



THE DYNAMICS OF ISLAMIC CIVILIZATION IN THE PERSIAN REGION: A HISTORICAL STUDY

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Abstract

The chapters in the history of Islamic civilization by historians are divided into classical, medieval, and modern periods. Islamic civilization itself is a civilization that spread widely to various regions, including the Persian region. Persia in its history deviates many relics that show how Islam and its civilization are dynamic in each era. This article was written using a qualitative descriptive approach by describing the literature study method. From the results of the discussion, it is known that Islamic civilization in Persia is dynamic, and most of the relics left by the Shafavid dynasty. In addition, in the later period, Persian identification with Shia (teachings) became attached to each other as a result of the dynamics of Islam in this region.

Keywords: *Persian, Civilization, Islam, Shia*

Abstrak

Pembabakan dalam sejarah peradaban Islam oleh para sejarawan dibagi menjadi periode klasik, abad pertengahan, dan modern. Peradaban Islam sendiri merupakan peradaban yang menyebar luas ke berbagai wilayah, termasuk wilayah Persia. Persia dalam sejarahnya menyimpan banyak peninggalan yang menunjukkan betapa Islam dan peradabannya dinamis di setiap zamannya. Artikel ini ditulis dengan menggunakan pendekatan deskriptif kualitatif dengan menggunakan metode studi kepustakaan. Dari hasil pembahasan diketahui bahwa peradaban Islam di Persia bersifat dinamis, dan sebagian besar peninggalannya ditinggalkan oleh Dinasti Syafawi. Selain itu, di kemudian hari, identifikasi Persia dengan Syi'ah (ajaran) menjadi melekat satu sama lain sebagai akibat dari dinamika Islam di wilayah ini.

Kata Kunci: Persia, Peradaban, Islam, Syi'ah

INTRODUCTION

Among the long history of Muslims in the world, Persia is one area that has also been entered by Muslims. However, when we talk about Persia, our minds immediately turn to the country that is now Iran. In fact, the ethnic group (Persia) is not only Iran, although the majority of Persians are in Iran. Persians are also a minority in countries

around Iran, such as Afghanistan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Kuwait, United Arab Emirates, Iraq, and also several countries in the Middle East. Before Islam came and conquered the Persians, this nation already had its own civilization. The greatness of this nation can even be equated with the Roman empire which also existed at that time. They have enjoyed their existence as an independent nation for centuries, and once represented a well-organized military force, having fought the Romans for more than 400 years (Hitti 2010, 198). Not only that, the long history of Persia can also be traced back to the time before Christ, where Persian civilization is one of the oldest human civilizations in existence.

The long history of Persia, of course, has passed down the inherent character and culture of the nation. There is an opinion that considers the Persians to be a nation of chauvinists. Believing that they are a superior race. A race/nation that has a higher dignity than other nations/races. This is also the background behind the rejection of Kisra (as the Persian king) against the da'wah of the Prophet Muhammad. The Persians felt more dignified than the Arabs. Even Kisra arrogantly tore up the letter of the Prophet Muhammad while saying that the Arabs do not need to teach him how to worship.¹ Rasulullah SAW said that the kingdom will be torn apart as Kisra did in his letter of Allah. The long history of the Persian nation after being entered by Islam eventually developed until various small Islamic sultanates (kingdoms) emerged which were widely spread to the largest, namely the Syafavid kingdom. The interaction between Islam as a religion and culture produces a distinctive Islamic culture in Persia. This paper will not describe the political and societal conditions of the various Persian empires, but will only look at some of the results of civilization generated through this interaction.

RESEARCH METHODS

The writing of this article uses a descriptive qualitative method with based on data mining through library research/literature studies from several literature sources (written) (Prayogi 2021). Qualitative research is used as an exploration for the humanities, social, and religion. And in library research, the resulting information comes from drawing conclusions that come from: citing references and abstracted as research findings. Writing is done through a process extracting data from various reference sources that discuss various articles/writings related to various literatures on Persian civilization. These various sources published in public media, so that it can be accessed through various places (library) and internet media openly. This article can be elaboration of various related articles and writings. Likewise, articles this is more of a synthesis of the writings that ever existed, to then be seen in relation to what can be done in the current context.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Glimpse of the Persians

¹ The name of the king of Persia (Sasaniyah Kingdom) who was sent a letter by the Prophet was Abrawaiz. He was the son of Hormuz IV, and the grandson of Kisra I who was known as Anusyirwan who was called by the Arabs as a just person. He was crowned after the assassination of his father in 590 AD (Chalil 2001, 103-104).

