



علوم محیطی سال هفتم ، شماره سوم، بهار ۱۳۸۹  
ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCES Vol.7, No.3 , Spring 2010

103-116

## Multidisciplinary Analysis of Nature, Culture and History in the Archeological Landscape of Iran

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### Abstract

Parse (Persepolis) in Farvardin plain and Pasargadae in Marghab plain (two ancient cities in Fars Province) are well-known World Heritage archeological sites dating back to the Achaemenid period (560-330 BC), located in South-Central Iran. The present protective buffers for each site have been defined without any consideration of the natural and cultural landscapes that are the major criteria playing unique roles in their development. The area between Parse and Pasargadae along the Sivand River and Tang-e Bolaghi valley hosts significant natural, cultural and historical landscapes in which the above mentioned two sites are only two small representative heritages among the vast integrated landscape indicating-temporal-a spatial The res. cultural associationults of this study are: (1) By studying the historical, natural and cultural context and consistency of Parse- Pasargadae region, the identification of a more suitable protective margin for Parse- Pasargadae, cultural landscape as a unified concept and also to prevent its destruction. (2) Identifying criteria for the cultural landscape (3) Recognition that the Qashqa'i pastoralists are a special Persian cultural index that has preserved this culture for thousands of years.

**Keywords:** Parse - Pasargadae, Achaemenid period, Historical and natural flows, Natural landscape, Cultural landscape.

### جستجوی میان‌دانشی بین طبیعت، فرهنگ و تاریخ در مناظر باستانی ایران

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### چکیده

مناظر باستانی پارسه و پاسارگاد در دشت فروردین و دشت مرغاب استان فارس، دو شهر باستانی متعلق به دوران امپراطوری هخامنشی (۳۳۰-۵۶۰ پیش از میلاد) هستند. حرايم حفاظتی کنونی پارسه و پاسارگاد بدون بررسی و مطالعه ویژگی‌های طبیعی و منظر فرهنگی بعنوان معیار اصلی در شکل‌گیری و توسعه این محوطه‌ها، تعیین شده است. منطقه مابین پارسه تا پاسارگاد در طول رودخانه سیوند و دره تنگ بلاغی با نشانه‌های طبیعی، تاریخی و فرهنگی نمایانگر تداوم تاریخ، طبیعت و فرهنگی است که پارسه و پاسارگاد تنها محوطه‌های کوچکی از این منظر یکپارچه می‌باشند. در این تحقیق نتایج زیر بدست آمده است: (۱) مطالعه تاریخ، طبیعت و فرهنگ منطقه، منجر به تعیین حريم حفاظتی منظر فرهنگی پارسه - پاسارگاد به عنوان یک منظر یکپارچه شده است. (۲) تعیین معیارهای منظر فرهنگی در منطقه پارسه - پاسارگاد. (۳) عشایر قشقایی نیز به عنوان یک معیار منظر فرهنگی در ایران با قدمت چند هزارسال. واژه‌های کلیدی: پارسه، پاسارگاد، دوران هخامنشیان، جریان تاریخ و طبیعت، منظر فرهنگی.

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## Introduction

Iran is a mountainous territory formed during the Tertiary-Quaternary period by Alpine orogeny. Through the collision of the Neotethys, an ocean lying between Eurasia, and Gondwanaland (Afro-Arabia) a large bowl-shaped continental plateau has been formed. Although this plateau is a high land with several mountain ranges, and hinterland plays and lakes, its marginal zones (Alborz and Zagros) are much higher where they surround a vast territory with Isberg-type peaks and wide plains forming upper-lower correlated systems (Figure1) (Kinsely, 1970).



**Figure 1-** Map of Iran (Larousse, 1986)

This geomorphologic exceptional system has setting topographic and features been influenced by differences but a correlated and associated distribution of natural resources such as water, plant cover, wildlife, climate favorability etc. that are the major natural potentials and intrinsic factors to cause differences between systems.

