University of
Sistan and Baluchestan

Iranian Journal of Archaeological Studies

Print ISSN: 2251-743X Online ISSN: 2676-2919

Archaeological Sciences
Research Centre

The Study of Ritual Architecture in Southeast of Iran According to Archetypes

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Received: 11/ 07/ 2018; Received in Revised form:22/ 11/ 2018; Accepted: 03/ 12/ 2018

Abstract

The ritual-cultural architecture is the result of a mutual interaction of man and nature throughout history. Hence, the study of ritual buildings in a geographical context provides us with a meaningful understanding and recognition of these monuments. There are a considerable number of ritual monuments in southeast of Iran, especially in some towns such as Chabahar, Konarak, and Nikshahr. According to the type of their structures, these monuments convey symbolic and meaningful concepts. The questions raised in the present study are as follows: How is the structure type of ritual architecture in southeast of Iran? And how these buildings have been expressed in connection with ritual behaviors as well as concepts and symbols? In terms of objective, the present study is a fundamental research and based on the nature and methodology, it is among the historical-analytic studies. Data collection has been performed using field study and data analysis conducted through library sources. The results indicated that archetypes have played a significant role in the quality of structural process of ritual architecture in the investigated region.

Keywords: Archetype, Ritual, Architecture, Southeast of Iran.

Article Type: Research Article

Introduction

The Iranian territory, according to its diverse environmental conditions, has always been a suitable context for the formation of various cultures and rituals. This process has caused the formation of numerous ritual monuments in different regions of the country. These structures have always been constructed according to the native architecture of the region. Among the significant examples of this type of architecture, the ritual monuments of southeast of Iran, which are the subject of the present research, can be mentioned. The following hypothesis has been posed in this research: environmental conditions and the presence and role of archetypes in the formation process of architectural structure of the investigated monuments, have been the most important factor in physical similarities, maintenance and the meaningful connection among them.

It is noteworthy that no research has been conducted on the analysis of ritual monuments with remarkable features in southeastern region of Iran to this date, therefore, the importance of the current

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DOI: 10.22111/IJAS.2019.6510

Publisher: University of Sistan and Baluchestan

research is explained. In this regard, a considerable number of shrine and tomb buildings have been identified during the archeological surveys in Chabahar and Nikshahr regions (Shirazi 2010) and the town of Konarak (Taleshi 2009) in Sistan and Baluchistan province. Since this type of architecture is part of the Iranian culture texture, study of this area can play a significant role in introducing some part of the culture and religion of the extensive Iranian territory.

The present research aimed at investigating the structural quality of ritual architecture of the investigated region and also recognition of the meaningful and significant relationship between them as sell as the expression of symbolic concepts and basics which have been effective in the formation of these structures.

Formation Process of the Structure of Ritual Buildings

Numerous factors are effective in the formation of architectural spaces such as ritual architecture. Material and environmental factors, including accessible phenomena as well as environmental and geographical characteristics, determine the realm of architectural space. Also, cultural and human factors reflect phenomena such as history and culture in art and architecture of a society. Religion is the most important constituent factor in the social, cultural and artistic structure of traditional societies, and despite the existence of differences between various religions, some commonalities can be observed among them. The most important factor in the survival of people's beliefs and thoughts is embodying them in the form of temples and shrines which have been generally built along the sacred elements of the nature. The sharing between the nature and principles and rules of the religions that find meaning in relation to the nature, have resulted in the construction of shrine buildings and similar places, all of which attest to the fact that these shrine buildings share a root with mythical beliefs and thoughts of the ancient Iran (Mokhles *et al.*2013:33).

In the past, invocation rituals and religious ceremonies were conducted in outdoor spaces, outdoor spaces associated with natural elements such as water, plants and soil and praising in such places has increased the spirituality and sanctity of them (Inanlou 2001:41). In fact, ritual spaces such as mosques, temples, shrines, tombs, and sacred places that the most amount of symbolization took place in their design and construction compared to other places due to their type of function and the values hidden in them can be considered as the best reflection of culture, beliefs and thoughts of a society (Soltanzade 2011:38). In this regard, the most important thing is to reveal the soul of the place and establish a deep connection between the earth, the texture of the structure and the sky; and eventually, the form and atmosphere of nature, as a concrete connection between the earth and the heaven, determine the identity of the place (Bemanian *et al*. 2010: 57). According to Lundquist, ritual buildings, as religious centers, have five common features: 1- they have a plan derived from the heavenly temples on the earth 2- They represent the spiritual path to the heaven. 3. They are the first place of revelation 4- They are the symbol of paradise 5- They are founded by a spiritual authority. In fact, these centers are the disconnection point from everything and they have been the only original image of unity, and everything originates from them (Lundquist 2000: 15-16).

