Study of the Evolution and Transformation of Ardestan Jameh Mosque Based on Available Documents

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Received: June 10 2013
Accepted: July 10 2013

ABSTRACT

Ardestan jameh mosque is one of the bedchamber mosques which changed to four porches mosque in different eras. It is said that the first mosque was built on an older building that may be related to Sassanid era according to available documents and sources. The present paper evolves the available documents and compares documents which relate to initial base of the mosque before its construction and finally consider this issue that what the first building was before construction of the bedchamber mosque with analyzing the existing documents. Then, completing issues of Ardestan jameh mosque to become four porches and construction time of porches and their completion according to implemented architectural styles in buildings and also available documents are to be considered.

KEYWORDS: jameh mosque, Ardestan, porch, bedchamber

1. INTRODUCTION

Jameh mosque is in Ardestan which is one of the Isfahan functions. Ardestan is composed of two words "ard" and "estan". "Ard" in Farsi is of the word that its rural writing and pronunciation is "asa" and "asha" and "art" is next to it which is used as holy, pure, bright, right, correct, religious, costum, wealth guard, materials, angel and client on religion meanings and is used as a member of composed words such as Ardeshir, Ardalan, Ardovan, Ordibehesht, Ardekan, Ardebil and the like and generally, it includes "ard" root that in each situation means one of the above special meanings based on the situation. Therefore, "Ardestan" means a holy, pure and bright place that is named due to stating pride and honor.

In addition, Ardestan like other cities have basically changed during historical events and became like the current one. City and mosque changes can be summarized as following eras:

2nd century: Islam publishing has been strengthen so that people tended to be educated in Islamic science in late mentioned century and the early 2nd century and wanted to destroy altars and other temples.

3rd century: The building of Ardestan jameh mosque was built in late half of 3rd century and it is possible that was made by the order of Umar Ibn Abd Al-Aziz who governed Hamedan in that century. Some great narrators and humanities scholars rose from Ardestan in late 3rd century and some works of mysticism and funeral have been seen.

4th century: This era is the authority era Timurid rulers. Timur fought with Sham people and specially Umayyad because of vengeance from Imam Hussein (AS) in Sham. When fighting ended, Timur, Arabs and retinue came to Iran and placed them in Ardestan due to their past services and issued a command that gave many ranges such as Babakooh shaft and Baba Khale shaft and many high Abestgah of city garden to all Arabs.

2. Jameh Mosque location in the context of city and its access

Jameh mosque of Ardestan is placed on Jameh Mosque Boulevard. This work is in one of the oldest districts of the city which is known as Mehal district (Figures 1, 2).
3. Introducing related buildings to Jameh mosque of Ardestan

The buildings around the Ardestan Jameh mosque include caravansary, Haj Hassan water storage, Hussainia (Tazieh square), low bathroom of Jameh mosque, Haj Hossein Nooreddini School and a small bazaar that there are no remained work from the small bazaar and caravansary now. All above mentioned works are around the Jameh mosque in the following picture which refers to 1967 (Figure 3).
4. Status quo maps of the work (plan, view, section)
Status quo of Ardestam Jameh mosque and also an introduction to surrounding area are presented in the following maps and consideration of the first mosque and its evolution are presented in the following pages (Figures 4, 5).

![Figure 4. Status quo plan of Ardestan Jameh Mosque](image)

![Figure 5. South view of Ardestan Jameh Mosque status quo](image)

4. Evolution and Development of Ardestan Jameh Mosque
4.1 The Sassanid monument, the basic foundations of Ardestan Jameh Mosque

It is necessary to consider historical writings and documents in order to realize that the first and shabestan mosque of Ardestan was built on an older building.

Moghadasi writes that this city is called Ardestan because it is set up in a white ground like powder. Gabriel believes that this name does not relate to powder but others believe that "aar", "ar", "or" mean mill in local dialects and it is called Ardestan due to abundance of mills in this area. There are some other opinions about this city and the most reliable ones are as follows: Ardestan includes Ard (holy, pure, bright) and Estan (place, location) and means a holy, pure, and bright place and the existence of Mehr Ardeshir Altar confirms this view (Alavieh, Ozbak Khan, p. 484).

