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Archaeological Evidence for the Proliferation of Dari Persian in Khorasan

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Abstract: Dari apparently began to spread in Greater Khorasan only in the aftermath of the Arab invasions of Iran. As the official language of the Sasanian court, it would experience a substantial proliferation following the shift in power from Ctesiphon and Fars to eastern Iran, particularly Khorasan, which appeared as a safe haven for the king and the prominent court families during the first two decades of the invasions. The question then arises as to the relation between the spread of Dari in Khorasan and the resettlement of western and southern Iranian populations in the eastern part of the collapsing empire. Our inquiry into the Sasanian-Islamic transition in quest of the fire temples that persisted in the early Islamic centuries led to the conclusion in view of the fluctuating numbers of coeval sites that the earlier harsh attacks had apparently forced inhabitants of southern Iran in particular Fars and Ctesiphon to take refuge in Khorasan, the land of Adur Burzen-Mihr Fire. In their new home, these refugees would adopt two different modes of subsistence, thereby settlement, systems: sedentary rural life, and nomadic lifestyle involving periodic moves within a certain area. This dichotomous approach would guarantee their survival. Among the manifold results of the late Sasanian peace treaties between the Dehgâns and the Arabs was the preservation of Iranian culture and language in Khorasan, where it contributed to several advances. Several years of efforts by Iranian immigrants to revive architectural and poetic styles in Khorasan proved that they were triumphant in the cultural battleground despite of losing the actual battle.

Keywords: *Sasanian period, Early Islamic, Dari Language, Fars, Khorasan.*

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Introduction

If the reign of Khosrow I marked the acme of the Sasanian power, his reforms would rather trigger major political and social problems that eventually brought about the empire's collapse at the hands of Muslim Arabs (Moftakhari, Zamani, 2008: 7). On the one hand, the Kust of Khorasan, having born out of the division of Persia into four kusts (major administrative divisions) and stretching from the Caspian Gates near Ray to the Oxus river (Christian-sen, 1995: 148), sustained in the ensuing periods. On the other, the foremost aspect of his reforms, concerning the Dehgâns and the taxation system, even fostered changes in the ways in which crop taxes were collected (Dinawari,1987:111).

"House" represented a pivotal institution for the Sasanian society, and such great families as the House of Mihran held important positions in the Khosrow I's reign (Nöldeke 1999: 981), as was the House of Karin, who as local governors of Khorasan and Gorgan were even entitled to sit on golden throne (Dinawari,1987:124). Yet, following the arrival of the Arabs and the collapse of former social structures, it was Dehgâns who assumed the vital role of safeguarding Iran's cultural values. Having retained their lands on account of Jizya payment, a group of them gradually gained power, and their aids proved crucial for the victory of the Abbasids, especially in Khorasan (Gardizi, 1984: 266; Dinawari, 1987: 361). And the Iranian tradition was the major inspiration for the transformation of the tribally oriented caliphate rule system into a hereditary monarchy, a change also encouraged and backed by the hadith "the Aimmah (leaders) are from Quraish (Ibn Umar, 1998: 310-311).

The Arab sheikhs living in Iran also formed a novel aristocracy, most of them now having withdrawn from the Umayyad caliphate and engaged in trade (Bayat & Dehghanpour 2011: 23). This new class enjoyed many economic interests, which was a source of concern and consternation for their indigenous Iranian counterparts based in Transoxiana (Gibb, 1923: 69). In effect, the Arab immigrants' voracity for land appropriation in the newly conquered Iran gave rise to this fresh aristocracy (Mahdi Al-Khatib,1999: 115-116). With the disintegration of the remainders of the Sasanian Iranshahr and the gradual shift from caliphate to a monarchy in the Umayyad period (Ibn Khaldoun, 1987: 400), the transmogrification and assimilation of the Sasanian system's remnant elements took on a new form centered on the Umayyad ethnicity, and along with the translation of books, all Iranian social institutions such as diwan (Administration Instructions) and monetary system (coin minting) were adopted. Such state of affairs did categorically strangle any aspiration for an Iranshahri mode of rule, and the practice of earliest Arab governors, who often indiscriminately levied similar taxes on both non-Arab Muslims and dhimmi communities (Seddiqi, 1993: 54-68), severely undermined Iranian populations economically (See: Salehi 2020).

For the period ensuing the political collapse of the empire, archaeological record evinces a change in the Sasanian settlements concentration, especially in south and west Iran. Historical and numismatic evidence has cast considerable light on the Sasanian contribution to the altered political and social landscapes of Southeast Asia. Yet, it is essential to also invoke archaeological data to grasp these complexities, viz. in analyzing regional settlement patterns, demography, modes of agricultural activities, trade and industrial productions (Wenke, 1981: 304). Archeological data speaks of enormous Sasanian investments in agriculture and irrigation networks in the mountain valleys spanning the modern province of Khuzestan to the regions north of the Strait of Hormuz, and possibly also further east. Under the Sasanians, agriculture in Khuzestan and Mesopotamia developed immensely with the construction of large dams and canal systems, ruins of which are traceable today in some cases, and the exploit of farmlands in these plains

reached its zenith (Adams 1965; Wenke 1981). This starkly contrasted the situation in the mountainous southern Zagros and the northern Persian Gulf littoral, wherein existed neither the flat and fertile lands nor the large rivers of Mesopotamia and Khuzestan to justify equally substantial ventures. The Sasanian policy in such regions apparently involved developing agriculture with smaller investing but on a large scale. The attainment of this goal called for the presence and supervision of government institutions, but the arrival of the Arabs would have put an inevitable end to that well-thought-out scheme. The implications of the change in settlement density were generally deemed insignificant citing such presumptions as the non-interference of the Arabs in the already operating economic systems. Some have even argued for a greater economic thrive in the earliest Islamic period (Sumner & Whitcomb, 1999: 314; Whitcomb, 1979: 5). To Crater, the multitude of Sasanian settlements across the plains of Bushehr represents agricultural centers that were there to provide regional ports with their food supply (Carter et al., 2006: 98). The Arabs entered Iraq in 633 A.D., but would be defeated by the Persians in the 634 A.D. Battle of Jasr (Daryaee, 2004: 55-56). Yet, the invading forces finally seized control of Ctesiphon in the decisive battle of al-Qadisiyyah fought in 636 A.D. Investigations in the Fars province tend to reveal a shared observation: a peaking in settlement frequency in the Sasanian period, and an abrupt and concurrent drop at the onset of the Islamic period, while a substantial rise is attested in the frequency of contemporary sits in Khorasan.

Thus, on account of the statement that "Dari was a language spoken by royalty (Shafiei Kadkani, 1963: 20), and given the fact that the homeland of the Sasanians lay in the Fars region and hence Dari was also used by the local houses there, we will try to explain how the status of Fars as the center of Dari language was conferred on Khorasan. The Arab invasion and the resultant migration of prominent houses to eastern regions seem to have been the main factor for the spread of Dari Persian in Khorasan in the Islamic times.

