

The Mozzafari Hospital of Shiraz, Persia

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Abstract

Introduction This article discusses three significant hospitals that were constructed in medieval Persia, specifically in the city of Shiraz, which is located in central present-day Iran. The first of these three hospitals is the Azodi Hospital, which was constructed during the Buyid dynasty. The second hospital was constructed during the Salghurid dynasty and is referred to as the Mozzafari Hospital by a primary source written by Qutb al-Din Shirazi, a physician who worked there. The third hospital is also referred to as the Mozzafari Hospital and was constructed during the Mozzafarid dynasty. Recent efforts have yielded archaeological evidence that marks the location in present-day Shiraz of this third hospital or an area south of its location. The evidence consists of the gravesite for Seyed Sharaf al-Din Jorjani, a prominent theologian who was employed by Shah Shoja of the Mozzafarid dynasty in the fourteenth century CE. at the compound containing the third hospital.

Conclusion The gravesite for Sharaf al-Din Jorjani in present-day Shiraz marks the site of the remains of the Mozzafari

Hospital built during the reign of Shah Shoja of the Mozzafarid dynasty or an area south of Shah Shoja's Mozzafari Hospital.

Keywords History · Medicine · Persia · Ophthalmology

Background

The Persian term *bimaristan* refers to a hospital and originates from the time of medieval Islam. In modern usage, this term is applied especially to a mental hospital. Historically, the *bimaristan* provided a wide range of services and also functioned as a medical research center and as a school [1]. An equivocal term for *bimaristan* is *dar al-shafa* [1, 2]. The first hospitals originated in ancient Persia during the time of the Sassanid dynasty, which lasted from the second century to the sixth century CE. In the Islamic era, the city of Shiraz was a haven for scientific endeavors and was called *Dar al-Elm*, or the “House of Science” [3].

The Azodi Hospital of the Buyid dynasty

Under the rule of the Buyid dynasty in the tenth century CE, Shiraz was the capital of and largest city in the Persian province of Fars [4]; today, it is located in central Iran [5, 6]. The Buyid ruler Azod al-Dowleh, who ruled from 936 to 983 CE [3], endowed a large hospital in Shiraz known as *Dar al-Shafa*, but that building fell into ruins during the anarchy of the late Buyid and early Seljuk periods [4]. This hospital is also referred to as the Azodi Hospital and was constructed between 971 and 973 CE in Shiraz. Furthermore, Azod al-Dowleh ordered the construction of another hospital referred to as the Azodi Hospital in Baghdad in 979 CE. The Azodi Hospital was affiliated with the University of the City in

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Shiraz. Shahab al-Din abi al-Kheir Zarkoub Shirazi writes in *Shiraznameh* that the hospital functioned as an important health center until the fourteenth century [3].

Remains from the Buyid dynasty still exist in and near Shiraz, but the Azodi Hospital, or *Dar al-Shafa*, is not among them; however, the name *Dar al-Shafa* has persisted as the name of a part of the old city [4]. Noteworthy, the extant literature employs the term *Dar al-Shafa* as a proper noun that refers to either the Azodi Hospital, the site in Shiraz on which the Azodi Hospital was built and the area in the vicinity of that site, or the Mozzafari Hospital built by Shah Shoja during the Mozzafarid dynasty. The use of the term *Dar al-Shafa* to refer to the site of the Azodi Hospital following the hospital's decline reflects the prominence of that hospital.

The Mozzafari Hospital of the Salghurid dynasty

From 1148 to 1282 CE, the Salghurid dynasty ruled the province of Fars [7]. The establishment of the Mozzafari Hospital is thought to have occurred during the time of the Salghurid dynasty. The exact date of the Mozzafari Hospital's establishment is not clear. However, according to the text *Farsnamh Naseri*, the hospital was established by Atabek Abu Bakr between the years 623 and 630 AH [8], or 1226 and 1232 CE per the Gregorian calendar. The Mozzafari Hospital was in operation during the time of the Mongol invasions. The Atabakan government of the Salghurid dynasty made efforts to protect Fars from the Mongols, thereby attracting scientists and theologians to Fars who sought refuge from the Mongols [9].

