

STUDYING THE ARCHITECTURE OF KERMAN'S ZOROASTRIAN CRYPTS WITH A LOOK AT THE BURIAL RITUAL

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Received: 21 August 2024

Accepted: 16 December 2024

Available online: 31 December 2024

Abstract: According to the teachings of Zoroastrianism, to prevent contamination of the four sacred elements, the dead should be placed in the open air or under sunlight. This was Zoroastrians' most common ritual method related to the deceased during the Islamic era. The deceased was placed in an open circular space on the mountaintop for the birds to eat them. This research aims to identify, introduce, and examine such buildings' uses and architectural structures. These buildings have been described and analyzed using field surveys, documentary studies, plans, maps, and images. The results show that the Zoroastrian crypts of Kerman have special features compared to other crypts in different parts of Iran. The ancient beliefs of the people of the south of Iran were also used in the construction of these crypts. According to these beliefs, the Khorfastaran, or demonic animals come from the north (Apakhtar). For this reason, the doors of the crypts were opened towards the Nimrouz (south) or the Khorbaran (west). Here, the location of two crypts with two architectural styles, Indian and Iranian, next to each other is interesting. The path to the crypt from inside the Gabr district of Kerman (the oldest Zoroastrian settlement in the city) is still visible and its stations are available. In addition, in Kerman, crypts are located both in the highlands and in the plains. The use of crypts existed among the Zoroastrians of Kerman until ninety years ago, when, with the efforts of Lord Keykhosrow Shahrokh, crypt burial was transformed into burial.

Keywords: Crypt, Death, Kerman, Architecture.

چکیده: بنابر آموزه‌های دین زرتشت و به منظور جلوگیری از آلودگی چهار عنصر مقدس، مردگان باید در فضای باز یا زیر نور خورشید قرار داده می‌شدند. این معمول‌ترین روش آیینی زرتشتیان در دوران اسلامی بوده است. متوفی درون یک فضای مدور روباز بر بلندی کوه‌ها قرار داده می‌شد تا خوراک پرندگان شود. این پژوهش با هدف شناسایی، معرفی و بررسی کاربردها و چگونگی ساختار معماری این گونه بناها انجام شده است. با روش بررسی میدانی، مطالعات اسنادی، تهیه پلان، نقشه و تصویر، این بناها توصیف و تحلیل شده‌اند. نتایج نشان می‌دهد که دخمه‌های زرتشتیان کرمان در مقایسه با دیگر دخمه‌ها در نقاط مختلف ایران از ویژگی‌های خاصی برخوردار هستند. در ساخت این دخمه‌ها از اعتقادات باستانی مردم جنوب کشور نیز استفاده شده است. بر اساس این باورها، خرفستران یا همان جانوران اهریمنی از سوی اپاکتر (شمال) می‌آیند. به همین دلیل درب دخمه‌ها را به‌سوی نیمروز (جنوب) و یا خوربران (غرب) باز می‌کردند. قرار گرفتن دو دخمه با دو سبک معماری هندی و ایرانی در کنار یکدیگر از موارد جالب توجه است. مسیر دخمه از داخل گرم‌محلۀ کرمان (قدیمی‌ترین سکونتگاه زرتشتیان این شهر) هنوز قابل رؤیت و ایستگاه‌های آن موجود است. به‌علاوه، در کرمان دخمه‌ها هم در ارتفاعات و هم در دشت قرار دارند. استفاده از دخمه تا نود سال پیش در میان زرتشتیان کرمان وجود داشته که با تلاش ارباب کیخسرو شاهرخ، دخمه‌گذاری به خاکسپاری تبدیل شده است.

کلیدواژه: دخمه، مرگ، کرمان، معماری،

I. Introduction

After the Islamic conquests, despite the restrictions, Zoroastrians retained many parts of their rituals, and although the elements of their ritual customs may have undergone some changes, their foundation remained the same. Gradually, Zoroastrians from Fars and Khorasan moved to Sistan and Makran, and some migrated to India. Zoroastrians from India (known as Indian Persians), who had managed to gain a strong social position, after learning about the situation of Zoroastrians in Iran, formed an association called the "Association for the Improvement of the Condition of Zoroastrians in Iran" during the Qajar period. They sent a representative named Manekji Limji Houshang Hatria to Iran to take steps to improve the condition of Zoroastrians in Iran (Khajepour, 2018: 58). In addition to numerous measures to improve the livelihood and religious rituals of Zoroastrians, Manekji took measures to repair places of worship, fire temples, and crypts of

the dead (Afshar, 2024: 402). Carving and digging out rock cliffs and creating crypts and shelters in the mountains have a long history among some ancient peoples. The ancient man provided himself with a larger space from a small space by digging out natural rocks on the slopes of mountains and creating holes. Rock architecture was a type of space expansion used as a house or crypt. In Zoroastrian religious literature, this practice is called placement in a crypt, and the burial structures associated with it are called crypts. Therefore, this type of expansion of space is also known as crypt architecture (Nourallahi, 2023: 47). The burial of the dead in circular crypts located high in the mountains was practiced until the past few decades in cities such as Yazd, Kerman, Tehran, and other Zoroastrian regions of Iran (Ahmadi, 2020: 3). The social and governmental restrictions related to Iranian Zoroastrian communities have meant that there are no ancient sources about the

method of building crypts in Iran. In addition, the method of building crypts in Iran was much more concise than that of the Persians in India (Shieni Gholampour, 2021: 116).