Research History

The rather voluminous literature devoted to Iranian literary history, comprised of both foreign and domestic contributions, almost invariably describes Khorasan as Dari's region of origin. Notable works in this regard include E. Browne's A Literary History of Persia, Z. Safa's Tarikh-e Adabiyat dar Iran *[History of literature in Iran]*, R. Mosalmanian Ghobadi's Farsi-ye Dari *[Dari Persian]*, Y. Ripka and other's History of Iranian Literature, P. Natel Khanlari's Linguistics and Persian Language, A. Tafzzoli's Tarikh-e Adabiyat-e Iran pish az Eslam *[History of Iranian Literature before Islam]*, A. Azarnoosh's Chalesh-haye Miyan-e farsi va Arabi *[Challenges between Persian and Arabic]*, S. Rezazadeh Shafaq's Tarikh-e Adabiyat-e Iran *[History of Iranian Literature]* along with several others, who have looked into the problem from the perspectives of historical texts and linguistic evidence. However, no serious archaeological work has so far covered the question of resettlement in particular in Khorasan in the early Islamic period as a repercussion of the Muslim occupation of Iran, and its relation to Dari Persian.

Questions and Hypotheses

Khorasan is typically regarded as the provenance of Dari Persian. In different phases of the Islamic epoch, several celebrated writers and scholars from the region have made remarkable contributions to Persian language and literature. Yet, the question considered here is: How did Khorasan attain this status, and how did the Muslim conquest of Iran play a part in the process? Chronologically, the problem mainly relates to a period spanning the Abbasid dynasty to the Mongol invasion of Iran, viz. the 10^{th} to the 11^{th} centuries A.D. According to archeological data, the Arab invasions led many magnates and prominent houses of Fars to move abroad especially

to China and India, while others were integrated into the caliphate system and traveled to Iraq. Yet, still others chose to flee to different parts of Greater Khorasan. Stimulated by the Dehgâns, this latter group would turn up as the guardians of Iran's national identity throughout history, and among their offspring are several illustrious penmen, the most notable being the eminent epic poet Ferdowsi.

Research Method

The material culture from the Islamic period consists of archaeological documents deriving from ancient sites as well as numerous historical texts. Here we address the issue of why Khorasan became a place for the expansion of Dari Persian drawing on the available historical evidence, historical linguistics, and archeological data.

Discussion

The Arrival of Arabs

The victorious battle of Jasr in 634 A.D. would prove futile as the Battle of Qadsiyah in 636 A.D. ended in favor of the Arabs (Daryaee, 2004: 55-56). Having conquered Ctesiphon, they began their attempts at capturing the remaining Iranian territories. Meanwhile, the Persian king was compelled to retreat to regions further northeast. In the year 20 of the Yazdgerdi calendar, the Arab army, then based in Pars and Khuzestan, launched an eastward campaign to Pahlaweh, the land of the Parthians, in quest of Yazdgerd. His successful escape was only ephemeral as he had to face the hostile army again on the Kushang border, where his army was shattered utterly. His attempted escape was this time interrupted by his murder (Marquardt, 1994: 137).

A group of Dehgâns were able to keep their lands through accepting peace, which entailed paying taxes including tribute and Jizya. Mainly retaining their ancestral religion, they were thus recognized as a dhimmi community. Yet, another group went for abandoning their former faith, releasing themselves from payment of Jizya (Shabani, 2001: 370).

The strong need on the part of the conquerors for a financial record-keeping system, especially with the foundation of the caliphate in Iraq, was to integrate a relatively large group of Dabirs into the Arab administration (Frye, 1984: 143). Mastering Arabic as part of their career, these Dabirs contributed to the spread of Arabic far more than the Arabs themselves. Yet, the situation was unacceptable for some Iranian locals. In particular, when poets praise Ya'qub b. al-Layth al-Saffar typically in Arabic, the king fails to understand as the language was unfamiliar to him, and reproaches them for reciting something he is unable to understand (Anonymous, 2002: 260). However, some Iranian writers, including the author of Qabus-nama, were not contented with composing in pure Dari, and found it much more attractive when it was supplemented with Arabic terms and expressions (Zidane, 2007: 492).

No historical accounts were ever produced by any historian loyal to the Iranshahr idea in the opening two centuries of the Islamic epoch (Shaked, 2002: 208-209). The profit the Arabs took from this "mnemohistorical historiography" was to impose the oblivion of the past on the people of the conquered lands. Thus, the selection of those parts of the vanquished society's history that the conquerors found appealing, such as the ruling practice and administration (Imanpour, 2011: 16), in the first two centuries that represented a transition period, means that the society was off the former systemic balance and was yet to gain a balanced state afresh (Azad Aramaki, Alami Nisi 2012: 11).

The Arabs were lucky. On the one hand, the 4000 Dailamite fighters who pleaded for mercy from Saad Waqas after Rostam's death would serve the Muslim army in the battles of Mada'in

and Jalula, and later settled in Kufa (Baladhuri, 1985: 41). On the other, the rebellion of Marv's ruler backed by the Turk troops in the area of Jalindan (Jonabaz) when Yazdgerd III was in Khorasan, expedited the eventual defeat and assassination of the emperor (Ibid, 74-75). Therefore, a group of magnates envisaging the preordained collapse of the empire, betrayed the emperor and the empire to secure and keep their current status and prestige (Zarrinkoob, 2001: 198). From now on, the Zoroastrianism no longer signified Iranians' spiritual unity as plural religious behaviors, exclusive state administrative practices and class segregation led to the Iranians distrust of religion and state, and thereby, to the loss of national integrity (Mahmoudabadi, 2005: 4). Hence, there always existed a degree of incoherence between the institutions in the society, a situation that results in a varying degree of public dissatisfaction and non-support of the rulers (Azad Armaki & Alami Nisi 2012: 14).

According to historical evidence, the first encounter of the Arab military commanders with the social strata of the Sasanian society occurred in the Sawad region (Southern Iraq), when Saad b. Abi Waqqas proposed the first assimilation scheme to the Dehgâns. Shortly, Jamil b. Busbahri of Falalij and Nahreyn, Bastam b. Narsi of Babylon and Khutarniya, Warfil of 'Al, and Firuz of Nahr-e Malik and Kutha, along with other Dehgans converted to Islam, and the second caliph agreed not to take their lands and to remove the Jizya (Baladhuri, 1985: 27). Even some Dehgâns, like those of Babylon and Mahruz, helped the conquerors in obtaining and relaying information (Tabari, 1996: 3555 & 3562).