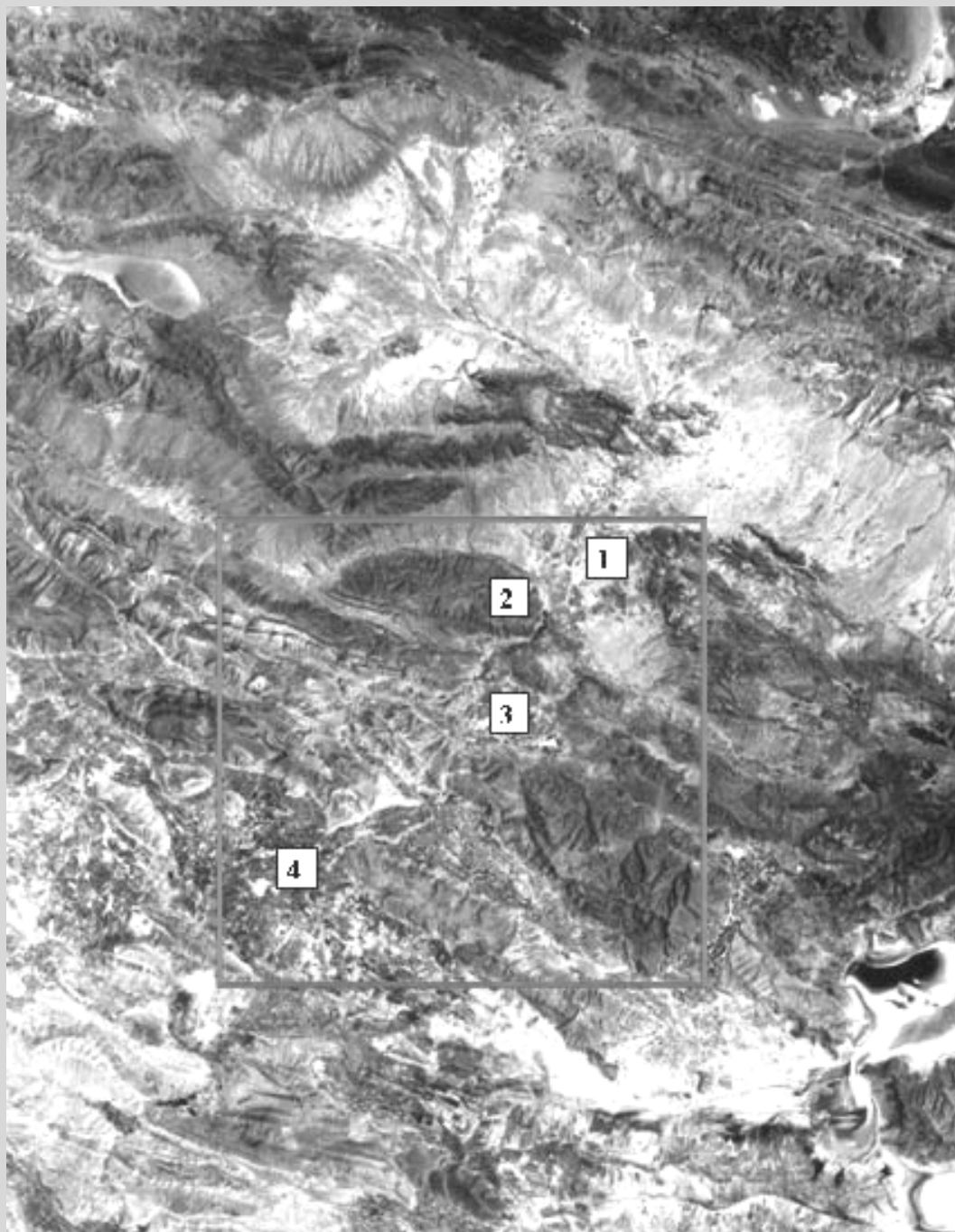
This plateau is a highland area but its edges include much more elevated heights than those of the central areas. Considering the geomorphologic features and landforms of mountainous areas surrounding the Iranian plateau, an upper-lower correlated system can be seen which is influenced by

the different but correlated and connected distribution of natural resources such as water, vegetation cover, wildlife, etc. In this correlated system due to the relationship between topography and moisture contents, this has caused a significantly diminished temperature, climatic conditions and plant covers. The abundance of water resources in the mountains creates appropriate pasture at rugged levels as well as on the flat amplitude plains (Figure 2).

These varieties of lifestyle between mountainous and plain areas have caused a sound response among their inhabitants. The signs of such a response, which is in harmony with the upper-lower nature, can be seen in pastoralists' decision making for seasonal migrations which itself is in compliance with natural generative or spatial planning and finding locations for settlement in the scales of valleys, heights and plains. Central Iran with its lower topography is the setting of plays, deserts and wide lands. The underground water resources are drained to the surface by *qanats* (underground channels) and these provide inhabitants with water even from limited resources (Samani, 2002).

The ecosystem of plain-desert areas enjoys less life variety than those of mountainous and foothill areas with the latter most often ending in fertile and rich in water plains. As a result, the numerous, delicate, vast and varied ecosystems of the plain-mountainous areas are extremely vulnerable and, in the event of any sort of disorders to their natural and cultural correlated systems, will rapidly lose efficiency and stability.