Iran or Persia is a Middle Eastern country located in Southwest Asia. Ethnic Persians are descendants of the Aryans who migrated from Central Asia to Iran in the second millennium BC. The Aryans were then divided into two, namely the Persians and the Medes. They then assimilated with local tribes such as the Proto-Iranian and Elamite civilizations. From here, Persian and other Iranian languages were born. The first written historical source regarding the Persians is the Assyrian inscription (834 BC). The inscription describes the people of Parsua (Persia) and Muddai (Media). At that time, the Assyrians used the term 'Parsua' to refer to the tribes in Iran. This Persian region was ruled by several kingdoms that formed powerful empires. Among these empires were Persian empires such as the Achaemenid, Parthian, Sassanid, Buwaihidah, and Samanian. Sassania was the last Persian empire before the arrival of Islam. The Persians in general lived a nomadic life. They lived in tents and moved from place to place in search of fresh grass and better weather conditions every year. This is what shapes the character of the Persians to be harsh, individualistic, and sometimes robbed of their more civilized relatives. Physically, they have a sturdy body, big and tall, curly hair and a sharp nose. Their skin color is a mixture of European white and Asian olive. The language spoken by the Persians is Persian itself, which is the oldest language in the world, including when compared to Arabic. The Persians are now scattered in Iran and its surroundings. Therefore, it is not surprising that Persian is the official language of Iran, as well as Afghanistan and Tajikistan. Meanwhile, Turkic, Kurdish, Arabic, Lori, Gilani, Mazandarani, and Baluchi languages are the local languages of the minority nations who inhabit Iran. Historically, the early religion of the Persians was the Zoroastrian religion, which is a religion that worshiped two Gods in their life, Deva and Ahura, as manifestations of the forces of good and evil.²

2. The Entry and Development of Islam in Persia

The first Islamic da'wah into Persia was delivered by the Prophet Muhammad SAW in the year 8 H. When the Prophet Muhammad SAW became the leader of the State in Medina, the prophet was aware of the existence of a superpower at that time. Rome and Persia became two great and respected superpowers at the time of the Prophet SAW. At that time, the prophet had sent delegates and envoys to send letters inviting rulers to worship Allah SWT, including to Persia. However, the Persian attitude actually showed hostility. In this case, the interaction between Islam and Persia has occurred. Islam entered Persia during the reign of Abu Bakr. Around the year 637 AD the Islamic or Persian forces won at Kadisiah which caused the fall of the Selucian capital-Ctesiphon which marked the end of the Persian resistance. Furthermore, through the Southeast Persian region, the success of the first wave became a stepping stone for the expansion carried out by the Umayyads. Islam succeeded in controlling the provinces that were previously part of the Persian empire (Mubarok 2008, 234).³

² Some aspects of people's lives in the history of ancient Iran (Persia) can be read, (Ansari 2017) & (Us-Samad 2001).

³ The fall of Persia was further carried out during the time of Umar Bin Khattab. He succeeded in conquering Persia, Egypt, Syria, Iraq, Burqah, western Tripoli, Azerbaijan, Jurjan, Basra, Kufa and Cairo. The Islamic attack on Iraq

After the entry of Islam in Persian lands, the political system of the regions in Persia changed to follow the concept of Islamic politics in which the leader had the title Sultan or Amir. Including the Persian region, there were many dynasties that rose and fell in their emergence in Persian land. In Iran (Persia) there were the following emirates or sultanates, the Bawandiyyah on the coast of the Caspian Sea (665-1349), the Musafiriyyah or Sallariyyah in Dailan and Azerbaijan (916-1090), the Rawwadiyyah in Azerbaijan (951-1071), the Shaddadiyyah in Arran and Eastern Armenia (951-1174), Ziyariyyah in Tabaristan and Gurqan (927-1090), Buwaihiyyah in Persia and Iraq (932-1062), Kakuiyyah in Central and Western Persia (1041-1119), Thahiriyyah in Khurasan (821-873), Samaniyyah in Khurasan and Transoxania (819-1005), Shafariyya in Sistan (867-1495), Khawarizam-Shia (995-1231), Qarakhaniyya in Transoxania and East Turkestan (992-1211), Seljuqs in Iraq and Persia (1038-1194), Artuqiyyah in Diyarbakr (1102-1048), Zangiyyah in al-Jazirah and Syria (1127-1222), Eldiguziyyah in Azerbaijan (1137-1225), Salghuriyyah in Fars (1148-1270), and Ismailiyyah or Assassins in Persia and Syria (1090-1273).⁴

