

Construction of the City of Ardašīr-Xwarrah Based on the Avestan-Vedic Mandala Wisdom and Its Connection with the Origin of Sasan

Type of Study: Review article

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Abstract

According to historical documents, Ardašīr-Xwarrah is one of the first cities built by Ardashir I, the founder of the Sassanid dynasty. It is based on precise geometric and circular calculations. So far, there have been many reports and studies on the description and interpretation of the monuments of the city of Ardašīr-Xwarrah. The purpose of this research is to investigate the origin of Sasan and what idea caused Ardeshir, that he built the cities of Ardašīr-Xwarrah and Jey to form of circular; and the important monuments and functions its are based on what concepts are placed. The research method is descriptive-analytical and data collection was done through library and field studies. Historical documents declared that Sassanians were probably descendants of the Achaemenids and after several generations of living in the eastern regions of Iran (probably India or Arachosia), they returned to their ancestral land (Pars province). On the other hand, the available sources report that Papak was also know of the sciences of astrology and was famous for this knowledge. The familiarity of these two important personalities in the family of the founder of the Sassanid dynasty has caused the city of Ardašīr-Xwarrah to be built with the concept of the city of King-God and a symbol of Avestan cosmology, based on Vedic knowledge and the Mandala. In the knowledge Vastu Purusha Mandala, quadrilateral (four elements) was very important in the design of temples and urban planning, which was considered to create balance. The balance of good and immortal forces, so as to provide the possibility of the appearance and descent of Purusha (Brahma) or the Great God. This situation can also be seen in the construction of Sasanian circular cities (Ardašīr-Xwarrah and Jey), which were built on the basis of this Avesta-Vedic idea. In Vedic wisdom, the main form of the mandala is a circle, and the use of square and honoring the four elements has been very important in the construction of cities and temples. The central tower of the city (Tarbal) is a symbol of Haraberazaieti (Alborz). Haraberazaieti means a high view point and the name of a holy mountain, which in Avestan cosmology was located in Xvaniraθa at the center of the world and the center of ērānwēz land.

Key Words: Ardašīr-Xwarrah, Vastu Purusha Mandala, Veda, Avesta, World center.

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documents declared that Sassanians were probably descendants of the Achaemenids and after several generations of living in the eastern regions of Iran (probably India or Arachosia), they returned to their ancestral land (Pars province). On the other hand, the available sources report that Papak was also known of the sciences of astrology and was famous for this knowledge. The familiarity of these two important personalities in the family of the founder of the Sassanid dynasty has caused the city of Ardašīr-Xwarrah to be built with the concept of the city of King-God and a symbol of Avestan cosmology, based on Vedic knowledge and the Mandala. In the knowledge Vastu Purusha Mandala, quadrilateral (four elements) was very important in the design of temples and urban planning, which was considered to create balance. The balance of good and immortal forces, so as to provide the possibility of the appearance and descent of Purusha (Brahma) or the Great God. This situation can also be seen in the construction of Sasanian circular cities (Ardašīr-Xwarrah and Jey), which were built on the basis of this Avesta-Vedic idea. In Vedic wisdom, the main form of the mandala is a circle, and the use of square and honoring the four elements has been very important in the construction of cities and temples.

Quadrilateral is an archetype and it is one of the principles of Vedic religion that has ancient roots in India. Brahma has four hands; in Indian art images have four faces and four directions. Its influence in Iranian art can be seen in different periods from pre-islamic until the Safavid period. This influence can be seen in the construction of four-door and four-door in the Sasanian period, which represents an Avestan-Vedic thought. In fire temples, the ground altar (fireplace) is located in the center of the Chahar Taqi and the dome is above it as the heavenly altar, which can be compared to the sikhara (roof of Garbehagariha), which is the symbol of Mount Meru in India. Plan of Mandala was also used in the construction of Ardašīr-Xwarrah city. Mandala is three main forms of circle, square and triangle. Two forms of mandala (circle and square) are shown in the city of Ardašīr-Xwarrah. The layout of the city is a circle, and the plan and base of the Tarbal and Takht-e Neshin are also square. On the other hand, the central square in the Vastu Purusha Mandala is where Brahma descends in it. In Iran, the central square, the location of the sacred fire, is a symbol of Ahura Mazda, which can be seen in fire temples. Fire temples are four entrances that it will be derived from the Vedic-Avestai wisdom.

In the Hellenistic world, the street is the main principle of the Greek city, and the main streets and gates of the cities of Alexandria, Seleucia, and even Nimrod Dagh are centered on the rising of the sun in auspicious occasions such as: the birthday, death, or victory day of a king who is thought of as the king of the world or has big dreams, they are made. The centrality of urban passages in the Hellenistic period was designed based on the azimuth of the sunrise and sunset or based on the summer and winter revolutions and tries to induce the immortality of a dynasty or royal dynasty. Therefore, Ardeshir, as the founder of the Sasanian dynasty, started to build his eternal and divine city with plan of Mandala on base of the Avesta-Vedic wisdom. This plan was later used in the construction of Baghdad. The Abbasid caliphs also sought to establish their own eternal dynasty, the city of Baghdad, like Ardašīr-Xwarrah that it has circular (Mandala) plan and four gates. It is likely that Sasan was familiar with the knowledge of Vastu Purusha Mandala, and on the other hand, according to Papak's historical sources, he also mastered the knowledge of astrology and astronomy. Therefore, it is assumed that the city of Ardašīr-Xwarrah constructed under influence the idea of Vedic-Avestan cosmology of Sasan and Papak.

The city of Ardašīr-Xwarrah is designed in the shape of a circle (mandala) with concentric and parallel streets. At least two circular cities, Ardašīr-Xwarrah and Jey, were built during the time of Ardesir I. Although the general shape and structure of the city of Ardašīr-Xwarrah remained relatively intact; But the traces of the circular shape of Sasanid city have disappeared. Based on the historical documents and the monuments, we can find comparable similarities between Ardašīr-Xwarrah and Jey, which It is included: the circular form of the city, the remains of a tower or a structure in the center of the city (Tarbal in Ardašīr-Xwarrah; Sarough in Jey), which is the symbol of Zoroastrian

cosmology. Also, There are four gates in cities of Ardašīr-Xwarrah and Jey, three gates have the same meaning and are related with the stars in the sky, which are reflection of religious orders in Bondaheshn. The stars, the moon and the sun all of them revolve around Mount Tirag (Tairah) as the center of the universe.

Apart from Tirag, which is the center of the world, there is another place called Haraberazaieti (Alborz) in Avesta. Haraberazaieti is the name of a holy mountain in Avestan cosmology, which is located in Xvaniraθa. It is the center of the world and the center of the land of ērānwēz. All the goddesses and goodness are created in Xvaniraθa. These evidences show that the city of Ardašīr-Xwarrah, as a tangible sign of the world, It was built based on cosmological and sacred beliefs. Sarough in the center of Jey is also introduced as a symbol of Tirag Mountain (Tairah) and the four gates of the city of Jey are placed according to the summer and winter solstice and special days.

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