In Iranian culture, a mountain is sacred. It is fertile and provides water and pasture for the herd. In ancient Iranian beliefs, mountains were considered as the place of descent of prophets, the location for light and water and shelter for most freedom lovers. The tough conditions and seclusion nature of mountains, have converted them to original incomparable birthplaces of ancient cultures in which profound interwoven ties between humans and nature are clearly observable. Mountains, in the ancient land of Iran are depositaries



**Figure 2.** Satellite image of Zagros folded range.

**Legend:** 1- Pasargadae; 2- Tang-eBolaghi valley; 3- Plains; and 4- Parse.

of historic and cultural heritage for the many human societies which have protected Iran and its rich culture against the harmful events for almost 8000 years.

Most of the villages and human habitats in mountainous areas have been formed in inter-mountain plains which have the advantages of altitude, water and pasture, on one hand, and are away from high elevations, ice and snow covers, on the other. One of the important potentials of these inter-mountain plains is the flat and fertile fields which are fed by drainage from a network of streams, rivers and their branches. Iranian cattle herders and farmers have always adapted themselves to nature since ancient times. Some of them have chosen the nomadic system and proper seasonal migrations as their lifestyle due to severe climatic change and differences in topographic elevations. Such a nomadic group, the Qashqa'i pastoralists, has chosen the seasonal migration in harmony with nature's variations and during different seasons of the year as a way to achieve a cheap resource of provender, healthy cattle, frequent pastures throughout the year and also to avoid drought and frost (Figure 3).

Of the mountain ranges in Iran which have covered 54% of the country's area, Zagros is the longest, extending 2300 Km from the NW towards the SE. This mountain range hosts many varied habitats of plants and animals. The native plants of the Zagros region have provided a diverse plant cover in different heights from the lowlands up to the highest level, ranging from herbs to provender and from cover crops to shrubs and trees.

The middle part of this mountain range, known as "High Zagros", has its own specific natural and geomorphologic features (Bahrami *et al.*, 2007).

Since the variety of plain mountainous regions has great effects on forming human communities and settlements, the "High Zagros" region has been the origin of several civilizations. One of the greatest ancient civilizations in this region is the Great Achaemenid civilization of 560-330 BC (Ghirshman, 1976).

The borders of the Achaemenid Empire were not territorially or geographically restricted to present-day Iran, rather it covered all the territories in which Iranian tribes dwelled. This empire which entailed the conquest of the surrounding lands and then farther regions by Cyrus, started from Anshan, a region located between Elam-Parsumash and "High Zagros" on the NE of Susa (Herzfeld, 1941).

What has been left from the great Achaemenid civilization in the form of magnificent architectural monuments, epigraphs, measuring instruments and so on, expresses the glory of this great empire. The great culture and civilization of Iranians in that era involved geometry, astronomy, mathematics, agriculture, medicine, social law, art and architecture (Pope, 1947).

Carried out studies on the capital and headquarter of Achaemenid Empire introduce this great civilization began in the historical-natural region of Marghab plain and the ancient city of Pasargadae (Olmstead, 1948).

Considering the strong link between the natural environment and the cultural communities formed in



**Figure 3.** Qashqa'i pastoralists have chosen the seasonal migration in harmony with the nature.

them, and simultaneous to the founding of Achaemenid dynasty by great Cyrus, the fertile and rich in water plain of Marghab has been chosen as the primary capital of Achaemenids by Meadian and Persian scientist (the two tribes forming the empire) (Godard, 1962).

Marghab plain Belongs to the "High Zagros" region and its long lasting civilization dates back to 3000 BC. Marghab plain is located 130 Km NE of Shiraz (Fars province) within high Zagros zone. having various life styles and several ecosystems in this region on one hand and the shape of mountain folds surrounding it on the other have provided a proper natural, geographical and strategic basis to establish the ancient city of Pasargadae. After the great Cyrus and the empire transition of Darius, and simultaneous to the political and geographical development of the Achaemenid Empire borders, the capital was relocated in Farvardin plain on the southern parts of Marghab plain (Stronach, 1963).

Following this shift of capitals, the second headquarter of the empire was founded in the amplitude of Mehr mountain and over the high platform of Parse (Takhte-Jamshid) (Schmidt, 1957).

Similar to Marghab, in this new plain one can also recognize exclusive natural features and cultural symbols of older Achaemenid civilization that represent exclusive combination of nature and human communities culture (Wilkinson, 2003).