There was also a royal power with more power and autonomy than the previous dynasty in Persia. Among the powerful dynasties were the Il-Khaniyyah in Persia (1256-1353), Myzafariyya in Southern Persia (1314-1393), Jalayiriyya in Iraq, Kurdistan and Azerbaijan (1336-1432), Timuriyya in Transoxania and Persia (1370-33). 1506), Qara Qayunlu in Azerbaijan and Iraq (1380-1468), Aq Qayunlu in Diyarbakr, East Anatolia and Azerbaijan (1378-1508), Shafavids in Persia (1501-1732) (Al-Usairy 2004, 324-328).⁵ It was the Shafawiyyah who later emerged as one of the three great kingdoms in the future.⁶

which was then under the rule of the Persian Empire had begun even before Umar bin Khattab rose to become caliph. The key to Islam's victory lies in the battle of Qadisiya in 637 AD, which took place during the Caliphate of Umar bin Khattab. By the year 641 AD, all of Iraq was under the control of Islam. And not only that, the Islamic armies even invaded the Persians directly and in the battle of Nehavend in 642 AD They then determined to defeat the last remaining Persian power. By the death of Umar bin Khattab in 644 AD, most of the western region of Iran was fully controlled. This movement did not stop when Umar bin Khattab died. In the east they quickly conquered Persia and in the west they pushed on with troops across North Africa. In 642 AD, Muslim troops managed to defeat the Persians in two battles, namely the Qadisiyah War and the Nahawan War during the Caliph Umar bin Khatab. After that, the Muslims scattered in the Persian state until the reign of the Sasanid dynasty ended in 651 AD. (Petrushevskii dan Evans 1985, 23-27)

⁴ In the long period of Islamic rule in the world, there were 82 dynasties that ruled in the Islamic world. This kind of dynastic conception biased the position of the government (caliphate or kingdom?). Besides that, who is more entitled to legitimate power (unifying Muslims in one command) is also biased against each other (Bosworth 1993).

⁵ After the Shafavids, there were also the Afshariyyah dynasty in Persia (1736-1795), the Zand dynasty in Persia (1750-1794), and the Qajar dynasty in Persia (1779-1924), which were later replaced by the Pahlavi dynasty. (Al-Usairy 2004, 438-442).

⁶ Islam entered Persia since the time of the Umayyad dynasty. This is marked by the success of expansion into several areas, both in the east and west, the area of Islamic rule during the Umayyad period was really very wide. These areas included Spain, North Africa, Syria, Palestine, the Arabian Peninsula, Iraq, parts of Asia Minor, Persian Afghanistan, what is now Pakistan, Turkmenia, Uzbeks and Kyrgyz in Central Asia. The success of the Umayyads in controlling the Persian region is one of the important aspects of the entry of Islam in Persia. But then the entry of the Umayyads into Persian lands was received badly by the Persian people, which caused the fall of the Umayyads and were replaced by the Abbasids. The establishment of the Abbasid power was inseparable from the assistance of the Persians which was motivated by two reasons. First, because of the oppression of the Umayyads against the Persians and the policies of the Umayyads which favored the Arabs and marginalized non-Arabs, including the Persians. Second, because of the Persian tradition that recognizes and believes in the existence of a sacred royal right. Thus the dependence of the Abbasids on the power of the Persians was very strong and this was well realized by the Persians, so in return, the Persians held an important and strategic position in the Abbasid government. The weakening of the Abbasid power made the Shafavid dynasty in Persia emerged as one of the three great powers that would face the Ottoman dynasty which replaced the Abbasids. (Mubarok 2008, 82).

