

Timurid Tents and Enclosures based on the Juxtaposition of Zafar-nameh of Yazdi and Narrative of the Embassy of Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo

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Abstract

As the histories record accounts, alluding to contexts of events is unavoidable; so they include some descriptions of the handicrafts belonging to the context, therefore, the histories can be placed among the main resources of art and culture subjects. Subjects such as tents, which were very usual in Timurid time. Different kinds of Timurid tents were introduced by various native terms in the histories such as Zafar-nameh. However, the tents due to being used routinely those days and writing about such things in the histories was disdained, there are few detailed descriptions of them in the book and most of them are couched in literary terms. So the lack of information cannot depict their characteristic features thoroughly. Fortunately, the absence is eliminated by Clavijo's descriptions in his book, contemporary with Zafar-nameh. As the tourists and visitors are more interested in unusual things, which are almost rare in their lands, they give much more explanations. Clavijo, the ambassador of Spain, has compiled an extremely detailed account on the various tents during his journey to Timur territory. This article, based on resources, extracts the names referred to tents from Zafar-nameh at first, and a general meaning of each word according to the context. Then by the juxtaposition with Narrative of the Embassy of Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo brings the detailed descriptions to complete the depiction of various tents. However, passing the centuries after Timurid time and extinction of some kinds of tents have made their names disused and forgotten or their meanings completely changed.

Objectives

1. Reintroduction the customary terms referring to different kinds of tents, which have been used during the Timurid dynasty and territory but nowadays get unused and extinct or totally forgotten, according to Zafar-nameh as a history of that time.
2. Finding out the characteristic features of various Timurid tents, based on the juxtaposition of two contemporary accounts, which have different points of view and cover their lack of information: of a Persian (Zafar-nameh) and a foreign

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(Narrative of the Embassy of Ruy Gonzales de Clavijo).

Questions

1. What words and terms were used for different kinds of tents during Timurid dynasty and territory?
2. What were the characteristic features of the various customary tents in the Timurid Time, such as function and purpose, erection method, shape, dimension and measurement, textile, pattern and ornamentation?

Keywords: The Timurid dynasty, enclosure, guyed tent, trellis tent, awning.

Introduction

Among the research sources in the vast area of culture and Iranian art are ancient Persian texts including history letters. History letters express a set of incidents that have happened to a nation in a century and since the occurrences that happen in a life of people are amidst cultural and man-made happenings, history letters focus on such occurrences and describe them. Accordingly, one of the ways in which historical research on tents and enclosures can be traced back to colonial and transitional life is to pursue the texts of the histories written during the prosperity of these constructions, including the Timurid period from the period of the development of such structures. It is considered, and throughout this period, the tradition of nomadic life preserved in Timur's court and his descendants (Okain 1993: 249). Timur's tents and experiences were so magnificent that they attracted the attention of most scribes and painters of the age in so which according to the details and information available in written and visual texts remaining from this era, tent structures can be depicted (Andrews, 1980:544).

One of these text sources is Zafar-nameh, a chronology written by Sharafuddin Ali Yazdi in the fifteenth / ninth century on the life of Timur. He began writing this book in the order of Ibrahim Sultan, the grandson of Timur, in the year 212-22 and finished writing it by citing al-Thaqi and some other textual sources, including Zafar-nameh Nizamuddin Shami (Yazdi, 2008: 4-5). Since Timur spends most of his life traveling and living inside tent structures, his life is inextricably linked to his residences and to his tribe and troops, and is thus a good source for acquaintance with all types of tent structures, related vocabulary and names.

Yazdi's focus in this book, like other court historians, has been on the conquest, overthrow and honor of the royal family and has not been recorded and chronicled for the ordinary daily affairs of the people. But addressing the tent structures and describing them, albeit briefly in the form of literary arrays, expresses that Timur's camps, as well as his artifacts,

were symbols of the royal family and deserved to be included in Zafar-nameh (Okain 1993: 251).

Another report of the tent camp structures of Timur is mentioned in the travel memoir by Clavijo which contains more details about the tent structures than the Zafar-nameh. His report, designated as one of three ambassadors sent by King Castiel, describes his meetings with Timur in 1401 in nearby Samarkand (Wilbur, 1979). His entrance to Samarqand was accompanied by joyful celebration and marriage ceremonies of Timur's children and grandchildren in an area named Canegel and Clavijo personally attended the ceremony. For this reason, his extensive report provides reliable and valuable information. His descriptions show how such ceremonies and rituals can express the power and supremacy of an emperor (Okain 1993: 251).

For the present article, the Persian translation of the Clavijo travel memoir has been used; however, while it was useful information, there were two drawbacks; firstly, in translating the expression of tent structures, the common term of the era is used, which is entirely different in what is applied in the Zafar-nameh is different; hence, comparing both works in terms of literary words is slightly difficult. Secondly, the Persian translation is derived from its English translation which is some means different from its original Spanish copy and this creates doubt and ambiguity (Andrews, 1980: 562). Similarly, where possible misunderstanding occurs, the first English version of Clavijo travel memoir translated by C. R. Murchham that is more closely related to the original text was used; moreover, reference to Dr. Peter Andrews's dissertation on woven tents in Central Asia: the wilderness tradition and its interplay with royal tents; was also referred to.

Finally, to clarify the ambiguity of the descriptions and to further confirm or explain each of the tent structures, paintings attributed to Kamal-al Din Behzad have been used in the manuscripts of Zafar-nameh in 935 AH. This edition is written by Sultan Noor Muhammad and is kept at the Golestan Palace Library.

Conclusion

The main terms and expressions that refer to the types of tent structures in the Timurid period used in the past include the Tabernacle, the Tent, the Candlestick, the Tentacle, the Cross, the Wag, the Head, the Canopy and the Rib. The written and visual sources used in this article are Zafar-nameh, Clavijo's travel memoir, paintings attributed to Kamal-al Din Behzad and one of the manuscripts of Zafar-nameh; moreover, the paintings of the

Shāhnāmeḥ under the supervision of Homo is also applied. This expresses that each of the above sources imply a certain type and function for tent structures with a variety of formal features. Some of these original vocabulary has changed over time as a result of lost and forgotten symbols, and their meaning has changed; hence, recognizing and knowing the appearance and function of each expression has expanded the scope of the vocabulary related to art and culture, and thus the linguistic sharing with first-hand sources becomes the subject of research.

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