The collection of archaeologists and historians studies on Pasargadae and Parse date back to early 19<sup>th</sup> century. These studies together with the existing documents, reveals a special cultural and historical consistency considering the shift of empire headquarter from Pasargadae to Parse. Most of the archaeologists who studied these two Achaemenid capitals are examined their changes are all unanimous on the fact that the capital shift was based on environmental, political, social and particularly strategic reasons (Koch, 1996).

Looking into these studies, shows that Pasargadae was still paramount value among Iranians,

and parts of their ceremonies like coronation and rituals were still held in Pasargadae. However by risking up Parse and funding Parse city in Farvardin plain which also resulted in its population growth, Pasargadae found a particular social quietness and was always considered as a valuable and ancient promise city besides Parse and Pasargadae. During 1972-1973 and based on the latest excavation in Marghab plain (the historical zone of Pasargadae) and Farvardin plain (Parse historical zone), Iranian archaeologists, headed by Ali Sami, identified the protective margins of these two zones and, by fencing off these areas, the control and protection of these regions was handed to the Iranian Cultural Heritage Organization (ICHO). To this aim, particular management rules and regulations were drawn up to protect the ancient mountains and works in these margins (Sami, 1972).

During recent years, excavation and restoration of ancient works in these historical zones has been carried out by Iranian archaeologists and restoration experts and the range of studies has widened towards the previous margins. In 1969, Parse was selected as the first inscribed property of world heritage in Iran and, later, in 2004 Pasargadae historical zone was inscribed by UNESCO as the forth Iranian candidate. These two valuable historical zones are also protected by IUCN and ICCROM. These two organizations are making an effort to preserve and protect the ancient works and mountains existing there.

Besides Pasargadae and Parse, there are innumerable mountains, historical hills and zones etc. in both the Marghab and Farvardin plains. The antiquity of these precious historical sites sometimes dates back as much as hundreds of years before Achaemenids. Some parts even belong to prehistoric eras. Also, there are numerous monuments in these two plains left from post-Achaemenid civilizations such as the Parthian (Ashkanid), Sassanid and Islamic (after Arab invasion) periods. Over several years of excavations, ICHO has surrounded each of these sites with fencing and taken them under its own control and protection. Of the best-known sites are the ancient city of Estakhr and the

Achaemenid kings' tomb complex in Naqsh-e Rostam which are located in the northern part of Farvardin plain and the sacred zone in Marghab plain.

Throughout the past centuries, the nature of these two historical plains that has established a special natural and cultural link via smaller plains and mountain valleys has experienced a continuum of political, cultural, social and scientific trends of different human civilizations. In this region the layers of life in terms of nature and history are so interwoven that the signs and symbols of culture, from ancient ages up to now, can be traced and comprehended despite the passage of the time and the overlapping of consistent trends of life in the form of novel structures and natural changes.

#### Materials and Methods

Throughout the years and as a result of an increase in the population of villages and the structural changes of the natural context in Marghab and Farvardin plains, some breaks and interruptions have occurred in the natural and cultural sequence of the region. The introduction of industry and technology into this natural context and the growth of population have caused many pastures and agricultural farms to be replaced by village cottages, roads, industrial workshops and factories that eventually distort the natural and cultural landscape of these regions. The innate fragility of mountains, villages and between mountain plains' natural ecosystems in this widespread region together with industry leaps have threatened and endangered these various and interwoven ecosystems. The diversity of these protected cultural sites in the plains and along the river valley which connects Marghab-Pasargadae to Farvardin-Parse, in addition to the lack of a constant and harmonious management among these celebrated cultural sites have led to many, vast destructions of historical works. Also, identifying protective margins in these zones has only been done by taking a mono-dimensional attitude towards the historical works

itself, whereas, considering the issue of historical zone protection entails a general examination and study of the natural context of historical works and their link to the surrounding nature. Paying attention to recent ideas like comprehensive protection, which deals with the protection of both a historical monument and its natural context, it seems there has almost been no precise and complete margin identification for the monuments and works uncovered through archaeological excavation and/or sudden discoveries. Obviously, this leads to an interruption in the cultural and historical context of a historical region.

Due to developments in environmental science and modern technologies which provide protection organizations with more precise data about the historical and natural context of such cultural zones, the research trends in such zones have a more modern and complete orientation. This results in more constant and comprehensive data for researchers (Rences, 1999). Also what has been considered in this study was "the application of modern attitudes and techniques in introducing a united natural context and conservation of the cultural landscape of Parse-Pasargadae".