3. Overview of the Shafavid dynasty

This kingdom originated from a tarekat movement that was founded in Ardabil, a city in Azerbaijan. This tarekat was given the name of the Safawiyah order, which was derived from the name of its founder, Safi Al-Din and the name Safawi continued to be maintained until this tarekat became a political movement (Yatim 2010, 138). Safi al Din Al Ardabilly is a descendant of the seventh Shia Imam Musa Al-Khazim. Therefore he is still a descendant of the Prophet from the line of his daughter Siti Fatimah. The Safavid Empire was officially established in Persia in 1501 AD when Shah Ismail proclaimed himself king or shah in Tabriz, and made Shia Itsna Asyariah the state ideology. However, this important historical event does not stand alone. The event is related to previous events in a fairly long time span of approximately two centuries (Thohir 2004, 167).

Since Safi Al Din began to lead the Safavid Order until Shah Ismail proclaimed the establishment of the Safavid Empire in 1501, the Safavid Order experienced two phases in its struggle. In the period 1301-1447 AD (700-850 H), the Safavid movement was still purely a religious (cultural) movement with the Safavid order as a means. His followers spread from Persia, Syria and Anatolia. Then in the period 1447-1501 AD the Safavid Order turned into a political movement (structural), with its leader Junaid bin Ali. The change occurred because of Junaid's political ambition. Because Junaid was a leader of the tarekat, his followers were made into an army called the Qizilbas (red turban with twelve tufts as a symbol of the Shia Imamate Twelve). But Junaid's efforts still failed in achieving his ambitions because he always failed to conquer several areas such as Ardabil and Chircasia, even in 1460 AD he was killed. Then he was replaced by his son, Haidar, but to no avail. Before he died, Haidar appointed his youngest brother, Ismail. After successfully conquering the city of Tabriz, Ismail then proclaimed the establishment of the Safavid kingdom, with Shia Itsna Asyariah as the state ideology in 1501 AD (Thohir 2004, 172). The following is the order of rulers of the Safavid kingdom: 1. Isma'il I (1501-1524 AD), 2. Tahmasp I (1524-1576 AD), 3. Isma'il II (1576-1577 AD), 4. Muhammad Khudbanda (1577- 1587 AD), 5. Abbas I (1587-1628 AD), 6. Safi Mirza (1628-1642 AD), 7. Abbas II (1642-1667 AD), 8. Solomon (1667-1694 AD), 9. Husein I (1694-1722 AD), 10. Tahmasp II (1722-1732 AD), 11. Abbas III (1732-1736 AD).⁷

⁷ The development and progress of the Shafavid empire did not necessarily be achieved when Shah Ismail I led (1501-1524 AD), but the glory of the Shafawi kingdom was only realized during the reign of Shaykh Abbas the Great (1587-1628 AD) the fifth king, where politically he was able to overcoming various domestic conflicts that disrupted the stability of the country and succeeded in reclaiming territories that had been captured by other kingdoms during the previous kings, with his political reforms (Yatim 2010, 142). As one of the great powers of its time, the Shafavid dynasty also eventually collapsed and then another dynasty would emerge. The collapse of the Shafavid dynasty was caused, among other things, by the prolonged conflict with the Ottoman Empire. The establishment of the Shia-based Safavid kingdom was a threat to the Ottoman empire, so there was never any peace between these two great kingdoms. Then there was a moral decadence that hit some of the leaders of the Safavid kingdom. King Solomon, who was addicted to narcotics and enjoyed the nightlife for seven years, never once took the time to handle the government, nor did Sultan Husein. The next reason was that the ghulam (slaves) troops formed by Abbas I did not have a high fighting spirit like the Qizilbash spirit. This is because they do not have mental resilience because they are not prepared in a trained manner and do not have spiritual provisions. This decline in the military aspect greatly affected the loss of resilience and defense of the Safavid kingdom, as well as frequent internal conflicts in the form of power struggles among the royal family (Yatim 2010, 158-159).

4. Islamic Civilization in Persia (Classic, Medieval, and Modern)

Among historians there are differences of opinion about when (when) the history of Islam began. In general, these differences can be divided into three types. First, the history of Muslims began since the Prophet Muhammad received the first revelation. According to this opinion, during the thirteen years of the Prophet in Mecca a Muslim community was born, although it was not yet sovereign. Second, the history of Muslims began when the Prophet Muhammad SAW moved to Medina, because Muslims were only sovereign in Medina. Third, Islamic civilization began since the Prophet Adam because all the prophets sent by God to humans, all of them are Muslims (Muslims). Harun Nasution divides Islamic history into three periods, namely the Classical period (650-1250 AD), Middle (1250-1800 AD) and Modern (1800-present) (Nasution 1982, 12-14).