After the short period of the Rashidun Caliphate, whose practice of treating the Mawali cannot be applied to the entire Islamic period because of the then infancy of the social mixing phenomenon, the Umayyad period was followed with the continued humiliation of the Mawali (Ibn Hilal al Thaqfi, 1975: 824). Inspired by the neighboring cultures, the Umayyad managed to build an imperial government out of the tribal orientations of the Arabs (Salehi, 2020: 59-60). Once the short period of the Rashidun caliphs was over (Ibn Khaldoun, 1966: 387-397), disputes began to arise between the Umayyad caliphate and the inhabitants of Iran over such issues as financial matters and the Arabs racism (Salehi, 2020: 58): in the Umayyad period, there are frequent orders dealing with Jizyas levied on the freshly converted Mawali (Ghazi, 2018: 44-45), and there are even occasions of Arab nobles, like b. Ash'ath, reprimanding the Umayyad discriminatory policies (Ibn Abd Rabbih, 1953: 329). The struggle between the caliphate and the centers of social power in Iran augmented in the mid-Umayyad period, to the extent that Iran became a refuge for the opponents of the dynasty (Petrushevsky, 1984: 44-49 & 66-67). Iran was also a refuge for the Arab migrants both for and against the caliphate (Bayat & Dehghanpour, 2011: 23). Major opposition groups, such as Khawarij (Yaqoubi, 1992: 226-227) and Alawites (Abul Faraj Isfahani, 2001: 447), and immigrant tribes came to Iran, not to mention the resettled governors and emirs who moved there to manage Bayt al-mal (the royal treasury) and rule over regions and tribes (Ahmad Al-Ali 2005: 25). Khorasan and especially Transoxiana (Choksy, 2008: 59) were among the regions that were able to survive thanks to the presence of Zoroastrians and small local governments and their neighborhood with the Turks and to confront the Arab conquerors due to several geographical and social reasons. Also, the Mutawa formed part of the migrants to the borders of Indus (Zarrinkoob, 1989: 105) and Transoxiana (Kennedy, 2000: 124), which were considered potentially sensitive as a centrifugal force (Yaqoubi, 1992: 226-227).

Most historians attribute the conquest of Khorasan to the year 22 A.H. (642 A.D.) at the time of the Caliph Umar b. Khattab, and believe that Tabaseyn and the province of Quhistan were the first localities to be opened in the region, by taking a route that went from Khabis in eastern modern Kerman to southern Quhistan through Tabaseyn, and continued to Herat, Nishapur, Marv, and other territories in Transoxiana. Some have dated its conquest to 29 A.H. (649 A.D.) in

the reign of Uthman b. Affan citing that after the death of Umar, the Khorasani people rebelled in the second year of the succeeding caliph, causing a severe trouble to Abd al-Rahman b. Samra, then governor of Khorasan. The latter informed Uthman about the situation in a letter. Uthman dispatched Abdullah b. Amer b. Kariz to Khorasan accompanied by the Basra army. Abdullah entered Khorasan from the direction of Yazd and Tabaseyn, and opened the regional territories (Baladhuri,1985: 38-49).

Iranian Uprisings

Having been crushed by the Muslim prophet, Arab ignorance was to be reincarnated in the shape of the Umayyad caliphate, turning the great epic of Islam to a disaster (Zarrinkoob, 2001: 7). Various groups of Dehgâns in Fars, Khorasan, especially Tabaristan, and in general, in eastern Iran, established coherent nuclei (Spuler, 1990: 275-276). In addition to annexation, the Rashidun caliphs repelled local rebellions and strengthened the new government by deploying military forces across conquered territories (Salehi, 2020: 157). Under these caliphs, Zoroastrians received a rather fair treatment, a situation that helped to attract them. The Umayyad period, however, marked a severe persecution of Zoroastrians as Hirbads were killed and fire temples were demolished (Anonymous, 2002: 92-93; Al-Jahiz, 1926: 480-481). In the late Ummayad period, attempts were made to recruit mavali through such policies as financial discounts (Safari Forushani, 2018: 50-119) or offering some minor positions to Iranians, as is evidenced by the case of Khalid b. Abdullah Qasri who chooses a Zoroastrian man to preside over his Muslim fellows (Ibn Khallakan, 1900).

At the same time with the spread of Islam among the Arab tribes of Rabi'a and Mudar in Iraq, Zoroastrianism, Christianity, and Mazdakism were popular (Amin, 1945: 84). The Christian Arab tribes who were allied with Iran often freely turned to Islam by dint of the Arabs propaganda that described them of the same race as themselves. For instance, among those making peace with Khalid b. al-Walid in Hirah were such Arab Christian chiefs as Abdul Masih b. Amr Azdi who accepted to spy on the Iranians (Baladhuri, 1985: 242-243). But the Manichaeans and the Mazdakians, who suffered severe harassment under the Sasanian dynasty and were subjected to extreme abuses by the Mobads (Seddiqi, 2013: 21-23, 31), found themselves more liberated under the new rule and began to lead a rather peaceful life. References to Manichaeans in Iraq and Khorasan continue in textual evidence at least up to the close of the first Islamic century (Ibn Nadim, 1967: 334).

On the authority of various sources, Iranians response to the invading Arabs was quite varied in different regions (Salehi, 2020: 157). The provinces of Iraq, Khuzestan, Azerbaijan, and Sistan chose a peaceful coevality. As some of major retreats for Zoroastrians, Jabal, Fars, Kerman and Khorasan were much less supportive of the Muslims. And the frontier regions of the Caspian Sea and Transoxiana would launch resistance operations (See: Choksy 2008). Such state of play can by no means disclose the actual status quo and the behavior of the new rulers (Dennet 1979: 49).

With the decline of the Sasanian dynasty, it was Dehgâns who strived to preserve Iranian culture through recounting national and historical traditions (Spuler, 1990: 275-277). Being in charge of local affairs (as Vastrioshan Salar), tax collection (Hotakhshbandan), and tax allocation, they prepared themselves for the upcoming new era at the end of the Sasanian period (Fazelipour 2001: 81). Sticking to introverted solid nuclei, various groups of Dehgâns in Fars, Khorasan, especially Tabaristan, and in general in eastern Iran (Spuler, 1990: 275-276), sought to breed within their own class to prepare themselves to stand against the Arabs.

Some, exempli gratia Beh Afrid, in Khorasan attempted a reconciliation between Islam and

Zoroastrianism, but interestingly enough was dissented by local Zoroastrian communities, who urged Abu Muslim to repel him (Gardizi, 1984: 266-267). As nationalism and the idea of independence began to spread afresh among Iranians, a number of Iranian rulers craved a return to their former religion, or worked towards its revitalization. Khorasan and especially Transoxiana (Choksy, 2008: 59) were among the regions that survived Arab invasions thanks to the presence of Zoroastrian communities and small local governments as well as proximity to the Turks, and successfully stood up to the invaders for several geographic and social reasons. The Mutawa, forming part of the migrant forces to the borders of Indus (Zarrinkoob, 1989: 105) and Transoxiana (Kennedy, 2000: 124), were also deemed a potentially sensitive centrifugal force.

