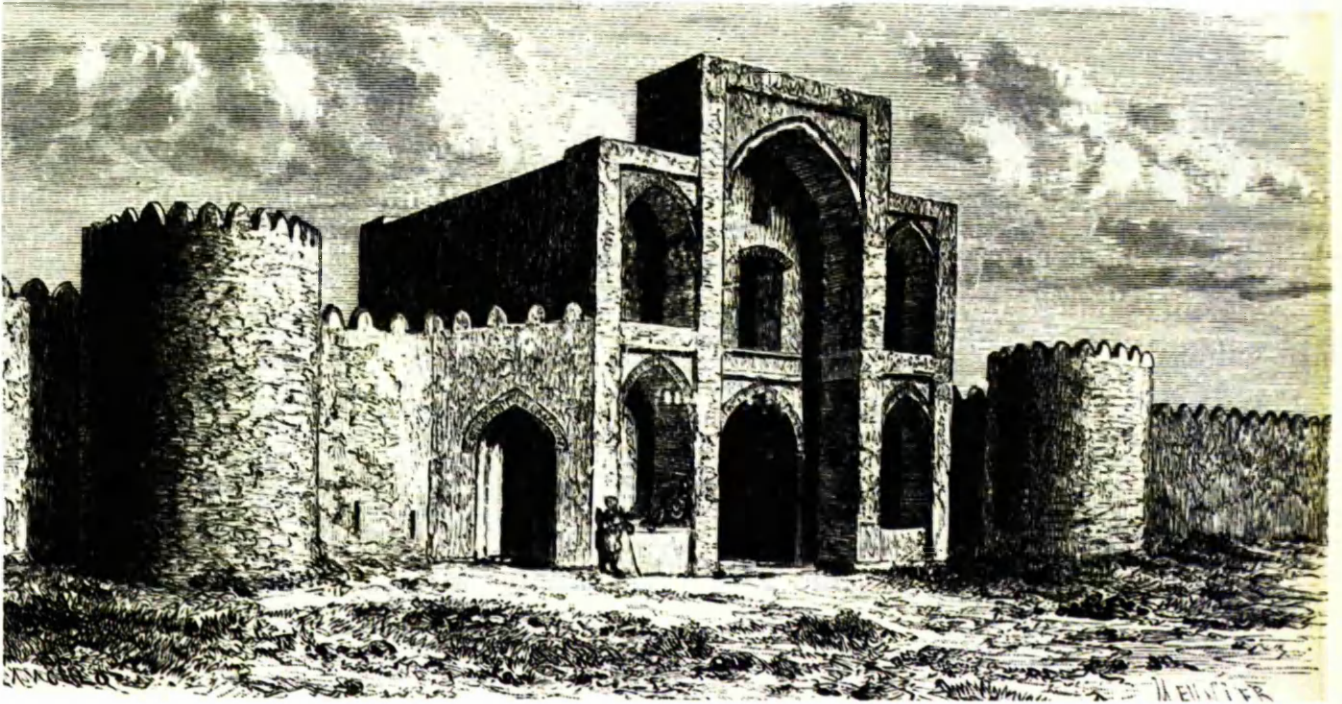
Pl.47. Caravansarai Natanz. Inscription.



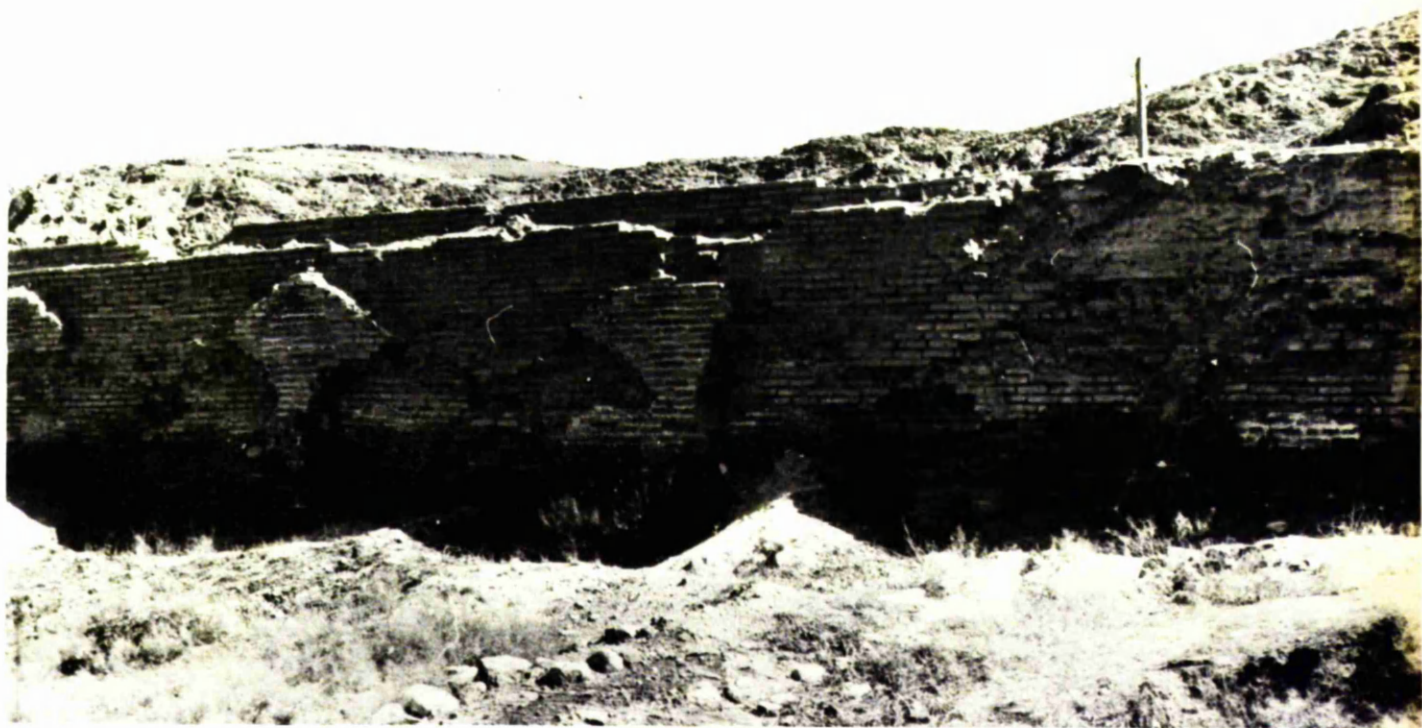
Pl.48. Caravansarai Natanz. Inscription.



Pl.49. Caravansarai Hous-Sultan. Corner of interior courtyard.



Pl.50. Caravansarai Passangan. Portal entrance.



Pl.51. Ruined caravansarai at Sar-Pul-Zahab.



Pl.52. Caravansarai Avage. South side of courtyard.



Pl.53. Bisuton mountain.



Pl.54. Safavid bridge in Bisuton.



Pl.55. A caravansarai at Bisuton.



Pl.56. Caravansarai Bisuton. Distant view. (so called Ganj Ali Khan)



Pl.57. Caravansarai Bisuton. General view.



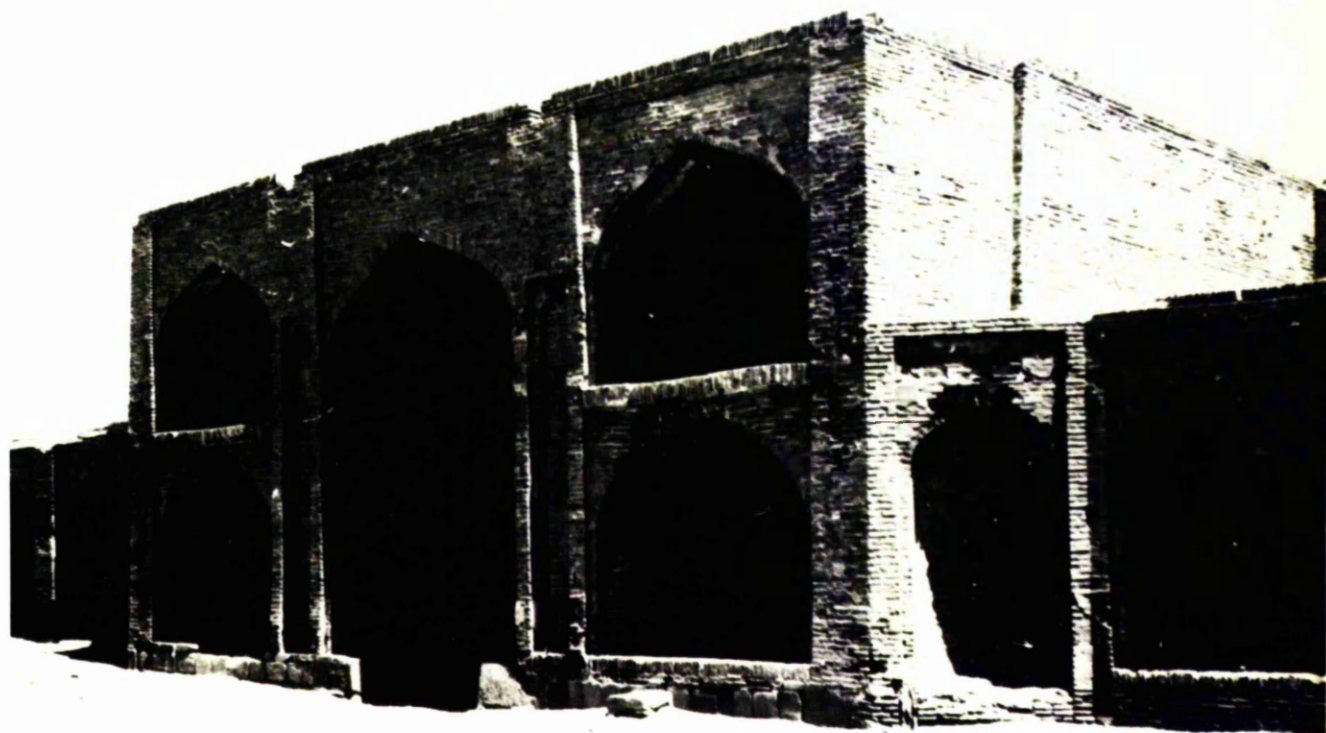
Pl.58. Caravansarai Bisuton. Portal entrance.



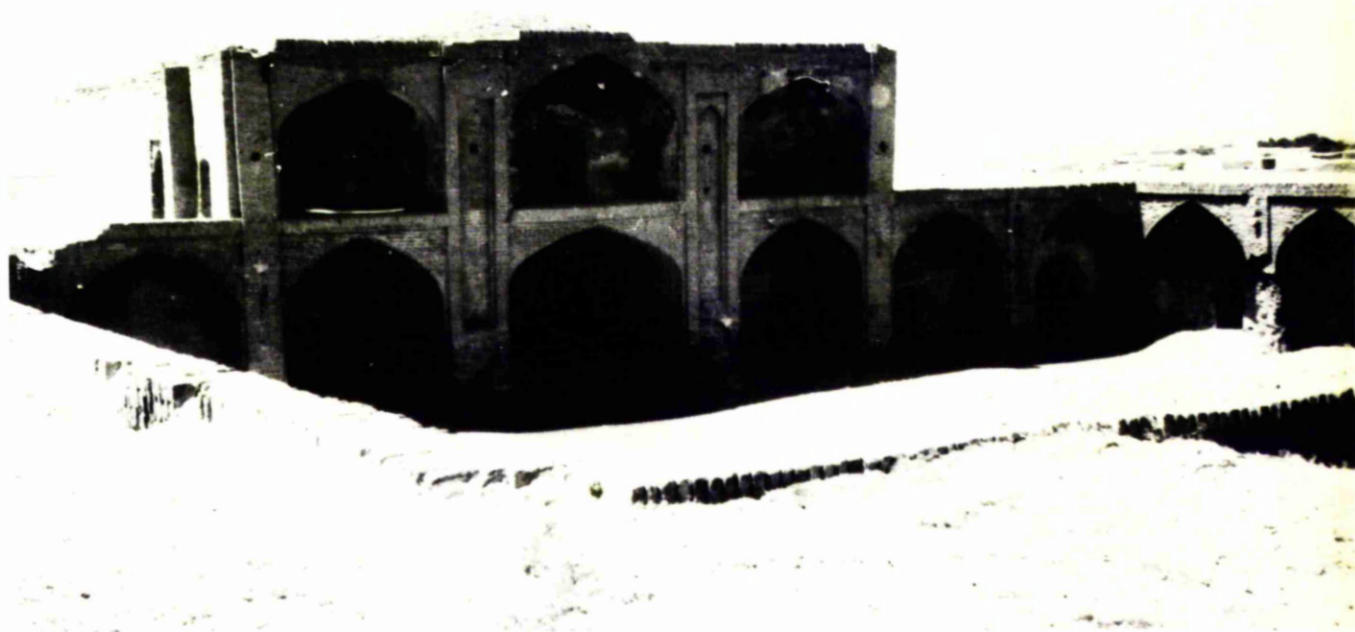
Pl.59. Caravansarai Bisuton. Courtyard.



