



**Recognition of Sassanid Takht-i-Nishin (Throne Room) in the Middle of  
Ardeshir Khorra City; A Proposition of a Temple of Anahita and Fire Chartaqi in the  
Continuation of Previous Traditions**  
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(161-187)

**Abstract**

In the middle of the city of Ardeshir Khoreh (the city of Gur), there is a rectangular tower, a circular structures, as well as a fort and a circular moat, which are considered to be the most prominent structures of this city; But in the northeastern part of the city of Ardeshir Khoreh, a place called "Takht-i-Nishin" (throne room) remains in the form of a platform of heavy dressed stone and a hollow or pit in the form of a reservoir, which has been studied by different scholars from the early centuries of Islam until now. However, there are still differing views on this complex; For example, the four-arched structure located on a flat platform is called by the names of Atashgah, Qasr, Tarbal, Atashkadeh, Dekan, Atashkhaneh, Kooshak, Irankiakhareh, Ivan, Dekeh, Irangardeh, palace, mansion, tower, house, and ziggurat. In addition, the reservoir next to the platform is also called Cheshmeh, Ghadir, Hoz Ab (water pool), AbAnbar (water reservoir) and Abnama (fountain). Therefore, attributing various names to this complex indicates the ambiguity in the nature of the constructions. The demolition the complex's most buildings and the coverage of its remains by rubbles over time, has caused less attention to this building in various documents and sources. Therefore, by interpreting the different views that exist around the structures of this building, this study aims to recognize the function of the Takht-i-Nishin complex, how the spaces are related and why it was built in the middle of the city of Ardeshir Khoreh. In order to achieve this goal, the interpretive-historical method have been used and library resources such as archaeological reports and historical documents were studied. Also, more accurate and up-to-date information was obtained through field visits and surveys, which paved the way for research. Then, by physical and spatial analysis of similar buildings such as the Anahita temple in Bishapour, a comparative comparison of the combination of four arched structure or Chartaqi and the water basin in the middle of Ardeshir Khoreh city has been conducted. As a result, the research findings show that the building on the platform is in the form of a cruciform hall with a four arched pattern and is located in an adjacent bed overlooking the man-made pond in the middle of the city of Ardeshir Khoreh. According to Ibn Balkhi, and the remains of debris visible on the ground, there was probably a similar quadrangle in front of the second basin or behind the available one. Hence, these Chartaqi, as a continuous fireplace connected to the water basin, have created a structure that shows a common pattern in the formation of Sassanid period religious collections related to water and sacred fire. The findings indicate that it can be a place of worship for the goddess Anahita in a ritual complex by being located next to the holy water pool and fire place.

**Keywords:** Ardeshir Khorra Takht-i-Nishin, Anahita Temple, Fire Chartaqi, Water Pond, Sassanid Architecture.

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### Intuoduction

The flourishing of Ardeshir Khoreh city is known in the time of Ardeshir Pabgan (the founder of Sassanian Dynasty) (Bal'ami, 1349: 35); But the history of this city, according to historians and geographers of the early and middle centuries of Islam, dates back to the reign of Kiyanian [probably Achaemenid], which was destroyed by the order of Alexander.

With the rise of Ardeshir in Fars, he was able to rebuild this city (Karnameh Ardeshir Pabgan, 1306: 380 and Estakhri, 1340: 110; Bal'ami, 1349: 35; Ibn Faqih, 1349: 12 and Ibn Balkhi, 1385: 137). Studying the text of "Ardeshir Karnamag", it is considered that Ardeshir dug a big hole or pit in the middle of the city; Then water was directed and filled the pit from the northern springs of Ardeshir Khoreh area, so that Chaharjou (four channel) could spring from it. A fire temple is then built near the ponds (Forsat al-Dawla Shirazi, 1998: 182 and Huff, 2012: 165). The founder of the Sassanid government spent the last years of his life in the magnificent buildings of Ardeshir Khoreh and prayed and rested in peace (Bal'ami, 1349: 38-39; Rajabi, 1383: 58-59 and Mehrafarin et al., 1392: 116).

In the middle of the city of Ardeshir Khoreh, there is a rectangular tower, circular structures as well as a circular moat; But in the northeastern part of the middle place (Miyangah), there is a platform of heavy and dressed stones that was once the throne of Ardeshir Pabgan (Bal'ami, 1349: 35; Flandan, 1356: 386; Forsat al-Dawla Shirazi, 1377: 180 and Ibn Balkhi, 1385: 138). This building is called "throne room" or "Takhtgah or Takht-i-Nishin" literary meaning the throne room due to its scaly appearance (Hoff, 1986: 79).

Most attention to this position is around the body and function of the collapsed staired platform and the cruciform hall left on the platform; Also, in the vicinity of this platform, two water basins are surrounded by a wall connected to the platform (Figure 1). The two water basins with an integrated wall of stone and mortar can be seen next to the bed platform.

Historians and geographers of the early and middle centuries of Islam have reported on the characteristics of the "Takhtgah". Archaeologists and researchers who have studied Ardeshir Khoreh have considered two main functions for the structure. For example, some have considered it a fire temple with religious uses (Huff, 1365: 79; Huff, 2012: 165) and others have considered its function as a palace with ceremonial and court purposes (Tahmasebi et al., 2016). Due to the different views that exist around the structures of this complex, the present study has restudied Takhtgah complex in the middle of the Sassanid city of Ardeshir Khoreh to increase our awareness of the architectural and urban features of the Sassanid era in the first years of their rule.

The structure of the throne with four pillars and a cruciform shape plan is similar to Chartaqi, a four arched structure with the function of fire place common during Sassanian period as Zoroastrian temples. In the field survey of the mentioned area, in addition to the four arched structure located on the flat stone platform and two water basins which can be the pools, another structure can be seen on the eastern side of the second basin and on higher plates (Figure 1). There is an accumulation of man-made stones in this place, but the extent of its destruction is so great that no specific structure can be imagined for it. However, based on Ibn Balkhi's reference to two fires on top of the two Ghadirs, it can be assumed that the second fire could have been the same structure destroyed. Meanwhile, at the back of the present throne, there are traces of walls that must indicate a large building reaching to the available four piled structure. Therefore, the function of the whole complex is becoming more important considering the debris around the two basins.

This study showed that the throne of Ardeshir Khoreh is in close connection with religious and ritual complexes. The four-arched space organization as well as the basins

and other surrounding constructions, indicated that the building was neither a palace nor a single fire temple, but a complex consisting of an enclosed fire place for the sacred fire, and the spring as an open shrine for the worship of running water. A cruciform hall with a four-arched pattern and a water basin in its vicinity have appeared in response to providing a place for water and fire worship. The research findings also showed that this complex was part of an integrated religious complex in the center of the city that Ardeshir Pabgan offered it following his ancestors and in praise of Goddess Anahita. Ardeshir Pabgan, who considered himself a king and, like his ancestors, set fire to the Anahita shrine, was able to both build his ambitious political ideas and instill a worldview of the Sassanid dynasty; As a result, it can be assumed that in the continuation of the previous traditions, a shrine for the worship of Anahita and a fire temple in gratitude for the victory for the king appeared in the new city. The surrounding complex can be considered as supporting structures for the presence of the ceremonies related to the presence of Ardeshir as the founding ruler in Ardeshir Khoreh, as the new city.