Building on pre-Islamic religious philosophy, new intellectual doctrines began to turn up. As Ferdowsi puts it:

If there is to be a prolonged life

I lust for staying long on this Khorramite (Joyfull) religion.

The magi cult rests on a long life associated with pleasure and ecstasy (Worship of Mehregan [Mithra] is his religion / indolence and lounging about is his practice...) and the advocates of the cult were called "Khurramites." Nizam al-Mulk states that:

> *The Khurramiya is characterized by sluggishness whit regard to Islam's practical requirements, viz. standing up (qiyam) and praying, fasting, performing Mecca pilgrimage, doing Jihad with the enemies of the glorious God, performing post-coitus ablution (ghusl jinabat), refraining from drinking alcohol, performing asceticism, abstinence, and staying away from whatsoever of obligatory requirements. And they are by no means intending to follow the religious law and the path [religious convictions] of the Umma of Mohammad.... Whenever the Khurramites rebelled, the Batinians joined them.... In the reign of Mahdi [the Abbasid Caliph], the Batinians of Gorgan, also called Muhammira (Red-Flagged Ones), were greatly strengthened and sided with the Khurramites... And when Harun al-Rashid was in Khorasan, the Khurramdites again rose up in the Sepahan region in Brandin, Kapeleh, Fabek and other villages, and a huge flock from Rayy, Hamadan and the Bayh plain came to join them. Their number amounted to above a hundred thousand.... By the year 218, the Khurramites of Pars and Sepahan and the entire Kuhistan (Quhestan) and Azerbaigan recolted again... They killed many Muslims and looted houses and took away Muslim children as slaves (Khaje Nizam-ul-Mulk, 1968: 47).*

Gardizi gives the following account of the same incident:

> *The inhabitants of Sepahan [Isfahan], Hamadan, and Masabazan [Mah Sabazan /near Nahavand] shifted to the Khurramite religion and adopted the faith of 'Babak Khurram Din,' and a large army gathered before Babak... And Babak Khurram Din brought about vast destructions in the province and led many people away (Gardzizi, 1984: 175, 180).*

Once captivated, Babak was brought to al-Mu'tasim in Samarra, where his hands were cut off and his stomach was slashed. His body was hung in the city, but his head would be circulated in Muslim territories as a great scourge to Muslimhood (Anonymous, 2005: 375).

Rayy and entire Khorasan acceded to the rule of Ismail Samani in 287 A.H. (Frye, 2006: 121). In 311 A.H., Yusuf Saji seized Rayy, which under the Samanians was left at the hands of its rebellious local rulers (Frye, 2006: 75). The city was captured by the Samanians in 313 and 314 A.H. From 314 to 316 A.H., an independent general, a former Samanian governor, ruled over it. Then, the Zaydi king of Tabaristan and later Asfar b. Shiruya, a professional warrior who first claimed

loyalty to the Samanian dynasty, took control of it. Shiruya would be murdered by his deputy Mardavij, who defeated the Caliph's governor in Jabal in 319 A.H. and put an end to the direct rule of the Abbasians over central Iran. In a little while, Ali b. Buyeh, a commander of Mardavij's army, rebelled against him and fled to Fars, where he managed to capture Shiraz after defeating the semi-autonomous governor of the Caliph (Frye, 2006: 75). The Samanians' conquest of Rayy was followed by a flood of Khorasani people into the city, and in 321 A.H. the Buyids settled it (Seifi Femi Tafrashi, 1990: 13).

Another Iranian nationalist faction was Shu'ubiyya. The vigorous perpetuation of the "Shu'ubiyya movement" during the Samanian period triggered a mobilization in the Islamic world and especially in the Arab ethnicity, a development that informed all social, political, intellectual and literary aspects of the Arab society. Through penetrating into all affairs and all branches of Islamic scholarship, technologies, and teachings, the Shu'ubis were able to bring about a profound change in all aspects of the Arab society and Islam, in particular intellectually and culturally (Zarei, 2010: 199).

Archaeological Survey of Sasanian-Islamic Transition Sites: A Case Study of Fars Province

Recent archaeological work as of the late 1990s mainly consists of regional surveys. Notable among them are the systematic survey of Lar, Mehr and Lamard (See: Askari Chaverdi, Azarnoush, 2004), Bushehr hinterlands (Carter et al., 2006), Bastak (Asadi 2008), and Gawbandi (See: Askari Chaverdi, 2006). Quantitative diagrams of the sites frequency in most of the investigated areas show a declining trend from the Sasanian to the early Islamic period. Table 1 gives the frequency of the reported sites for both periods. The major decrease concerns the Bastak area, where an *80%* decline is attested compared to the Sasanian period. The number is around 35% for the Lamard and Mehr plains (Diagram 1) and *70%* for the Bushehr plain. The only region showing an increased frequency is the Siraf hinterlands, the reason for which will be discussed below. With respect to Shiraz, the study of the Karbal Plain indicates a declining trend, as Whitcomb concluded in his examination of the seals from the Abu Nasr Palace in the environs of modern Shiraz that, "the Palace of Abu Nasr never assumed the same central place in the province that Shiraz achieved in the post-Islamic centuries, and was simply deemed a regional city whose influence hardly reached beyond the Shiraz plain" (Whitcomb, 1985: 16).

For the Bastak region, a sudden abandonment of many sites and all the fortresses of the Sasanian period has been reported. At many large centers such as Sites 34, 36, 40 and 113 (each exceeding 10 hectares in total area), the surface pottery reflects the Sasanian period, lacking any traces of Islamic cultures. These indicate the sudden destruction of the concerned sites, probably at the end of the Sasanian era. A look at many abandoned sites reveals a total lack of springs and other water sources in their immediate vicinity, and without water supply from springs and extensive irrigation, they would not have been able to survive (Asadi, 2008: 28). The limited Sasanian sites with continued occupations in the Islamic era all lie in in areas with more favorable ecological conditions (Fig. 2). In other words, a same pattern of settlement distribution as those of the prehistoric and Achaemenian periods began to prevail in the region (Diagram 2), and exactly the same trend characterizes the declined number of identified Islamic sites compared to the high frequency of their Sasanian counterparts in Kazerun and Borazjan (Fig. 3), also clearly evident in the patterns of artifacts distribution in the plains of Karbal and Marvdasht (Fig. 1) and the coast of Parsian (Fig. 2). A decrease in site frequency, though lesser than that of the Bastak plain, is also evident in the plains of Lamard, Mehr and Alamarvdasht. Again, in this region the Islamic occupations occur simply at 19 of the total of 30 Sasanian sites (Askari Chaverdi & Azarnoush 2004: 13). This relatively lower falloff might again be attributed to

better environmental settings.