Pl.60. Caravansarai Mahi-Dasht. Entrance facade.



Pl.61. Caravansarai Mahi-Dasht. Portal entrance.



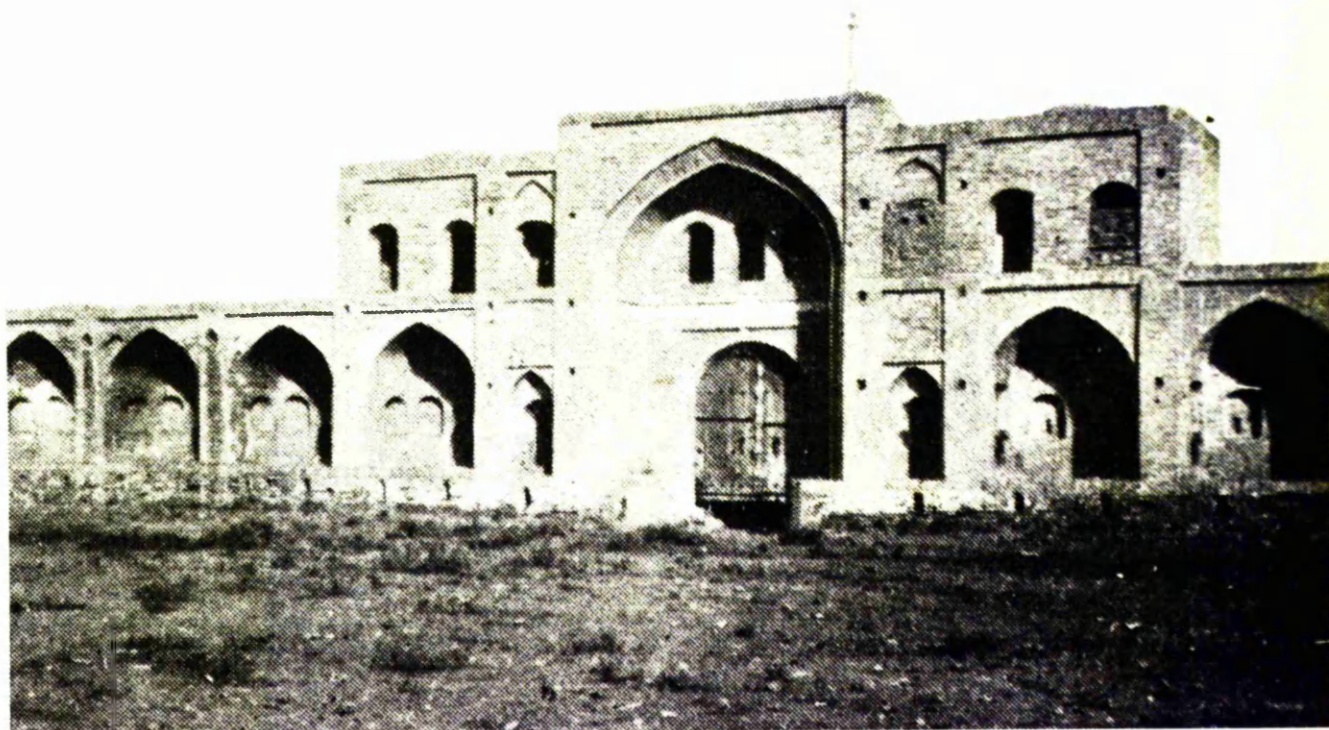
Pl.62. Caravansarai Mahi-Dasht. Interior view.



Pl.63. Caravansarai Shah-Abad. Vestibule from courtyard.



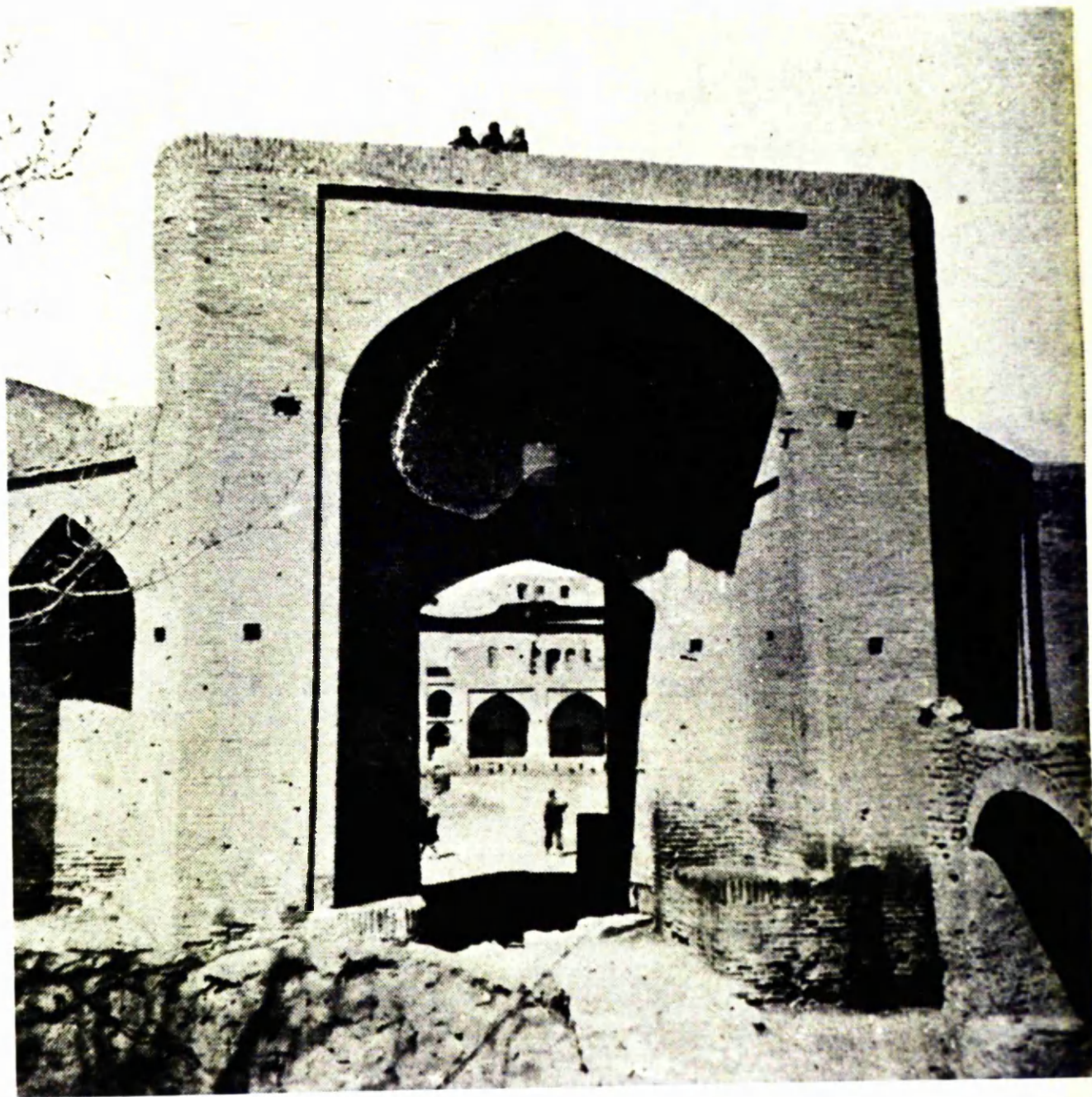
Pl.64. Caravansarai Shah-Abad. Courtyard.



Pl.65. Caravansarai Mian-Dast. Portal entrance.



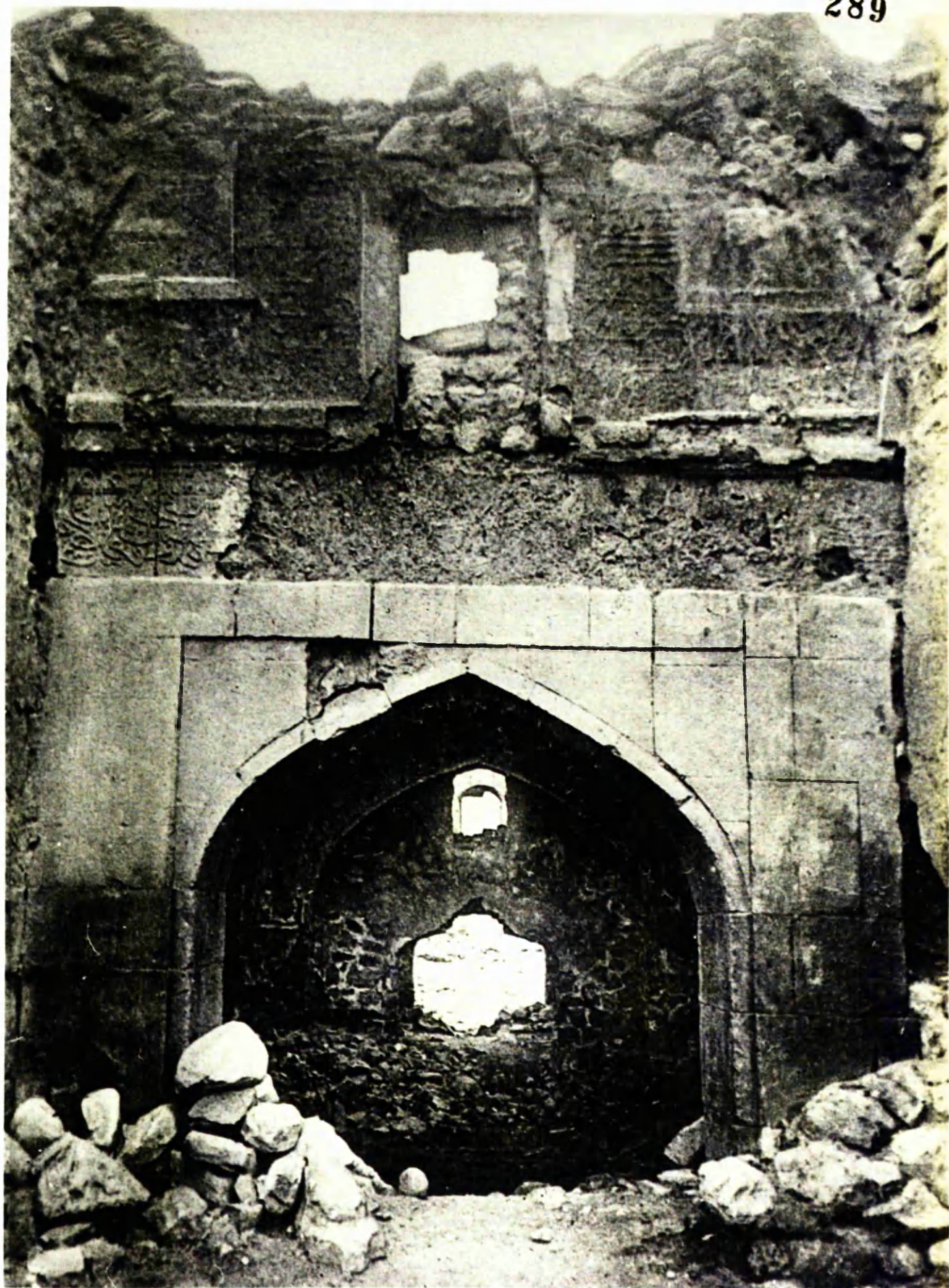
Pl.66. Caravansarai Shah Abbas at Ahwan. Entrance facade.



