



Study the Archeology and Chronology of Castles of Moghan Plain Based on Archeological Data

Pasha Pashazadeh^{1*}, Javid Gahremanzadeh²

¹University Professor, MA, Sports Management, Department of physical Education, Sari Branch, Islamic Azad University, Sari, Iran

²MA, in archeology historical period, Islamic Azad University Central Tehran

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 17 Mar 2016

Received in revised form 20 Apr 2016

Accepted 05 May 2016

Keywords:

Chronology study,

Castles of Moghan plain,

Archeological data,

Ardabil

ABSTRACT

Objective: Our information about west-north of Iran in Sassanid era is less than other regions in Iran and the studies on it are in the same manner. **Methodology:** Undoubtedly, Moghan plain in Sassanid era has high political, commercial, cultural, and environmental potentials. The existence of high and low mountains and foothills with small and big rivers such as Aras, Baleha river, Barzand, etc. are evident of this region environmental potentials which humans have used them historically for establishment.

Results: On of Iranian arts in this region are castles which were made for military, security, and surveilling functions in this region. Since these buildings haven't been yet studied and a few studies on it are defected, the subject on identification and datelining of these arts was selected as the title of this thesis.

Conclusion: Generally The used materials in Azarbaijan castles are rubbles, carved stone, mortar sand, sometimes adobe, and mud walls according to be mountainous that shows the initial period of building castle.

1. Introduction

In Sassanid era, the permanent threats of neighbors made the Sassanid king to have always anxiety of protecting castles both inside or outside the boundaries of country and finally made him order to build defensive walls in boundaries to protect against the invasions of tribal. According to this view, the four angle or rectangular design was mentioned to build cities equipped with great rampart and ditch behind the castle walls and walls or round bases city centre and this method was continued in Islamic period (Alizadeh, 2010).

2. Materials and methods

The arrival of copper and pewter objects in Ardebil grounds showed especially guns were obtained by the around village dwellers. Mostly this objects were simpler than the ones found in Lorestan and maybe older than them (Amoozegar and Tavassoli, 1996). The found hammer in Lorestan is estimated older than three thousand years BC was also found in Ardebil. The found copper swords had more than 1m length. Some swords had heavy handles. These objects had been made skillfully, but the precise figures and picture of animals were seen in pewters of Lorestan that are not found here. The pewter objectives in Ardebil can be classified in three categories according to time:

- 1- Very simple initial designs including small dirks and copper bayonet with not so much intricacy in them.
- 2- The average style including long swords and various dirks that their handles, blades, and connections were made more skillfully.
- 3- The used metal in various industries that can called pewter. "The samples of this metal include short swords with a curved blade and also more skillfully made arrowheads." (Wilson, 1938)

* Corresponding author: p_pashazadeh@nomail.com

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.24200/jmas.vol4iss03pp44-48>

“Megalithic” is the title used by western scientists for this culture that is well-known as “Macro stone” in Iran and it is translated in some references as “raised stone or Menhir and is called tall stone in Celtic language.”

Jacques De Morgan believes that the type of stone raised by an independent team of Dülmen Caucasus and the Kuban and Namin of Ardebil were made independent of the Dülmen in Europe. Therefore, the relationship between megalithic tribes of Iran and Europe (Azarnush, 1975).

The Garmi city in the eastern north of Ardebil is in 100m altitude. Its distance from Ardebil is 108Km, 55Km from Bilesavar, and 97km from Parsabad. Garmi city is one of the ancient residential regions of Azarbaijan whose initial building was made by groups of Parthian and its strategic importance in later periods was also protected in next eras. This research tries to archaeologically identify Moghan plain castles and its comparison to the established defensive castles and their comparative suggested chronology based on superficial materials and historical resources. The documented historical writing of Moghan plain castles in Sassanid era and registering in Iran national arts were done to protect them and have transparent perception of Sassanid era in this region (Hoveyda, 1973).