Textual evidence tends to suggest a prosperous trade for the Sasanian period and traditionally for a number of ports as commercial centers (Daryaee, 2003: 8). Excavations in Siraf reveal that the Sasanian structures there, especially the fort, were destroyed at the onset of the Islamic era (Whitehouse 2009: 12). However, the site appears to have been restored after a short while, as the excavation reports attest only to a rather limited span of time between the obliteration of the Sasanian fort and the construction of the early Islamic mosque (Ibid). In general, the available evidence shows that Siraf attained its prosperity at the expense of major ancient centers on the Persian Gulf littoral, especially the Rishahr port, which fell victim to Arab invasions. Unlike the Sasanian Rishahr (Riv/Rav Ardeshir), Siraf lacked the requirements of a large commercial port because of its geographic location, in particular its inaccessibility to inner Fars. It was only used out of expediency (as a transitory substitute for the destroyed ports, in particular the Sasanian Riv Ardeshir/Bushehr). According to Whitcomb, as with many other Iranian ports on the Persian Gulf, Siraf was dependent on inland cities (in this case Shahri-i Gur and Shiraz). This simple center suddenly emerged as a complex port. It was closely contingent on large hinterland cities as Siraf naturally and geographically never qualified for a regional center, but instead it was a constructed urban institution, which subsequently gave rise to a regional settlement system (Whitcomb, 2009: 96). That is the reason why in the earliest Islamic period the areas around the route linking Siraf to Shahr-i Gur begin to thrive as a trade strip.

For the Bushehr region, Carter points out a falling-off in the frequency of sites across the plain at the beginning of the Islamic period, after a peak in the late Sasanian period (Carter et al., 2006: 97). He then adds that recent analyses on the collection sampled by Williamson indicate that more than half of the sites (in the Bushehr region) were abandoned between the 6^{th}-9^{th} and 9^{th}-11^{th} centuries A.D. Indeed, he himself should have already discerned a sharp drop in Bushehr's population, given his identification of only 7 sites from the 9^{th}-14^{th} centuries A.D. on Bushehr, together making up 14 hectares, compared with 450 hectares of the Sasanian sites. It seems that even by the mid-Abbasid period, Bushehr remained deserted and was only sparsely populated. The impacts of the destruction of the Sasanian Bushehr have also been attested in the Bushehr plain. Observations made during the regional survey suggest that at the same time as the fall of the Sasanian centers on the Bushehr island, the Sasanian city north of modern Borazjan, i.e. Sites BH29-44, were also abandoned, and no Umayyad glazed pottery occurred in this city. If we consider mutual connections between the Sasanian sites on the Bushehr island and the aforementioned Sasanian city in terms of supplying mutual economic needs, the conclusion will then follow that the overall structure of the settlements across the Bushehr region has declined in the earliest Islamic period (Carter et al., 2006: 97).

Thus, the decline and destruction of the hinterland settlements, because of their intricacy and need for government support and management, occurred at the same time as the Arab invasions, resulting in a sharp drop in settlement frequencies. The desertion of almost all Sasanian forts evinces a serious transformation and the obliteration of the previous political structure. The entire hinterland regions seem to have been totally void of any sort of administrative structures and control over a short time-span. The reduction of settlements in Bushehr from 450 hectares to 14 hectares (Carter et al., 2006: 97) indicates the severe breakdown of the earlier settlement system. In the meantime, only Siraf, probably a military port in the Sasanian period (Whitehouse, 2009: 10), emerged as a makeshift substitute for the destroyed Rav-Ardeshir (Carter et al., 2006: 97-8), gaining a commercial reputation in the 9^{th}-11^{th} centuries A.D. As already stated by Carter, the dropped number of sites in the early Islamic period in Bushehr and other parts of Fars flies in the face of Whitcomb and Sumner's conclusions concerning the increased

number of contemporaneous settlements in the inland Fars (Whitcomb and Sumner, 1999: 314). In this regard, whilst one might argue that the intensity of drop in the central and northern Fars was slighter, the idea of the rise of settlement density in northern areas requires serious reappraisal. However, available historical reports describe eastern Iran as a territory laden with fortresses as residences for Dehgâns. Most of these fortresses were abandoned at the time of Muslim historians' visits, while in others Dehgâns were settled (Labbaf-Khaniki, 2020: 179). Thus, many Sasanian sites across the Nishapur plain had remained in use until the arrival of the Mongols (Labbaf-Khaniki, 2020: 182). Of the total of 57 sites recorded by the surveys of Bardaskan, 62% purportedly date to the Islamic period, equally divided between its early (31%) and middle (31%) phases (See: Heydari et al., 2018). Investigation of the southern Sarayan plain in the Islamic era has revealed that the sites were invariably single-period and contingent on the local permanent river (See: Nazari et al., 2018). Given the expanded settlements in Khorasan in the Islamic periods, the region is deemed the largest inhabited quarter (Anonymous, 1974: 87). Abarshahr or Nishapur was a major city of Khorasan from the onset of Islam, and persisted to house a mint in the Umayyad and Abbasid periods as with its historical tradition (Frye, 1984: 13).

While archeological data points to a drop in the frequency of sites in the Fars province at the end of the Sasanian period, settlement patterns in the Semirom city in the Sasanian-Islamic transition did not show significant changes in settlements quantity and quality (See: Karimian et al., 2013), so that 30% of the known sites are Sasanian, 30% date to Islamic times, and the remaining belong to the transition between the two periods (Ibid, 79). Also, some 36 Sasanian sites were recorded in the nearby Khomein County (Mousavinia & Basfa, 2014: 179). Furthermore, half of the Islamic sites (n.= 7) recorded by the survey of Tuyserkan, belong to the early Islamic period, spanning the onset of the Islam to the 11th century A.D. (See: Nazari Arshad et al., 2019), a number much less than that of the Sasanian sites (Ibid). This observation indicates that the largest migrations happened in Fars and Ctesiphon as the provenance and capital of the Sasanian dynasty as they housed the royal families and nobles.