Iranian Zoroastrians still maintain their fire temples in the aforementioned cities, but they no longer bury their dead in the tower of silence or the crypt. It is worth noting that the bones of the deceased were transferred from the crypt to a place called the ossuary (Rahbar, 2024: 58). Currently, Zoroastrians bury their dead, but since they believe that the element of soil should not become contaminated, they place the deceased on a metal or wooden surface and then bury them in the ground so that there is no direct contact with the soil. In different parts of Kerman, many religious buildings such as square towers, fire temples, shrines, crypts, and tombs have remained from the Sassanid and Islamic periods. This study attempts to study and introduce the uses and architectural structure of the aforementioned buildings.

II. Methodology

This research addresses the identification, description, and analysis of Zoroastrian crypts by examining and photographing architectural works and documentary studies. In the field study, one of the building mapping methods called the r leve method was used, which has various applications. In this method, architectural maps of buildings are prepared using different tools and techniques. This method is used especially for old, historical buildings, as well as buildings for which maps are not available. Using advanced tools such as laser scanners, three-dimensional cameras, and levelers, accurate maps of the building are prepared. This method allows for accurate restoration of ancient works and can be used to detect possible damage caused by various accidents and in the reconstruction of buildings. Given that historical buildings and textures play an important role in determining the identity of a nation, recognizing and protecting this heritage is of particular importance. R leve generally allows us to identify the building in all its physical and functional dimensions by taking and preparing accurate maps. As a result, r leve, as an architectural mapping method, allows us to obtain accurate information about old and historical buildings, which is effective in their preservation, restoration, and reconstruction. In this research, a survey camera was applied to capture UTM points of different buildings according to the building plan. Then a laser meter was used to verify distances and dimensions randomly.

III. Death in Zoroastrianism

In Zoroastrianism, human death is not the end of life, but rather the beginning of spiritual happiness (Niknam, 2002). After a person has completed the

stages of his life in the best possible way, at the end of his natural, fruitful life, while knowing the purpose of creation, he reaches his origin and destination, namely, reunion with his true beloved (Shahzadi, 1992: 100). Therefore, believing in wailing and mourning for the dead would be basically blasphemy and ingratitude, because everyone's wish, whether for themselves or others, is this happy ending. For this reason, crying, wailing, and self-harm are strongly condemned in the Mazdaist religion, and their religious prohibition and prohibition are strictly recommended (Razi, 2001: 92). Zoroastrians believe that the soul is not mortal (Pirnia, 2013: 267). After death, the soul wanders around the body for three days, taking care of its body (Hinles, 2014: 68). On the morning of the fourth day, near the Chinud Bridge, a court of justice is held, attended by angels such as Soroush, Rashan, and Estad, to carefully consider the good and bad deeds of the departed soul (Azargoshasb, 1993: 205). Sinners cannot pass through this stage (Bahar, 1996: 43), but it is easily passed by a soul that is recognized as pure and innocent (Qadiani, 2009: 319). The virtuous go to heaven and the sinners fall into hell. At the end of time, after the passage of twelve millennia, hell is destroyed, the souls in hell are also freed, and the world is transformed into heaven (Mazdapour, 2003: 104).

There are no blazing flames in the Zoroastrian hell because, as we know, the sacred fire should never be polluted by the presence of sinners. What torments sinners in Zoroastrian hell is the absence of fire and the presence of bitter cold and absolute darkness. According to the Gathas, hell or the house of lies is a place called the place of unhappiness. It is a land from which the stench rises and cries of lamentation and sorrow are heard from its dark depths. On the other side of the Chinud Bridge, in the house of pleasures, according to the Gathas, is the highest paradise. That place is a happy place and the sun never sets there and it is the best place (Mashkour, 1998: 101).

If it is known that a person is dying, a priest should be called to ask for forgiveness of sins for him. A pious person should die praying (Hinles, 2014: 93). The prayer recited for a dying person by at least two ministers is called the patet, or "confession of sin and request for forgiveness" (Gaiman, 2002: 148).