In the classical period, Persia consisted of small dynasties that ebb and flow. In this period Islam also colored Persian culture. Among the remains of civilization in the classical period, among others, in the field of religion where the Zoroastrian beliefs which were the original beliefs of the Persians turned to Islam. There is also cultural acculturation where Arabic (Islamic) culture is more formed in conversational culture. The Arabs in the past did not pay much attention to literacy problems, so they did not perpetuate knowledge in written form. This nation is used to conveying their valuable knowledge orally. The entry of Islam to the land of Persia gave another color to the culture of the Muslims. The Iranians used to write down what they knew and develop every branch of knowledge. As part of the Muslims, the Iranians learned Arabic, and after mastering it, they developed this language. The Persian population, especially the inhabitants of Khurasan, northeastern Iran, are very fluent in Arabic. One of his remains is *Al-Kitab Sibawayh* which is one of the major works in the field of *sharaf* and *nahwu* which has even become one of the main reference books for Arabic language experts. This book was written by Sibawaih, who turned out to be from Iran. Since the first centuries of Hijri, many Persian words entered into Arabic, and conversely, many Arabic expressions entered into Persian.⁸ The remains of civilization in the classical period were more dominated by literary and linguistic works where Arabic as the language of Islam became the second language for the Persians. Things like this are not difficult for the Persian people, considering the Prophet SAW himself had acknowledged this advantage. On one occasion, he rubbed his hands on the head of Salman al-Farisi, one of the Persian companions, then he said, "If faith is above the Tsurayya star then the people (the Persians) will certainly be able to reach it too." (Narrated by Bukhari).

In the medieval period, the Persian region had emerged a large royal entity which in this case was represented by the emergence of the Safavid kingdom. Cultural developments that have emerged include the political field in the form of military management and foreign policy management and conflict resolution.⁹ In the economic

⁸ Sibawaih's real name was Amru bin Uthman Al-Haritsi. Another name is Abu Basyar. He lived in the 8th century AD. He is a non-Arab (Persian) person who is able to master Arabic knowledge and is the first person to develop the knowledge of *nahwu* in Arabic which is still used today (Budaiwi 1997, 108).

⁹ This success was achieved when the Safawiyah kingdom was led by Abbas I, where Abbas I had "donated" the results of civilization in the form of stable political management and government which could be pursued by efforts

field, he controlled the Hurmuz archipelago and the port of Gumurun which was converted into Bandar Abbas. With the control of this port, one of the sea trade routes between east and west that the Dutch, British and French could fight over completely became the property of the Safavid empire. In addition to the trade sector, the Safavid empire also made progress in the agricultural sector, especially in the fertile crescent area (Yatim 2010, 144). In the religious field, Shi'ism developed, however, during the Abbas I period, religious policies were no longer like those of the previous Sultans who always forced Shia to become the state religion, but instead instilled an attitude of tolerance. Abbas I instilled religious politics and a very large understanding of tolerance or grace. Shi'ism is no longer a compulsion, even Sunnis can live freely doing their worship. Not only that, Christian priests are allowed to develop religious teachings freely because many Armenians have become loyal residents in the city of Isfahan (Hamka 1981, 70).

During this period, Islamic civilization in Persia contributed a lot in the development of science and art. In the history of Islam, the Persians were known as a highly civilized nation and were instrumental in developing science. Therefore, it is not surprising that during the Syafavid Empire, especially when Abbas I was in power, the scientific tradition continued to develop. The development of science during the Syafavid Empire could not be separated from a fundamental doctrine that the Shi'a should not be taqlid and the door of ijthihad was forever open. The Shia are not like the Sunnis who say that ijthihad has stopped and one should just taqlid. The Shia still maintain that the mujtahids are not cut off forever (Hamka 1981, 70).