There are multiple references in the extant Persian literature that describe the Mozzafari Hospital as being founded by Atabek Abu Bakr. According to the text *Shiraznameh*, one of the valuable buildings of Atabek Abu Bakr was a hospital in Darb Salm [10]. The Darb Salm Quarter was located in the southeastern part of Shiraz [11, 12]. The text *Tazkerat al-Shaara of Dolatshah* [13] reads: "Atabek Abu Bakr ebne Saad ebne Znagi was a great man. He built the Mozzafari hospital, mosques, and charity buildings." Another reference in the Persian literature concerning the Mozzafari Hospital is by the historian, poet, and scientist Vasaf al-Harzah, whose real name is Shahab al-Din Abdollah ibn Ez-al-Din Fazl-Allah. He was born in the thirteenth century in Shiraz. In his book *Vasaf's History*, he states that Atabek Abu Bakr built a hospital in Shiraz and recruited surgeons and scientists to work at the hospital [14]. The extant English literature corroborates this fact. Limbert writes that in the thirteenth century CE, Atabek Abu Bakr and his minister Moqarreb al-Din Mas'ud endowed a hospital in the Salm Gate area located near the Dar al-Salm Cemetery, the region of Dar al-Salm being outside the southern wall of the city [4]. The English transliterations of "Darb

Salm" and "Dar al-Salm" are remarkably similar, and both terms refer to the same site.

An important employee of the Mozzafari Hospital was Qutb al-Din Mahmud ibn Mas'ud al-Shirazi (1236–1311), who was a Persian scientist and philosopher [6]. He was born in Shiraz [15] and thus took the name Qutb al-Din al-Shiraz [16]. He belonged to a well-known family of physicians and Sufis [17]. His father, Dia al-Din Mas'ud [17] or Mas'ud al-Qadharuni [16] or Ziya'-ul-Din Mas'ud al-Kazaruni [15], was both a Sufi master and a famous physician at the Mozzafari Hospital in Shiraz [16, 17], and specifically practiced ophthalmology [15], and his uncle was the physician Kamal-ul-Din abu ul-Khayr al-Kazaruni [15]. Under his father's guidance, Qutb al-Din received his training in both medicine and Sufism [17]. Thus, he was his father's apprentice in the field of medicine [6]; though under his father's tutelage, he may have studied ocular diseases mainly [15]. Qutb al-Din was only 14 years old when his father died [6, 16, 17]. Despite his young age, he was entrusted his father's duties as a physician at the Mozzafari Hospital in Shiraz, where he remained for the next 10 years [15–17]. His abilities as a physician and his father's influence secured him this post [15]. Qutb al-Din Shirazi wrote the following passage in *Durrat al-taj li-ghurra al-dabaj* that evidences his post at the Mozzafari Hospital: "And since I had developed a reputation as one with a good instinct and acumen I was made a physician and ophthalmologist in the Muzaffari hospital in Shiraz after the death of my father, when I was 14 years old. I stayed there for 10 years as one of the doctors who did not desist from studies except to provide treatment..." [18] Walbridge describes the hospital as "newly established" at the time that Qutb al-Din's father was a staff physician and ophthalmologist at the Mozzafari Hospital [6]. As he was 14 years old when his father died, his father's death occurred in either 1250 or 1251. This fact, in conjunction with Walbridge's aforementioned description of the hospital's time of establishment, suggests that the hospital was founded in the early thirteenth century.

Following the departure of Qutb al-Din Shirazi from the Mozzafari Hospital, the hospital developed financial problems. A lack of political stability in Fars led to the hospital being shut down. However, two female political leaders and benefactors of Fars, Abeshkhatoon and her daughter Kerdo Chin, endowed the hospital with funds and thereby reopened it. However, after their deaths, the hospital closed again [19]. The English and Persian literature suggest that after this episode, the Mozzafari Hospital was reopened as a result of the efforts of the physician Khajeh Rashid al-Din Fazlollah Hamadani. He was born in 1247 CE to a noble and intellectual family in Hamdan, a central city in present-day Iran, and was the son of a Jewish pharmacist, Emad al-Douleh Abulkhayr [20]. By the beginning of the fourteenth century, the hospital had lost its endowment and its buildings had fallen into