As soon as a Zoroastrian person dies, his relatives close his eyelids, fold his arms across his chest, and fold his legs from the knees. Then, he is laid in a well-cleaned corner of the house, on an iron bed or the paved floor, and he is covered from head to toe with a clean and washed robe (Azargoshasb, 1993: 207). Since in Zoroastrianism the four sacred elements, including soil, must not be polluted, the deceased is placed on an impenetrable surface of iron or stone (Vahidi, 2014: 96). The bearers of the dead, whom Zoroastrians call "Pishgahans," were informed that a person had died

and were to be present to take him to his eternal grave. The pallbearers, whose number was always even (Azargoshasb, 1993: 208), carried the deceased on their shoulders from the house to the crypt or tomb. Depending on the distance from the city or village to the crypt or tomb, they came in groups of eight to thirty-two, and then lifted the body from the ground, placed it on a stretcher, and took it to the washing house and shrouded it (Mazdapour, 2003: 606). The washing house was a relatively large building and area for washing, praying, and performing other religious ceremonies for the deceased (Soroush Sorushian, 1956: 213). This place has two doors; one is the entrance door and the other is the exit door. At the entrance door of the compound, the name of the deceased, the day, month, and year of birth, and the name of the deceased's father were recorded in a special book. After the religious ceremony was performed and the deceased was shrouded, his name and the day of death were written again in a special book at the exit door.

Since the bearers of the dead did not receive any money for their labor, they prepared a tray or plate or dice or a copper spoon and engraved the name and date of birth and death of the deceased and the name of the assistant on it and presented it to them. The deceased was not placed on the ground in more than three places from the house where they were lifted to the tomb or crypt: from the house to the bathhouse, from the bathhouse to the prayer hall, and from the prayer hall to the eternal place. In ancient times, in the prayer hall, when they wanted to lift the body from the ground, they placed a loaf of bread on the deceased's chest and brought a dog that sniffed and, if the soul was not in the body of the deceased, picked up the bread. This practice was called "Sagdid". This dog was trained for this task. Zoroastrians believe that the soul of the deceased remains in his home until the morning of the fourth day in this world. Therefore, from the day of death until the fourth day, when the body was laid on the ground, they would build a chamber with three unbaked bricks (mud bricks) and light a lamp in it. After this period, the lamp inside the chamber and all the lamps in his house would be turned off and turned on again, and the brick chamber would be thrown into running water to destroy it. Turning off and turning on the lamps means that the deceased has left that house and world, and the lamp and light belong to his survivors. For four days, the close relatives of the deceased were not allowed to eat meat and did not consider it proper to entertain anyone. In addition, during this period, greetings were not obligatory for them. All that was said was "May the souls of the deceased be happy!" and "May God have mercy on everyone!" On the third day, most women would go to the deceased's house and take with them a measure of flour, oil, an onion, eggs, potatoes, and other things, and they would help and cooperate in the

household chores of the deceased until late at night. The ceremony on the fourth day began with the recitation of the Avesta by the priests and others. They would put a pleasant scent on the fire to perfume the air, and freshwater, garlic, sedab, and fruit would be placed on the table (Mazdapour, 2002: 607-606). If a person died in a month with thirty days, the rituals specific to the fourth day of his death were not performed. In other cases, if for any reason the day, month, or year of the deceased's death was not known, they would base it on Farvardin, the day of Azar from the month Azar, and the day of Dey from the month Varahram, respectively (Akhteh, 2006: 136).

IV. The Architecture of the Crypt

The method of building the crypt was such that in the heights of the mountain, a circular area was chosen, and a wall was built around it and a door was placed for its entrance. The size of the crypt depended on some things, including the location of the mountain or the population for whom the crypt was built. Of course, the architecture of the crypts was greatly influenced by religious beliefs and the way of looking at the world and the afterlife, as well as how they functioned. This place was built to prevent the four main elements of nature (water, wind, earth, and fire) from being polluted. On the other hand, Zoroastrians believe that one should not be dependent on the deceased and do not consider building a tomb to be a good thing. This was achieved by placing the dead in the crypt because in this way no trace of the deceased remains. According to Zoroastrian beliefs, like other monotheistic religions, women, men, and children are all on the same level before God. Accordingly, the best form for building a crypt that is consistent with this belief is a circle. In addition to the geometric strength of the structure and body, the circular form has no corners, angles, top and bottom, and the poor and rich are all the same in the crypt. On the other hand, the circle is also reminiscent of the sun, which has a special place in the eyes of Zoroastrians. Overall, these beliefs, along with the beliefs related to the need for peace of mind on the first nights after death, have determined the architectural form of the crypt. Although fixed and specific beliefs have been followed in the construction of the crypts, their architectural features are not completely the same, and the local conditions have caused some changes and differences in the architecture and the way they are built. Therefore, the design of the crypts has depended on ideological and functional factors.

Four general principles were considered in the construction of the crypt:

- 1 -Distance from the center of people's residence (city or village);
- 2 -Exposing the deceased to sunlight to purify the body;

3 -Not polluting water, soil, wind and fire (the four elements);

4 -Exposing the bodies to the light of the fire at night, and guarding the soul by fire and guiding it towards the afterlife and the Day of Judgment.

Zoroastrian crypts come in two styles, Iranian and Indian, which we will discuss below.