3. Discussion and results

3.1 Oltan Castle City

The Oltan Qalasy or Oltan castle city is one of Sassanid castles that were used later in Islamic period to the 4th migration century. These castles were around by two or three rampart or ditches that most ancient cities had such conditions. The Oltan city castle had special defense that is in an important strategic situation.

This castle based on aerial maps (pic. 2-6) and present surface examining from what is seen is a rectangular with approximate 450*720 m² with adobe fences whose height is 5m and width is unclear for not examining. However, it is more than 1.5 m probably (pic. 3-6 & 4-6). According to present evidences and examinations, the gate is in west-south with surrounding adobe fences with 30m distance. One tower is seen in oval form among all towers. There are many small and big ancient hills inside the castle ancient campus. The big hills with great probability had role of the central buildings and the small great number of surrounding hills had role of residential rooms of inside castle for other kings or lord of people. By examining this mound pottery and architectural works that have come out of unauthorized excavations, these hills return to Islamic era. (pic. 5-6 & 6-6) and there are several wells with more than 10m depth around these hills that still have water showing castle water supplement (Khamachi, 1993).

In Sassanid era, the permanent threats by strangers or neighbors made Sassanid kinds to have the main anxiety of protecting their realm inside and outside of country and finally they decided to make defensive ramparts in their boundaries to protect it against invasive tribes. Oltan castle is one of the significant symbols of Sassanid era and continued to the 4th migration century.

Today, in heart of thousands of dust and a little exploration which is tangible in front of the extension of this building, which is stayed unchanged and is damaging by human and natural factors every day and it is hope authorities remember it that is the biggest ancient campus of Sassanid era in Azarbaijan and is called city castle and need explorations to survive this valuable ancient Iranian heritage with Sassanid and Islamic culture in it and thousands of information pieces can be obtained (Nöldeke, 1999).

3.2 Qizqalasy

One castle in Moghan plain after Oltan castle is Ghisghalasi Injirlu, subordinated district of Moghan ancient Bilesavar city, which is related to Sassanid and Islamic era. It shows all features of Sassanid and Islamic military castle for visitors. The most number is related to Garmi city, but there is Sassanid ancient castle with fence and rampart in other cities such as Bilesavar which protected the gorgeous, elegance, and power of Sassanid era. If the obtained information about urban castle construction method in Oltan village, Parsabad Moghan city in Sassanid era is considered efficient, the necessary information about Sassanid military castles, architecture, position, and conquering story, and their applications in Sassanid and later eras, particularly the castles in Moghan city with more than three numbers should be mentioned. Before exploring the military castles of Moghan plain, first it should be notices that building castle has an old history in various parts of Iran. People built castles to defend themselves and kings to protect their territories. Castle was not just a military or army status, but it was a proper location to keep political criminals and prisoners and sometimes kings' treasures. (Naseri Bilesavar, 1993).

The word “Qiz” is combined with names of many castles in Azarbaijan. According to the virginal meaning of this world, it seems that the unconquerable castles were named “Qiz-Qal’e-si” (Qal’e in Persian language means castle), they called Qizqalasy as following: Qırqızlar in Sarab village, Çaroymaq, Qizqalasy Garmi, Qizqalasy Kaliber, Qizqalasy Maraqa, and also the ancient arts of Nəmin city called Yeddi – Dev – Qızı and Qizkorposo.

Qizqalasy (girl castle) is in northwest of Iran, Ardebil province, 17km to Garmi city in Bilesavar Moghan city, Injirlu village, in small country called Qizqalasy beside the ancient river of Barzand in east north of Balehard on the highest point of hill with approximate 60m height.

The parts of Qizqalasy are 1-fences, 2- rampart, 3- water pools, and 4- residential houses.