In the past, no significant design associated with ritual spaces was formed in world based on accident or merely based on the personal desires of the designer (Soltanzade 2011:47). Indeed, human never chooses a place, but he discovers it and the sanctity of that place sustains during the next generations (Ilyade 2006:347).

Regarding the place of saints' tombs, numerous factors are effective. In some situations, with a normal transfer, the tomb could gain its own sanctity and gradually become a complementary place for praying, and occasionally the identity of the original owner of the tomb was forgotten and the identity of that person was replaced with another figure who was more in line with the religious needs in that region (Hillenbrand 2008:276). From the earliest works related to burial of the dead bodies and ritual buildings in prehistoric period to the most important historical civilizations of Iran, including Elamites and Achaemenids, one can see the reflection of this

conception, transformation, and evolution in burial and ritual buildings. During a long time, tomb construction in Iran was not considered for a variety of reasons, and only the rock tomb and ossuaries consisted the concept of burial. By accepting Islam, the Iranians have maintained a significant part of their myths about the death and burial rituals as well as the construction of tombs. It seems that the tradition of tomb construction has not existed in the Islamic culture from the beginning, and archaeologists offer different ideas about the origin and source of it. But what is important is that the process of sacramentalism and behaving contrary to Islamic tradition have progressed step by step from a simple sign (such as covering the graves by cloth) to building a large tomb (such as Sultanieh Dome with a height of 48 meters), and it has been dispersed all over the Islamic lands, and eventually become one of the most important cultural elements in Islamic countries. This theme has reserved many artistic effects inside itself (Hillenbrand 1998: 314. Wilber and Golmbeck 1988: 16).

A Glance on Archetypes and Symbolic Concepts

Archetypes are the main pattern of sustainability which is the result of collective experience of human over thousands of years and stored in the unconscious hidden memory of humans under the name of collective unconscious (Golabchi and Zeinali Farid 2012:1).

Archetypes have been defined as universal symbols. From this short definition, two common characteristics of the archetypes are revealed: first, they are classified under the category of symbols; and second, they associate a single concept for most people of the world; these patterns are usually behavioral patterns. Distinctions have been made in defining the archetypes in different areas; for example, in psychology, it has been considered as a model and pattern of person, personality and behaviors of an individuals and in philosophy with reference to platonic examples, the archetypes have been conceived as the same instance considered for objects or the early forms (Abbaslou 2012:85). According to Jung, "the natural symbols originate from the unconscious contents of the psyche, and thus represent a large variety of ancient profiles of fundamental patterns. In many of these cases, the symbols with the roots of their archetypes can be traced by the ideas and profiles found in the earliest historical evidence and primitive societies "(Jung 1988: 134). States believes that "myths, as archetypes, can play an important role in the attractiveness of literature, as well as the reconstruction of ancient history, about whose history little information is available" (States 1980: 333).

The concept of a symbol, in a simple definition, refers to a series of relationships in which, a phenomenon can be realized from another phenomenon based on a type of implication; therefore, when a phenomenon can represent a phenomenon other than itself and, with its advent, unveils another matter behind it, then it will be regarded as a symbol. The symbol has a knowledge granting dimension and a way to deepen this knowledge and is more concerned with spiritual and conceptual origins; therefore, it has been abundantly used to refer to content and concepts in the symbolism of physical and decorative elements, and concepts that cannot be directly expressed have adopted symbolic forms in order to be able to express themselves (Hamze Nejad and Moghaddam 2012:116). In fact, transcendental facts that cannot be transmitted and induced by any other means when they are integrated with symbols could be transferred to some extent (Guenon 2001: 55). The emergence of symbols in the Iranian art has an unbreakable linkage with myth and religion. Ancient ritual beliefs have directly been connected with nature, commemoration and praise of natural elements, as ritual places were set alongside elements such as mountains, water, and trees (Javadi 2007: 14). In fact, the oldest holy place we know is part of the Minor World, i.e. a landscape of rocks, water and trees (Eliade 2006: 263). It can be stated that there has always been a profound and meaningful relationship between ritual architecture and natural elements, and this process has maintained its structure in many regions.