Historical background of Ardestan is in a veil of confusion as its beginning is known related to Mahabadyan and Kayanids testaments. The existence of remained altars in Ardestan plain confirms the relatively ancient history of this area; other altars such as Amharan, Zavareh and Jogand can be mentioned except Mehr Ardeshir altar. It is probable that some of the altars are very ancient. For instance, perhaps Mehr Ardeshir altar has been built on a temple from "Mithraism" and therefore, its antiquity is related to earlier time (Alavieh, Ozbak, p. 486).

Moghadasi knows Ardestan as one of the biggest cities of desert edge that has thriving bazaars and a fallen Jameh mosque and as Estakhri reports, the construction of this city is strong and there is one castle in every district.
and there is one altar in every altar and maybe this city is known as having 6 altars due to according to this. As Moghadasi considers, this city has a valuable place as an important business center besides religious reliability. Until the middle ages, the ruins of the Sassanid have been remained in the city. Mehr Ardeshir altar has been set until 4th century and then changed to a mosque.

Ardestan is known as one of the famous desert city between Fars and Khorasan and there was a way to Tabas and to Damghan and Ghomes from the half of Tabas way as Ibn Hoghel said. Ardestan distance to Zavareh is written as 2 milestones and Ardestan distance to Isfahan is written as 18 milestones.

According to Estakhri as cited in Yaghoot, "there is one castle in every ancient district of the city and there is one altar in every castle", and Moghadasi reminisce of a fallen society in Ardestan in the beginning of the second half of the 4th century (AH). If we can trust the report of Yaghoot which is published at the end of Estakhri book, Jameh mosque did not occupy the place of altar but it is built in adjacent space or inside the Mehal castle. Yet, there is no doubt that the mosque is not built on a pristine ground (Alavieh, Ozbak Khan, p. 487). Obtained evidence of the place where the mosque is founded implies that it has a great and integrated building which is built with 32*32 cm square bricks and mud material and plaster coating and its floor surface is 40 to 50 cm lower than floor surface of the first mosque. In addition, the wall of the old building has been used as the wall of the first mosque in some parts (Ayatollah Zadeh Shirazi, 1980).

Andre Godard atates that Ardestan Jameh mosque is one of the important four-arched mosques in the book "Iran Art" and declares that most important four-arched mosques which are known so far are as follows: Jome mosque in Ardestan, Jome mosque in Bersian, Jome mosque in broojerd, Jome mosque in Golpayegan, and … . Also, he mapped the mosque plan as follows (Godard, 1998, p. 380) (Figures 6, 7).

**Figure 6.** Jame Mosque map of Golpayegan with four-arched Sassanid location

![Figure 6](image)

**Figure 7.** Jame Mosque plan of Ardestan with four-arched Sassanid location (Godard, 1998)

![Figure 7](image)
Following results are received from above documents:

1- Ardestan was one of the important places from religious and business point of view before Islam and such place certainly had many altars and castles.

2- The number of Muslim has been increased in Ardestan from 4th century onward and they started to destroy Sassanid buildings (altars) and to build mosques on them.

3- Certainly, mosque building was built on Sassanid building foundation because it was vain to build jame mosque on a pristine ground due to city development and existence of strong and fallen buildings in addition to this that mosque place was part of the city main elements and historical texture.

4- Although Muslims had experience in construction of mosques on Sassanid four-arched buildings in early centuries of Islam, it is unlikely that they built the first mosque on another building except the four-arched building in Ardestan.

5- It seems that building of the first mosque was built on a four-arched building of the Sassanid according to conducted research of Dr. Shirazi and also produced map by Andre Godard.

4.2 The construction of the first mosque with Shabestan plan in early centuries of Islam

Jameh mosque of Ardestan is also established in Khorasani method and with pillar shabestan and then changed into four porches. Ancient mosque has been built in late of the second century and maybe in first half of the 4th century (Pirnia, 2007, p.148).

Building sets has been formed in different eras and the oldest historical element of jameh mosque is stabled as our considerations represent. This means that there are works in mentioned building arenas that there is no trace of them in the lands and archeological excavations will create to access to it.