Pl.67. Caravansarai Abbas-Abad. Portal entrance.



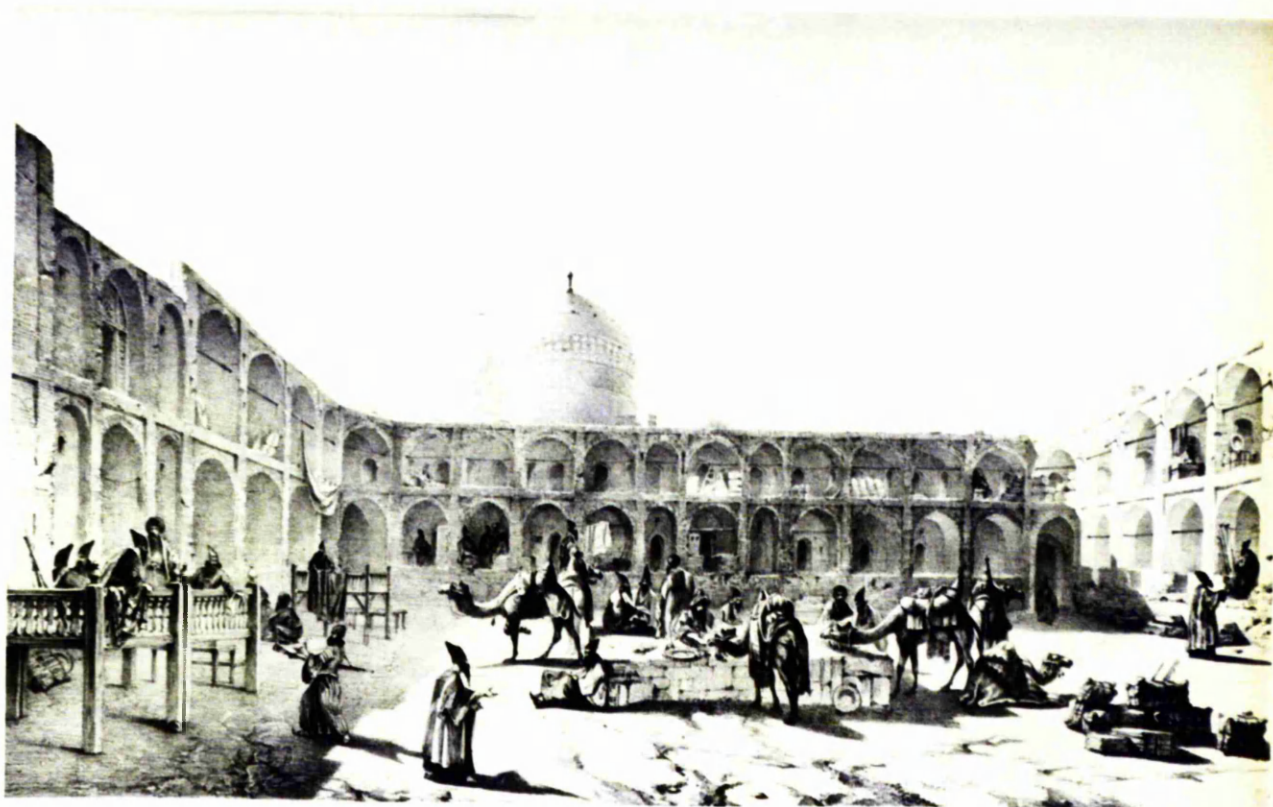
Pl.68. Caravansarai Abbas-Abad. Interior.



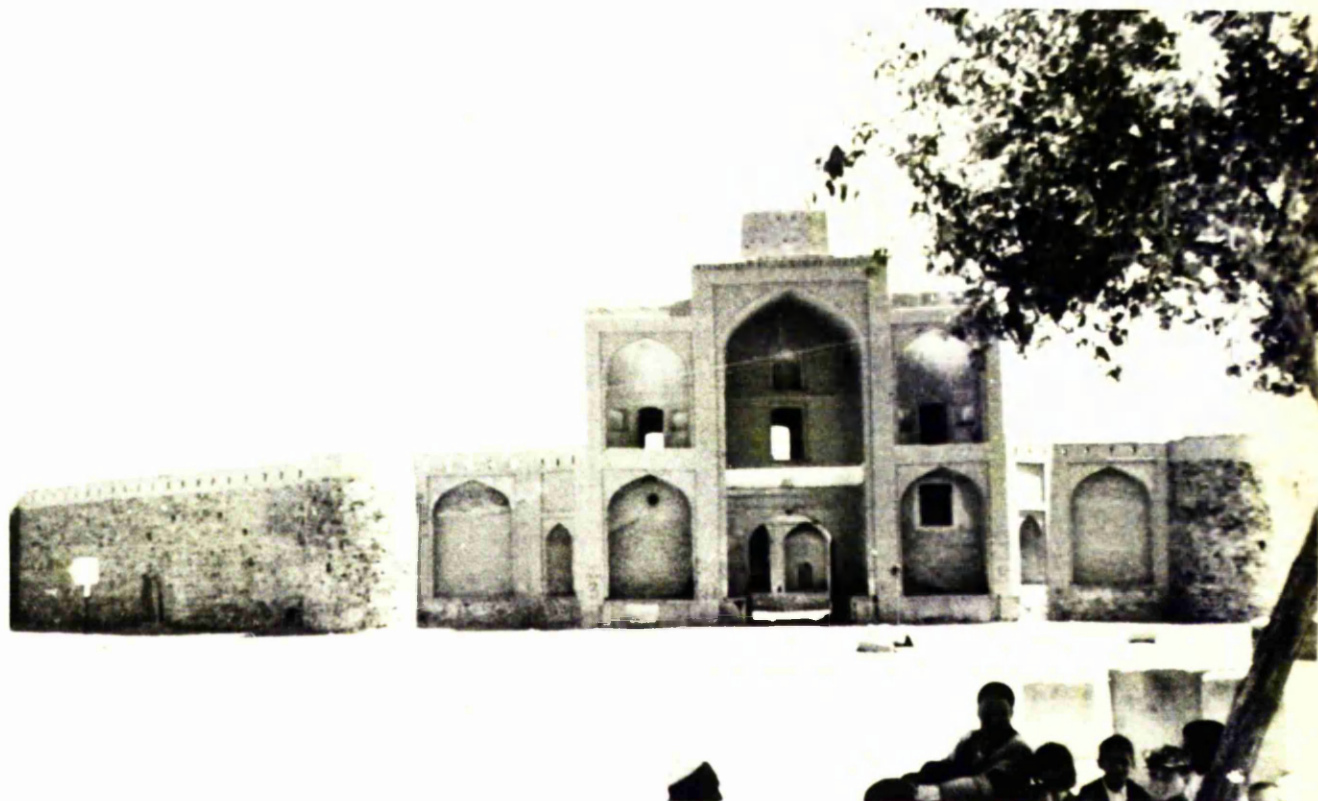
Pl.69. Caravansarai Sankhawst. Main entrance.



Pl.70. Caravansarai Sankhawst. Hall entrance.



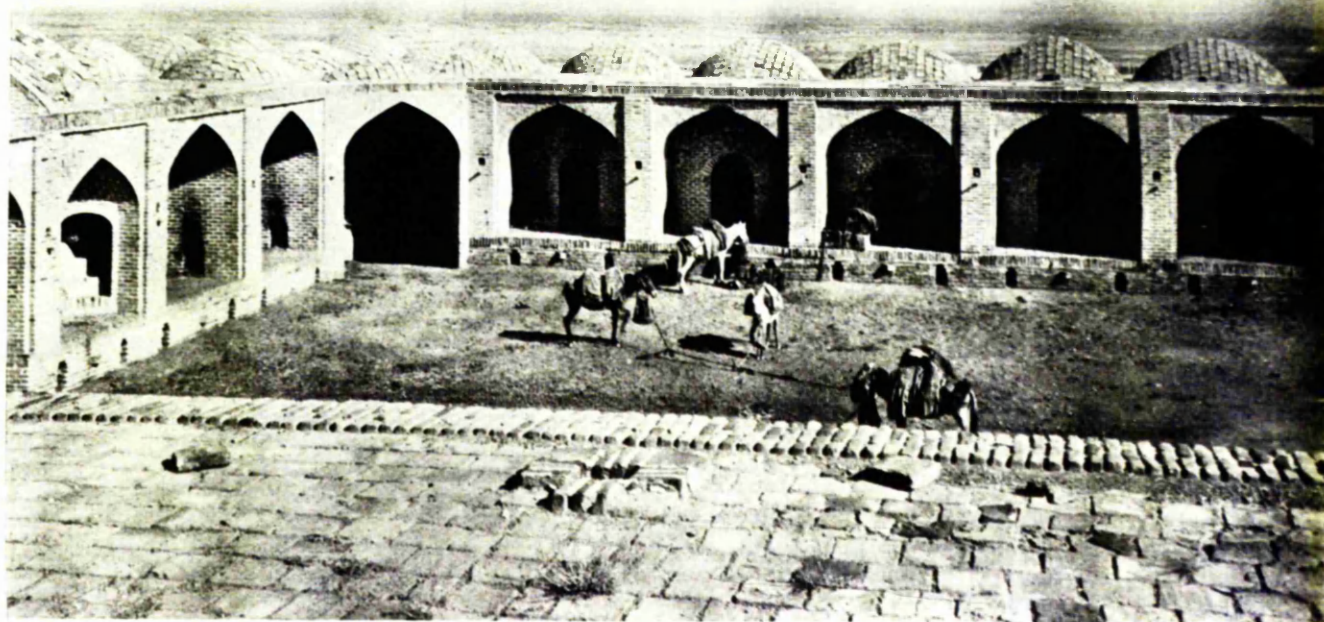
Pl.71. Royal caravansarai of Qazvin.



Pl.72. Caravansarai Amin-Abad. Portal entrance.



Pl.73. Caravansarai Amin-Abad. Courtyard.



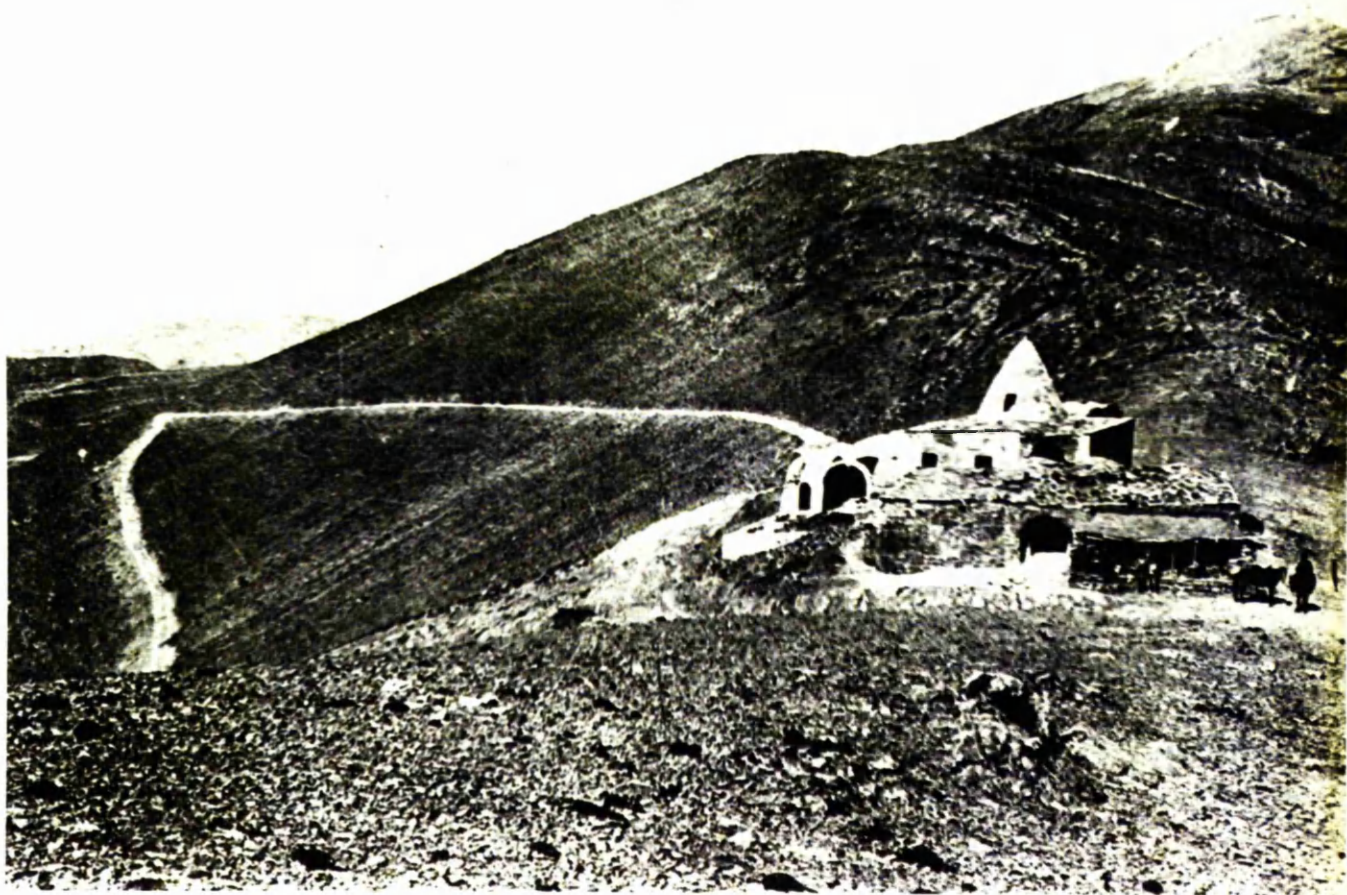
Pl.74. Caravansarai Khan Khurra. Interior view.