IV1. Iranian Crypts

There were two types of crypts in Iran. One type of crypt, examples of which can be seen in the cities of Yazd and Kerman, was built on the side of a mountain. Some of these crypts, such as the Yazd crypt, were divided into two halves by an internal brick wall, half for the deceased and half for the bones of the dead (Boyce, 1974: 3; Huff, 2003: 623). These crypts, while simple, had the conditions for carrying out this custom according to the instructions of Vendidad. In the Islamic era, a high circular wall was built around the crypt to protect it from predators and foreigners.

The other type of crypt, better known as the tower crypt, was a man-made structure that was used in Iran during the Islamic era. The oldest document that mentions this type of crypt dates back to the 10th century AD (Boyce, 1974: 4). The crypts were located on the steep slopes of the mountain and close to the settlements of Zoroastrians living in the plain. The circular body of these crypts was often made of stone and sometimes of brick and was then surrounded by a high wall. The designers dug a well in the middle of it to collect the decayed bones of the dead. This crypt had a small iron door that was higher than the interior surface of the crypt and usually faced east (Dhabhar, 1932: 103). According to Boyce, the old Iranian and Indian crypts, due to safety issues, did not have any staircases, and usually, a ladder or rope was used to enter and exit. In Iran, most of these crypts were destroyed with the spread of Islam, and the Zoroastrians themselves destroyed some to build new ones (Boyce, 1974: 3).

IV2. Indian Crypts

In India, the construction of the crypt was done by Zoroastrians who migrated from Iran, known as Persians. The Persians initially adopted the architectural style of the Iranian crypts, and in cases of ambiguity, they consulted Iranian priests (Ringer, 2011: 144). From the late 16th century AD, practical reforms in the construction of crypts emerged to adapt to the humid climate of India. The new Persian crypts are reported to be more scientific with a more regular and advanced structure and organization than the old Iranian crypts (Jackson, 1906: 440). One of the practical actions of the Persians in the construction of crypts was to separate the bodies of the deceased inside the crypt, they paved the surface of the crypt with stone slabs in three separate parallel rows, one for men, one for women, and

one for children. These rows of stones were called Pavi. There are an equal number of Pavis in each concentric row (Boyce, 2014: 218). The order of their arrangement is such that the first row, which starts at the foot of the wall and is larger, is for the bodies of men; the second section is for the bodies of women and the third section is for the bodies of children (Razi, 2010: 376). This division was made according to the three principles of Zoroastrianism, namely good thoughts, good words, and good deeds. The Pavis were separated by small walls called Dandas. Small channels were dug between them so that rainwater or fluids that came out of the dead body could flow through this path into the well in the middle of the crypt. In addition, they dug four wells outside the crypt wall at its four corners, which were deeper than the middle well or the ossuary and led to the middle well of the crypt (Saradah) so that water and dirt could be transferred to these wells, and they poured about one meter of sand on the bottom of these wells (Razi, 2010: 376). One of their far-sighted actions to prevent the soil outside the crypt from being contaminated was to purify the salts and sediments in the water. For this purpose, a thin layer of coal and sand was poured in front of these four outer wells of the crypt, so that the dissolved substances in the water flowing from the inside of the crypt to the outside would be taken before contact with the ground. Of course, other changes were made later in the construction of the crypts; such as installing a small opening in the crypt wall overlooking the fireplace so that the light from the fire could shine into the crypt from there (Fig. 1).

The foundation of the Persian crypts was based on two principles. One is equality between the poor and the rich after death, and the other is the sanctity of the crypt. Therefore, building a personal or family crypt was reprehensible to Iranians and contrary to the teachings of Zoroastrianism, because they believed that it would weaken the idea of equality between individuals. From the perspective of a religious Persian, the crypt was not just a simple stone or brick building, but a powerful religious spiritual base that helped Ahura Mazda in the fight against the filth caused by the devil and kept the creatures of nature away from impurity. It was because of this perspective that when they built a new crypt, they sanctified it and kept it closed until the body of a pious man or an innocent child was first placed in the crypt. By taking the first dead person into the crypt, the entire structure of the crypt became impure, and from then on, except for the bearers of the dead, no one was allowed to enter the crypt (Kotwal, 1995:168-169; Dhabhar, 1932: 103).

The ceremony of building a Persian crypt included digging the foundation, construction, and consecration. The priests performed this ceremony along with reciting various prayers such as Yasna, Vendidad, and Baj

Sorush in praise of the gods and the gods. The crypts of Iran and India were built similarly and their difference was in the complexity of the execution and the ceremony of their construction. The construction of the crypt in India was more elaborate than in Iran, such as

having four wells for the blood and dirt of the dead to drain from the central well called Bahandar, and the ceremony of hammering nails and pulling ropes under the foundation of the crypt.