What can be said as the result of the consideration includes the following outlines:
1- The first mosque has a central courtyard with an area more or less equal to the current yard.
2- Pillared-shabestan environ the yard from four sides.
3- Northern and Southern shabestans (former) had five openings to the yard and three springs depth.
4- The middle opening of Northern and Southern shabestans width is more than two other side openings.
5- Eastern and Western shabestans have six openings to yard and their depth is two springs.
6- Shabestans have identified differences from the pillar construction point of view that seems related to different construction eras of the first mosque that can be separated and considered as follows:
   - Pillars of Southern Shabestan
     - Pillars of Western and Northern Shabestan
     - Pillars of Eastern Shabestan
   The pillars of Southern shabestan have a bigger diagonal than the pillars of other shabestans and the bricks of its building are different from other pillars. Even, the way the pillars of Southern shabestan are constructed is different from other pillars of other shabestans. This is that they are mill hill like Sassanid pillars and historical mosque of Damghan is like horizontal and vertical layers.
7- The first mosque extent in South continued to main front door head of southwest and Eastern body of the first mosque was composed of Western wall of Eastern entrance corridor and Eastern porch length of the current mosque to the Northern wall.
8- There was a small and separated building in the corner of Northwest which was a house of prayer. It is now in a common part of the mosque and religious school. Encountering with sanctuary works in the former side of this building somehow confirm that it is a house of prayer.
   There was a sanctuary place in the current entrance to this space of jameh mosque that is destroyed and entrance door is constructed on its place. The house of prayer is not newer than the first mosque if they were not constructed at the same time according to its remained building situation and decorations of sanctuary.
9- Plaster decorations of the first mosque are seen with variety and differences in design on fasteners, entrance corridor of Southwest, remained earring pillars of the mosque compartment (sides of the entrance of South corridor to Shabestan under Seljuk dome), two corner pillar in Southwest and Northwest, circular pillars of Northern porch, Northeast Shabestan wall plinth. An inscription with wall decorations which is probably more recent that other mentioned modeling can be seen in two Southwest sides of half story of Southwest Shabestan. Painted bricks were seen in locational searches of Northern Shabestan which were probably related to music arch of this Shabestan.
10- The consideration represents that mosque building was totally constructed of bricks and plaster materials except external walls which were established from thick clay bricks (Ayatollah zadeh Shirazi, 1980, p. 9-10).
Locating map of jameh mosque initial pillars of Ardestan which is produced by Dr. Shirazi is presented (Figures 8, 9).
Figure 8. The pillars of the initial mosque of Ardestan which is presented on an aerial photo in 1967 (source: the author)

Figure 9. Ardestan Jameh Mosque, pillars and piers in black represent the initial mosque in the second and third centuries (AH) (Source: magazine, volume 1)

4.3 Mosque developments in 6th century (AH)

Developments of the 6th century in Jameh mosque can be mentioned as follows:

1- First developments of the mosque outside the first era restrictions of its construction was in late of second half of the 6th century from the South. In this way that dome building is established with destroying the small compartment of the mosque and adding a land in the south of it.

2- Some years later, not only the plan of southern pillared-shabestan totally and basically fell apart but also the mosque spread in southeast with establishing southern porch on southern shabestan and also eastern and western porticos of the dome and porch.

In this way, the mosque had a shabestan under dome and a wide southern porch for the first time and totally the building of the pillared-shabestan that had an integrated and uniform space changed to various spaces with special qualities and huge piers and walls with covers in larger scales and bigger openings as well as higher heights took its place. These developments are signs of a completely identified social-political wave that started in late of 5th century in Isfahan and achieved to Ardestan and Zavareh in 6th century. Although these developments happened in new space scale in the south side, the apron side of mosque and other shabestans remained intact in this stage.

3- The third stage of the building that itself has wide dimensions follows eliminating the plan of pillared-shabestans in east and west. At this stage, strengthening pillars is perhaps proceeded due to structural weakness to the extent that thick piers and walls are replaced.
According to achieving inscription and Dr. Shirazi research there is no doubt about the construction time of southern porch that it was built in 555 AH and in the time of Seljuk government. Also, Andre Godard in the book "Iran Art" believes that four porches of the mosque were built in this era that means simultaneously in 6th century and Malik-Shah Seljuk. However, Bagher Ayatollah Zadeh Shirazi rejected the presumptive date of Godard about dome construction of this mosque and stated that the structure of this dome and the domes of Isfahan Jameh mosque have identified differences and probably was part of the first two-colored domes. Moreover, he wrote about construction history of the porches that the mosque did not have four porches in 555 AH based on achieved documents and against claim of Godard but just the southern porch was built in that year and other porches are the works of later eras (Ayatollah Zade Shirazi, 1980) (Figures 10, 11).