Khorasan, the Home of Burzi-Mihr Fire: The Refuge for Emigrants

The Pahlavi treatise Shahrestanhaye Iran splits Iran into four Kusts of Khorasan, Khwarwaran, Nimruz, and Azarbayjan (Daryaee, 2002: 22-25). Under the Sasanians, Khorasan was conceived of as a part of Iranshahr, and was ruled by a spahbed called "Padusian" and four marzbans. Each of the latter was stationed in a different part of Khorasan: Marv Shahjahan; Balkh and Takharistan; Herat and Bushanj and Badghis and Sajistan (Sistan); and Transoxiana (Mosaheb 1977: 887). Apart from Bahram II's conquests of 284 A.D. in eastern Iran, including Gorgan (Hyrcania) and entire Khorasan together with Khwarazm, Sogd and Sakistan, the province of Mokran and Turan was also annexed to Khorasan (Christiansen, 1995: 98). Zarang or Zaranj, the town of Segistan, which was considered the Basra of Khorasan (Maqdisi, 1982: 444-445), is a large city, and it is a city with huge rabzi and ditches (Jihani, 1989: 161-162). The following modern territories along with several others once comprised parts of Greater Khorasan: Kandahar, Balkh, Badakhshan, Badghis, Takhar, Zabul, Kabul, Herat, Helmand, Bukhara, Samarkand, Ashgabat, Dushanbe, Khujand, Kofarnihon, Merv, Khwarazm, and Tashkent. Today they form parts of Afghanistan, southern Uzbekistan, Turkmenistan and Tajikistan. In cities such as Merv, Bukhara, Samarkand and Herat, large libraries and centers of scholarship were established, whence pre-Islamic Iranian intellectuals and scholars would arise (Browne, 1972: 5).

Also, Khorasan was of particular religious' importance, and the Adur Burzen-Mihr Fire associated with the farmer class was established there by Key-Wisthasb, a supporter of Zoroaster, in Rivand, Khorasan (Moleh & Marijan, 1998: 92). For political reasons, in the Sasanian period

this fire of Parthia origin deemed inferior to the fires of Adur Gushnasp of Azerbaijan and Adur Farnbagh of Persis (Fars) (Bahar, 2002: 116). Given the importance of Mithra in Mihr Yasht as the "owner of broad pastures," it is possible to ascertain the connection of Greater Khorasan with the farmer class (Christiansen 1995: 97; Azargashsab 1974: 18). Despite of efforts to precisely locate the fire temple of Adur Burzen-Mihr in Rivand, the scholarly positions are still divided between two more plausible candidates: The Mehr Mountain near Mehr village between Sabzevar and Shahrood; and the Rivand Mountain in Nishapur, close to the village of Barzavun. Yet, early Islamic inscriptions and texts suggest that the fire temple lay almost certainly near a village named Jonbad in the Keyzeghan Rural District, Sheshtamad District, modern Sabzevar County, once was a dependency of Rivand (Pourshariati, 2008: 264). This fire is thought to outdate the Sasanian times: "Fereydun asked them to take a part of that fire to Khorasan, where he put up a fire temple in Tus, and another in Bukhara..." (…). Given the more than frequent replacements of Zoroastrians, al-Masoudi also reports, "[abundant] fire temples [were] built by the Magi in Iraq, Fars, Kerman, Sistan, Khorasan, Tabaristan, Jabal, Azerbaijan, Aran, India, and Indochina' following the Muslim conquests (Masoudi, 1986: 609).

Spread of Dari Persian as an Upshot of Iranians' Flee to Khorasan

Modern Persian is the descendant of Dari, a descendant of the Zoroastrian Middle Persian, an indirect descendant of the ancient Persian inscriptions, which in turn descended from Proto-Iranian, Indo-Iranian (Aryan), and finally Proto-Indo-European. Therefore, the same sequence applies to each individual phonemes of the language, from early Indo-European to present-day Persian (Bakhtiari, 2005: 109-119). As stated by early Islamic texts, all Iranian provinces formed a single country, sharing a common king and a common language (Masoudi, 1986: 73-74). In the onset of Islam, the prevailing language was Pahlavi, but the language would evidently undergo gradual changes to take the form of present-day Persian, thus the emergence of post-Islamic Persian prose and poetry (Rezazadeh, 1973: 108). Upon the Arabs arrival, Iranian populations received the moniker ajam because of their inability to understand the Iranian language. A'jam defined a person who failed to speak clearly and articulately, both an Arab and a non-Arab (Amiri Khorasani & Mohseni Nia 2007); even if he was able to speak clearly in a language other than Arabic; dumb, mute (Dehkhoda, s.v. A'jam). Nonetheless, there are reports from the 10th century A.D. that inhabitants of the regions of Aran, Azerbaijan, Darband, Caucasus and Armenia and other territories in west, east and south Iran generally spoke and wrote in Persian (Ibn Hawqal, 1966: 96; Masoudi, 1970: 78). Thus, it is said that "We all know that the world's most eloquent people are Iranians, and the most eloquent among them are the people of Fars, and the most fluent and well-mannered speech is for the people of Marv, and the most articulately speaking in Dari and Pahlavi are the people of the town of Ahvaz" (Al-Jahiz, 1926: 6/3). In the next stage, ancient Khorasan became, not the birthplace, but a cradle for the proliferation of Dari or Persian. Afghanistan and Transoxiana (Samarkand, Bukhara and Tajikistan) are among the lands that became the secondary cradles for the spread, growth and disclosure of the language in the wake of the abovementioned migrations.

Since the Sasanian period, Dari was in common use throughout the imperial territories (Azarnoush, 2006: 258), and was among the distinctive Iranian languages that had deep historical roots in the Iranians' homeland, especially in Khorasan and Transoxiana, and went up against the ancient languages of Sogdian, Khwarazmian, Bactrian, etc. (Shakuri, 1996: 141). Therefore, Persian existed in the areas occupying the both banks of the Oxus River (Ghobar, 2014: 95), viz. Transoxiana and Khorasan, before the arrival of Islam. Therefore, Dari perhaps prevailed in Khorasan, including Transoxiana, in pre-Islamic times, and attained the status of a poetry lan-

guage in the Islamic period thanks to its unprecedented advances (Shakuri, 1996: 142). In effect, from the beginning of the Islamic centuries, "the main home for Dari is eastern Iran in Khorasan and Transoxiana, whence it later spread to other territories" (Sattārī, 2001: 6-7). Yet, Fars was the real origin of the language (Lazard, 1975), and since the throne was moved to Ctesiphon in the later Sasanian period, the city of Mada'in represented the incipient base of Dari (Safa, 1959: 141), with Transoxiana and Afghanistan being next in line to act as centers for the manifestation of the language (Nādirpūr, 2000). In other words, Zoroastrians migrated to the region during the Arab conquests, (Ripka & Yan et al., 1991: 154-155) and it was after the compulsory migration of Iranians from Fars to eastern regions that "Bukhara emerged as the center of literary Dari, and the premier place for the exposition of the new Persian" (Shakuri, 1996: 33). And thereafter, the main center for Dari were Khorasan and Transoxiana (Bahar, 1994: 45), whence it would spread to other parts of Iran. Given this demographic replacement and at the time when non-religious poetry and music were dissolving in the late Sasanian and early Islamic period (Tafzzoli, 1997: 312-313) and the Abbasid caliphs in Khorasan sought out nothing but the Quran and the hadiths of the Prophet, overruling books as works of the magi and setting all books and treaties by the ajams and magi on fire (Samarkandi, 1958: 35), the Old Persian poetry, in the vein of a groundswell, rose from northeastern Iran and overwhelmed its entire territories (Natel Khanleri, 1988: 43). As is the case, the first independent states of Iran after the Arab conquest were established in Khorasan. So, Dari as a local dialect of northern Khorasan came in use in administrative affairs, and became the common language of all Iranians. Therefore, one may argue that if the first strong Iranian government had been founded in another part of the country, the dialect of that region would have spread and become the communal language (Natel Khanleri, 1968: 143-144). Thus, Dari of eastern Iran turned into a literary language in the first three Islamic centuries, and remained in use as the official literary and political language up until the present day (Safa, 1959: 130). Therefore, Persian does not belong to any individual group or a specific ethnic group (Pahlavan, 2003: 75), and all Iranian ethnicities have contributed to its growth and evolution.

