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(۲)



بنیاد ایران شناسی

انتشارات

(۱۰)

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on Iranian Studies

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History And Historical
Geography

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The Construction of Apadana of Persepolis and Susa: Which one was built first?

Mohammad T. Imanpour

Following the mysterious death of Cambyses on his return from his campaign against Egypt and by an unconcealed coup d'état against the Cyrus line, Darius the Great came to the throne of Persia in October 522. Since he was not the obvious heir to the throne, Darius had to quell rebellions that arose throughout the Empire. Darius claims that "this is what I did by the favour of Ahuramazda in one and the same year after I became king. Nineteen battles I fought; by the favour of Ahuramazda I smote them and took prisoner nine kings".¹ The provinces that according to Darius became rebellious were "Parsa, Elam, Media, Assyria, Egypt, Parthia, Margiana, Sattagydia and Scythia".² In the first year of Darius' reign, Parsa was a rebellious region, and a man known as Vahyzdata, from the district of Yautiya, claiming to be "Bardiya" became king in Parsa, where he finally was suppressed in May or July 521 BC.³

In the second year of Darius' reign, there was yet a third revolt in Susiana under one Atamaita an Elamite. Gaubaruve (Gobryas, one of the seven conspirators) was given command of the army and promptly crushed the rebels.⁴ It was perhaps following the suppression of those rebellions, Vahyzdata in Parsa and later Atamaita in Elam that Darius felt secure enough to order for the construction of two royal capitals one in Parsa in the place he defeated Vahyzdata in the Marvdasht Plain and second one at Susa. When Darius began to build his palaces at Persepolis and Susa is a question

which has been discussed by a number of scholars and we are going to examine it in this paper.

The archaeological excavations at Susa revealed that the site was occupied more or less continually from about 4000 BC.⁵ As early as the third and second millennium BC, the Elamite kings built their palaces at Susa.⁶ The site was frequently used as their capital by Elamite kings until the date 646 BC, when it was finally destroyed by Assurbanipal. Though the ancient texts inform us that Cyrus the Great called himself King of Anshan, which implies that he controlled Elam and Susa, no archaeological evidence confirms his presence in Susa.⁷ There is no evidence of the presence of Cambyses (530-522) in Susa either.⁸ The extensive excavations conducted over the course of a century at Susa have yielded no Achaemenid structure or inscription dating from or referring to the time of the Achaemenid kings before Darius (522-486). If we follow Strabo (XV. 3.2) where he has written about the presence of Cyrus in Susa, it is not improbable that some structure would have been built by Cyrus at Susa.⁹ Nonetheless, the evidence indicates that it was Darius who started to found new buildings there,¹⁰ though we are not certain precisely when he began work at Susa or at Persepolis, or in which site the work started first.

It has been argued by some scholars, on the basis of the style of glazed brick and the Darius inscription at Susa, that the city was re-founded in 521/520, before the foundation of Persepolis.¹¹ Comparing the orthography of Dse stone stele fragment (Dsaa) and Behistun texts F. Vallat has suggested that the foundation texts could not have been deposited any later than 519 or 518 BC.¹² Taking into account the Egyptian ex-naval commander at the court of Cambyses and Darius, Udjahorresnt's report mentioning about present of Darius in Susa in 519 BC P. Briant seems infer that Darius must have had a palace to reside in.¹³ Pointing to Darius' inscription at Susa, in which he invokes a blessing on his father Vishtasp (who was still alive), Dandamaev suggests that the Apadana of Darius at Susa was most likely built before Persepolis.¹⁴ Based on the foundation documents of Darius at Persepolis, which were found in stone boxes in the

corners of his Apadana Hall, dating c. 514, a similar opinion has also been expressed by some other scholars.¹⁵ In spite of the above suggestion, however, there is evidence indicating that Persepolis was probably founded before or at least synchronously with the re-foundation of Susa.

As we know, Ghirshman who excavated Susa, did not find enough evidence to date its construction earlier than 518 BC, and accordingly he dated it between 518 and 512 BC.¹⁶ In contrast, a date between 520-518 BC was suggested for Persepolis, indicating that work in this place must have started before that in Susa.¹⁷ Base on careful study of stoneworking techniques used on discarded column drums re-cycled as casings for bronze doorsockets, C. Nylander has suggested that Ionians and Lydians were most certainly at work on Apadana of Susa around 520-510 BC which this suggestion is comparable with Ghirshman view as was cited above.¹⁸ Secondly as far as the name of Vishtasp is concerned, the same illustration could be plausible for Persepolis, because, according to Xerxes' inscription in Persepolis, the construction began in Persepolis during the reign of Darius, while both Vishtasp and Arshames were still alive.¹⁹ Thirdly, the occurrence of the name of Inia in the foundation document at Persepolis – which caused Ali Sami to suggest that Susa was re-founded before Persepolis,²⁰ is not relevant, because the name of India is mentioned in both of Darius' inscriptions at Susa and Presupposes.²¹ Thus the above evidence gives no information to prove that Susa was founded before Persepolis.²² In contrast, comparing the list of provinces in Darius' four inscriptions at Behistun (DB), Persepolis (DPe), Susa (DSe) and Naqsh-e Rostam (DN) and Xerxes Persepolis (XPe), indicates that Persepolis was founded before Susa, or at least the principal work in Persepolis was finished before that in Susa.