The fences of Qizqalasy are irregular rectangular forms with smooth slopes from the mountain height to the range in 250*500 m which was built by the native materials of stone and masonry mortar. The width and length of this fence is 50m and 80 cm and it doesn't just end to this castle, but other fences are in the south of castle whose application is different from the castle fences. The distance of two fences is more than 30m which is not clear for residential constructions. The width of this fence is not clear, because it was embedded in soil and its height is more than 6m and its materials are stone and masonry mortar (Sotoudeh, 1974).

The ramparts stock out of castle in distance of 50m along with castle fences in semi-circular as height as castle fences. The diameter of some of these fences is different. Some are in big dimensions and some others are small, and just three turrets of castle have remained complete, and others were damaged and just their foundation remained for village dwellers constructions.

Qizqalasy was registered with no. 629 in national index of country and is comparable with the castles in northwest of Iran.

Qizqalasy didn't have any archaeological activities such as excavation, repair, and privacy determination. Achieving more information about this castle need exploration (Torabi Tabatabaei, 1976).

Unfortunately, this castle is more exposed to human factors destructions and unpermitted excavation than natural factors destruction.

The small 2*3*3 m³ building as water reservoirs (well water) inside castle fence beside ancient hill was built by village dwellers and destruction of fence and ramparts and transferring stone materials to another place as the wall of the built house in yard. The worst one is building residential houses inside castle and destruction the castle pool.

The only way to survive this historical heritage that is identity of political history (Sassanid and Islamic) period is as following:

- 1- Determination the privacy of Qizqalasy
- 2- Prevention from any changes, transference castle buildings to another place
- 3- fence repairing on rampart and complementing it
- 4- exploration to achieve necessary information about Qizqalasy

It is hoped the authorities have proper actions to survive parts of Qizqalasy

3.3 Oghli Qalasy

Oghli Qalasy is a castle of Sassanid era in Zaviyeh Sang (Dashziveh) village. It was placed with 70 families Angut region, which is between Meshginshar and Parsabad city whose path goes from Ardebil road to Parsabad near Allah Yarlu triode in the left side of tourists signpost. The Zaviyehsang (Dashziveh) is an old village with many tourists' attractions in Angut sector of Garmsi city as memorial of Parthians.

According to the superficial explorations in this territory and also comparison the Oghli Qalasy pottery with its adjacent castles returns to Sassanid and Islamic era. This castle can't be introduced as remain of Islamic and Sassanid era for discovering the potteries of Parthians era in this region. However, this region can be known as establishment place for Parthians era and building three military castles in Sassanid era and the difference of Islamic era. (Pic. 6-45)

The remained arts in this castle include:

1. Two pools with different dimensions within 40 cm
2. Other symptoms of this castle is the surface channel (water way) from amidst the rocks into the pool to collect rain water and store it inside pool.
3. The excavated holes with different dimensions, size, and diameters on rock cover whole the castle.
4. The stone bench is in 100m distance on rock of another stone parallel and in the same height of castle.
5. Other works of the castle is the nature of this castle including natural rock-stone in shape of soldiers and other animals beside each other with more than 30m height. Oghli Qalasy is not the only castle in this region; there are number of these castles near Zaviyehsang (Dashziveh) and Dumula village (Demuli) as far as 5 km (Verchavand and Nafisi, 2004).

3.4 Enzer Qalasy

This castle is in the highest point of Enzer mountain with more than 1700m in two Dumula and Gelin Budaghi villages by people of Sassanid era. This mountainous castle is permanent with always green nature of mountain range with power of Sassanid era. The history of this castle according to the obtained potteries returns to Sassanid era and then was used to the third and fourth Islamic centuries.

The architecture of this castle is in rectangular shape with irregular fence with more than 1 hectare area. The rampart and turrets of Enzer castle was made by local materials stone with mortar. The thickness of castle fence was 70cm with varied height in 4 and 5m in some places, and the natural dam of mountain stones reaches to 2m.

The turrets of castle are in regular distance in semi-circular shape. Some of these turrets were made in the zero craggy of mountain that the espial of this turret observed this castle environment and many further castles.

