Detail from above the entrance of Tehran’s fire temple, 1286/1917–18. Photo by © Shervin Farridnejad
Contents

Articles & Notes

1. Matteo Compareti: Nana and Tish in Sogdiana: The Adoption from Mesopotamia of a Divine Couple 01
2. Sajjad Alibaigi: Additional Remarks about the Function of the so-called Anahita Temple Monument in Kangavar, Kermanshah: A Clue to Solving an Old Problem 08
3. Daniel T. Potts: Between Myth and History: Susa and Memnon through the Ages 15
5. Kiarash Gholami: On the Chronology and Coinage of Two Iranian Lords in the Umayyad Territories 40
6. Yazdan Safaei: A Local Revolt in Babylonia during the Reign of Darius III 50
7. Nina Mazhjoo: On Lincoln's Savior Mithras 56
8. Firoze M. Kotwal: A Historical Overview of the Parsi Settlement in Navsari 62
9. Antonio Panaino: The End of the Yasna between Philological and Theological Problems 72

Reviews

Additional Remarks about the Function of the So-called Anahita Temple Monument in Kangavar, Kermanshah: A Clue to Solving an Old Problem

Sajjad Alibaigi
Department of Archaeology, Razi University, Kermanshah, Iran

The great stone edifice alongside the Great Khorasan road and located at Kangavar, 90 km on the east of Kermanshah in western Iran, is now a well-known monument (Figs. 1-2). The frequent historical references, field studies and extensive archaeological excavations have all revealed significant aspects of this important site (See: Kleiss, 2010).

However, there is no consensus among archeologists regarding the history and function of this structure. Seyfollah Kambakhsh Fard, the main archeologist who excavated the site, believed that the building was a Parthian temple (Anahita) and the cemetery containing coffin graves and pithos graves nearby its exterior wall was probably constructed in the site due to the temple’s sacredness (See: Kambakhsh Fard: 2007a: 131). But contrary to Kambakhsh Fard’s opinion, Masoud Azarnoush, another excavator of the site, suggested that there is no relation between the cemetery and the monument which is prob-

1- M. Nikzad had collected all of the opinions and suggestions about this monument and presented them in a detailed paper (Nikzad, 2010).
ably a Sassanian structure (Azarnoush, 1981; 2009).

In his last article, published in Iranica Antiqua in 2009, he argued that the stone monument is constructed on a platform which is actually a natural hillock, previously utilized as a cemetery during Parthian period and the monument was later constructed during Sassanid period, therefore there is no link between the cemetery and the stone monument (Azarnoush, 2009).

The discovered Parthian coins were clear evidences for precise dating of the cemetery, while no Parthian evidence was observed on the platform by Kambakhsh Fard, in fact all of the Parthian evidences were discovered from the graves inside the platform and the building was constructed upon them in the following centuries (probably Sassanid era). On the other side, the dating proposed by Azarnoush and attributing the building to Sassanid period is based on the architectural stylistic studies and is supported by dating sample (See: Azarnoush, 1981; 2009). Considering Azarnoush’s arguments, it seems logical to recognize the great monument of Kangavar as a Sassanid construction, however, he believed that this building is not a temple but an uncompleted structure which was abandoned and never occupied (Azarnoush, 2009).

As a matter of fact, the ending part of Azarnoush’s interpretation is perplexing; since it seems that he overlooked and did not mentioned the movable Sassanid findings discovered during the excavations. The discovered cultural material from the construction and the ruins around it, do not seem to be related to an unfinished and unoccupied building, including a diverse collection of ceramic sherds, ceramic vessels, glass wares, stone and bone beads, vessel with Pahlavi inscription, two Sassanid seals and one bullae (See: Kambakhsh Fard, 2007 b: p. 73: Fig. 29; p. 74; Fig. 33; p. 104: Fig. 24; p. 106: Fig 26 p. 119: Fig. 48; p. 120: Fig 50; Mehryar and Kabiri 2004: p. 126: Fig 40 and Pl. 15; Mehryar & Kabiri, 2004) (Figs. 3- 4). The question is how these materials can be related to a building which had been never used? While, for instance, Mehdi Rahbar only found the sherds of one vessel during the widespread excavation in the Sassanid unfinished construction of Bisotun (Rahbar, 2008; 2014).