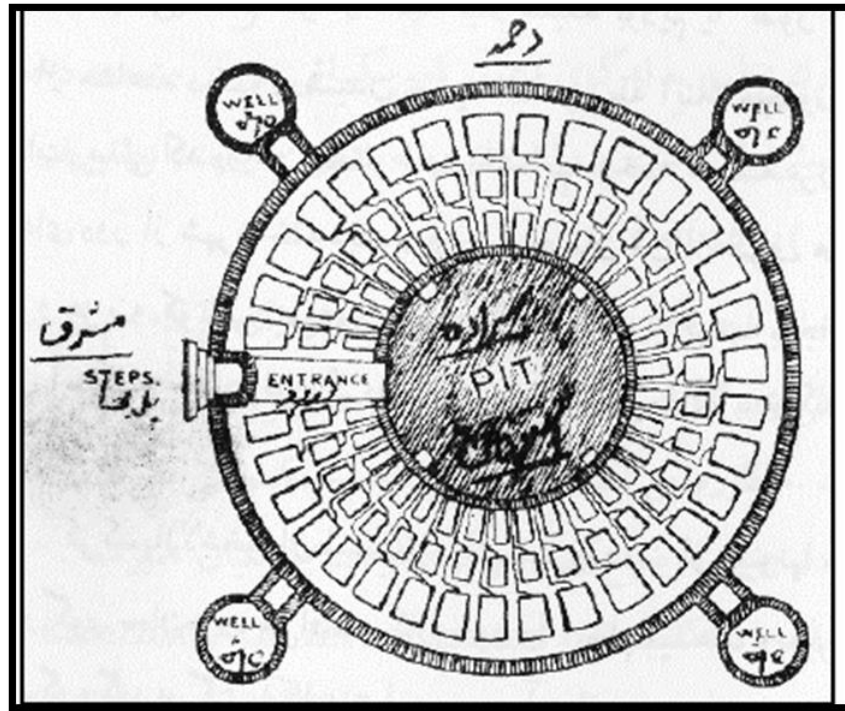


Figure 1. Indian-style crypt plan (Azargoshasb, 1993).

In the city of Kerman, two crypts are located next to each other. One is older and, according to many researchers, dates back to the late Sassanid period, and the other, with a more recent architecture, dates back to the Qajar period, which was built in 1867 AD by Manekji Hatria for Golestan Banu.

Kerman's Zoroastrian crypts have special features compared to other crypts in different parts of the country. For example, the construction of these crypts was based on the ancient beliefs of the people of the south of the country, who believed that the Khorfastaran, or demonic animals, would come from the north (Apakhtar). For this reason, the doors of the crypts were opened towards Nimrouz (South) or Khorbaran (West). Another feature is the location of two crypts with two Indian and Iranian architectural styles next to each other. Their most important feature is the burial route from inside the Gabri district (the oldest settlement of the Zoroastrians of Kerman) to the crypt, which is still visible and its stations exist. The route of carrying the body to the crypt began next to the shrine of Shah Varahram Izad and continued north. The escorting caravan would first make a short stop in front of the "Pirsabzposhan" and then enter the bathhouse. After the ceremony, the movement continued, and the

caravan's next stop was in front of the water tank on the way. They would take the required water and move towards the lower buildings of the crypt. After the ritual ceremony, the deceased's body would be transferred to the crypt. After a short rest, the escorting caravan would return to the city. Zoroastrians around the city had their own crypts. The Zoroastrians of Kohan Chenar, Jopar, and Ismailabad used the Kohan Chenar crypt, and the Zoroastrians of Qanat Ghistan, Langar, and Mahan used the Golestan Banu Qanat Ghistan crypt, and the Zoroastrians of Gzhgin, Baghin, Ravar, Kohbanan, Tarz, Anar, Rafsanjan, Bardsir, Bahram Jard, Baft, and Sirjan each had their own crypt (Figs. 2 & 3).

The crypts had three uses: personal, public, and military. The crypts of the Zoroastrians of Kerman were public. It was customary to leave the doors of the crypts half-open for four days and to keep the court fire burning in the nearby buildings, which were called Khileh, for four days. This had two reasons; one was religious, that the soul of the deceased had to cross the Chinud Bridge. The other reason was that if a dead person came to life, he would see the fire through the hole in the wall of the crypt, which was directly facing the fire, and reach it through the half-open door of the crypt.