Apart from the various groups of Ionians and Scythians whose names, with different spellings occur in the inscriptions of Darius both at Susa and at Persepolis, the names of twenty provinces are common at the four main inscriptions of Darius in Behistun, Susa, Persepolis and Naqsh-e Rostam as well as in Xerxes' inscription at Persepolis.²³ In addition to these twenty provinces which their names are listed on all the above inscription – there

are four more provinces (Skudra/Macedonia, Putaya/Libya Kushiya/Ethiopia, Karaka/Caria) which are listed on DN, DSe, and XPe, but not in the Darius Persepolis inscription.²⁴ We know that the DB inscription was written in the early years of Darius' reign before the DSe, DPe, DN and XPe. In other words the DN and XPe inscriptions were written when the Persian Empire was at its peak and had extended to far lands. Considering the fact that these above four names do not occur in DB as well as on DPe, but are mentioned in the DSe, DN and XPe inscriptions, we can thus reach a conclusion that the Persepolis inscription of Darius was carved before the Susa inscription. Accordingly, Persepolis was constructed when those provinces were not under Persian control, while during the construction of Susa those lands had been conquered by the Persians. In other words, the writing of the Persepolis inscription, and accordingly the construction of some of the Persepolis buildings, probably took place before the inscription of Susa had been written as well as before the construction of Achaemenid Susa.

The only territory which is mentioned in Darius' Persepolis inscription, but not in either the Susa inscription or other foregoing inscriptions, is Sagartia.²⁵ Since this name is mentioned only in Persepolis, not in Darius' other inscriptions, it could be explained that Sagartia had probably been taken out from Media as a governmental unit following the writing of the Behistun inscription, and then returned to its old place as part of Media again.²⁶ Putting this name among the lands of the eastern or southern Caspian Sea and before the name of Parthia also confirms our suggestion that it was not new land conquered later. In addition, the name of Saka is included as a single country on the DB and DPe inscriptions, whereas on the other inscriptions, DSe, DN and XPe, there are two lands mentioned named Saka (Saka Haumavarga and Saka Tigraxauda).²⁷ This evidence again indicates that Persepolis was built before the date that this new country came under the control of Darius, while during the construction of Susa, the Persian Empire extended beyond the land of Saka.

Finally we can also remark on the position of Media listed in the above inscriptions. The name of Media is listed in tenth place in the DB inscription and in third place in DPe, whereas it is listed in second place, after Parsa, in other inscriptions, including DSe. Comparison of the arrangement of the name Media in these inscriptions with the historical evidence--showing Darius' hostility to Media early in his reign, in particular in his inscription at Behistun concerning Gaumata--seems to indicate that the Persepolis inscription was written before the Susa inscription. Darius' revenge against the Median, which originated from his rivalry against the Cyrus line, probably diminished later when he seized power from the Cyrus line. As we know Cyrus was the grandson of Astyages the King of Media.²⁸ Following the foundation of the Persian Empire by Cyrus the Great, many of the Median élite achieved high positions in the Persian army as well as at court.²⁹ Gaumata could have been one of these Medes who probably served at the court of Cambyses and then of Bardiya, when Darius carried out the coup d'état against Bardiya, the younger brother of Cambyses. Darius, who was looking for an excuse to take the Persian throne and was acting against the Cyrus line, trying meanwhile to gain legitimacy, targeted the Median and even declared that he had killed Gaumata a Median, not Bardiya. It seems that after taking power, however, Darius felt politically secure enough gradually to list the name of Media in its real position after the name of Parsa. Later, and even during the reign of Xerxes, the title of King of Persia and Media also appeared in Babylonian texts.³⁰

In summary, taking into account the above evidence, it seems that the Persepolis inscription pre-dates that of Susa. Accordingly, it is most likely that the construction in Persepolis began before that in Susa, if not simultaneously, as mentioned by some scholars.³¹ It seems following the suppression of revolts in the first and second years of his reign, that Darius probably ordered the construction of new buildings, first in Parsa, homeland of the Persians, to demonstrate his legitimacy as the descendant of the Achaemenid dynasty, and shortly afterwards, ordered the construction of an

administrative and residential building in Susa which was for all intents and purpose as important as Persepolis.