Fig. 1 Upper image (black and white): Sharaf al-Din Jorjani is pictured sitting second from the right (Adapted from *Majales Aloshaq* by Amir Kamal al-Din Hossein ibn Shihab al-Din Tabasi Gazorgahi. Published 908 AH. Image from page 139, Lithograph India, Jamadi Alsani 1293 AH.). Lower image: a color rendition by an artist, Salva M. Shoja

disrepair. In order to address this problem, Rashid al-Din appointed the Shiraz-based physician Najm al-Din Mahmud ibn Elyas as the director of the hospital and executor of its endowment, and also added more funds to the hospital’s yearly stipend [4]. Rashid al-Din noted in *Savaneh al-Afkar* that the Mozzafari Hospital lacked a supervisor, and thus, he

selected Ibn Elyas as the hospital’s new manager [12, 21]. Following the deaths of Rashid al-Din and Ibn Elyas, the Mozzafari Hospital closed for a third time [12, 21].

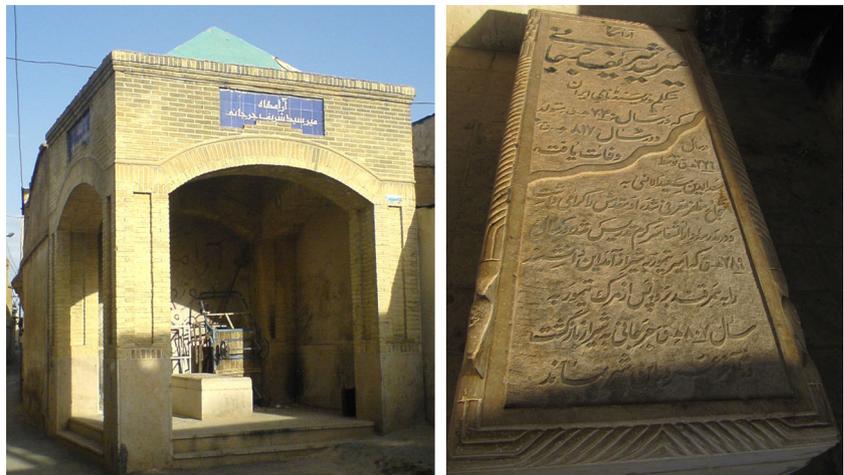
The Mozzafari Hospital of the Mozzafarid dynasty

The Mozzafarid dynasty ruled over southern Iran from 1314 till 1393 CE [22]. This dynasty was afflicted with strife among family members. Jalal al-Din Shah Shoja ruled from 1357 [23] or 1358 till 1384 [22]. He died on 9 October 1384, at 53 years of age [23]. Shortly before his death, Shah Shoja divided his possessions among his three sons, who later were forced to become vassals of the conqueror Timur. In 1393, Timur extinguished the dynasty by defeating and killing its last ruler, Mansur, who reigned from 1384 till 1393 [22].

Shah Shoja was responsible for the founding of a hospital in Shiraz that was attached to a seminary. The integration of hospitals, seminaries, and academic centers into one institution was exemplified in Rashid al-Din’s Rashidi Quarters [20]. Shah Shoja likely emulated this model. Floor writes that Shah Shoja founded a *dar al-sifa*, or hospital, in Shiraz in 1384 that functioned during the reign of Timur [24]. Some references in the English literature describe this institution that Shah Shoja founded, *Dar al-Shafa*, as a school [4, 23] or seminary [4], but given Rashid al-Din’s model, a hospital likely was a part of this institution. Limbert writes that *Dar al-Shafa* was located in the Jame’ Atiq District in the City Center and that the institution was likely built on the site of the tenth-century Azodi Hospital, which was also known as *Dar al-Shafa* [4]. As noted earlier, the term *Dar al-Shafa* continued to be used to refer to the site of the Azodi Hospital even after it shut down [4]. Limbert writes that no trace remains of the *Dar al-Shafa* seminary founded by Shah Shoja [4].