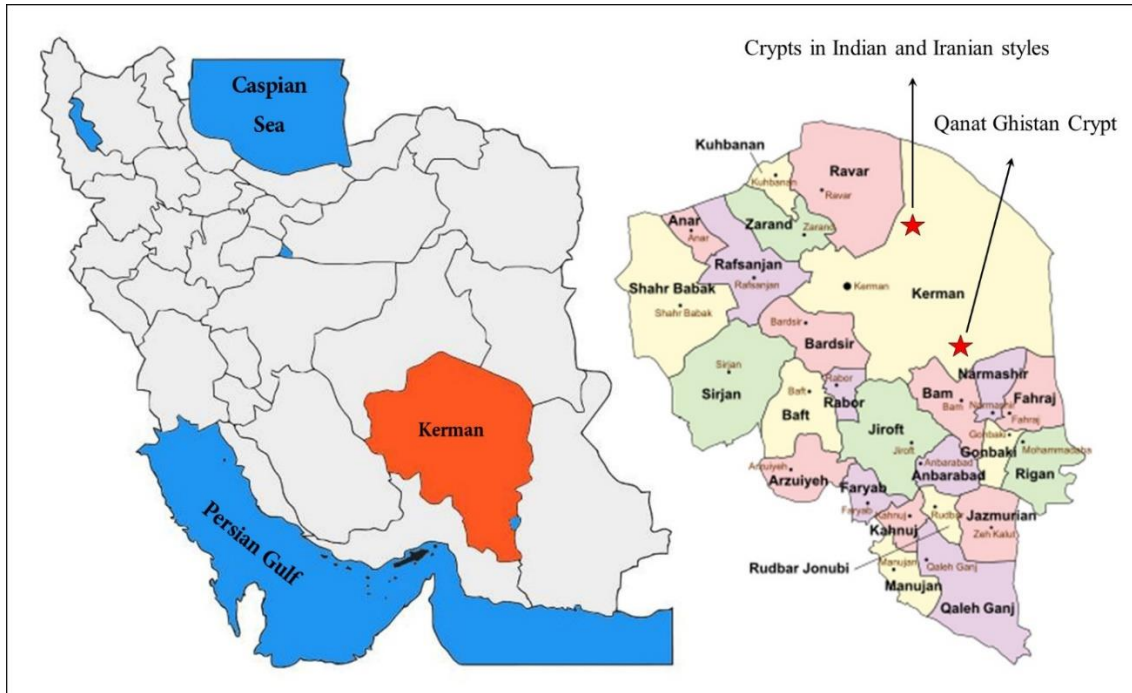


Figure 2. Location of Kerman crypts.



Figure 3. Location of the crypts and their distance from each other (Google Earth).

V. Iranian-Style Crypt

The plan of this type of crypt is an irregular oval with a length of approximately 72.19 m and a width of approximately 30.27 m. The longitudinal walls on the southeast side are more eroded than the west and northwest. The height of the building is approximately 10 m. A fence has been drawn around the crypt, which has parapets in several parts. This building is made of natural materials available in the area, such as river stones and rubble with mortar. The crypt is currently

not in good condition. All its dimensions have been recorded by the author from the healthier parts of the building that are higher, using a laser meter, a crooked drawing, and a drawing in AutoCAD software in metric terms. Based on the available evidence, the architectural style and materials used in the building belong to the Sassanid period. Of course, no scientific work or excavations have been carried out at this site, and more detailed information about the crypt, its dating, and its analysis require archaeological research by experts (Figs. 4, 5, 6 & 7).



Figure 4. Location of crypts in the area and relative to each other (Google Earth).

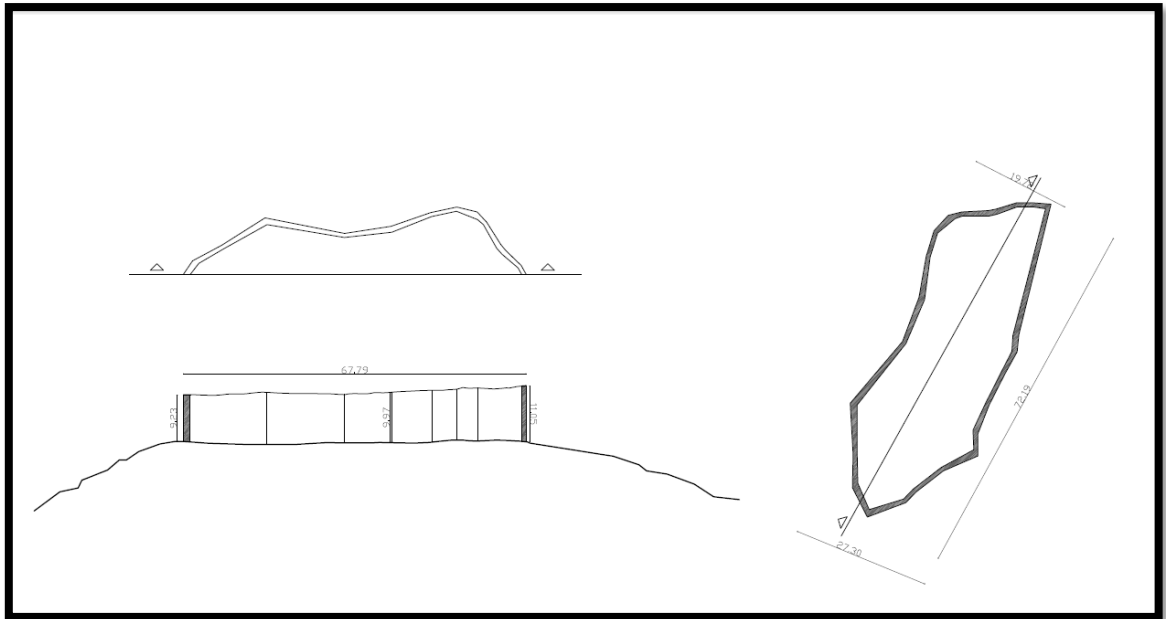


Figure 5. Plan of the crypts (Authors, 2010).