The list of Abbreviations

- Aclr: Acta Iranica (Leiden)
AMI: Archaeologisch Mitteilungen aus Iran (Berlin)
CAH: The Cambridge Ancient History (Cambridge)
DAFI: Delegation archéologique Française en Iran
FHE: De Meyer, L., Gasche, H. and Vallat, F. eds. (1986),
Fragmenta Historiae Elamicae: Mélanges offerts à M. J. Steve, Paris: Edition Recherche sur les Civilizations
Iran: Iranica Antiqua (Leiden / Gent)
JNES: Journal of Near Eastern Studies (Chicago)
ZA: Zeitschrift für Assyriologie (Leipzig and Berlin)

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- 1 - R. G., Kent, 1953, *Old Persian: Grammar, Texts, Lexicon*, 2nd ed., p. 131. For more information about these events and related texts of Heleen Sancisi - Weerdenburg, 1995, "Darius I and the Persian Empire", in J. M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilization of the Ancient Near East II*, pp. 1035-39.
- 2 - Kent, 1953, p. 123.
- 3 - Kent, 1953, p. 127. Cf. Yamauchi, 1990, *Persia and the Bible*, p. 146; P. Briant, 1996, *Histoire de L'Empire Perse: De Cyrus à Alexandre*, pp. 119-150.
- 4 - Kent, 1953, p. 134.
- 5 - Elizabeth Carter and Matthew Stolper, 1984, *Elam: Surveys of Political History and Archaeology*, p. 104.
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- 7 - Carter and Stolper, 1984, p. 55; P. de Miroschedji, 1985, "La fin du royaume d'Anšan et de Suse et la naissance de l'Empire Perse", *ZA* 75, p. 276 ff.
- 8 - P. de Miroschedji, 1987, "Fouilles du chantier Ville Royale II a Suse (1975 - 1977) II Niveaux d'époques achéménide, parthe et islamique", *Cahiers de la DAFI* 15, p. 35. Cf. D. T. Potts, 1999, *The Archaeology of Elam: Formation and Transformation of Ancient Iranian State*, p. 235.
- 9 - Oscar White Muscarella, 1992, p. 216; Dandamaev and Lukonin, 1989, p. 256.
- 10 - Miroschedji, 1987, p. 35; Potts, 1999, p. 325.
- 11 - Mark B. Garrison, 1996, "A Persepolis fortification seal on the Tablet MDP 11 303 (Louvre sb 13073)", *JNES* 55, p. 18. No. 13; cf. O. W. Muscarella, 1992, "Achaemenid art and architecture at Susa", in Prudence O. Harper, J. Aruz and Françoise Tallon (eds.), *The Royal City of Susa: Ancient Near Eastern Treasures in the Louvre, the Metropolitan*

- Museum of Art, p. 218, no. 2; Yamauchi, 1990, p. 293; E. F. Schmidt, 1953, *Persepolis I: Structures, Reliefs, Inscriptions*, p. 30.
- 12 - F. Vallat, 1986, "Table accadienne de Darius Ier (Dsaa)", *FHE*, p. 281.
- 13 - D. T. Potts, 1999, p. 328. Cf. P. Briant, 1993, "Herodote, Udjahorresnet et les palaces de Darius a Suse, *DATA* : Achaemenid History Newsletter, 2; T. G. H. James, 1991, "Egypt: the Twenty-Fifth and Twenty-Sixth Dynasties", *CAH III* 2, p. 724.
- 14 - Dandamaev and Lukonin, 1989, p. 257.
- 15 - For example see: Josef Wiesehofer, 1996, *Ancient Persia: From 550 BC to 650 AD*, Azizeh Asodi (trans.), p. 21; H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1995, p. 1044; O. W. Muscarella, 1992, p. 218, no. 2; Yamauchi, 1990, p. 338; p. 108; J. M. Cook, 1983, *The Persian Empire*, p. 159; A. Sami, 1977, *Persepolis*, R. N. Sharp (trans.), ninth ed., p. 5.
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- 17 - For example see: Margaret C., Root, 1995, "Art and archaeology of the Achaemenid Empire", in J. M. Sasson (ed.), *Civilization of the Ancient Near East IV*, pp. 2624; Frye, 1984, p. 125; Shabbazi, 1977, p. 197; Donald N. Wilber, 1969, *Persepolis: The Archaeology of Parsa, Seat of the Persian Kings*, P. 42; Fritz Krefter, 1971, *Persepolis-Rekonstruktionen*, p. 11.
- 18 - C. Nylander 1974, "Anatolians in Susa and Persepolis (?)", *Aclr* 6., pp. 320-1.
- 19 - Kent, 1953, p. 150.
- 20 - Cf. Ali Sami, 1977, p. 10.
- 21 - Kent, 1953, p. 141.
- 22 - It was on the basis of this inscription that Ali Sami (1977, p. 10) dated the construction of Persepolis after Susa and in 514 BC.
- 23 - R. G., Kent, 1943, "Old Persian texts", *JNES* 2, pp. 303-304.
- 24 - *Ibid.*, p. 306.
- 25 - *Ibid.*, pp. 303-304.
- 26 - *Ibid.* p. 304.
- 27 - *Ibid.*, p. 305.
- 28 - See Mohammad T. Imanpour, 1998, Phd Thesis, chapter 6, the University of Manchester.
- 29 - Herodotus (L 156). As it has been noted by Christopher Tuplin (1994, "Persians as Medes", in H. Sancisi-Weerdenburg, A. Kuhrt and M. C. Root, *Achaemenid History VIII: Continuity and Change*, p. 256), it is possible that Ecbatana, the capital of the Medes had also been frequently used as a residence of Persians by Cyrus the Great and Cambyses.
- 30 - Christopher Tuplin, 1994, p. 256.
- 31 - Cook, 1983, p. 73.
- * * *