Moreover, according to the discovered Sassanian sealing from Kangavar excavations, sealed with the seal of the Nimavand (Nahavand) fire temple’s priest, a consignment was delivered to this building in Kangavar. It does not seem rational for an important fire temple such as Nahavand fire temple to send a sealed consignment to an uncompleted and empty building. Besides, how the ceramics as well as the stone seal with the motif of eagle can be interpreted? What about other valuable items such as the glass wares? Furthermore, the important discovery of the monument known as Anahita temple is a ceramic seal (Fig. 5) with the name of Khosrow Shanum (Khosrow Ashum), the ruler of the western regions of Iran at the late Sassanid period (Qouchani has thoroughly studied this seal and evaluated it in a historical context. For more detailed discussion in this regard, See: Qouchani, 2006). Why would the seal which belonged to one of the major governor of the region, from Hamedan to Qasr-e Shirin, be found in an uncompleted and abandoned building?

Besides, several authors in Islamic period has also mentioned the monument in Kangavar as the palace of Kangavar, including Ibn-Faqih, Abû Dulaf and Yaqût al-Ḥamawi. Is it possible to make a more precise conclusion through current evidences and future discoveries?

If we accept Azarnoush’s interpretation about the monument’s date, we can rely on the movable

2- Short Sassanid inscriptions can be also added to the evidences in this regard (Kambakhshfard, 2007b: 126- 127).
discoveries for interpreting the function of the building. In fact, concerning the seal of the well-known Sassanid ruler in the excavation, this assumption comes to the mind that the monument has probably been a palace, a residential complex or perhaps the managerial organization of Khosrow Shanum. Indeed, important discoveries like the seals and sealing are significant evidences that the monument in Kangavar had been utilized and occupied by a special class of Sassanid society. In my opinion, these important evidences are strong proofs that the Kangavar monument had not been an abandoned and uncompleted building; and the scattered pieces of stone materials, mentioned by Azarnoush, such as the vaults were not a reason for the building to be unfinished, but they were probably displaced during the Islamic period. Two fragmentary and incomplete stone materials are not sufficient evidences to conclude that the building was unoccupied and abandoned. It is also highly possible that the discovered material such as the ceramics, glass wares, seals and other objects were part of the collection utilized in the residence of Khosrow Shanum during the late Sassanid period. However, we are fully aware that except for the exterior parts of the building, the majority of the site and specially the platform has not been excavated and it is very likely to encounter more evidences from Sassanid period during the future excavation and reach to a clearer interpretation.

Acknowledgment:
I would like to thank Dr. Shokuh Khosravi and Dr. Remy Boucharlat for reviewing this short note.
Fig. 1. The location of the so-called Anahita temple in Kangavar, Western Iran (Courtesy of Saeid Bahramiyan)

Fig. 2. The Sasanian structure of Kangavar
Fig. 3. Some Important Sasanian period objects from Kangavar Excavations: a. vessel with Pahlavi inscription (after Kambakhsh Fard 2007 b: p. 47: Fig. 23; p. 104: Fig. 24), b. Sasanian Seal (after Kambakhsh Fard 2007 b: p. 74: Fig. 33), and C. Sasanian Bullae with seal impression of the Nimavand (Nahavand) fire temple’s priešt (after Kambakhsh Fard 2007 b: p. 73: Fig. 29).
Fig. 4. Some Sasanian glass vessels from Kangavar Excavations (after Kambakhsh Fard 2007 b: p. 119: Fig. 48 and p. 120: Fig. 50)

Fig. 2. The Seal of late Sasanian governor (Khosrow Shanum) of the region between Hamedan to Qasr-e Shirin with Arabic Inscription founded in Kangavar excavations in 1994 (Mehryar and Kabiri 2004: p. 126: Fig 40 and Pl. 15; Qouchani, 2006: Figs. 8, 9 and 12)
Bibliography