At this time several philosophers emerged, among others, scientists who preserved the thoughts of Aristotle, Al-Farabi and Mir Damad alias Muhammad Bagir Damad by writing philosophy books in two languages, Arabic and Persian, including the famous qabasat and taqdisat. At the time of the Safavids Philosophy and Science revived in the Islamic world, especially among the Persians who were highly interested in cultural development. This new development is closely related to the Shia sect which was established by the Safavid Dynasty as the official state religion. In the Twelve Shia there are two groups, namely Akhbari and Ushuli. They differ in their understanding of religious teachings. The first tends to stick to the results of the ijthihad of established Shia mujtahids. The second is taking from the source of Islamic teachings, the Qur'an and Hadith, without being tied to the mujtahids. The Ushuli group played the most role in the Safavid era. At this time two types of schools of philosophy developed. First, the "Periphatic" philosophy as proposed by Aristotle and Al-Farabi. The two Isyraqi philosophies were brought by Syaharawadi in the 12th century. These two schools were widely developed in the Isfahan and Shiraj schools. In this field of philosophers appeared several philosophers including Muhammad Baqir Damad who is considered the third teacher after Aristotle and Al-Farabi, other figures such as Mulla Sadra who historically was the most capable dialectician of his time (Thohir 2004, 177). With the rapid development of philosophy, in the field of education, especially for the development of

in the form of centralizing administration, reducing the influence of elite troops, and establishing peaceful relations with other countries on condition that and certain agreements (Yatim 2010, 142).

the Shia school, theological schools and centers for Shia studies were established in three cities, namely: Qum, Najaf, Mashhad

As for the arts, progress in the field of architectural art is marked by the establishment of a number of magnificent buildings that beautify Isfahan as the capital of this kingdom. A painting school which is a legacy of Timuriah located in Herat, was moved to Tibriz in 1510 AD by Ismail I. A number of mosques, schools, hospitals, bridges that extend over Zende Rud and Chihil Sutun Palace. The city of Isfahan is also beautified with well-arranged tourist gardens. When Abbas I died, in Isfahan there were 162 mosques, 48 academies, 1802 inns and 273 public baths. Other elements can be seen in the form of handicrafts, ceramics, rugs and other art objects. And there are relics of the Shah Mosque which was built in 1611 AD and the Sheikh Lutf Allah mosque which was built in 1603 AD (Yatim 2010, 145).

The crisis of the 18th century ushered in the end of premodern (classical and medieval) Iranian (Persian) history. In almost all Muslim areas, the premodern period ended with various interventions, conquests by Europeans, and with the formation of several colonial regimes, in this case the consolidation of the European economy and political influence has been preceded by the destruction of the Shafavid dynasty and by the liberalization of the ulama. Thus, the Shafavid regime has left a cultural legacy to modern (Persian) Iran in the form of the Persian tradition of a great royal system, namely a regime built on the power of the *uymaq* or main tribal elements, and bequeathing a cohesive Shi'a religious authority, monolithic and independent (Lupinus 1999, 467). Modern Iranian civilization today increasingly emphasizes that Shi'ism and Persia are still a unity that is difficult to separate.

CONCLUSION

Before Islam came, Persia had stood as a great empire with a great history of civilization. The entry of Islam during the liberation period by Umar bin Khattab brought an opening wave of Muslims (Arabs) to the Persian region. Not only that, the Persian community itself in the end also gradually made Islam their identity. This process was a long continuous process and was continued under the rule of the Umayyads, who increasingly opened the Persian area to the entry of Islam. The Umayyads had built the Islamic foundation for the Islamic community to grow in Persia. In its subsequent development, the Persian Muslims politically made their own efforts in realizing their power, with the emergence of the Safavid kingdom which became the culmination of Islamic civilization in Persia. The dynamics of the ebb and flow of dynasties in Persia is evidence of this, until now.

However, the entry of Islam in Persia resulted in a new identity which in the end showed the results of its civilization that influenced each other. Islamic civilization in Persia at various times left a legacy of civilization in each field. Especially in the socio-religious field where Persia ended up with a Shia (Islamic) Identification. In the field of political economy, Islam in Persia gives color to the system of government which also ends with the identification of the Shi'a system, which began when Shia was declared the official school of thought of the state since the Shafavid dynasty and has persisted until

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now. In other fields, the results of Islamic civilization in Persia can be seen from the many remains of civilization, especially in the fields of philosophy, language, and literature. Remains of cultural objects such as places of worship and other places can still be seen to survive to this day.

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