The Study Area

Baluchistan is an extensive land located in southeast of Iran and southwest of Pakistan. The

study area is located in Nikshahr, Konarak and Chabahar in Sistan and Baluchistan province (Figure. 1). Geographically, the region is a high and mountainous area with hot and arid climate. Southern Baluchistan basin with an area of about 48367 hectares is located in the southernmost part of the country. From the east, it is adjacent to Pakistan, from the south it is overlooking the Oman Sea, and the cities of Chabahar, Nikshahr, Konarak and Qasr-e Qand are situated in this basin (Darvishi 1999: 24). Kasu-kuh and Dorak shrines in Chabahar, the shrine of Bibi Mortaz Ali in Konarak, and the shrine of Jangal village located in Qasr-e Qand district of Nikshahr, are among the ritual monuments of this region. We would like to appreciate the great help of the late archaeologist, Mr. Mojtaba Soltani, who provided us with the data of the present research.

During this research, the mentioned buildings were classified in two architectural types: uncovered architecture with revetment structure and roofed architecture with a domed-shape cover, and then they have been evaluated and compared through a comparative approach.

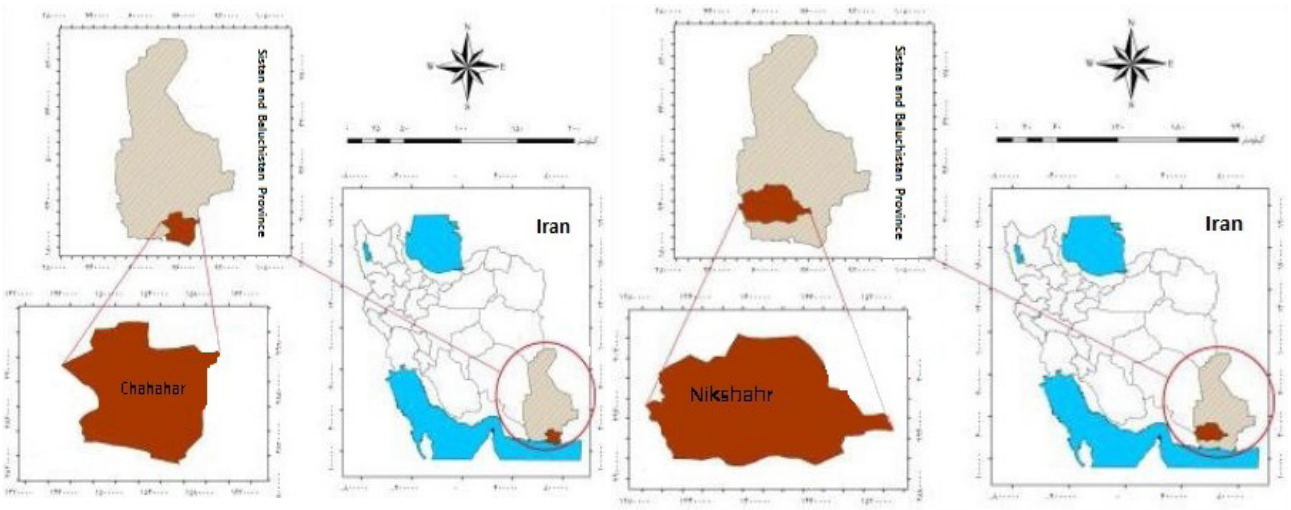


Figure. 1:*The location of Nikshahr and Chabahar in Sistan and Baluchistan*

Buildings with Simple and Uncovered Architecture with Revetment Structures

Kasu-Kuh Monument

In the suburbs of Chabahar and three kilometers south of the village of Gharfaqir, there is a tomb monument called "*Kasu-Kuh*", which is respected by many of the people residing in this region. According to the anthropological reports of the region, the tomb belongs to a religious figure and its structure is different from other graves. The Kasu-Kuh shrine building is situated on a hill. This monument is surrounded by a circular wall constructed using dried stone revetment. In fact, the builder' purpose behind the structure of this building was to separate the sanctum of the shrine from the perimeter environment. Placing colorful fabrics on the grave indicates the sanctity of this place (Figure. 2).