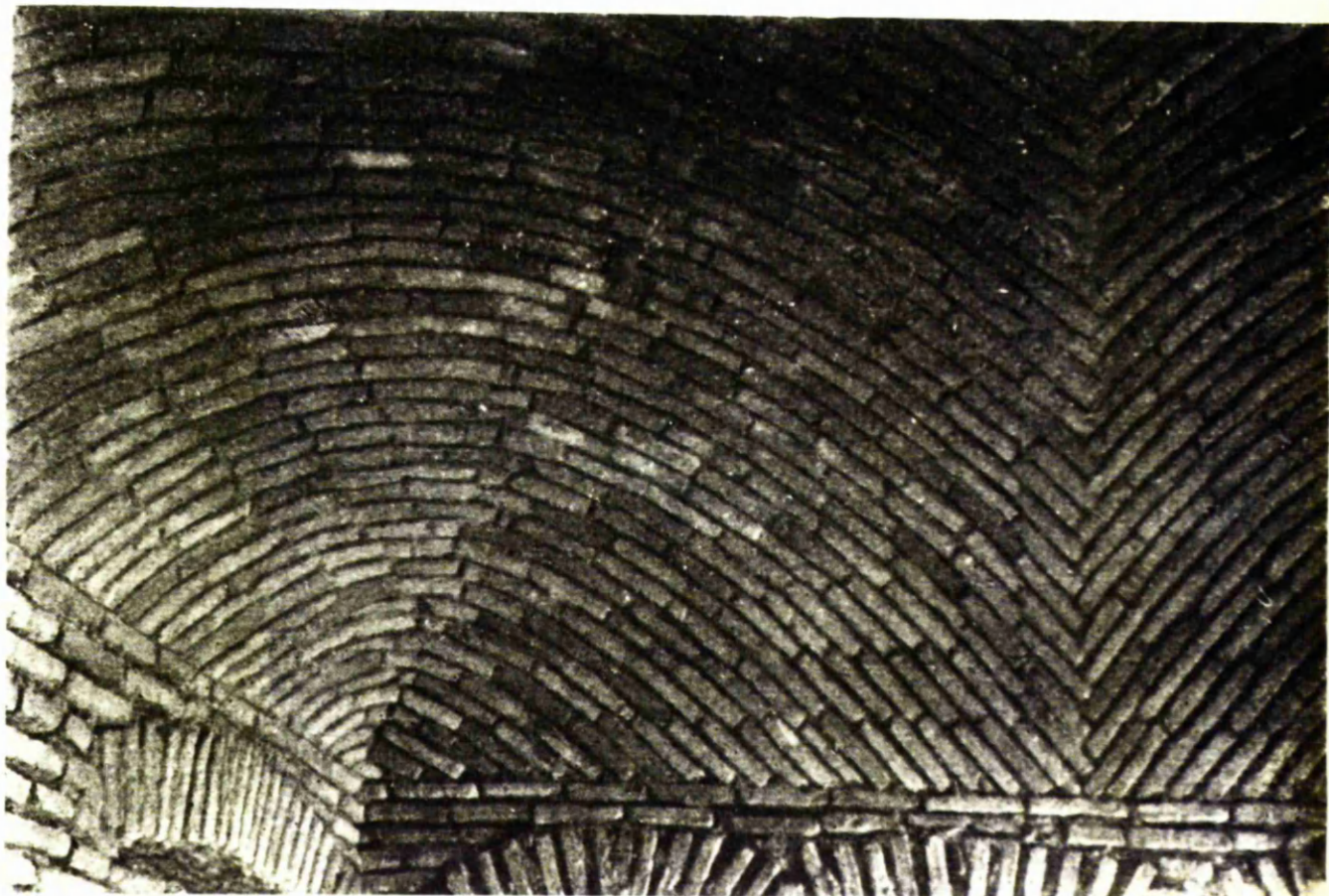
Pl.75. Caravansarai Shebli. General view.



Pl.76. Caravansarai Neri. General view.



Pl.77. Caravansarai Imam Zadeh Hashem.



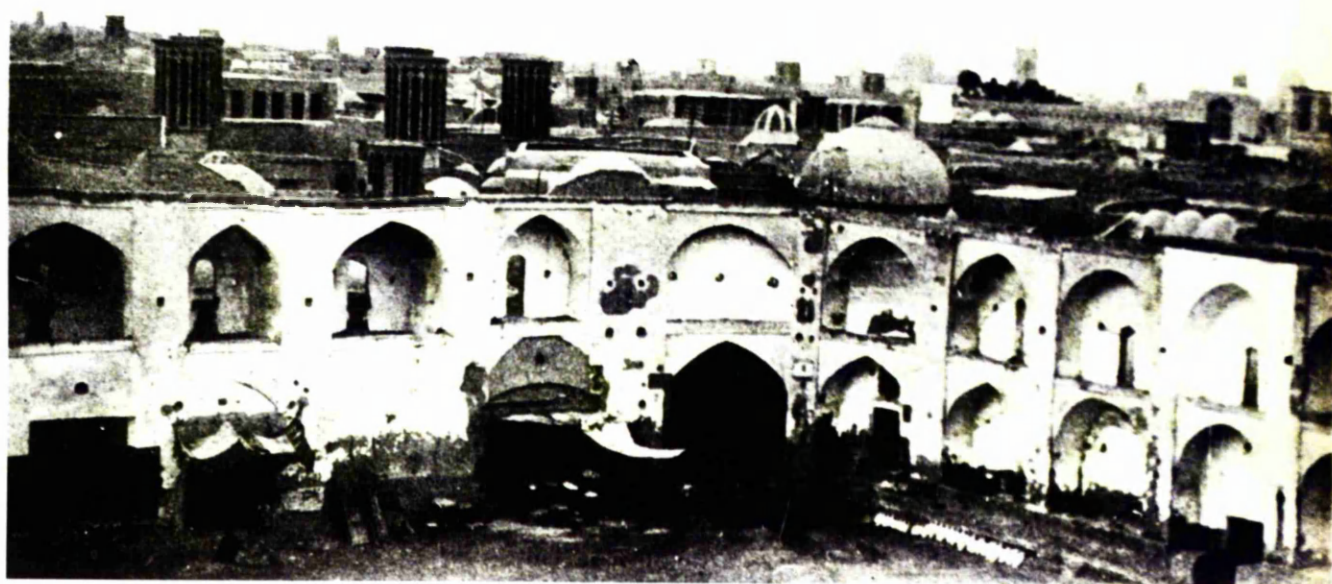
Pl.78. Caravansarai Sabzewar. Corner of barrel vault.



Pl.79. A caravan in a caravansarai. Naien.



Pl.80. Caravansarai Hous-Sultan. Portal entrance. Qajar period.



Pl.81. A caravansarai in Yazd.



Pl.82. Caravansarai Manzarieh.



Pl.83. Caravansarai Khan-Zinan. Fars. 19th century.



Pl.84. Caravansarai Sabzewar. 19th century.