Muslim authors have made implicit mentions of the origin of Dari, "والغالب عليها من لغة اهل خراسن و المشرق لغة اهل بلخ." That is, in the Dari language of the cities of Mada'in, the language of the people of Balkh predominates (Ibn Nadim, 1967: 22), and the following statement by al-Khwarazmi in his Mafatih al-ʿulūm is an exact reiteration of the above phrase: "و الدريه لغة اهل مدن المدائن و بها كان يتكلم من بباب الملک فهی منسوبه الی حاضره الباب و الغالب عليها من بين لغات اهل المشرق لغه اهل بلخ." (Khwarizmi, 1895: 117) (Dari is the language used by the populations of the cities of Madai'n and the Sasanian court, and the dialect of the people of Balkh predominates in that language). In effect, it was following the Iranians migration to eastern regions that Dari used in Mada'in assumed the Balkhi dialect because "the dialect of the people of Balkh is the sweetest" (Maqdisi, 1982: 489). The sprouting of Dari in Transoxiana was not a result of the revolts against Islam or Arabs, since the language put itself at Islam's disposal to promote the religion. Regarding the characteristics of Dari) (Frye, 1998: 404-405), it is said that any word void of whatsoever defect is called dari (Tabrizi, 1983: 847).

Among the reasons for the appellation of Dari Persian, it is believed that "the name comes from the word "dar" (Persian door), i.e. a language spoken in the royal court (darbar) and his diwan (administrative offices)" (Zamakhshari Khwarizmi, 1963: 26; Maqdisi, 1982: 491). Quoting ʿAbd Allah b. al-Muqaffaʿ, Ibn al-Nadim puts that "Persian dialects include Pahlavi, Dari, Farsi, Khuzi, and Syriac. Pahlavi relates to Pahleh, which designates five different cities of Isfahan, Rayy, Hamadan, Mah-Nahavand, and Azerbaijan. As for Dari, it was the language of urban residents, used by courtiers, and is associated with the royal court; and from the dialects of the populations of Khorasan and the East, that of the people of Balkh is prevalent in it. Persian was

the dialect of mobids, scholars and the like, used by the residents of Fars. Khuzi was a dialect used by kings and military commanders in private talks and when playing and having fun with their associates. And Syriac was a common dialect, and writing [system] is [in] a type of Persian Syriac" (Ibn Nadim, 1967: 22; Tabrizi, 1983: 432).

Poetry and Architecture

A notable corollary of the late Sasanian population movements from southern Iran, especially Fars, to other territories, particularly Khorasan, associated with the spread of Dari was the birth of distinctive styles in poetry and architecture known as "Khorasani styles." Interestingly enough, the trajectories of both styles majorly fall in the Tahirid, Saffarid, Samanid and Ghaznavid periods up to the rise of the Seljuk dynasty, mainly spanning the 8^{th}-11^{th} centuries A.D. The simple barrel vault was popular in the Khorasani style (Pirnia, 2003: 163), and the cross-shaped plan mainly used in fire temples still continued from the pre-Islamic period with a dome atop a squinch. Central to these buildings was a cross-shaped room with the wings of the vault sitting on the doorway and the dome on the latter, and all supported with the squinchs. While the origins of this traditional architectural type are attributed to the Khorasan province, whence it would allegedly spread to other areas (Serato, 2005: 54-55), the cross-shaped silhouette (tinge?) with four cruciform arms along with square dome was a component of the Sasanian Iranian architecture (Serato, 2002: 32-37) that persisted in the Islamic times (Labbaf-Khaniki, 2006: 307-329). Hence, given the population movements discussed above, the tradition might be plausibly related to Fars.

The Iranian literary movement following the rise of Islam first started from Khorasan, and given the region's remoteness from Baghdad and the Caliphate's territory, it became the center of Islamic culture that was characterized by Arabic (Browne, 1988: 130-131). Within the 10^{th} century A.D. Persian poems, one seldom finds traces of despair and desolation. The poetry is typified by vitality, freedom, national pride, and epic thought, and represents the true spirit and thought of Iranian people (Safa, 1959: 366). A noteworthy point is that the poets of the 10^{th} century A.D., among them being Rudaki, Masoudi Marvzi, Abul Hossein Shahid Balkhi, Abul Muwayd Balkhi (a contemporary of Nuh b. Mansour), Abu Shakur Balkhi (author of Afarin-nama in 336 A.H.), Daqiqi (who composed for Nuh b. Mansour a Shahnama in which he expresses his sincerity to Zoroaster), Kasa'i Marvzi and last but not the least Ferdowsi (the greatest Iranian epic writer) outnumber those of other periods. The Samanian period apparently marked a stage of cultural and literary prosperity and excellence (Safa, 1959: 359), and the Samanian royals are renowned for their patronage of scholars, justice (Ibid, 363), and providing a safe atmosphere for intellectuals. The period is described as an age of thirst for science and knowledge, as evidenced by the contemporary intellects (Heravi, 1992: 52-54).

As part of their cultural undertakings, the Samanian dynasty tried to revive ancient symbolisms. Not only in medicine, literature, music and handicrafts, their approach to Iranian cultural roots is evident in architecture as well. The mausoleum of Ismail Samani with its five-domed facade in Bukhara imitated the Sasanian fire temples (Spuler, 1990: 214). Other nationalistic symbolisms include the palaces of Ahmed b. Ismail (301 A.D.) and Nasr II (331 A.D.), which were safeguarded by two tamed lions, as well as the saddled horse ready for running (Heravi, 1992: 146). For Iranians lion implied power and national spirit, and ancient Iranian emblems and symbols became popular whenever national tendencies were strong. Upon establishing a powerful and national empire in Iran, the Samanians would abandon the title "emir" to be called "king") (Mirahmadi, 1989: 149). On the other hand, they linked their lineage to Bahram Chobin to show their nationalistic aspirations. Thus, Gardizi attributes their descent to Keyumars, the

first Iranian king (Gardizi, 1984: 322). Emphasizing the Persian language was another treasured step taken by the Samanian dynasty. Ismail Samani issued his orders in Persian, though his offspring would prefer Arabic instead (Heravi, 1992: 229).