The Monument of Jangal A Village (Jangal A)

This shrine is located in Jangal village and in Qasr-e Qand district of Nikshahr city. The mentioned building has been constructed on the top of a high hill and consists of two intermittent circular sections. The approximate diameter of the central circle is two meters and the diameter of the outer circle, which encloses the central part, is 2.80 m. This building has a structure made of dried stone revetment. Most likely, this place is a monument which has been constructed based on the beliefs of the people residing in the region (Figure. 3).

The Monument of Jangal B Village (Jangal B)

This sacred place is also located in the same location in Qasr-e Qand district of Nikshahr. This structure has a square shape. But it is highly probable that its initial structure had been circular, which has become quadratic over time. It was built on a low-altitude hill and its approximate dimensions are 2.20 m at 2.10 m. The structure of this building is in the form of dry stone revetment and an approximate height of 30 to 70 cm (Figure. 4). These two shrine sites are respected by the native people of the region who refer to this place to meet their spiritual needs and pray.

The mentioned structures have common features, the most important of which include: Simplicity in the architectural structure, creating a boundary between the sacred space of the sites and their surrounding environment using dried stone revetment (Table. 1). The fence, wall, and the revetment ring encompassing the sacred space is considered among the oldest architectural structures of burial structures. The wall around the sacred area only requires the permanent presence of the manifestation of power or the manifestation of sanctity in the enclosed space, but it does not imply its presence; in addition, the purpose behind the construction of a wall is to protect the unfamiliar individuals against the danger threatening them when carelessly enter into the enclosure. Sanctity has been always dangerous to anyone who approaches any holy place without preparation and fulfilling the approaching acts that are obligatory in any religion (Eliade 2006: 348). The most important features of these sites are the sanctity and respect of these building as monuments. In these structures, the entrance is located in the eastern direction, where the sun rises, in order to illuminate the dark world with its own light. The struggle between good and evil or darkness and light is rooted in ancient Iranian culture. Light has not only been sacred for its own nature but also for the determination of time. Mitra as the goddess of the sun, is one of the most ancient Indian and Aryan deities (Golabchi and Zeinalifird 2012: 217-216).

Among the other features of these monuments is being located on the altitudes of the environment. Mountains are one of the cosmic elements that always represent the sacred concepts of blessing and fertility and are a source of life. According to the stated interpretations, the relationship between the tree of life and the mountain has been considered as a holy center and source (Abeddoost and Kazempour, 2011: 31). In fact, the mountain can be a natural temple and perhaps the first temple of man (ibid. 119). On the other hand, it can be argued that the mountain is the place where heaven and earth meet, and the roots of the mountain are connected with the nether world so that this hill provides the first symbol of the union of three points in the world-the nether world, i.e. the earth and the heaven, (Lundquist, 1982: 286-289 and George 1997: 128-129). One of the important points in these buildings is their connection with cosmology. In fact, it can be argued that the construction of terrestrial temples is a design derived from celestial temples. According to these thoughts, sacred geometry in constructing them as a cosmic model is highly considerable (George 1997: 34). Kramrisch believes that the form of temples expresses the ritual behavior of the building (Kramrisch 1976: 165) (Figure. 5). These buildings, with their simple structure have maintained their sanctity even today and are always considered as sacred entities to indigenous people.

Roofed Buildings with Dome-Shaped Cover

The Tomb of Bibi Morteza Ali

This building, which is located in the city of Konarak, is a simple quadrangle with a rack dome built over a natural hill. On the corners of the building, there are four minaret-shape battlements, and another battlement has been mounted on the dome which is a symbol of shrines and religious buildings in this region. The room has a length of 380 cm and width of 290 cm while it is 170 cm in height. The diameter of the dome is 330 and its height is 190 cm from the top of the room, taking into account the height of the room, the total height reaches 360 cm. Entrance door of the building is on the east. The materials used in the body of the building are stone and mortar. Also, according to the local guide, the ceiling in the inside part is made of wood. In the southern part of the building, a revetment has been created in the form of a circle that is intended for prayer. In front of the northern

