

From the Mausoleum to the Throne; The Tombs of Naghsh-e-Rostam and Persepolis from the Point of View of Parseh

Abstract

The tomb complex and building known as the Kaaba of Zoroaster was built in Naqsh-e Rostam in the Achaemenid period. Naghsh-e-Rostam collection, especially the Kaaba of Zoroaster as the spiritual heritage of the Achaemenid kings, has continuously played a dynamic role in the religious, political and spiritual structure of the post-Achaemenid period, which is rooted in the ancient pre-Achaemenid traditions in the ancient Middle East particularly during the Elamite period. The closest interpretation of the function of this building in relation to the Achaemenid tombs and its connection with the Persepolis throne can be meaningful. Understanding the spatial relationship between Naqsh-e-Rostam and Persepolis is functionally significant. Persepolis was formed in the heart of a city and Achaemenid palaces were part of this city. This research, accomplished via a descriptive and analytical method and relying on library data, has sought to examine the environmental zone around Persepolis, known as the city of Parseh, and has made the hypothesis of reconstructing the historical city of Parseh within the range of the 1st degree of Persepolis more conceivable. The findings of the research indicate that according to the surviving works and inscriptions, the collection of works of Naghsh-e Rostam in the Achaemenid, Seleucid, Parthian and Sassanid periods has continually been applied and honored. In the Achaemenid period, the connection of Naghsh-e-Rostam tomb complex as a chief and functional part of Parseh city was related to Persepolis. The tradition of burying the deceased king was performed according to Zoroastrianism and after the burial of the king, the enthronement of the new king was performed in the monument and holy shrine of the Zoroastrian Kaaba.

Research aims:

- 1- An investigation of the location of Naqsh-e-Rostam and the Kaaba of Zoroaster and the reasons for its dependence on the city of Parseh based on geophysical studies.
- 2- A study on the function of the Kaaba of Zoroaster from the Achaemenid period to the end of the Sassanid period.

Research questions:

- 1- What are the usages of the Kaaba of Zoroaster in diverse historical periods?
2. What information do geophysical studies provide about the location of the Kaaba of Zoroaster and its dependence on the city of Parseh?

Keywords: Zoroastrian Kaaba, Naghsh-e Rostam, Tomb Collection, Parseh.

Introduction

The royal tomb (necropolis) of Persepolis is located on the northeastern outskirts of Parseh. The tomb tradition of the Achaemenid kings was built from the time of Darius I (521-486 BC) different from that of Cyrus the Great (530-559 BC) on the outskirts of the Parseh residential area and at a distance of 7 km from Persepolis. Darius I chose a rock 60 meters high and carved a square room on the rock, which probably inspired this style of tomb from the region of Anatolia in Asia Minor. The tradition of building tombs (necropolises) outside the outskirts of ancient cities in the Mediterranean, along streams on the coast in front of cities in Egypt, or along roads outside the city in ancient Greece and Rome. In fact, these tombs (necropolises) consisted of several large tomb buildings that were used for several centuries. Darius I carved a large surface at the site of Naghsh-e Rostam on the rock facade of Mount Hussein, where he built three burial mounds of rock coffins in a square room in stone. He placed a stone door on this tomb and completely engraved the lower surface in the lower view of the tomb so that it transferred into a polished surface making it impossible to reach the inside of the tomb. The upper level of the tomb door was dedicated to the symbolic depictions of the king's prayer scene accompanied by the representatives of the satrapies, along with the honoring of the fire and the display of the king's divine deity. He also decorated the facade of both sides of the tomb door in the form of a columned porch with the heads of columns in the anterior shape of two animals similar to the columnar porch of Apadana Hall. Inscriptions in the worship of God, the glory of the king and the description of the land under his territory for the future were engraved on the rocky view of his tomb. His first successors were Xerxes (486-465 BC), Ardashir I (465-425 BC) and Darius II (404-423 BC) in the same place and later Ardashir II (404-359 BC). And Ardashir III (359-338 BC) created similar tombs on the outskirts of Persepolis with decorations similar to the tomb of Darius. Knowledge of the nature and manner of this tomb complex can pave the way for many points of social and political life in ancient times.

No independent work has been written on the subject of the present study, but many tourists, travel writers and archaeologists have visited Naqsh-e-Rostam and written many reports. Published material includes studies of Madame Dieulafoy (1885-1885), Ernst Herzfeld and Zare (1910; Herzfeld 1928, 1941; Sarre & Herzfeld); Byron (1935); Sprengling 1937; Demandt (1968) Borger (1969), Eric Schmidt (Schmidt 1939, 1970), Wurfel (1970), Hinz (1971), Schipmann (1971), Gotch (1972), Michael Roof (Roaf 1974), Nadjmabadi (1976), Shahbazi (1978), Wolfram Kleiss (1976), Borker Klahn (1982), and Sancici-Werdenburg (1983). Among all these scholars, Eric Schmidt published the documents of the archaeological excavations of this collection, which can be said that the detailed description of Eric Schmidt's book provides the result of the most archaeological information about the role of Rostam in the Achaemenid period. The present study seeks to investigate this tomb complex by descriptive-analytical method and by relying on library resource data and field observations.

Conclusion

Comprehensive archaeological studies were carried out in the two northwestern parts of Persepolis and Firoozi complex, where tens of hectares of building complexes including irrigation systems, semi-industrial areas of the city, palaces and monuments were identified to such an extent that according to Askari Chavardi and Kaliri, it seems that the border of the buffer zone, one around Takhtgah, which reached Naqsh-e Rostam and Istakhr to the north, coincided with the borders of the city of Parseh since the archeological evidence provided showed that the city of Parseh had formed over a large area. In the collection of works of the Achaemenid period of Parseh city, a large collection of Persepolis, southern great, northern great, northwestern part of Persepolis in Parseh, Firoozi and Takhtgozar collection, discovered brick mound gate

and surrounding areas, Mehr mountain complex, and especially Naghsh-e-Rostam tomb complex is remarkable, which was built in this vast area on the outskirts of Parseh city in the Achaemenid period. According to ancient relics and inscriptions, the collection of works of Naghsh-e Rostam in the Achaemenid, Seleucid, Parthian and Sassanid periods has continually been used and honored. In the Achaemenid period, the connection of Naghsh-e-Rostam tomb complex as an important and functional part of Parseh city on the outskirts of the city but was related to Persepolis. The tradition of burying the deceased king was performed according to Zoroastrianism in this place, and after the burial of the king, the ceremony of enthroning the new king was performed in this place and in the monumental and holy building of the Kaaba of Zoroaster. After performing religious ceremonies, the king left Naqsh-e-Rostam and sat on the throne in Persepolis. This collection, as the ancient and spiritual heritage of the Achaemenid kings, has always played a dynamic role in the religious, political and religious structure in the religious legitimacy of the post-Achaemenid periods as a belief heritage. The transfer of several thousand years of Mesopotamian and Elamite religious tradition in spiritual ascension and legitimation to the king himself as he ascended the throne in the religious ideological cities of Babylon, Inshushinak in Susa and Choghaznabil, and the continuation of this tradition with more complex but cohesive formations. In addition, the Sassanids in the construction of the Kaaba of Zoroaster in the role of Rostam in the ideological city of Parseh in the Anshan plain shows the evolution of the religious process and the religious legitimacy of the Elamite, Achaemenid and Sassanid governments in southern and southwestern Iran over several millennia.

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