THE PERSIAN ROYAL ROAD



CASPIAN SEA

△ Mt Ararat

Van

NUSAYBIN
Nisibin

Nineveh
ABELA
Arbil

Kirkuk

M E D I A

P A R T H I A

I R A N P L A T E A U

S U S I A N A

Susa

B A B Y L O N

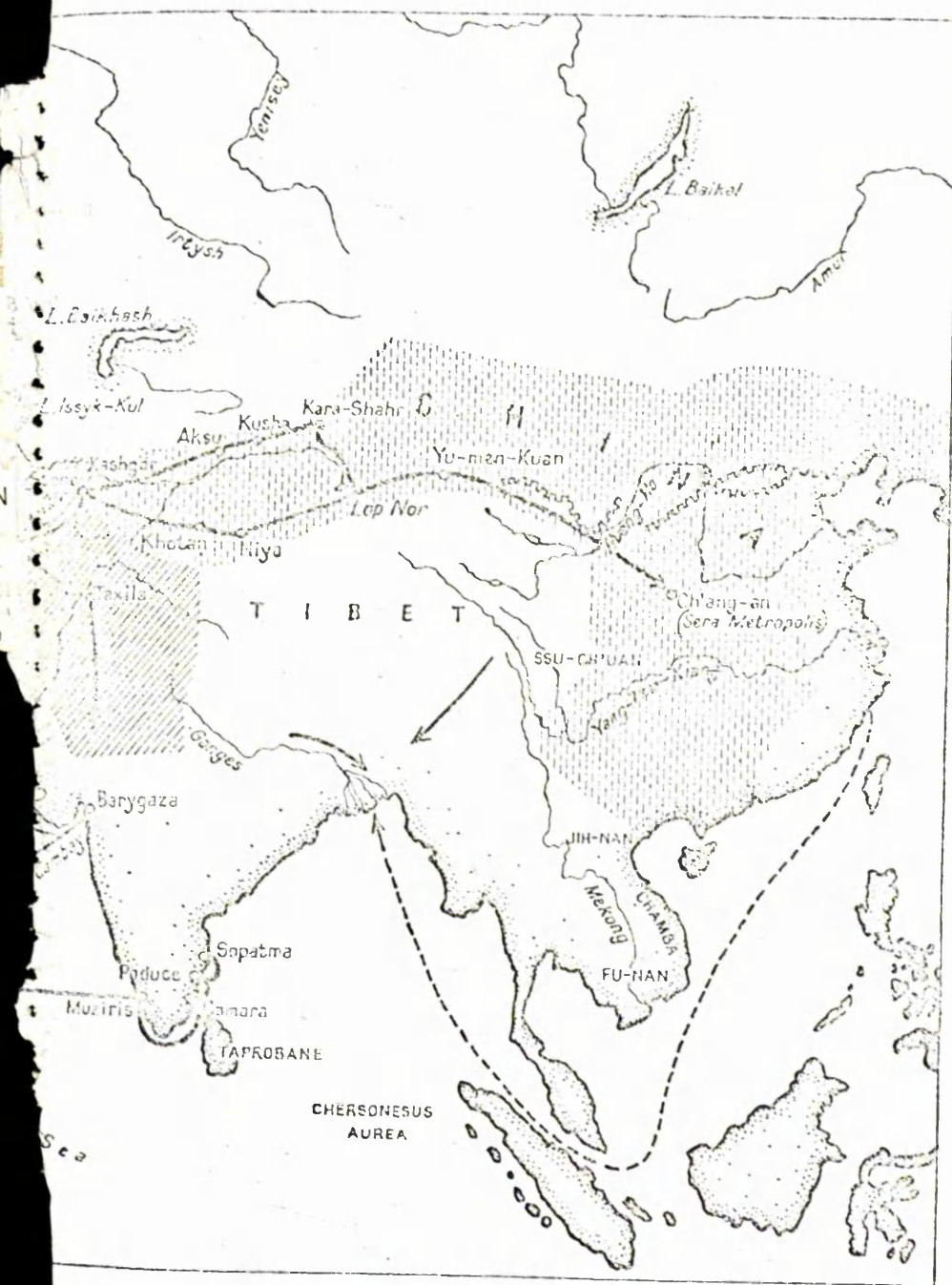
E L A M

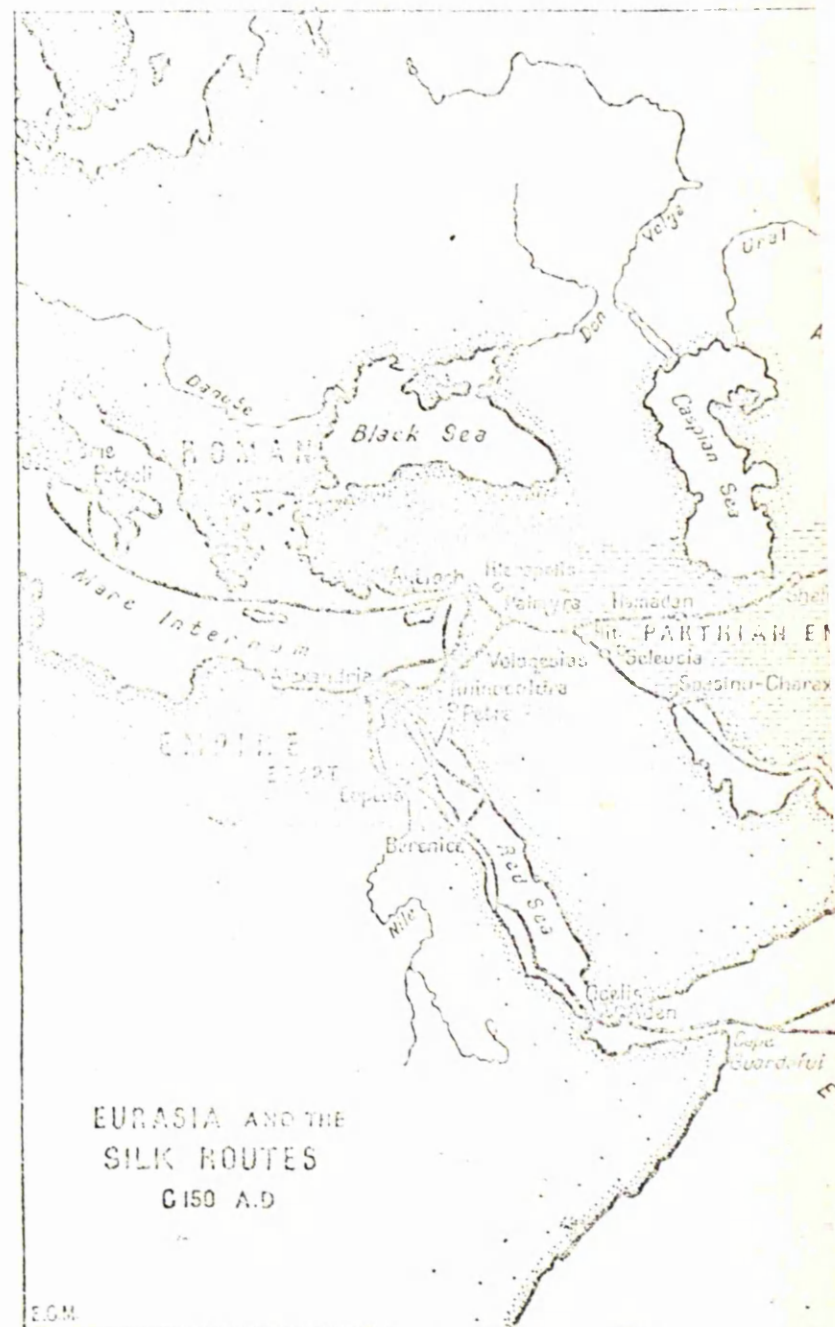
P E R S I A

P E R S I S

P E R S I A N G U L F

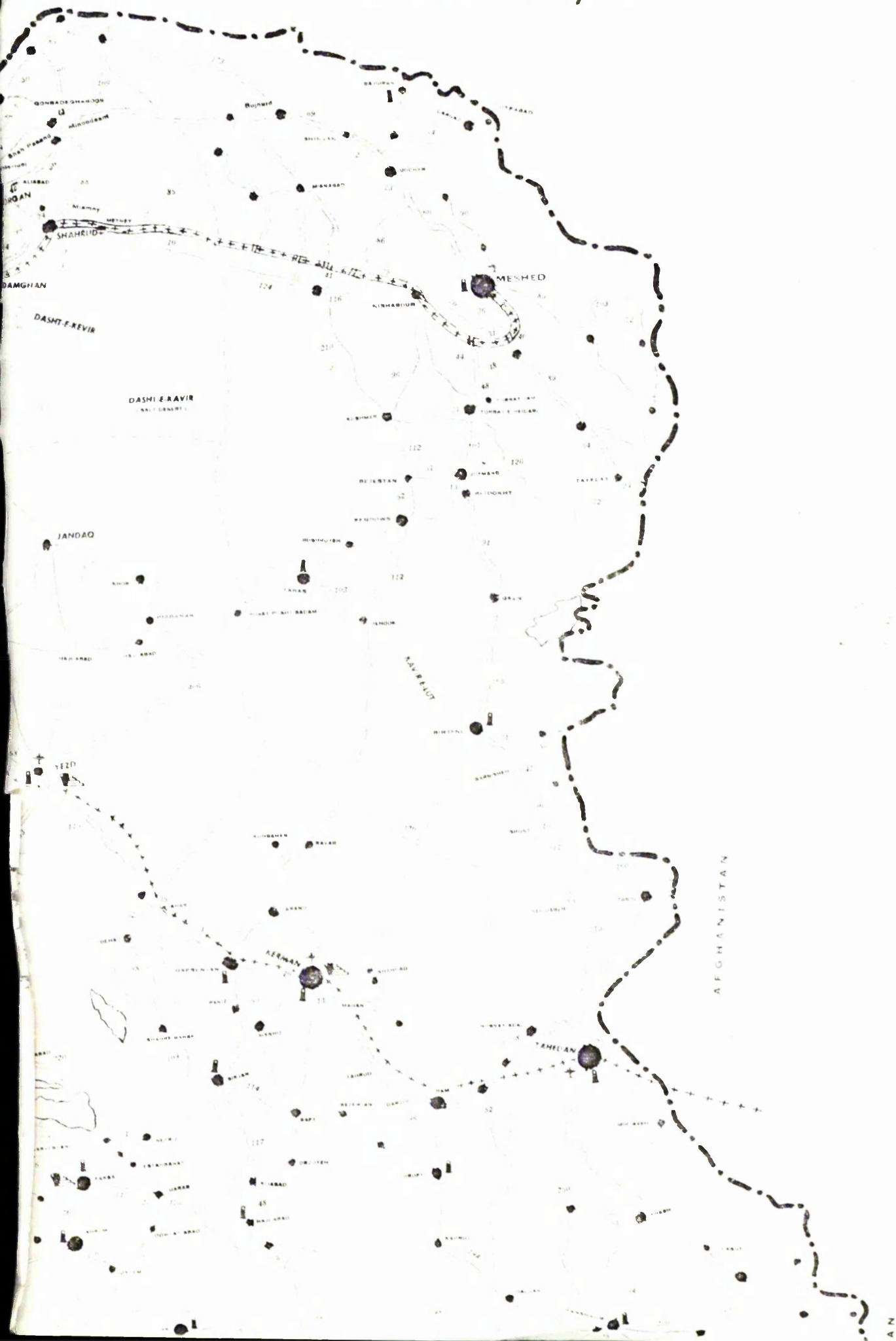
Baghdad

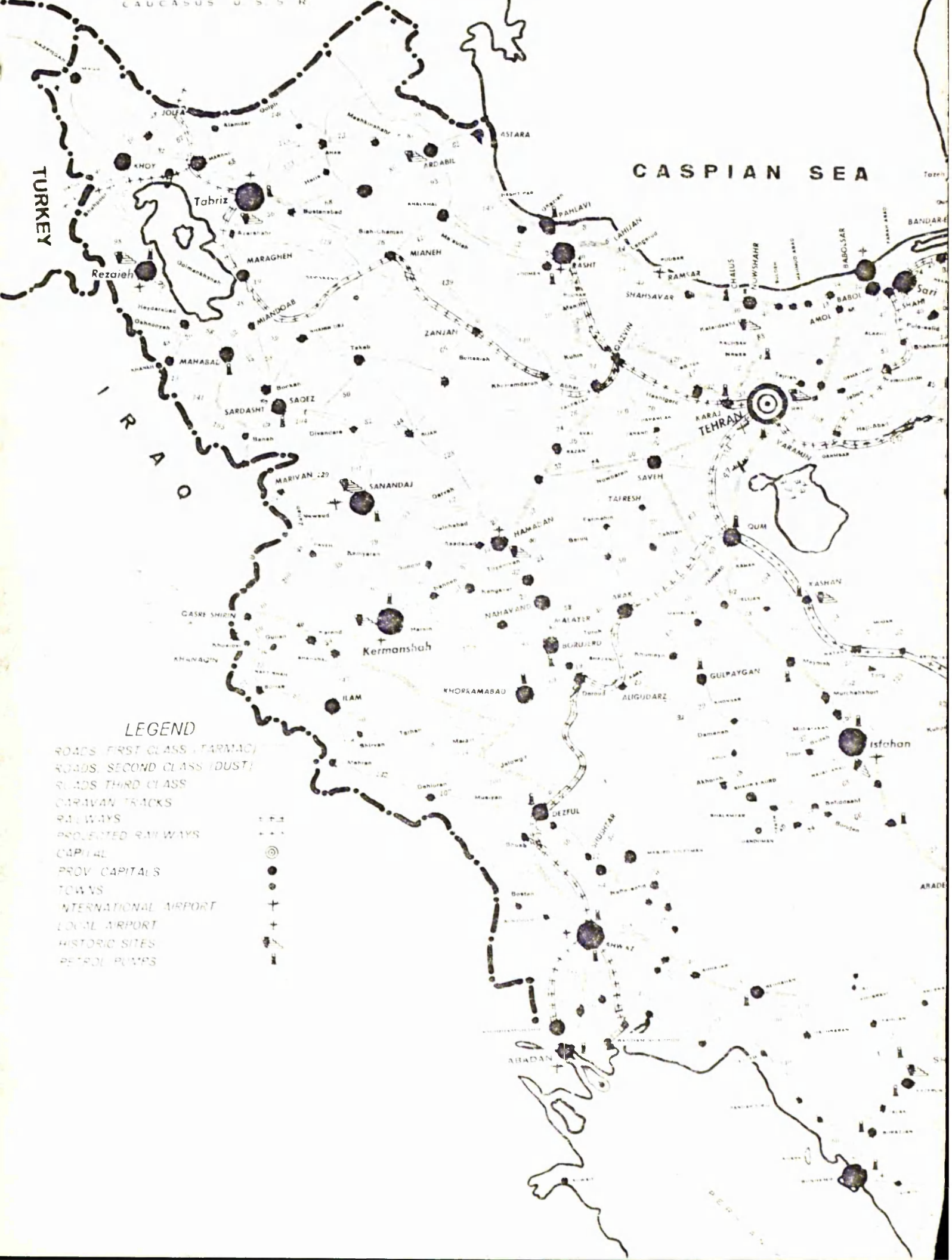




3. Eurasia and the silk routes, c. 150 A.D.

Road Map of IRAN





Appendix

This appendix is the continuation of our study on Safavid caravansarais, and consists of four parts as follows:

Part One consists of details of the arrangement of caravansarais such as staff, water supply, furniture, etc..

