

# Revival of Beyramabad Garden, crucial for preserving Kerman's cultural heritage



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Kerman Province, known for its desert landscapes, holds a treasure trove of stunning gardens that owe their existence to the ingenious qanat system devised by our ancestors. These gardens stand as a testament to the unwavering efforts and enthusiasm of the people in this region. One particular gem, the Shahzadeh Mahan Garden, has even earned the prestigious title of a UNESCO World Heritage Site. Unfortunately, some of Kerman's precious gardens, which are esteemed as cultural heritage sites, face the threat

of destruction and loss for various reasons. However, by preserving and restoring these gardens, we can enhance the province's tourism sector with enriching historical attractions. Among the renowned gardens in Kerman is the Beyramabad Garden, constructed during the Safavid era by the then governor of Kerman, Beyram Beig Afshar, under the rule of Shah Ismail Safavid. This magnificent garden covers an area of 4.5 hectares in the eastern part of the city and has a history of four hundred years. It was officially recognized as a National Heritage Site on Febru-

ary 27, 1999. The architectural marvels of Beyramabad Garden, reminiscent of other Safavid era structures, blend stunning designs with an abundance of flora, trees, and water features, making it one of the most captivating gardens in Kerman. According to an endowment document, the garden was entrusted to the Holy Shrine of Imam Reza during the Qajar period. This allowed various activities to take place within its premises, with the proceeds directed back to the shrine. However, negligence and natural calamities have pushed the gar-

den to the edge of destruction. The last restoration efforts for Beyramabad Garden date back to 2001, when the Cultural Heritage Organization meticulously renovated its fences, towers, and surrounding walls. Recognizing the importance of revitalizing the neglected recreational and tourism potentials of the city of Kerman, Alireza Razm Hosseini, the former governor of Kerman, announced a restoration program for Beyramabad Garden in October 2015, following the successful restoration of Fathabad Garden near the city of Akhtarabad. However, despite

the anticipation of cultural heritage and tourism enthusiasts, the garden remains closed to visitors even after eight years of restoration efforts. Mojtaba Shafiei, the deputy head of Kerman Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization, acknowledges that the restoration work carried out by Astan Qods Razavi, under the supervision of the Cultural Heritage Organization, has made the monument largely ready for public visits, while there is ongoing restoration in certain areas of the structure that could provide added attractions for visitors.

He noted that the decision to reopen the garden lies with the Astan Qods Razavi, as they manage it. The authorities of Astan Qods Razavi still consider the restoration of Beyramabad Garden incomplete, despite the Cultural Heritage Organization's belief that conditions for visitation and utilization by tourists have been prepared. It is our hope that the necessary steps will be taken to fulfill the aspirations of cultural heritage and tourism enthusiasts eagerly waiting to experience the beauty of the historical Beyramabad Garden once again.

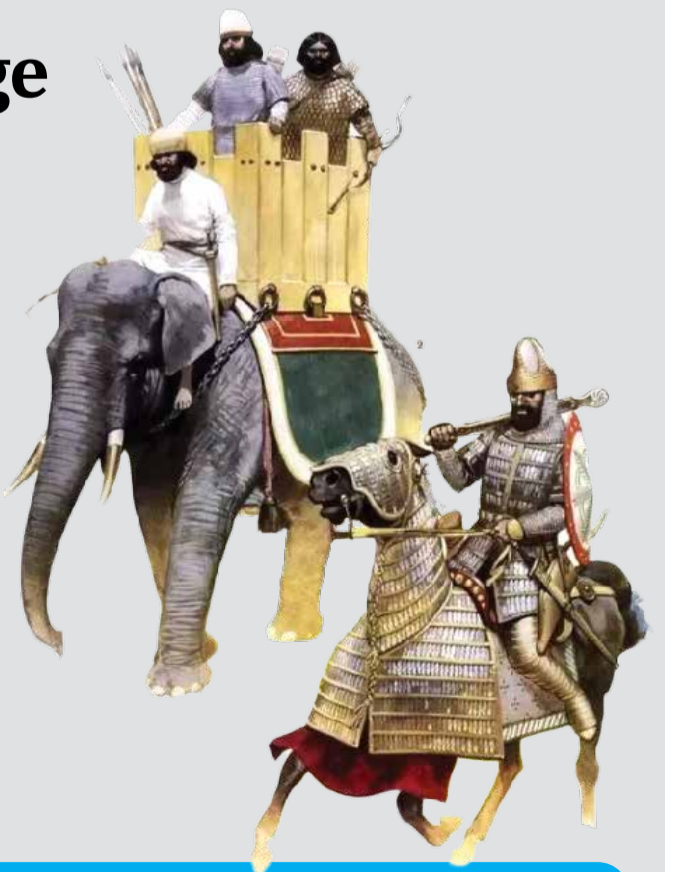
## Voluntary migrations and cultural exchange between Roman and Sassanid empires

Apart from forced movements, individuals and groups voluntarily migrated between Roman and Sassanid empires, seeking economic opportunities or intellectual freedom. These voluntary migrations — both temporary and permanent — ranged from groups of skilled craftsmen seeking economic opportunity to talented individuals who hoped to improve their prospects or find refuge from the ill will of the rival sovereign. For example, many skilled Roman silk workers immigrated to the Sassanid Empire to find work and price fixing practically killed the industry in the Roman empire, and took with them, no doubt, motifs and imagery as well as technical expertise.

Similarly, after Justinian (Roman emperor from 527 to 565) effectively closed the Athenian Academy in 529 CE, prohibiting the teaching of law and philosophy there and pagans from teaching anywhere, six prominent philosophers led by Damascius traveled to Ctesiphon to seek refuge at the court of Kosrow I. This sort of intellectual movement also occurred as a matter of diplomacy. Procopius, a prominent late antique Greek scholar and historian, records that Justinian I lent the sickly Kosrow I the services of a physician over the course of a year. Persian Christians traveled to the Roman empire because it was a center of Christian learning or to escape persecution. However, the flow of informa-

tion was not just unidirectional. A learned Syrian cleric, Paul the Persian, traveled to Constantinople from the Sassanid Empire and instructed Justin I and various high court officials on doctrinal issues before returning to Nisibis. Several high-level officials, and even members of the royal family, sought refuge at the court of their sovereign's opponent, a phenomenon that increased their rival and his court culture. In the fourth century the Sassanid prince Hormozd sought refuge at the court of Constantius II and even accompanied him on his famous trip to Rome, serving as a mouthpiece for witty commentary in Ammianus's (the last major Roman historian) account.

Hormozd served as a cavalry commander and took part in Julian's ill-fated campaign against his brother. Conversely, Ammianus devotes a chapter to the defection of Antoninus, bodyguard of the dux of Mesopotamia, to Shapur II and the service rendered to the king in his campaign against the Romans. As a consequence of their diplomatic service, envoys became acquainted with the customs of their hosts and could pick up tastes for Roman and Persian luxury goods and visual culture from long stays in the other empire's capital. Military service and the occasional capture of rich booty brought aristocrats into continued contact with the other empire's culture as well.



The above is a lightly edited version of part of a chapter entitled, 'The Art and Ritual of Kingship Within and Between Rome and Sassanid Iran', from a book titled, 'The Two Eyes of the Earth', written by Matthew P. Vanepa, published by University of California Press.