Figure 10. The construction of southern porch of Ardestan Jame mosque which is specified in yellow (source: the author)

Figure 11. Eliminated pillars at the time of southern porch which are in red (source: the author)

4.4 Mosque developments in 10th AH

Next important stage of construction of Ardestan Jameh mosque is related to the constructions of north porches. In researches it was found that the north porch was directly built on the initial mosque work and the content of the inscription of 496 certainly match with reality. Except in covering the plan of southern porch was greatly considered in the building of northern porch with a difference that surrounding buildings of the porch were built in two floors and two-story of this part of the mosque will be probably reflected slowly in other parts of the mosque (Ayatollah Zadeh Shirazi, 1980).

Therefore, according to the inscription of northern porch, the construction history of it can be known as 946. This inscription introduces Ali Ibn Ahmad Tabatabaei Zavaeie as the founder of northern porch and its connected
booths. At this time, surrounding buildings of northern porch were constructed firstly in two floors. Covering situation of northern porch represents that the roof of the porch probably had been had damages in 974. The roof was repaired and some changes have been made on its decorations in this year. Soltan Beik, one of the governors of Safavid Tahmasp era was the founder of these repairs according to remained inscription (Figures 12, 13).

Figure 12. Progressing of Ardestan Jameh Mosque in northern porch which is specified in red (source: the author)

Figure 13. Pillars of the initial mosque which have been destroyed during the construction of northern porch and are specified in green (source: the author)

4.5 Mosque developments in 11th and 12th centuries (AH)

Next stage in completing four porches of Ardestan Jameh mosque is the construction of the eastern porch and then western porch. Eastern porch was built in late 11th AH and western porch was built in early 12th century AH (Ayatollah Zadeh Shirazi, 1980).

Eastern and western buildings were built with the same solution which means that two middle openings out of six openings to the yard were selected for the porch opening and then established with elimination of the middle pier and thickening sides of the porch buildings. Certainly, it has been spread simultaneously with eastern porch building or near to that mosque all over this side and its joined Hussainia was built. The school building joined to the mosque which is located in northwest corner can also be known among the construction actions of this era. There is no dome of the porch in eastern porch in dome and it is realized that the dome of this part of the mosque was never built according to what is clear in aerial photos of previous years and also fieldwork researches (Figures 14, 15).
5. Conclusion

Following results have been achieved according to mentioned contents and also available documents in how the mosque was formed in different eras:

- The mosque was built like a four-arch at first which changed into four porches during the time.
- The process of four porching of the mosque is as follows: 1- Initial bases of the mosque in 2nd and 3rd AH, 2- The construction of Southern porch in 555 AH, 3- the construction of northern porch in 946 AH, 4- The construction of Eastern porch in late 11th AH, 5- The construction of Western porch in early of 12th AH

- We achieve to the following architectural common between Razi method and also southern porch of Ardestan Jameh mosque with the architectural consideration of Razi method which includes Seljuk era: 1- Changes of Shabestani mosques into four porches are observable in this era that just southern porch was built in Ardestan Jameh mosque and actually, it can be stated as changes of Ardestan Shabestani Jameh mosque into a single-porch mosque, 2- Implementation of two-layered arch, arc and dome forms, 3- Paying attention to building strengths and using brick resistant materials (and stone), 4- Paying attention to brick decorations

- Following points are seen in consideration of architectural type in Isfahani Method with northern porch of the Jameh mosque: 1- simplification in plan and designs, 2- using coverings (arch, toizeh, frame, …), 3- using tore and paintings
- Following points are seen in consideration of architectural type with Isfahani method: 1- more simplification in plan and designs, 2- using coverings (arch, toizeh, frame, and ...), 3- 4- paying attention to the architecture of inside of the town with city constructed elements like (square, school, garden, ...)

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