Part Two includes the Persian text of the manuscript dealing with Safavid caravansarais in Isfahān.

Part Three consists of a note on Persian texts of inscriptions.

Part Four consists of the sources of illustrations.

Two maps of caravansarais form the final part of this appendix.

The first map shows the caravan routes and the location of caravansarais which are included in the thesis. The second map demonstrates the various types of caravansarais in different provinces of Irān.

Part I

Details of the arrangement of caravansarais

Although in the previous chapters the arrangement of caravansarais in general has been described, a brief survey of details such as: Staff, water supply, light, carpentry, ventilation, chimneys and furniture seemed to be worth-while.

1. Staff

A caravan was composed of a group of travellers, who journeyed together to the same place. Every caravan had a Chwarvedār or Caravan-Bāshī (leader of the caravan). The leader of a caravan had several persons in his service, whose principal duties were loading and feeding the animals. The leader of a caravan received from each traveller the sum necessary for their passage, transport, and subsistence. When a caravan arrived at a caravansarai the leader saw that the travellers collected their baggage. After arrival every traveller was free to choose a chamber for himself, and poor or rich were equal in this accommodation. In the caravansarai the traveller was responsible for arranging everything for himself; he stabled his own animal, cooked his own meals, etc..

Every caravansarai had a Caravansara-Dār or keeper, who lived in the building all the time, looked after the traveller's belongings, and helped them in case of necessity. The keeper received a small

salary from every traveller according to their position.

Sometimes the keeper sold the travellers the most common necessities of life, such as bread, milk, butter and meat. Also these common necessities were available from shepherds or the people who lived in the neighbouring villages. Sometimes bazars and shops were close or attached to the caravansarais, and the travellers could buy what they needed. In addition it should be mentioned that city caravansarais, with their economic aspect, had different administration. These buildings were either private or belonged to the Awqaf (pious foundation). The owner of a private building would let the chambers of a caravansarai to a merchant, according to their agreement. Those which belonged to the Awqaf organisation had a keeper, who was in charge of the caravansarai. He paid monthly or yearly fees to the Awqaf (according to the arrangement between Awqaf and the keeper), for a long period. When a merchant wanted to get one room or office for his business from a caravansarai, he had to pay the Key-money and monthly rent to the keeper. The cost of the Key-money depended on the area, economic activities and location of the caravansarai. At the time of transferring a chamber in a caravansarai from one business man to another, both had to pay some money to the keeper. Finally the keeper was responsible for looking after the merchandise, transportation and cleaning.

2. Water Supply

One of the important problems for travellers on their journey on the road was the scarcity of water. This problem has sometimes been mentioned by historians and travellers like Nāsir-i-Khusraw and Tavernier (see pp. 49 and 149). Usually along the caravan routes there were cisterns at regular distances, at which travellers could get water and rest after having travelled some kilometres. Most of the caravansarais had a cistern in the middle of the courtyard (e.g. Caravansarai Bisutūn in Kermānshāh, pl. 59 and Abbās-Abbād on the Khurasān road, pl. 68). In fact when a caravansarai was under construction a cistern was also built in the courtyard, or outside the building. Fountains, streams and rivers, normally in the vicinity of the caravansarais, were other ways by which the problem of water for travellers was solved.

3. Light

Every traveller had his own light, and it was usually an oil lamp.

4. Carpentry

In general caravansarais have one entrance or main gateway. Under the gateway, on which the security of the building depended, was a thick robust door. The door, made of a thick timber in strong wood such as cypress, walnut or maple, was usually reinforced by cross-bars and braces. The moving part of the door

pivots on a frame (so-called Chahār-Chube or four woods), of which the top and the bottom parts was fixed and concealed inside the walls.

Locking inside and outside was ensured by small chains fixed at the top and bottom of each opening and by bolts nailed to the fixed parts.

The inside of the main gateway door had a large wooden bolt, sliding between two fixtures, also made of wood and fitted onto each gate. Usually the chambers around the courtyard had one opening door with a simple wooden or chain fastening. Sometimes instead of a door some kind of hanging or tapestry was used. Windows are common in the upper parts, (Bāla-Khāneh), and in two storeyed caravansarais. The windows were very simple and made of wood, sometimes locking inside with simple chains.

5. Ventilation

The ventilation depended on the location of the caravansarais; in cold climates caravansarais were completely roofed, and in hot areas they were provided with ventilation towers. In summer time travellers could sleep on the terraces or in the exposed part of the arcades. Otherwise, nothing special was provided for travellers, though the chimneys were probably considered as ventilation.

6. Chimneys

Most caravansarais, especially from the Safavid period, have chimneys. The chimneys were placed under the chambers, iwans and stables. Some caravansarais in the mountain regions had huge chimneys, and it seems that the purpose of chimneys in many caravansarais was more decorative than practical.

7. Furniture

Apart from the important, and city caravansarais, the rest were unfurnished, and travellers used their own furniture. Finally some caravansarais had baths, kitchens, fireplaces, as well as an oratory or Mihrāb in the best part of the building.

In addition it should be mentioned that most of the aforementioned description is concerned with the caravansarais along the road which had a more religious aspect. Others, such as city caravansarais, which had a more economic aspect, had better arrangements.

Part II

The Persian text of the Manuscript

The Persian text of the British Museum Manuscript (no. 4049) is arranged in the same order as the English translation in Chapter VI. Each caravansarai described in the text is separated from the next one by a line.

در دشتن کاروان سرای اصفهان کاروان سدهای شاه که در چهار قصه است در برابر
مرا بخانه و آن کاروان از شاه و عباس و بزرگ سخته است و دوران کاروان نیمه کوچک
نیمه یعنی کاروان سدهای کوچک نزدیک بصد حجه بالا و پایین دارد و دوران کاروان
سوداگران بسیار می آیند و می باشند مثل سوداگران تبریز و اردبیل و در آنجا بالا خانه است
و آنکه زرگر پست ترش و حکاک که جواهرات می تراشند و متاع تبریز و اردبیل
کار تبریز و مقصب عمل قزوین و دارایی کار تبریز و متاع کار اردبیل از کلیم و جاجیم کار اردبیل
کوشال کار اردبیل در آنجا خویه و دخت می شود و دیگر سوداگران اصفهان که در آن کاروان سدها
دارند از هر جنس متاع که می خواهی در آنجا بت و ملک التجار در آن کاروان می نشینند
و تبریز که در میان کاروان سدها اکثر بند و می نالند و می باشند و دوران کاروان
هر شب نه چهار روز هر شب کشیک میدارند

کار و اسرای آنرا در دشتان بهر ستم شایع که از دشتان می آید مثل آنرا در دشت آنرا
 که از دشتان می آید در آن کار و اسرا فرود آورند و آن کار و اسرا کار و اسرا را در دشتان
 فرود آورند در آن کار و اسرا بهر ستم شایع که از دشتان می آید در دشت آنرا
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کاروانهای محو و سبک که در برابر کاروانهای آنها رودن است و در پشت خانه انگلیس
 نوینی واقع است و متعلق به در آن کاروانها رودی که برنج و ذین بنویسد که از ما زنده آن
 می آید متاع کرمان و متاع ابرقوه و متاع و کاسه و سیاه که در جلوی کاروانها رود و خرم
 و در دخت مرصوف و متاع کرمان کاسه و بنقاب و کعبه و تخت و تخت و قوری و در میان در آن
 کاروانها رود و در دخت میگرد و دیگر متاعی که در کاروانها رود و در دخت میگرد و متاع ابرقوه
 کاروان می آید در آن کاروانها رود و متاع اوزنیک همین نیست و کاغذ سمرقند و کاروان
 از سمرقند می آید و متاع این است که نگردد

کاروانهای کله بران در این کاروانها رود و در دخت میگرد و متاع ابرقوه و کاسه و سیاه که در جلوی کاروانها رود و خرم
 آنرا کله بران میگویند و در دخت میگرد و متاع ابرقوه و کاسه و سیاه که در جلوی کاروانها رود و خرم
 می آید در آن کاروانها رود و در دخت میگرد و متاع ابرقوه و کاسه و سیاه که در جلوی کاروانها رود و خرم
 قبایمینه از آن کاروانها رود و متاع آن کاروانهای کله بران همین است که نگردد

کاروانهای قزوینی که در نزدیکی مسجد خارجی با شریک و در آن کاروانها رود و متاع ابرقوه و کاسه و سیاه که در جلوی کاروانها رود و خرم
 و ذین بنقاب و در دخت میگرد و متاع ابرقوه و کاسه و سیاه که در جلوی کاروانها رود و خرم
 خرم و در دخت میگرد و در آن کاروانها رود و متاع ابرقوه و کاسه و سیاه که در جلوی کاروانها رود و خرم

کار و اسنادی خارجی با پیش در هر کار و اسنادی و زمینان است و در آن کار و اسنادی خارجی
 است و اگر آن جهود شیراز را با متاع خود را می اندازند و میزنند و متاع شیراز خوب
 بنم و زنجیر شک و قفل و دار چینی و قفل و در و ناس و بیل و قنوه است
 و سوداگران بهودی شیراز را از هر کس که می آیند در کار و اسنادی خارجی با پیش
 مسکن می کشند. ساکن می شوند و متاع خود را می فرستند و بکار و اسنادی خارجی و دیگر نمی
 توانند فروخته و متاعهای که در کار و اسنادی اند کور شده و دیگر کار و اسنادی
 سرای خارجی با پیش نمی توانند متاع خود را در این دست و پا کنند. عباس بزرگ که اسنادی
 گذارند

کار و اسنادی و زمینان غیر از کار و اسنادی و زمینان دیگر کار و اسنادی است
 که شتایی و کرباس و اسنود و جادو که زمان در آن کار و اسنادی فریند و خوش می شود
 می پوشند

کاروانسرای که در کوه دال^ش خفته است در آن کاروانسرا مردم و کودکان^{مرد} و زنان^{مرد}
 یار می آید از نه^{ساخت} و شایع است که صایون^{مرد} هم و کرباس^{مرد} هم می باشد و آن کاروانسرا^{مرد}
 است. منسوب^{مرد} مردم که از کاشان و ده کاشان که از آن پید^{مرد} کل گویند و کودکان^{مرد}
 زهر و طننه و دیگر کرده از خشک بار و شیل مویر و گشیش^{مرد} و آل و کاشان و قالی
 عیال^{مرد} که از ده کاشان است در آن کاروانسرا می باشد

و در برابر آن کاروانسرای چهار دیوار است و نمایا و دیریت از ده^{مرد} کاشان و در آن
 دو^{مرد} همه مردم آن جویده اند که کرباس^{مرد} می باشد و شایع مردم نمایا و کرباس^{مرد} است و بهتر نمایا^{مرد}
 و رز دالوی^{مرد} خشک و آلودگی خشک از نمایا و می آید و کشته و باله^{مرد} تر از آن کاروانسرای^{مرد}
 کاشان است یعنی خود شتر و آلب می کشند و پوست آن را می^{مرد}

کاروانسرای^{مرد} مردان^{مرد} که بین مغز است که بر خا^{مرد} است یا شتر می میرد و جانی^{مرد} می کشند که این را^{مرد}

کشت^{مرد} گویند شیل^{مرد} آب^{مرد} مرده و شتر مرده و آلودگی می کشند و پوست^{مرد} مردان^{مرد} می کشند
 و کورنت^{مرد} و پنجه^{مرد} و دالوی^{مرد} را در صحرای هزار دره^{مرد} که آن بار^{مرد} آلودگی کرده در هزار دره^{مرد} می کشند
 که کله^{مرد} خان^{مرد} جمع^{مرد} شوند و شایع^{مرد} آلودگی^{مرد} می کشند و کشته^{مرد} می کشند و مردم^{مرد} که شتر^{مرد} که زخم^{مرد} دارند
 با^{مرد} شتر^{مرد} که زخم^{مرد} دارند و از کاف^{مرد} ده^{مرد} است مردم^{مرد} که این می کشند و کشته^{مرد} و کورنت^{مرد} آنرا^{مرد} در^{مرد} کاشان^{مرد}
 آنرا^{مرد} کاروانسرای^{مرد} مردان^{مرد} که گویند