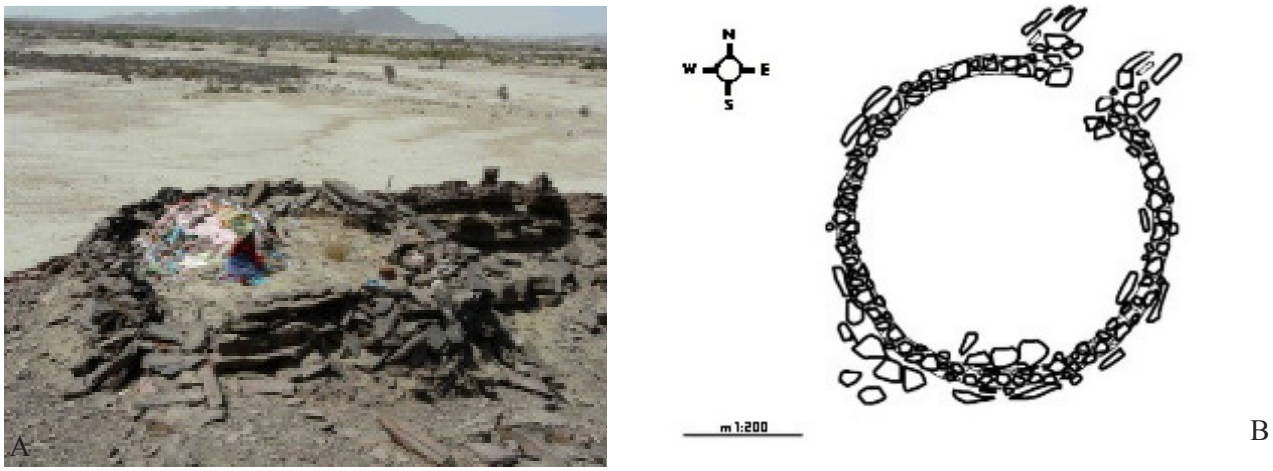


Figure. 2A: *Kasu-Kuh monument (Afiter: Shirazi 2010)*
B: *Kasu-Kuh monument Plan*

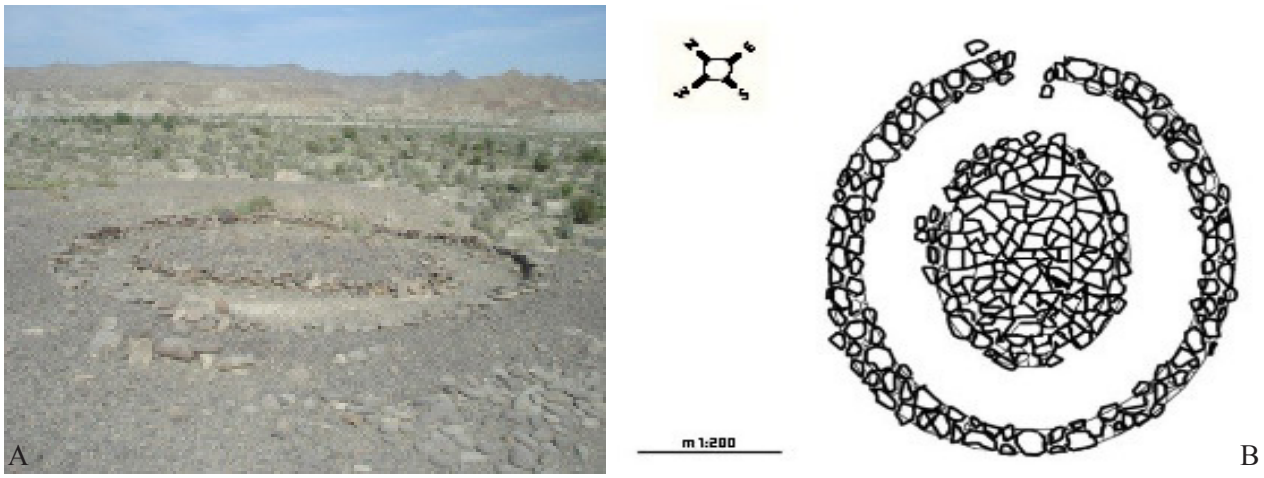


Figure. 3A: *.Monument of Jangal village, Qasr-e Qand B (After: Shirazi 2010)*
B: *Monument of Jangal A village Plan*