In this study, modern technologies like satellite data processing and image analysis have been applied besides field studies and environmental interpretations together with data different scientific fields such as geology, botany, hydrology, archaeology etc. Studying the historical, natural and cultural ties and consistency of Parse- Pasargadae region can lead to identifying a more suitable protective margin for the Parse-Pasargadae cultural landscape as a unified concept and also prevent its destruction. Taking the general purpose of the study into consideration and introducing the natural historical context and Parse-Pasargadae in terms of a cultural landscape, in the process of studies, an analysis of the natural context characteristics plus the historical and archeological features of the monument and works scattered throughout the plains and along the Polvar-Sivand

river valley, known in ancient times as Madoos River, has been carried out. The criteria for analysis have been identified on the basis of modern definitions of a 'cultural landscape' in international conventions. Due to the variety of cultural landscapes in different countries, the presence of different natural context variables, human and cultural resources and what has been left from ancient civilizations all over the world, the criteria for a cultural landscape have gradually been defined in several conventions.

To examine the criteria in the Parse- Pasargadae region, many studies have been carried out in the various fields of environmental, archeological and cultural sciences. Parts of these studies took advantage of Satellite Data processing system and then were modified and adapted to field study interpretation (Kruckman, 1987).

## Results

### Parse - Pasargadae natural context

Considering the natural structure, the Marghab plain, Polvar-Sivand ancient river valley and Farvardin plain are a combination of the "High Zagros" mountain range and between mountain plains. This mountain-plain region contains permanent-seasonal flows of Polvar-Sivand River and its several branches. This has provided proper natural conditions for different types of native plants to grow. The aforementioned river has a permanent flow which snakes through northern parts of the Marghab plain and Pasargadae historical zone and then heads towards the South and the Farvardin plain, including the Parse historical zone. The presence of various climatic features and the geographical natural structure of upper (heights), middle (plains) and lower (river) areas have given birth to several different ecosystems in mountains, between mountain plains and river sides.

The amount of soil humus in these places has raised and their flat plain contexts are located among lime rocks. The plant cover in this region includes trees, shrubs, pastures and several meadows. Different sorts of native plants and pastoral herbal which are specific to the "High Zagros" region together with

different kinds of wildlife especially hunting, water and migrating birds can be found in various seasons. The resuscitative flow of Polvar-Sivand River has connected the two historical plains with a N-S trend since ancient ages. The results have been a proper climate, high levels of underground water, rich and fertile soil, etc. by which suitable conditions for agriculture and rural development became possible during the past 3000 years. Most of the villages in the region are aged and between the mountain plains in Parse-Pasargadae region have been the birthplace of great human civilizations since Neolithic period. At the moment of this study, the natural context of the plain is covered by small to large farming lands which are often irrigated by vertical and horizontal water canals branching-out of the Polvar-Sivand River. The agricultural system in this region is traditional which has long been

intermingled with peasants' lives. Some parts of these lands are under dry-farming and used by the region's pastoralists. In accordance with natural changes in different seasons, these lands are planted along their migration route.

### Parse-Pasargadae historical context

Historically speaking, the signs of civilization in this region date back to Neolithic and cave-dwelling periods. The signs and remains of primitive human communities in caves and stone crevices in deep valleys besides the Polvar-Sivand River have been found, especially in southern part of Marghab plain, also called Tang-e Bolaghi valley (Figure 4).



**Figure 4.** Polvar-Sivand River in Tang-e Bolaghi valley (southern part of Marghab plain).

Studying these marvellous remains reveals the gradual trend of civilization changes from the cave-dwelling period to forming of primitive human communities and then the Great Achaemenid, Parthian (Ashkanid), Sassanid and Islamic eras until now. These remains have been scattered from the northern parts of the Marghab plain, Pasargadae, along the Polvar-Sivand river valley, the Tang-e Bolaghi valley towards southern parts and, finally, Farvardin plain Parse zone. The scattered nature of these remains, historical hills and ancient zones of Parse-Pasargadae reveals the consistency of historical and civilization trends in the Parse- Pasargadae natural context (Figures 5 &6).

### History, flowing nature and government

Nomadic residents of the plateaus and valleys of the Zagros Mountains of southwestern Iran, the Qashqa'i, are members of a tribal confederacy of some 800,000 individuals. They speak a Central-Asian derived Turkish and constitute one of Iran's many ethnic and national minorities. Until the 1960, most Qashqa'i were nomadic pastoralists who migrated semiannually hundreds of kilometers between winter pastures at low altitudes near the Persian Gulf and summer pastures high in the mountains to the North and East.