The authors wish to clarify carefully at this juncture the alleged location of the Mozzafari Hospital constructed by Shah Shoja. Limbert contends that this hospital was built in

Fig. 2 Monument dedicated to Seyed Sharaf al-Din Jorjani (left); tombstone of Seyed Sharaf al-Din Jorjani (right)



the Jame' Atiq District in the City Center and likely on the site of the Azodi Hospital. The hospital built during the Salghurid dynasty at which Qutb al-Din Shirazi worked and that he himself called the "Mozzafari Hospital" was built in the southeastern part of Shiraz. References in the Persian literature contend that 50 years after the shutting down or destruction of the Mozzafari Hospital of the Salghurid dynasty, which followed the deaths of Ibn Elyas and Rashid al-Din, Shah Shoja built a small hospital where the previous Mozzafari Hospital had existed [21, 25, 26]. This hospital likely was another hospital distinct from Shah Shoja's famous *Dar al-Shafa*, as archaeological evidence, which is discussed in the next section, supports the location of the hospital in the vicinity of the Azodi Hospital, if not, on the actual site of the Azodi Hospital.

Seyed Sharaf al-Din Jorjani

Sharaf al-Din Jorjani (Fig. 1 and Cover Picture), whose full name is Ali ibn Muhammad al-Jorjani and who was also called al-Sayyid al-Sharif [27] and al-Saiyyid al-Sharif Ali b. M. al-Jorjani [28] and Mir Seyyed Sharif Alameh Jorjani [4], was born in Taju, near Astarabad, Iran [27, 28]. The year of his birth is provided as 1339 [4, 27] and 1340 [28, 29]. Sharaf al-Din Jorjani died in 1413 in Shiraz [4, 27, 28]. To note, Sharaf al-Din Jorjani should not be confused with Esmail Jorjani (1042–1137), a prominent Persian physician of the eleventh and twelfth centuries [30].

Sharaf al-Din Jorjani was initially educated in Harat and then in Egypt [27]. He visited Constantinople in 1374 [27], and, upon his return in 1377, he was given a teaching appointment in Shiraz [4, 27]. Specifically, Shah Shoja appointed him to a professorship in the *Dar al-Shafa* at Shiraz [4, 23, 28]. Storey [28] suggests that this appointment may have taken place in 1378. This appointment effectively made Sharaf al-Din Jorjani a member of Shah Shoja's court [29]. The Persian literature interestingly states that Sharaf al-Din Jorjani also served as the manager of the Mozzafari hospital during his tenure in Shah Shoja's court [21, 25]. In 1387, Shiraz fell to Timur, and Sharaf al-Din Jorjani was forced to relocate to Samarkand, Timur's capital that is located in present-day Uzbekistan [4, 27, 29]. He stayed in Samarkand until Timur's death in 1405 [4, 27–29]. Following Timur's death, Sharaf al-Din Jorjani returned to Shiraz [4, 27, 29]. He taught in Shiraz until he died [4, 27–29]. Limbert writes that Sharaf al-Din Jorjani was buried in an area south of the Jame' Atiq District still known as *Dar al-Shafa* and that his tomb is in this area [4]. Sharaf al-Din Jorjani's tomb (Fig. 2), which has been identified, corroborates Limbert's conclusion. Some Persian references contend that the location of the Mozzafari Hospital, or *Dar al-Shafa*, built by Shah Shoja can be identified by the tomb of Sharaf al-Din Jorjani [21, 25, 26] and that the only

part of this significant hospital that has survived is Sharaf al-Din Jorjani's tomb [11, 12]. Thus, some authors advocate that al-Din Jorjani's tomb marks the precise location of Shah Shoja's *Dar al-Shafa*, but Limbert's contention implies that his tomb marks an area in the vicinity of Shah Shoja's *Dar al-Shafa*. Regardless, Sharaf al-Din Jorjani's tomb is a historical signpost for an area in medieval Persia made famous by the Azodi Hospital of the Buyid dynasty and the Mozzafari Hospital of the Mozzafarid dynasty.

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