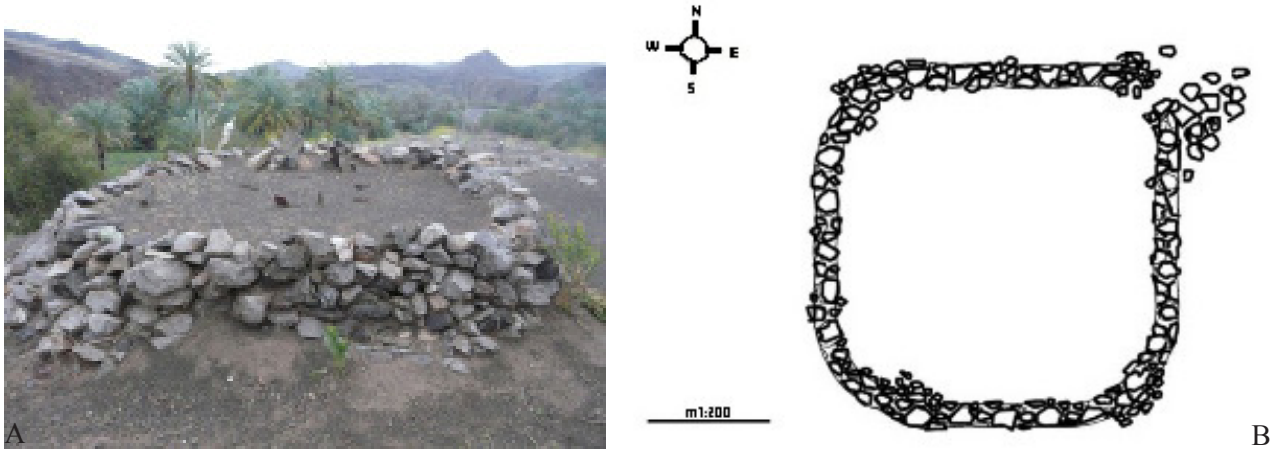


Figure. 4A: *Monument of Jangal village, Qasr-e Qand B (After: Shirazi 2010)*
B: *Monument of Jangal B village Plan*

Table 1. *Representation of typological components in the architecture of monuments with revetment architecture*

Buidling Name	Jangal A Monument	Jangal B Monument	Kasu-Kuh Monument
Geographic location of the building	Nikshahr town	Nikshahr town	Chabahar town
Direction of Entrance	Northeast	East	Northeast
Decorations	-	-	-
Functional Materials	Revetment	Revetment	Revetment
Use of symbolic concepts	Being located on the top of a hill, the monument is situated among shrubs	Being located on the top of a hill, existence of trees alongside the building	Being located on the top of a hill
Ritual behaviors	Holding invocation and pilgrimage ceremonies	Holding invocation and pilgrimage ceremonies	Holding invocation and pilgrimage ceremonies
Use of the building	Holy shrine and memorial monument	Holy shrine and memorial monument	Holy shrine and tomb

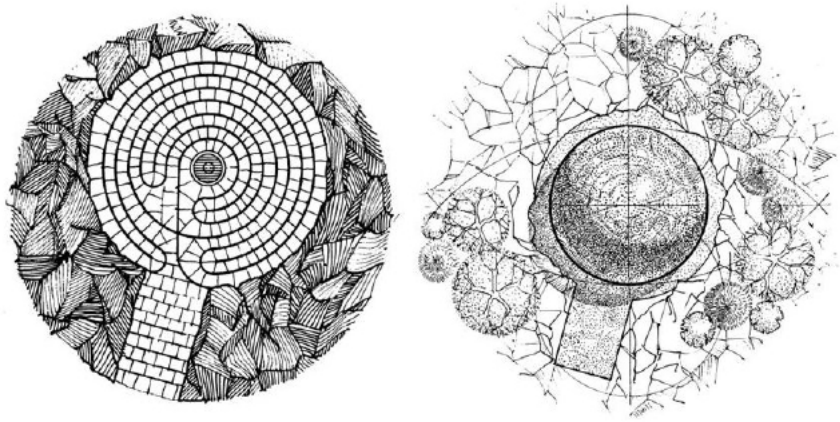


Figure. 5: *The Goddess Temple Plan (After: Lobell 1975: 21).*

wall, like other shrines, a timber which is a symbol of tree, has been set up and different colorful fabrics are hanging from it. (Figure. 6).