آنرا^{مرد} کاروانسرای^{مرد} مردان^{مرد} که گویند

از کار دهنده ارشد ارشد ارشد ارشد

کار دهنده ای که در زمان کار دهنده ارشد ارشد ارشد ارشد
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از کار دهنده ای که در زمان کار دهنده ارشد ارشد ارشد ارشد

کاروانسرای بادانیتیان که او را کاروانسرای میزراهد است مشهور است کاروانسرای بزرگ دوران
 کاروانسرای شجاع شیراز و بادانات می اندازند و شجاع شیراز پیشینه قلیان و قرابه شیرازی و فرهاد آب لیم
 و عرق بهار نارنج و لیمو و طلب یعنی عرقی تا زده که در صندل و قهوه می کنند و شبهای آب لیمو و عرق
 حوت یعنی عرق می نارس و شجاع شیراز است و متاع بادانات کفش سبزه و میز سبزه و فرهاد
 سبزه که فرهادشانی گویند و در غن و دشت بادانات در آن کاروانسرای می زدند و این چیزها را از
 بادانات و شیرازی در نه و بادانات و بهر است از ده است شیراز

کاروانسرای بادان و در بزرگ میدان گفته است و در آن کاروانسرای مردم محلات
 روزه می آیند و متاع محلات خان و خواجه نقاش است و قالی کار محلات دوران و خاخره
 و روضه برشود و مردم جو میاشقان که قالی بافند در آن جا هستند

کاروانسرای بوبریا باقی که در طرف محله گلبار است و در آن کاروانسرای بوبریا باقی
 می باشند و دیگر متاع در آن کاروانسرای بوبریا باقی است و در صحنه آن بوبریا باقی کاروانسرای
 بیسج کاروانسرای بوبریا باقی است و در بوبریا باقی که در مسجد و حمام می اندازند و در آن کاروانسرای

در عرق و دشت کاروانسرای که در میدان است است

در عرق و دشت کاروانسرای که در میدان است است

کار و اسرای مقصود عقار و این مقصود مرفی بود صاحب مال و شاه عباس بزرگ او را
 پذیرفته بود و آن مرد عصار درین قریب دیده و دل زده و گمان و کار و نهرا داشت که حاصل
 بهم قریب شده است این کار و اسرا که مذکور میشود مقصود عصار از نال خود تمام بود پیشکش
 شاه عباس کرد و در اصفهان بچوبی این کار و اسرا او باز آمد که در آنست بلکه در همه ایران مانند خازنه
 و این کار و اسرا واقع است در نزدیک شاه و باغات و در میان این کار و اسرا آنچه واقع است
 و در بیان این کار و اسرا آنچه هم شده است و در مجرای کار و اسرا سر اجاعت بود اگر آن
 لار و بر نموز و جویند و دورق و کلاه و غیره میباشند و متاع مردم لار و قومه و بنای که از
 طرف شیراز از عقیل قبل از جویند و کجک و در خیل برورده و در بنای برورده و سایه و بکله
 برورده و در آن کار و اسرا می آورند و شاه عباس آن کار و اسرا را بدین خورده بخشید
 و اسما را بایش بر سر نه است

کاروانهای جبهه و آن کاروانها دو دروازه که یکدش طرف میدان است یکدش در
 طرف چهارسوی بازار کاهیه و وقتی که طرف دوشین میبرد و این طرف که او میبرد آن است
 چهارسوی بازار کاهیه و دروازه بازار کاهیه دروازه و دروازه از آنست و مسلمان
 و دکان دارند و در طرف چهارسوی تپچه است خانه که از آنست که از حاکم مراکز در آن
 تپچه می باشند و حقیقه و حقیقت و دروازه بازار کاهیه در آن تپچه می باشند
 و از آن در که در طرف چهارسوی و بازار کاهیه دارند و دکان باشند و در تپچه و در
 دروازه یکدش است در آن پنجاها یعنی صد لیقان که از آنست که در می باشند و این لیقان
 سنی هستند و در آن کاروانها و بیشتر سوداگران و پراچه بند و شان و مالک از آن هستند و از آن جا
 رود و آمدن و میر متاعی که از راه بندر می آید در آنجا فرو می آید و تنباکو در آن کاروانها می آید
 و آن کاروانها را در این دروازه و وقتی که می آید و در کاروانهای جبهه سوداگران و عده
 از مسلمان و از مولای و سنی و در آنجا بار می آید از آنست و باریت از مساع هند است مثل سبیل و
 و مساع سبیل و آنچه کار بند و آنچه ما و سبیل و نبات و آید و بهیله و پرورده و درختل پرورده و آنچه
 تغیرتی و حقیقت و کما که در این کاروانها می باشند و دیگر تنباکو از شیراز و سر قه
 می آورند و در آن کاروانها و کما که در این کاروانها می باشند و از آنست که در مسیح این سوداگران
 سبیل و در این کاهیه بسیار دارند و از آنست که در این کاروانها می باشند و پراچه می باشند

این نقش جهان است که در کتب قدیم ازین حدت و رسم برای

سماوات و ارضاء مثال که در طرف نقش جهان است که بر پشت بزرگ توپک بنام دروازه فک و هم برای
آنها کار و اسبهای صدل نام گذاشته که شاه عباس از زر حدال آن کار و اسبها فرمود که خوراک و پوشاک
شاه از گرانیه آن کار و اسبها بود و درین کار و اسبها خود اگر آن روی می باشند و مشایخ ایشان کافیه
است بطلی و در پیش منته و نوره و غیره

و فرستاد عباس که حضرت میر عبد العظیم خود در پشت بازار مسکن آن است در آن کاروانسرا
سوزاگران در آنجا می باشند و متاع کثیر و عظام است از کرب و در آنجا کاروانسرا
خیره و در وقت می شود از هیچ کاروانسرای کثیر و عظام از سیاه و سفید میروند و حکیم شاه
حنین است

کازدا اسلری غاسیان در آفران بازار رنگ بران است و دو کار و انهر است یکی قدیم است
و یکی در زین شاه عباس کو بکست خسته است و شایع آن بود که آن خراسان بود تجار ایشی میخدا طایمی
و نمده منهدمی در نجین و آلوی بخارا ایشی و جاجیم و قالی خراسانی و شیر خشت و یابونچی کار
خراسان و آن کار اسلر ایزد در دخت میثود و پوکت نیم رس کبود و نیم رس سبز و نیم رس سیاه
و در آن کار اسلر ایزد در دخت میثود

کاروان برای خواب رایان که در بنا بر در و در آن واقع است و خود اگر آن خواب رایان
 صحن در آن کاروانها فرد می آیند و متاع ایشان مشکه باریست میوز خشک و دیگر کلاخ
 و می پخت و در شب رز و رز و الوی خشک که آنرا قنسی گویند و تخم شمش خشک کرده
 که آنرا آموز نیندی گویند و سیب بزرگ سرخ که آنرا سیب ^{خوان} و کلاهای شیرین است که
 آنرا آبه ندان خواب رای می گویند و می پخت است بیشتره را آنچند را می پختند و در یک
 می جوشانند تا آنکه حزب غلیظ شود آرد در آن می اندازند و آنرا می جوشانند
 که به طریق پانزده می کشند باره باره که آنرا در کتاب می گذارند خشک می شود و بعضی مغز ما دام
 و شیر کرده و خیل آن می کشند و آنرا می پخت با دایمی و در دایمی بوند و یک کلاهی شیرین را دو باره
 می کشند و در و منیز کرده می کشند و می گذارند تا آنکه از کتاب خشک بر شود آنرا می کلاخ می گویند
 سکه و خود اگر آن حرات را بهین متاع دارند

هر چه کاروان برای خواب است در اول بنا بر آنرا کاروان برای خواب است
 مشهور است و در زمان شاه بزرگ رویان در آنجا باری انداخته چون شاه عباس ثانی
 کاروان برای حلال ساخت رویان و خود اگر آن روم در کاروان برای حلال باری می کشیدند

کاروان برای خواب است در اول بنا بر آنرا کاروان برای خواب است

نکار و نسرایی علی بنی خاں که در بازار محمد قمر بنان است و در آن بازار مروتانین است
و در حقیقتی و در حقیقتی بازار خاں بازار کاه کار و نسر او واقع است و نکار و نسرایی مویکن را بتمک
میگویند و بنام آن کار و نسر ایندیوان ^{بنام} خاں می شنند و در آن بازار کاه کار و نسر او بار خیمه می
خوابد و از آنجا پیدا می شود

کتاب در بیان سید ابراهیم
کاروان خاتم محرم که صفتی که در نزدیک خانه کندیس است و در آن کاروان سرایه نرویان فرود آمد
و آن فیله برزدوران کاروان استماع ایشان فرودخانه می شود و متاع آنها نیز دولت در انچه و کلاب و آنچه فرستاده
است

فصل پنجم
کاروان سرایه بابا و دران کاروانند و باین می باشند و سخاخ خانه نمیدان در اینجاست

کاروان سداي شونى ساجى و در زيبکى هاي منار کله است در آن کاروانسرا هندو ملي ناله دارند
و نيکه نوا دارند و مساع ميخواند و به شهر ناکير ميروشنند
کاروان سداي زولتي که در زباني منار کله است در آنجا کاروانسرا چيت کران کارمي کنند

کادوان سه ای در کز میان که هست از در کزین می آورند در آجی رفته می بند و این ماست
در فصل چهارمی آورند

و این کار را که در شب می‌نویسید و در آن کارها بسیار از این عقی روگان دارند

کاروان سترایزدین در آن کاروان سترایزدین و کشته حربه و زارنه و متاعهای خوب
از زلفت و مندیها رزق مار و هر جنس مار چه که خواهند در آن کاروانها پیدا میشود و این کاروانها
و این کاروانها در قریه است
بر روی و بگردان اجنی متاع و در بنظره

کار دهنرا کاشیدن و کار دهنرا است یکی کار دهنرای کاشیان گفته مشهور است
و یکی کار دهنرای کاشیان نو در نزدیکی خانه اخیس است این هر دو کار دهنرا
و متاع کاشان از زر بخت و قطره و آنچه و تحقیق و چهار گرمی است

کامیابان در نزدیک بازار مسکران آن کار دهند و در پشت دار است
و در شفا مبتدیان کار دهند و بیمار آن و دیوانه و دور انجی می باشند در پشت خانه الکفیس است
خانه

کاروانی که در آنجا می باشد

سلاح خانه شاه و مرغ خانه شاه در پشت شاه است
و در آن کارها که کنند بیک در کارهای گشته میشود و مرغها که در میان پادشاه حضرت پیشه

در آن کارها است

کارهای دیگر که در بازار شاهان است از این مردم نیز در مشایخ خود می اندازند
و مشایخ آن کارها را استر می گویند و اینچنین بود در خطه عرب می شود

کارهای دیگر که در این است

از قویان در پشت پادشاهان است
و در آن کارها را استر می گویند و اینچنین بود در خطه عرب می شود

کارهای دیگر که در این است از این مردم نیز در مشایخ خود می اندازند
و مشایخ آن کارها را استر می گویند و اینچنین بود در خطه عرب می شود

Part IIINote on the Inscriptions

As has been mentioned before, every caravansarai usually had an inscription set into the entrance wall, which gives the date of erection, name of the founder or the person who repaired it.

In course of time most of these inscriptions have disappeared and some of those that survived are badly damaged. These inscriptions are written in Thulth or Nastālīq.

The translation of the inscriptions have been described in chapters 3 and 4. In the following pages the complete Persian text of inscriptions are included.

A.	Inscription of the caravansarai	or robāt	Sharaf	described in	p. 56
B.	"	"	"	Sārcham	" p. 59
C.	"	"	"	Yazd-Khwāst	" p.101
D.	"	"	"	Chaleh-Siāh	" p.113
E.	"	"	"	Naṭanz	" p.127
F.	"	"	"	Mahi-Dasht	" p.136
G.	"	"	"	Ahwan	" p.141
H.	"	"	"	Miamy	" p.142
I.	"	"	"	Mazinān	" p.142
J.	"	"	"	Be-Dasht	" p.144
K.	"	"	"	Mehr	" p.145
L.	"	"	"	Turuq	" p.145

في عالي دولة السلطان المعظم شاهنشاه الاعظم
 مالك رجايب الامم سيد ملوك العرب والعجم
 اطان الله بعا ميرا دنيا والدين ابو المرحش بن
 بن ملك شاه تبرهان امير المومنين اعز الله
 انصاره وباهتمام خاتون
 والمسلمين ملكه نساء العالمين مغرة آل افراشيا
 قلع بلكا سيده ترکان بنت النمامان
 الاعظم ادام علا بالله في شهور
 تسع واربعين وخمس مائة .