There is another castle in the highest point of water pool. This pool is bigger than the other pools of castles without stairs. The length and width of this pool is 5*9m with 2.5m depth which was dug in the middle of mountain.

There are architectural buildings by stone in castle yard whose stones are dispersed in yard that may be residential houses.

3.5 Oghlan Qalasy

Oghlan Qalasy was in Dumula village such as Enzer castle in the highest point of mountain higher than 1000m. According to the obtained potteries in this castle and its comparison with the adjacent castles, it is comparable with the other castles in Azarbaijan. Oghlan Qalasy like other similar name castles is in Zaviyehsang village and has the history as old as Sassanid and Islamic era.

The works of this castles are 1- castle fence, 2- castle water pool, 3- architecture or a suspended stone structure inside castle, and 4- castle graveyard. The thickness of castle fence is 500cm in spite of Enzer Qalasy castle and its materials are stone and masonry mortar like other castle. Its height is not clear for fence collapse and inside castle fence is 500m². In side castle, there are two water pools that both have 2*8m and its depth is unclear for being full of residential structures rubbles. It has two water pool with stairs toward pool. The water collection was by the hand-dug grooves in the middle of stone as the tinny channel of rain water from the middle of rocks toward pool, because both water pools have stairs, hand-dug rain water path grooves in the middle of stone (Mobedi and Sadighian, 1971).

The fences inside castle are disspread stone structures probably were used as residential houses in castle like Enzer Qalasy.

3.6 Stronghold and Fortress

Stronghold and village fortress is actually in Dumula (Dumuli) village in the distance between Enzer Qalasy and Oghlan Qalasy like Dumula village between two so high mountains.

This fortress is called Kand Qalasy (village castle) or Qalasy power (power castle) in all parts of Angut, but this doesn't have any similarities with the previous castles and other castles of Sassanid castles. According to this antiquities, it can be called great fortress, because it has all characteristics of a fortress.

Stronghold like other castles is on the highest point of a natural rock with more than 100m height. However, this fortress doesn't have proper passing ways for horses or military traffic or dwellers of castles in spite of other castles, because there is a headland to inside a water fall with more than 100m from fortress range in front of fortress (at the end of Dumula village), and the only way to reach fortress is from the back of rock with smooth slope inside rock with ability of passing one person. This place was collapsed chronically and fortress campus.

History of this fortress returns to Sassanid era according to studies and was used to the second and third centuries, because all Islamic and Sassanid potteries are found around fortress, inlet, and outlet of fortress, and inside it affluently. (Pic. 6-67)

The water pool is the only remained ancient building of fortress and unfortunately this fortress was destructed by smugglers. Inside building of this fortress is 300m². An unpermitted water pool and a stone structure or wooden ceiling was obtained by smugglers inside fortress.

The water pool architecture was rectangular with 3*5 length and width and its depth is unclear for getting full. This pool is made from two parts: 1- the west side that is a piece of dug from rock, 2- the east side of pool is put on each other's head for sharp slope of headland edge that was caved in big rectangular form from another part of pool. This pool is like Enzer Qalasy pool without stairs. (Pic. 6-68)

Another structure was obtained by unpermitted excavation which is made by stone and wood that was most likely is a residential structures.

Archaeologically, this is an untapped area and it is hoped identification of this region would be a basic place of research and study for all three Parthians, Sassanid, and Islamic eras for other archeologists.

3.7 Barzand Castle

The Barzand castle is in 68km distance in east south of Qizqalasy and in 105 km of west south of Oghlan Qalasy in Zaviyehsang, Oghlan Qalasy, Enzer Qalasy Dumula, the Barzand Castle village, Angut district in Garmi city in the main path to Ardebil.

Barzand castle is in the name village in Barzand ancient coffee shop (small river) with 3 hectar area with fence, rampart, ancient hills inside and outside hence that is fully established castle in comparison to Oltan city in 125km far from its north.