According to the residents of a village called Chat, this place has been a woman's tomb and sometime later after the burial, part of her scarf appears from the ground, which is the reason for the holiness and respect of the woman among the villagers. Then they build the present shrine on her grave (Taleshi 2009). Lobell believes that the first temple buildings belonged to goddesses, and referring to the feminine identity in the construction of goddess temples considers them as an archetype (Lobell 1975: 21). It seems that the formation of this ritual building is not unrelated to the archetypes of the mother of goddess and the fertility goddess. In ancient Persia, the first comprehensive or independent figure which was made included small clay samples of pregnant women and animals, i.e. the achievements of two fundamental beliefs about fertility and nature (Zabolinazhad 2009: 37). In fact, female deities have always had a great status in ancient mythology and ancient culture. One of the most important of these is Anahita, Goddess of the Water.

Dorak Tomb

This tomb located on the outskirts of Chabahar city is almost similar to the shrine of Bibi Morteza



Figure. 6: *Tomb of Bibi Morteza Ali (After: Shirazi 2010)*

Ali, in terms of architecture and location. The building has a dome with Nar style. There are four mini-minarets on the sides of the structure and four other mini-minarets on the lower stem of the dome and another small mini-minaret is seen on the dome. The entrance door of the building is on the east and has two window-like openings on the northern and southern walls. In the same direction of the entrance, there are a number of wooden pillars, from which colorful fabrics are hanging associating the symbol of the tree. The ground around the building has been flattened for about one meter and a short road has been intended for the pilgrims to enter. All of these structures follow the principles of local architecture. The main decorative characteristic of the mentioned tombs is the presence of small minarets on the corners of the building and on the entrance door. The exterior façades are often plated with white mortar, white cement, and white paint (Figure. 7).

In Baluchistan, these places are still highly respected and, in some cases, people resort to them. Sacrificing cows or sheep is among the ceremonies which are often performed in these places. At least eight examples of these types of building have been identified in Chabahar, only two of which have flat roof while the rest are covered with conical domes (Shirazi 2009).

These roofed buildings with a dome-shape cover have been built on altitudes just like the uncovered structures. Although their architecture seems more advanced, they have a simple structure and have not progresses much beyond the scope of their native architecture. The common feature of these structures is the presence of ritual mini-minarets on the corners of the building. These decorative mini-minarets representing the greatness and status of the deceased person are also seen in some of the tombs of the Islamic period. The most prominent example of this architectural element is the tomb of Rulers of the Samanids in Bukhara (Figure. 8).

As mentioned previously, the current ecological condition of the investigated areas in Baluchistan is in such a way that it lacks any forest cover and density. Therefore, due to the lack of the tree in the frontage of the ritual buildings, in many of them, including the tomb of Dorak and Bibi Morteza Ali, some banners used as a symbol of tree. "The tree has been regarded as a symbol of the incomprehensible nature at different times and among different tribes, a symbol whose archetype is hidden in its connection with the human." (Mokhtarian:146). (Table. 2).



Figure. 7: *Dorak Tomb (After: Taleshi 2009)*

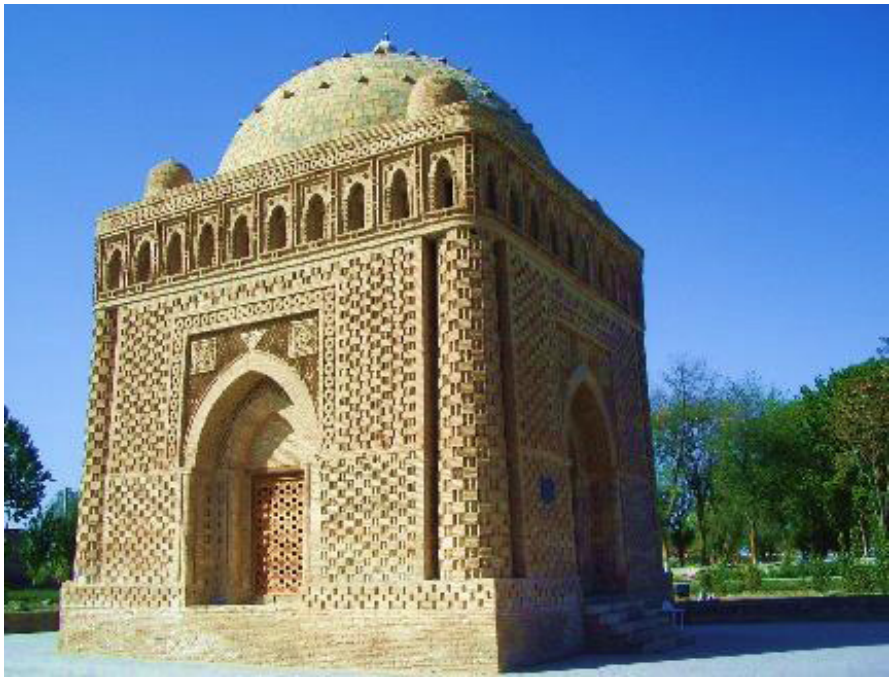


Figure. 8: *Tomb of Rulers of the Samanids in Bukhara (After: Ettinghausen et al. 2001: 339)*