B

"من فواصل صدمات السلطان الأعظم عليه الدولة
 الواسع يدور خان خلد الد سلطانه واجل
 شأنه في هذا الرباط "
 "المنهزم الأعظم سلطان الوزراء في العالم
 نيات الحق والدين فحقه اغرالد "
 "النصار دولة في سنة ثلاث وثلاثين وسبع مائة

قال السيد تبارك و تعالی و لایة علی بن ابی طالب
 حصنی فمن دخل حصنی أمن من تاروی
 بنده شاه و لایة
 فی ایام الدوله دینا السلطان اعظم و النبی
 الاکرم مروج فدیب لائمه المعصومین کلب
 آستان علی بن ابی طالب عباس الحسینی
 الموسوی الصعوی بنیاد درخان خلد تعالی
 ملکه و سلطانه

مروج فدیب حق لائمه المعصومین
 مروج فدیب امانه الطاهرین
 مروج بشریعة امانه الطاهرین
 مروج آثار اجداده المعصومین

کلب آستان امیرالمومنین
 کلب درگاه امیرالمومنین
 اصفهان
 کتیبہ محمد رضا امامی الاصفہانی
 کتیبہ محمد رضا امامی
 الاصفہانی الادبی

بحون البدو غنايه

در عهد سلطنت ابد قرین شیراز دین پرور عدل
 آسای سلیمان تان شکر زمان بانی امن و
 امان راقع و عایم بنیان معدلت و احسان
 چراغ دودمان مصطفوی و مرتضوی ابوالمظفر
 شاه سلیمان صفوی الهوسا خلد البدو ملکه
 و ابد سلطانه دستور اعظم و امیر مرضیه الشیم
 اعتماد الدوله العلیه العالیة النعمانیة اعتماد السلطنة
 البیة السلطنة شیخ علی خان لازالت سدة
 الرفیعة علما للانام و بركاته فی دایرة الايام این
 رباط عالی راقیه الی البدو طلبا بسیر الملوی
 بنافرموده تاریخ ۱۰۹۸ هجری صورت
 اتمام پذیرفت .

«... والسلم ابوالمطهر شاه عباس الحسيني الصوفي
 بساد خان بنده درگاه شاهي ابوالهاتمي شير
 به آقا ميرزا ابن اسد الدين علي الهندي الميرزا
 النطري توفيق بسا ختن اين بعقد خیر تاج
 هزار و بيت و نه جهری با تمام رسانید و با همت
 اين درگاه علاء الملك اسد که تواب آن
 به روزگار فرخنده آمارت عالی حضرت شاهي
 و»

در عهد دولت اعلیٰ حضرت اقدس
 شاه شاه دین پناه ناصر الدین شاه
 قاجار خلد اللہ علیہ و صدارت جلالتماب
 اشرف انجمن اعتماد الدولہ صدر اعظم
 میرزا آقا خان نوری این رباط کہ حلیمہ
 آبادی بکلی افتاده بود تعمیر شد کہ قاطبہ
 زیوار و مرقودین بر فراہیت و حاجیوں
 اقدس ہمایون و واقف باشند
 (۱۲۷۵) عمل حاجی جعفر خان معمار با
 اصفہانے الاصل ولایہ مسکن .

در زمان دولت سلطان سلیمان زمان
 خسرو و الانصاف محل خدا عز و جل
 زناظر منظورشان شاه دین پرو کف
 آنکه باشد نه نظیر از جمله ارباب دول
 منظر توفیق حق مصداق فرزند خلیف
 کز کمال شمار دانه در حسان باشد مثل
 در ره شاه خراسان مقصدای انس و جان
 حجت حق ضامن محشر امام عقد و حل
 ضامن اشی عشر سلطان علی بن موسیٰ نسفا
 آنکه بی اخلاص و ایمان ندارد ما حاصل
 از شرف آرامگاه زائران امام بی غفل
 با خلاص نیست و از اعتقاد و حل
 کرد احداث رباطی در محل آهوان
 خالی از تقصیر زوال ویران فیض لم یزل
 خامه نایب در امامت با حشیش نوشت
 منزل امن و امان است و رباطی بل

در زمان دولت روزافزون اید مقرون بادشاه
 حجاج ملائک سیاه ظل الله خاتمان الاعظم
 مملکت قصاب القرب والبعی السلطان
 ابن السلطان بن السلطان شاه عباس
 الثانی الصفوی الموسوی الحسینی بهادر خان
 خلد الله ملک و سلطانه و اماض علی العالمین
 بره و عدله و احسانه بنده درگاه اعز و لوکس امیر
 دیوان اعلی بایسته این بناس خیر بنیاد شد
 فی سنه اربع و ستین بعد الالف
 کتبه الفقیر اسمعیل

قال تبارك و تعالی مثل الذین ینفون
 سبیل الد کمثل حبه الی آخره باعث
 تحریر این ارتقام خیر انجام در ایام دولت
 کاتکارت اعلی حضرت یاد شاه جمہاء ظل الد
 السلطان بن السلطان بن السلطان
 مروج مذہب ائمہ اثنی عشرہ غلام با
 اخلاص امیر المومنین جیدر شاه عباس
 الشاہ فی الد الحسینی المورس الصنف
 بہادر خان خلد الد ملکہ عالمی جناب
 عزت و رفعت بناہ متغنی الاتقا
 طایف سیت الد الحی ام زائر الدین
 والمقام حاجی الحمرین الشہین
 حاجی محمد طالب ولد مرحمت

و مغفرت نياه جنت آرا مكاه المشرق
 في بحار رحمة ربه الفتى حاجي معين الدين
 محمد اصفهاني توفيق اين رباط مبارك
 كثير الفيض يافت و ثواب اين بنا
 رباط عظيم المفع را بروح والد خود هديه
 نمود قريه الى الله تعالى في سنة اربع و
 سبعين بعد الالف بكتبه محمد رضا الهادي

شکر لله که بهر راحت خلق
 از تفاضای قسمت از
 بنده عاجزی بنا نمود
 این را از فیض لم یبدا
 وز قضا نیز سال تارخیش
 شد رباط وزیر شیر علی

۱۰۵۵

کاتبه بانیه قمری الحسینی العرشی

جند والد بضاعف لمن يشاه والد واسح
 عليم الدين يتفنون اموالهم بالليل والنهار
 شرا وعلانية
 وكامراته اعلى حضرت ياد شاه جيماه
 ظلم السلطان بن السلطان بن السلطان
 والتمامان بن التمامان بن التمامان مروج
 مذهب امه
 تومشق اتمام اين بن كيشه الخير مايفت
 حاج الحرمين الشريفين حاجي سعيد الدين
 مرحمت حاجي معين الدين محمد الصغرى
 منى سنة خمس وسبعين والالف

بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ

زهی سپهر نبائی رفیع الارکان که دارالزما و سیاحان بلاد
 جهان و احرازگاه زائران استان ملائیک یاسبان و صحر
 بنیان است در عرش سلطنت روز افزون اعلی حضرت
 خدایگان صاحبقران شریستان السلاطین السلطان
 و الخاتمان بن الخاتمان ابوالنظر ابوالنصور شاه سیمان
 الموسوی الصفوی بادر خان خلد آید ملکه و سلطانه
 سالک طریق تحقیق معکف زوایه توقیف مؤید
 تباشیر روانی کرمانی واضح و بانشه جبهه آراشش
 سامین و آسایش چمدن مژدین میما زوار آستانه
 معده سه دره مرتبه عرش درجه روضه افیویه علیه
 الصلوة والرحمة قیام و اتمام نمود من البجته الیه
 فی شهر شعبان المعظم سنه ثمانین بعد الالف
 اقسام انجائیه

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U.S.S.R

TURKEY

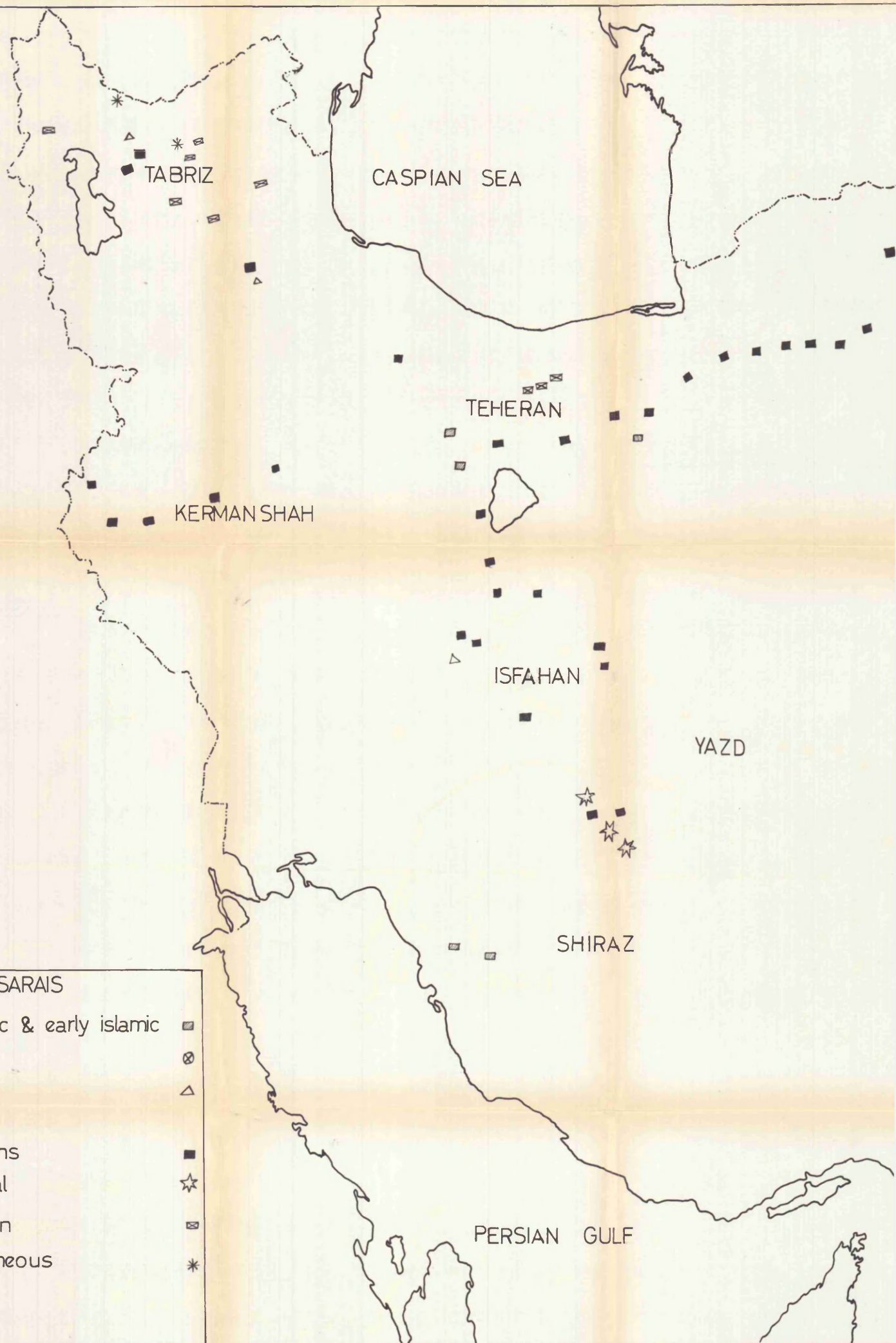
CASPIAN SEA

IRAN

LEGEND

- roads —————
- caravan roads ————
- capitals ●
- caravansarais •

PERSIAN GULF



CARAVANSARAI

pre-islamic & early islamic

seljuq

il-khanid

safavid :

four iwans

octagonal

mountain

miscellaneous