Ilkhanid Urban Planning; the Manifestation of the First Large-Scale Public Spaces on a Geometric Scale in Iranian-Islamic Cities

Abstract

The Ilkhanid era in Iranian-Islamic urban planning can be considered as a transition period from Razi style to Isfahani style. The status of this period in Iranian urban planning is due to the fact that on the one hand, following the special situation after the devastating Mongol invasion, it has maintained the evolution of Iranian urban planning and on the other hand, the necessary background for the formation of Isfahani style in the Safavid period is shaped (1135-907 AH). The present research is accomplished by a descriptive and analytical method by the means of library resource data. Research findings indicate that the urban planning and architecture features of the Ilkhanid era seeks to create glory and splendor in the form of tall porches, higher heights of domes and openings, large and long spaces, more accurate and proportionate dimensions in the architecture of large squares of urban complexes all within the form of a complete urbanization forms. In fact, the purely geometric shape of large-scale urban spaces in Ilkhanid urban planning is significantly dissimilar from the courtyards of earlier urban complexes and body-like squares within urban contexts. The destruction of the socio-economic-physical structures of cities by the Mongols at the beginning of the seventh century AH, led to the reinvention of the concept of the square in a higher structure at the end of this century that included a large-scale geometric structure that became global regarding the urban planning of the Safavid period.

Research aims:

1. Recognition of public space styles in chronology of architectural-urban planning styles in Iran.

2. Study of the characteristics of public spaces in the urban planning of the Ilkhanid period.

Research questions:

1. In architecture and urban planning in the history of Iran, what styles have existed in creating public spaces?

2. What are the characteristics of public spaces in the urban planning of the Ilkhanid period?

Keywords: Iranian-Islamic city, urban planning, Ilkhanid era, geometric public space.

Introduction

Urban spaces are part of the open and public spaces of cities that are a crystallization of the nature of collective life, that is, where citizens are present. A space that allows all people to access and work. The nature of public spaces is that they are easily accessible and include enclosed spaces without roofs (religious buildings and civic organizations). These spaces have diverse bodies including the built structure to natural environments. With such a definition of urban space, a re-reading of Iranian-Islamic cities shows that until the period of the Ilkhanid era reforms, there was no large-scale, geometric and pre-conceived urban space that was used by the public for general social activities. In fact, it can be acknowledged that until the Ilkhanid era, the urban planning system was designed only on the scale of government-religious spaces, or the generalities of urban planning, including determining the general shape of the city. The formation of urban units such as neighborhoods, public open spaces and even the physical shape and form of the market, has been formed gradually and completely organically around the designed centers. Depending on the worldview of the rulers before the Ilkhanid period, the space and place that was designed for the gathering of a large number of people (at the city level) was either a government space such as a palace or an ideological space such as a mosque. What is emphasized here is the single function and specificity of the mentioned spaces. Obviously, the palace complex demands its own rules for the entry and exit of the general public. Therefore, open, large, geometric and pre-conceived spaces cannot be considered as public urban space. Religious-ideological open spaces, such as courtyards of mosques or open spaces around fire temples, have had their own functional rules throughout history, consequently, they cannot be used as public urban space.

Regarding the background of the present study, it should be said that no independent work with this title has been written so far. However, articles on urban planning and urban spaces have been published regarding the Ilkhanid period. An article entitled "Factors and Elements of Formation and Elements of Cities of the Ilkhanid Period" written by Talebonia and Najafi (2015) has been written in which the authors have analyzed the effective factors in the urban planning of the Ilkhanid period. Another article entitled "An Analysis of Urban Spaces from Tabriz Ilkhanid to Safavid Isfahan" written by Forootan (2009) has studied the effective factors in the transformation of urban spaces in this historical period. However, there is no reference to the discussion of geometric spaces, accordingly, in the present study, this issue is investigated.

Regarding the method of conducting this research, it should be said that this research has been compiled in three stages based on an analytical-interpretive historiography. In the first stage, with a descriptive-analytical method, the concept and function of the square in the history of Iranian and Iranian-Islamic cities from the Median civilization to the Ilkhanid period, according to architectural styles, and based on written documents, is considered. In the second stage, by a meta-analysis method, 120 studies related to Iranian-Islamic urban planning with the aim of recognizing the importance of the square as an significant and influential element among the elements and urban structure, from the perspective of Iranian-Islamic cities, with library tools is analyzed and in the third stage, by the method of historical research, by explaining the historical processes, the emergence of the first large-scale urban spaces of geometric scale in Iranian-Islamic cities is evaluated.

Conclusion

In-depth studies on the process and product of the formation of Iranian-Islamic cities show that in addition to climatic conditions, socio-political structures directly affect the manifestations of urban planning. Even if it appears to be in deeper layers. This influence is more pronounced in the process of shaping public spaces, which is itself a sociological issue. This is why the vast Ilkhanid intellectual foundations of the

ruling governments of Iran, often with tribal origins and structures (in which obedience to the orders of an elder or tribal chief is essential), originates from this place and does not give a right to the opinion of the people and therefore does not allocate space to demonstrations and social and institutional manifestations in the city. This fact is accurately the opposite of what is happening in the real world of the city, in the form of agora and forum, in the real world of the city, in the form of agora and forum. Therefore, it seems logical that with the fusion of Iranian and Greek civilizations, after Alexander's invasion of Iran, the formation of an open and public area, although still primitive in the cities can be observed. In the next stage, the expansion of the Islamic worldview with theories of equality and fraternity in Iran, and the equalization of the common people with the privileged social classes and the importance of rabbis, cause this public open space to gradually scale on a larger scale. However, since the growth of urbanization is very slow, public spaces, following other urban structures, are formed gradually and organically and without preconceived plans. In the last stage, and after the almost global and irreversible destruction of Iranian-Islamic cities after the Mongol invasion of Iran, and as a result the necessity to build new cities that also represent the glory of the rulers, a kind of large-scale public spaces with complete geometry is based on designs that might be called master plans is created. Public spaces, surrounded by public functions, operate on a city-wide scale and have an orthogonal geometry and become the basis for the formation of Iranian-Islamic cities throughout the land.

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