Great antiquity and propagation of myths, legends, and symbols associated with the tree have gone far beyond the history of religions and extended to philosophical anthropology. The tree is the illustrative symbol of disconnecting from the materialistic life and an experience of going beyond that life and spiritualization of it in most ancient stages of culture and human's ontological jump. In fact, the tree is a symbol of asleep memories and the familiar melodiess of the ancient era and the silent legend composition full of the great spirit of the existence which has always been considered as

Table 2: *The Typological Components of The Architecture of Domed-Shaped Buildings in Southeast of Iran*

Building name	Tomb of Bibi Morteza Ali	Tomb of Dorak
Geographic location of the building	The city of Konarak	The city of Chabahar
Entrance Direction	East	East
Decorations	The use of white color in the external façade of the building, presence of mini-minarets on the corners of the sides and dome of the building	The use of white color in the external façade of the building, presence of mini-minarets on the corners of the sides and dome of the building
Functional Materials	Thatch mortar and white cement	Thatch mortar and white cement
Use of Symbolic Concepts	Being located on the top of a hill, use of symbolic trees	Being located on the top of a hill, use of symbolic trees
Ritual Behaviors	Sacrificing cows and sheep, hanging cloth from the branches of the symbolic tree	Sacrificing cows and sheep, hanging cloth from the branches of the symbolic tree
Use of the Building	Holy Shrine and Tomb	Holy Shrine and Tomb

a ritual and symbolic value in human culture, and is regarded to be a venerable entity as well as a mysterious and extraordinary phenomenon; and in some religions, it has been praised and considered to be sacred (Pourkhaleghi Chatrudi 2001: 92). It can be stated that in the system of being, the tree is the most magnificent mythological stature among the recurrent and sacred symbols, and it is the pillar and base of the universe and it is considered as the connection between the earth and the heaven as well as the column of the cosmos; moreover, it is a symbol of birth, growth, death and resurrection (Pourkhaleghi Chatrudi 1998: 75).

Conclusion

Studying and investigating the type of ritual architecture of lands can provide us with the right logic and understanding of their cultural behaviors. The architecture of the structures under study has entirely been based on the native structure. According to the available evidence, it seems that many of the revetment structures have changed into dome-shaped structures during a process. It is likely that after the burial of a great figure in the sanctum of the memorial monuments, the structure of the tomb changed into a domed-shape structure for the sake of respecting the deceased person. These structures have the following characteristics: the maximum relationship with nature, the use of low cost and minimally-decorated materials, the lack of a tomb in some memorial monuments, the lack of spatial hierarchy in reaching the graves in tomb structures, and the use of symbolic concepts in the formation process of these structures. What is resulted from the connection of such graves with the nature is to achieve a quiet and peaceful place for the pilgrims to be able to focus as much as possible. In fact, the form and the space of nature and symbolic concepts in connection with architecture provide the place with an identity as a meaningful relationship. The performed research indicates that the presence and role of many long-standing archetypes rooted in ancient Iranian culture are evident in the formation process of the architecture of the southeast of Iran in different periods according to the requirements. This has led to the creation of physical similarities in architecture and their meaningful relationship. However, due to the lack of sufficient archaeological works, a precise chronology cannot be provided for many of these buildings, but because of the architectural type and style and observing the dates on the tombstones obtained from some of the tombs, these structures can be considered among the buildings of the late Islamic period. It is hoped that through an extensive study of these beliefs and their origins, we can discover the existential truth and the secrets behind them.

Acknowledgment

The authors would like to thank the referees for their valuable comments which helped to improve the manuscript.In gratitude for the efforts of the esteemed Researcher and Archaeologist, the Deceased "Mojtaba Soltani", this Article is Dedicated to his respected family.

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