Figure 6. Iranian-style crypt (Authors, 2019).



Figure 7. Iranian crypt, view from Indian crypt (Authors, 2019).

VI. Golestan Banu's Crypt

The building is located in a circular shape on a high hill with a diameter of approximately 25 m and a height of 8.7 m. The building has an entrance door 1 meter long and 90 centimeters wide. A platform 1.10 m high completely blocks the entrance door and prevents direct view into the crypt. It is approximately 2.3 m wide and 70 cm thick. The interior of the crypt is divided into sections for placing corpses and grooves for blood and contamination to drain out of the crypt. The crypt in the middle of the building is approximately 9 m in diameter and 1.60 m deep, and is a place for the bones of the dead. After the corpse decays and is destroyed, the bones are washed and poured into it. The walls are 6

meters high from the inside and 70 cm thick. There is an opening in the wall for light. The building has been damaged and needs protection and restoration. The crypt was built by Darabji Faramoji Pandeh in the name of his mother Golestan Banu by Manekji Limji in 1236 Yazdgerdi (Shahmardan, 1957: 264). This crypt, with its modern architecture and Indian style, dates back to the Qajar period. The building is made entirely of stone and its exterior and interior are covered with mortar. The entrance to this building faces south. Near the building, there is a temporary residence or resting place, called Khileh, for the relatives of the deceased. In this place, dishes related to various ceremonies were cooked (Figs. 8, 9, 10, 11 & 12).

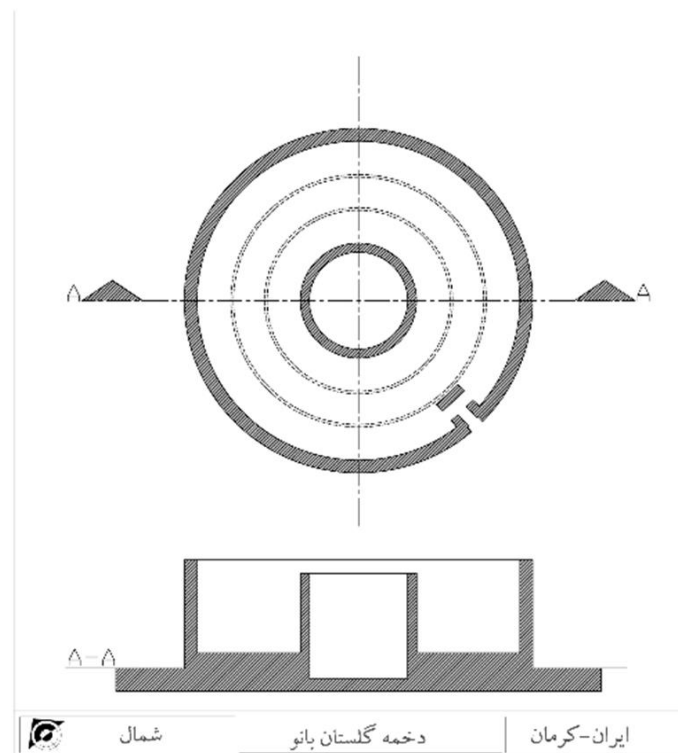


Figure 8. Plan of the Golestan Banu Crypt (Authors, 2019).



Figure 9. Golestan Banu Crypt (Authors, 2019).



Figure 10. The floor of the Golestan Banu Crypt (Authors, 2019).



Figure 11. Khileh (Authors, 2019).



Figure 12. Entrance to the Golestan Banu Crypt (Authors, 2019).

VII. Qanat Ghistan Crypt

Unlike other crypts, this crypt is located on the plain and has no entrance door. The plan of the building is circular and 2.4 m high. The interior space is completely destroyed and no trace of the floor remains, and there is only an ossuary 2 m deep and 3.8 m in diameter, which is also damaged. The approximate diameter of the crypt is 11 m and its walls are 80 centimeters thick and made of local natural materials such as rubble and mortar. This building is currently very damaged, so that

nothing remains of the walls of the building. Unauthorized diggers have excavated the inside and around the building and caused serious damage to it, so that nothing remains of the floor and interior space except dirt, stones, and deep holes. There is a stone slab next to the crypt that was used to transport the body into the crypt. The time of use of this building dates back to the Qajar period. Near the crypt, there is a Khileh for the residence of the deceased's relatives (Figs. 13, 14, 15, 16, 17 & 18).