The Barzand Qalasy effect includes 1- fence, 2- rampart, 3- the ancient hills inside fence

The Barzand Qalasy works are in rectangular form with clay and rubble materials with 70cm thickness and its height is unclear for human and natural factors destruction; however, 1.5m of it is observable now. (Pic.: 6-73)

The Castle turrets are observable from all four direction that 2 of them are seen and other two ones damaged by destruction the civil activities such as pulling off the road into the village and construction activities. The turrets of castle are observable in all four sides of fence as semi-arc form to 3m height.

4. Conclusion

According to studies, the Azarbaijan castles can be divided as following:

- 1- the most castles were made at the top of mountain that its 2 or 3 sides are toward headlands and has natural wall, and 1 or 2 remained sides have rampart and stone high walls which were built on the sharp slope.
- 2- All of these castles have one tank inside and 1 or 2 water tanks out of it.
- 3- There are rooms within the castle, some like rooms Zahhak Castle of the plan have been built correctly by traditional building materials and some others such as Bazarlu havens are natural caves with a little manipulations.
- 4- They have rampart, fence, and gate.
- 5- Most castles have military usages.

Generally. The used materials in Azarbaijan castles are rubbles, carved stone, mortar sand, sometimes adobe, and mud walls according to be mountainous that shows the initial period of building castle.

In this regard, all Moghan plain castles, that is a part of Azarbaijan region in Sassanid era, are in political, environmental, and strategic situation and is comparable with other Sassanid castles in Azarbaijan, and most castles of Moghan plain are in road in Caucasus, invasion of foreigners such as Armenia, and other Cross-border trade routes.

Two from six studied castles and fortress are in plain in established form and both are overlooking from one direction to river unlike other castles in Moghan plain, that one of them is Oltan city castle by overlooking to Aras River. This castle was the gathering place of many Sassanid kings in the ancient Vorsan city. Today, there is no name of this city in the ancient village of Oltan that is probably the Vorsan city in the past; another castle is Barzand castle whose used water is from the wells inside castle that is probably the irrigation well in Sassanid era.

REFERENCES

- Alizadeh, K. 2010. Excavations report Oltan Qal'ehsi, Publisher: Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization of Tehran.
- Amoozegar, Z., & Tavassoli, A. 1996. Zoroaster living legend, Cheshme Publishing. Tehran.
- Azarnush, M. 1975. Archaeological report on Iran. Tehran.
- Hoveyda, R. 1973. Natural geographical Azerbaijan. University of Tabriz.
- Khamachi, B. 1993. Historic castle Azerbaijan, Tabriz Ashiyane Press.
- Mobedi, I., & Sadighian, A. 1971. *Echinococcus multilocularis* Leuckart, 1863, in red foxes, *Vulpes vulpes* Linn., in Moghan, Azerbaijan Province,

northwest of Iran. *Journal of Parasitology*, 57(3).

Nöldeke, T. 1999. Whenever the history of the Sassanid Persians and Arabic Translation: Zaryab A., Institute of humanities and Cultural Studies in Tehran.

Naseri Bilesavar, A. 1993. Moghan the historical pathway, first edition, Pouya express.

Sotoudeh. M. 1974. Seven climates or in the face of castles. Kerman.

Torabi Tabatabaei, S. J. 1976. Azerbaijan antiquities. of the National Association of Tehran series of publications.

Verchavand, P., & Nafisi, S. 2004. Sassanid civilization to the attention of publications A. Jorbozedar Asaatir Tehran

Wilson, C. 1938. The history of Iran's industries Translation: A. Feryar, Publisher: Borukhim, Tehran

How to Cite this Article:

Pashazadeh P., Gahremanzadeh J., Study the Archeology and Chronology of Castles of Moghan Plain Based on Archeological Data, *Uct Journal of Management and Accounting Studies* 4(3) (2016) 44–48.