Since 1960, many Qashqa'i have settled in local villages and towns, although often retaining pastoralism as one of their several means of livelihood. Despite the new places and patterns of residence for many of these settlers, most remained attached to their customary seasonal pastures, visited their kin there, and continued to exploit the resources, often in cooperation with these kin. Their winter and summer pastures are located in the valleys and on the slopes and plateaux of the "High Zagros" mountain. Mountain peaks rise above the nomads' camps, each of which is usually secluded by the rugged terrain. A typical campsite in winter pastures would contain three woven goat-hair tents with slanted roots to deflect rain and snow. The black tents were pitched on flat areas on the slopes of gullies to protect the



Figures 5 and 6. Parse- Pasargadae historical area.

occupants and their possessions from flash floods while also still providing some shelter from wind (Beck, 2001) (Figure 7).



Figure 7. A typical campsite in winter pastures contained three woven goat-hair tents with slanted roots to deflect rain and snow.



A simple, roughly circular, open-air enclosure made of rocks heaped with dried thorny bushes protected the animals at high and helped to discourage predators. Each household owned its own sheep and goats, which were tended together in herds of from one hundred to three hundred animals.

Accompanied by donkeys to carry the load, the camp's women and children spent many hours a day traveling to and from a well in the valley below, the nearest source of clean drinking water. Before dawn shepherds took the herds to graze different parts of the surrounding hills and mountain sides, while a camel herder tended his animals and collected firewood for the camp's use. Qashqa'i nomadic pastoralists herded their sheep and goats seasonally between lowlands and highlands, distances as much as 600 km each way and exploited the pastoral resources along the routes. These migrations were not merely passages between two regions, for the vegetation along the way, especially in spring, was a vital part of the animals' sustenance. Also, seasonal pastures did not provide sufficient natural grazing and water to support the nomads and their animals for long periods. Once arriving in their winter or summer pastures, the nomads did not stay in one location for the season. Rather, they moved periodically from place to place within these areas seeking fresh grazing, better access to water and other natural resources and clean campsites.

The migration trend of these pastoralists is accompanied by natural cycles. In years when there is a predicted change of autumn, the migration time changes too. They collect their tents and move in search of warmer regions and proper provender for their cattle.

One of the major routs of the Qashqa'i pastoralists is the Tang-e Bolaghi valley in the southern part of Marghab plain. This ancient route lies along their migration from southern parts of Farvardin plain towards Marghab. They traditionally set up their black tents in the northern parts of Parse and beside Mehr mountain amplitude. After a while, they head

towards Pasargadae passing along the Polvar-Sivand River and halting for a short time on the vast plains between Parse and Pasargadae. Along this route, they are busy with their husbanding as well as cropping lands which are dry-farmed and under common ownership. During the centuries of Qashqa'i tribal migrations, their specific culture and civilization have remained. They have settled their migratory route along the plains and between the mountain valleys of Parse-Pasargadae region. Their life and seasonal migration are closely interwoven with the region's natural context. Several factors like social issues, governmental policies and international economic issues have led to their population decrease within the past century. Most pastoralists have completely left migration and settled in villages. Some others follow the migration route to some extent and then settle down in villages on the way during certain seasons. The pastoralists trade their dairy products, cattle and handicrafts such as rugs, carpets, etc with the fellow villagers and peasants (Figures 8 & 9).

Their handicrafts usually include symbols and pictures of their migratory life style and are woven in naturally dyed yarn with abstract forms of flowers, trees, mountains, plains, valleys, waters and animals. In these woven handicrafts the culture, emotions, fear of natural forces, sacredness of mountain and water and even picture of ancient works are woven in the form of "memory art".



**Figures 8 and 9.** Qashqa'i pastoralists' handicrafts include symbols and pictures of their migratory life style.



Along their migration route, beside having access to provender, dry-farming and transaction of their products, they traditionally take advantage of native

trees such as pistachio and almond as well as herbs on the basis of their ancestors' trainings.

### Identifying the cultural landscape criteria in Parse- Pasargadae

The major criteria for analyzing a cultural landscape are based on the World Heritage Center (1992) and complementary cultural indications as reported from different countries (Wilkinson, 2003).

In this research not only cultural criteria have been introduced by this committee for Parse- Pasargadae, but also the Qashqa'i pastoralists is considered as a special Persian cultural indices who has preserved this culture since thousands years ago.