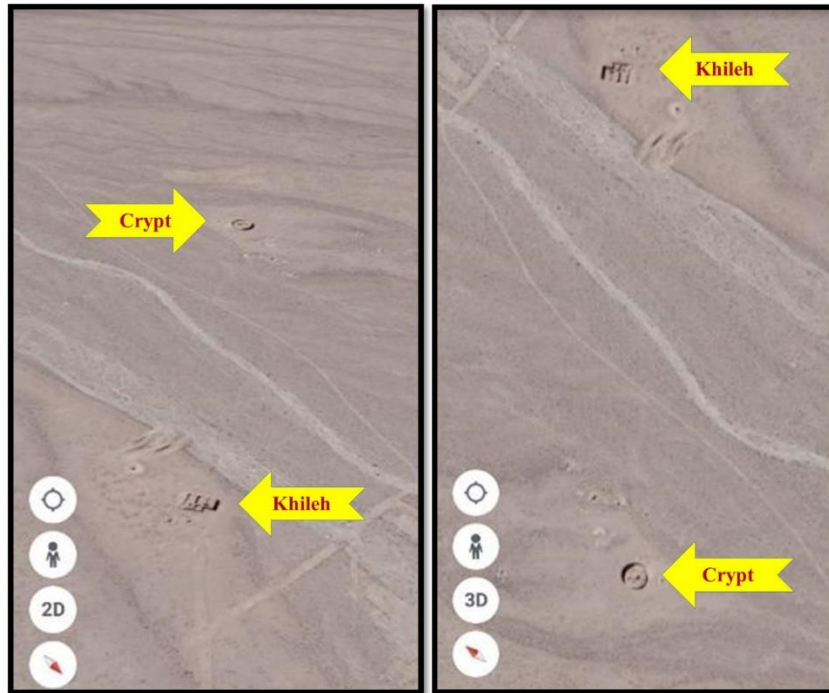


Figure 13. Location of Qanat Ghistan crypt (google earth).

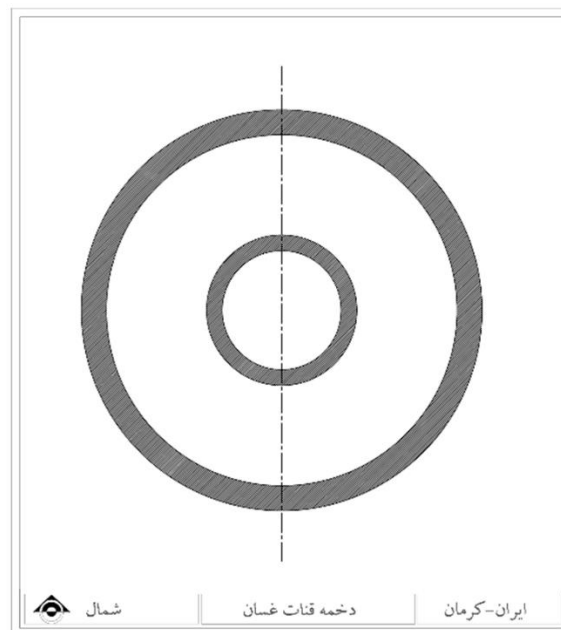


Figure 14. Plan of the Qanat Ghistan crypt (Authors, 2019).



Figure 15. Qanat Ghistan crypt (Authors, 2019).



Figure 16. Khileh (Authors, 2019).



Figure 17. The floor of the Qanat Ghistan crypt (Authors, 2019).



Figure 18. A stone related to the architecture of the Qanat Ghistan crypt (Authors, 2019).

VIII. Tomb

Until about 60 years ago, people in Zoroastrian cities used old and dilapidated crypts to bury the bodies of their deceased. Later, in Tehran from the mid-1930s, in Kerman from 1941, and in Yazd from 1961, the crypts were transformed into tombs (cemeteries) (Qadiani, 2008: 322-323). The use of crypts among the

Zoroastrians of Kerman was transformed into burials with the efforts of Lord Keykhosrow Shahrokh. As mentioned, according to Zoroastrian beliefs, the element of earth should never be polluted. Therefore, the body of the deceased is placed on a metal or wooden bed and buried in the ground so that direct contact with the soil is not established (Figs. 19 & 20).



Figure 19. Zoroastrian tomb (Authors, 2019).



Figure 20. Zoroastrian tomb (Authors, 2019).

IX. Conclusion

The Zoroastrian crypts of Kerman have special features compared to other crypts in different regions of the country. The ancient beliefs of the people of the south of the country were used in the construction of these crypts. They believed that demonic animals come from the north and for this reason they opened the doors of the crypts to the south or west. Also, there are two crypts with Indian and Iranian architectural styles close to each other. The route of carrying the body to

the crypts from inside the Kerman Gabr district is still visible and there are stations for it. In Kerman, crypts are located both in the highlands and in the plains. All the crypts are built with local materials. The use of crypts existed among the Zoroastrians of Kerman until about ninety years ago, when it was transformed into burial with the efforts of Lord Keykhosrow Shahrokh. To prevent the soil from being contaminated by the deceased's body, it is placed on a wooden or metal bed and placed in the grave.

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