**Table 1-** The major criteria for analysis of cultural landscape

| Criteria | Explanation  |
|----------|--|
| i        | A masterpiece of human creative genius.  |
| ii       | An important interchange of human value, over a span of time or within a culture area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental arts, town-planning or landscape design. |
| iii      | A unique or at least exceptional testimony to a cultural tradition or civilization, living or disappeared.   |
| iv       | An outstanding example of a type of building or architectural or technological ensemble or landscape which illustrate (a) significant stage(s) in human history.                                       |
| v        | An outstanding example of a traditional human settlement or land use, representative of a culture (or cultures), especially when under threat.   |
| vi       | Be directly or tangibly associated with events or living traditions, with ideas, or with beliefs, with artistic and literary works of outstanding universal significance.                              |
| A        | Aesthetic quality is significant on the site.  |
| B        | Building, often large buildings are significant.   |
| C        | Continuity of life way/ land use is an important element.  |
| F        | Farming/ agriculture is/ was a major element in the nature of the landscape.   |
| G        | The landscape is/ or contains as a major element, ornamental garden(s)/ park(s).   |
| I        | Primarily an industrial site.  |
| L        | The landscape is/ or contains elements which are, significant in one or more forms of group identity such as for a nation, or a local community.   |
| M        | A mountain or mountains is/ are an integral part of the landscape.   |
| N        | The landscape contains, or is entirely, a national park or other protected area.   |
| P        | A locally- resident population is a significant part of (the management of) the landscape.   |
| R        | The landscape possesses an important dimension of religiosity/ sanctity/ spirituality/ holiness.   |
| S        | Survival is a significant theme in the landscape, physically as of ancient field systems and archeological monuments, and/ or socially, as of group of people in a hostile environment.                |
| T        | Towns, and/ or villages, are within the inscribed context landscape.   |
| W        | Water is an integral, or at least significant, part of the landscape.  |

**Description and analysis of criteria in a plain landscape (between plateau plains of which the two most important are Farvardin of Marghab)**

i- Throughout these fertile plains, particularly Marghab and Farvardin, there are ancient works and monuments scattered. These brilliant works belong to several historical periods including pre-historic era, the Neolithic period, pre-Achaemenid civilizations, and the Achaemenid, Ashkanian, Sassanid and Islamic periods. It continues over a few centuries and represents the genius and creativity of human throughout the time.

ii- Brilliant works and monuments represent the consistency and interaction of human values throughout the time and contain modern developed styles of architecture and technology particularly as a place for the formation of great Achaemenid civilization. The public landscape of Marghab plain together with its several remains of palaces, gardens, castles, fortresses, and the Tomb of Great Cyrus (the founder of Achaemenids) represent the ancient city of Pasargadae. There are also several brilliant works of architecture, stone-cutting, sculpture, and epigraphs found as the remains of Parse ancient city as well as Parse in Farvardin plain. Architectural and industrial development can easily be observed in these ancient remains. There are monuments of civilizational changes from the cave-dwelling period to the formation of primitive human communities and then the Great Achaemenid, Parthian (Ashkanid), Sassanid and Islamic eras up until now in Tang-e Bolaghi valley.

iii- The epigraphs, stone-plates, and other stone carvings of Marghab and Farvardin introduce what occurred in the great Achaemenid civilization and the historical periods afterwards.

iv- Existence of architectural, industrial, and artistic works and monuments since 3000 years ago reveals the cultural and religious changes as well as different styles of art and architecture during the

civilization history. The signs of these civilizations have given birth to various landscapes whose traces have still remained in the present landscape.

v- Marghab plain is the place of formation and origin of the glorious Achaemenian civilization. Farvardin plain is also the second capital of Achaemenids. Throughout these two historical plains together with the ones in-between, the signs of ancient civilization have been left over in the form of ruins and architectural works.

vi- Parse-Pasargadae region lying between Farvardin and Marghab plains is an obvious sample of settling and residential premise for Arians and displays their golden culture and civilization. Upon gaining victory over other tribes of ancient Iran and under the united kingdom of Achaemenids, the Arians scattered the limits of their Empire to the farthest and far-fetched areas.

Aa- The combination of special natural attractions in between plateau plains of Parse-Pasargadae region, the constant flow of the Polvar-Sivand River, and its surrounding natural forests besides the ancient works and monuments, which are scattered in the plains, add to the aesthetic and visual quality of the landscape.

B- The glorious and brilliant architectural works, belonging to Achaemenids, Ashkanian, Sassanids and their aftermath are scattered throughout the plains.

C- Since ancient times, several climatic features like high amount humus, a suitable soil for agriculture and husbandry, the constant flow of the river as the critical flow of plain, high levels of underground water, the existence of an ancient lake in the southern and western parts of the Great Cyrus' tomb area, the region's topography, and other environmental factors have resulted in great natural potentials in the plain and have long been utilized by humans and Parse-Pasargadae inhabitants. These people have long established a constant and dynamic balance among their needs and the region's nature.

**F-** Since ancient times, the land structure, soil quality, high levels of underground water, climatic conditions including proper amount of rain-/snow-fall, and other environmental factors made the region's natural context appropriate for agriculture, and the farmer and cattle-herders have always been present in this consistency.

**G-** During the Achaemenid Empire Pasargadae gardens, also known as the world's first designed *chahar-bagh*, were created in the Pasargadae historical zone. These gardens were irrigated by the branches of the Polvar-Sivand River.

**L-** Parse- Pasargadae region was the origin of the great Achaemenid Civilization.

**R-** The peasant inhabitants of Parse-Pasargadae region have long held special beliefs towards the Pasargadae historical complex, in particular Great Cyrus' tomb. Special rituals and religious ceremonies are held around the tomb on different occasions. Mehr Mountain in the Farvardin plain is also of sacred and special credit.

**S-** The interaction between Parse-Pasargadae natural ecosystem and human (together with human-made works and monuments) is constant, and the gradual passage of time has created a dynamic balance among natural factors (natural context), human, and the advantages he took from ancient environment.

**Wr-** The river water, as a resuscitative flow, is the major factor of consistency and stability among natural ecosystems of the region.

**Pa (pastoralists)** - Since 3000 years ago, this region was the path of pastoralists' nomadic migration. Tent-dwellers together with their cattle pass through the Parse- Pasargadae region twice a year, and pitch their tents in Farvardin, Marghab, and other between mountains plains. Their nomadic life is in direct relation with the plain's natural environment and establishes a consistent trend of their flowing life and empire as a critical and renovating layer beside other living environmental layers. The present pastoralists of Marghab plain belong to the Qashqaei and Baseri tribes and are also busy dry-

farming in the region's plains.

## Discussion

Studying the table introduces Parse- Pasargadae region as a united and rich cultural landscape. The most evident features of this cultural region includes various ecosystems of wildlife, different kinds of native plants (trees, shrubs, herbal), crevices, caves, various beautiful shapes of cuts, rivers, ancient remains of civilizations, the mobile nomadic life of pastoralists and the view of their migration alongside villages and farming lands.

The significance of recognizing and comprehending the cultural landscape consistency in the Parse-Pasargadae region is such that we can specify it as a united landscape under full protection taking aspect of history, civilization, culture and nature into consideration.

For the time being, besides the native lifestyle together with nomadic tribes, the whole area of the Marghab - Farvardin plains and Polvar-Sivand River valley are under thorough examination and excavation of archeologists. There is still a great deal of signs belonging to ancient civilizations buried under the ground.

Moreover, tourists from all around the world come to visit the historical zones of Pasargadae, Parse, Naqsh-e Rostam, Naqsh-e Rostam, the ancient city of Estakhr etc. the interaction between past and present, nature, history and human, shapes the body of this cultural landscape. It is crystal clear that any sort of interference in the components of this landscape will result in irreparable outcomes, and interrupting the united and consistent cultural landscape of Parse-Pasargadae will lead to its destruction. The most important danger which will cause irreparable outcomes and unfortunately is about to occur is the flooding of Sivand dam 50 Km off Parse in Tang-e Bolaghi valley. The construction of this dam on Polvar-Sivand River was initiated in 1993 and its flooding has been postponed till 2007. Due to the huge volume of water, the climatic and natural conditions of

the environment in Parse and Pasargadae will be subject to great changes. Furthermore, lots of ancient works along Polvar-Sivand River will sink underwater and historical sites including Cyrus the Great tomb and palaces remains will be exposed to gradual destruction due to climatic changes such as the increase in relative humidity.

Also, flooding of the Sivand dam involves destruction of its surrounding habitats and will lead to a change in the migration routes of nomadic tribes with ancient culture. These tribes are just alive in memories now and their cultural variety will be ruined by the disappearance of life variety. This will surely be a serious harm to Parse- Pasargadae cultural landscape.

In this way, the natural and historical attractions of the region will also fade away and the concept of tourism based on visiting and discovering natural and historical contexts of the region will be restricted to visiting museums, whereas, by introducing Parse-Pasargadae region as a united cultural landscape, treats of this kind cannot do any harm to the dynamic consistency of the region. Examining the natural context characteristics, history, civilization and the pastoralists' region presents a complex mutual interaction between the human and natural environment in Parse-Pasargadae region. This consistency has its roots in ancient times and is still stable as a living memory and history now.

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