Nomadism and Sedentary

An outcome of the Arab invasions and the retreat of local populations from southern Iran was the extreme drop in the number of settlements in the latter region. So on the one hand, a group of Iranian nobles managed to survive through shifting to a nomadic lifestyle, and on the other, since Muslims settled in cities (Zarrinkoob 2011: 122), Zoroastrians were forced to move to countryside landscapes in an attempt to evade exasperations and keep with their own religion and customs (Forouzani & Hakimipour, 2018: 192). This scenario for the expansion of rural settlements and nomadism is much more traceable and evident in Khorasan than any other region. War continued to rage throughout Iran for more than a century. A group of people who could afford neither a bloody fight nor payment of heavy jazya decided to relocate to mountains and deserts so as to preserve their ancient religion, and the mountains of Khorasan served as a shelter for these refugees for an elongated time-span (Azargashsab, 1979: 59; Pourdavoud, 1938: 2). And despite of the political and economic transformations, they would gradually populate such regions as Shiraz, Sirjan, Kerman, Rayy, and Sarakhs by the 10th century A.D. (Afshar 1995: 823). For example, "In Sarakhs some hybrid people live. Population of Herat consists of ajam nobles and an Arab component. People of Marv are nobles of ajam Dehgans together with an Arab component. Inhabitants of Pushang are a combination of ajams and Arabs, though Arabs make a smaller part. The people of Bost are ethnically mixed, and the population of Tus mostly consists of ajams, and people of Qumis are ajam, and in Nishapur Arabs and ajams live together (Yaqoubi, 1964: 52). And, on the authority of an account by the author of Al-Qasd wal-Umam (The Endeavors and the Nations), people of Transoxiana, especially in the cities of Fergana, Osrushana and Chach, were mostly fire worshipers and majus (Al-Namari 1971: 36) And the good conduct of Asad b. Abdullah, ruler of Khorasan, who treated the great houses and nobles rather fairly, was another factor encouraging Iranian nobles to convert to Islam, as evidenced by the case of Saman Khuda (Narshakhi, 1984: 81).

Of the credible reasons one can cite for the alleged migration of different Iranian ethnic groups to Khorasan is the language and various dialects that prevail in the region especially in modern Semnan Province (Lecoq, 1989). The earlier local dialects would remain completely unchanged after the arrival of the Arabs (Safa, 1959: 141), and a recent seminar was dedicated to the topic (See: Nazari, 2009). The Semnani dialect and those of its environs make up the five categories of Semnani, Sangsari, Shahmirzadi, Lasjerdi, and Sorkheie. An interesting point is that an individual dialect is not articulated in a similar way all through the region. Tabarestan was no exception to this rule, and for a long time it allured the adversaries of the caliphate system. Therefore, Pahlavi remained in use in Tabaristan long after the fall of the Sasanian dynasty (Pirnia, 2007: 263).

It is noteworthy that those groups of Iranians who moved to regions beyond the former borders of the Sasanian empire, though failing to make Persian their common language, could well preserve Pahlavi texts. Although some believe that the migration of the magi from Khorasan to India preceded the rise of Islam and the fall of the Persian empire, the Arab invasions and the ensuing heavy Jizya and the forceful conversion to Islam alongside the destruction of a large number of their fire temples and burial grounds forced a large number of Zoroastrians to move to India to preserve their religious customs (Kajbf & Tashakori, 2008: 183-185). They first had to stay for 19 years on the Dib Island (in the Oman Sea, south of the Kathiawar Peninsula) before

moving to the Indian Peninsula proper. The ruler of Gujarat accepted them conditionally, and the Iranians gradually colonized the area, designating it Sanjan (Azargashsab, 1979: 59). His conditions stipulated that these Iranian Zoroastrians might perhaps explain their religion to the local population but should never try to convert them, must hand over their weapons, must learn Gujarati language, must perform their marriage ceremony after sunset, and finally their women should wear Indian garments instead of their won. While preserving their religion, they also remained loyal to their commitments (Khorshidian, 2005: 111). Sanjan, as the first residence of the Iranians in India, grew into a large, thriving city. They lived a prosperous and comfortable life and their population gradually increased. A few centuries later, some of them moved to other cities across India (Azargashsab, 1979: 63; Pourdavoud, 1938: 2).

Conclusions

Examining the frequency of sites from the period marking the transition from the Sasanian to the Islamic period, it was determined that in the wake of the Arab invasions, large populations from south and western Sasanian kingdom were forced to move to the safer eastern regions. Interestingly, from the archeological perspective the frequency of settlements in southern Iran shows a decline compared to the northern region, suggesting that following the initial fierce Muslim attacks the residents of the southern regions moved to places that seemed more secure, and what better place than the one picked by the Iranian king—Khorasan, which was also the home of the Adur Burzen-Mihr fire. The decision was made on the supposition that in addition to staying away from the Arab's drawn sword, they might find a way to confront and repulse the enemy through gathering around the king. With the demise of the king and the dissolution of the Sasanian aristocratic and religious system, it was no more possible to select a new king that would be unanimously acceptable for all and approved by the religious system, and the resistance continued by scattered groups, who were destined to fail as large groups of the defeated Mawali joined the Arabs. Therefore, many Dehgâns had to accept peace and were thereby able with great hardships to maintain their ancient customs by paying tax and Jizya. Henceforward, with the settlement of most of great houses in particular the Dehgâns in Khorasan, Iranians were able to spread Dari Persian in eastern Iran. The language used to flourish in the Sasanian court in Mada'in, and it was also used by the noble class in Persis as the origin and center of the empire. All these developments were triggered by the replacement of large flocks from the southern and western regions. A supporting evidence for the alleged migrations is the various ethnic groups attested in the modern Semnan province in Greater Khorasan, which today bears the moniker "the island of languages and dialects." This socio-political movement had at least two consequences for Iranian culture in the Islamic era: the evolution of the Persian language and literature in the Khorasan region, and the birth of the so-called Khorasani architectural style. However, a group of these migrants adopted a different approach, viz. the nomadic lifestyle, due to occasional attacks staged by the Arabs. In doing so, they moved in search of safe places, carrying their belongings on their livestock, along routes that later became the routine annual itinerary for the regional nomads. That group of Iranians who chose to join the caliphate system and travelled to what now forms modern Iraq, mostly included Dabirs who as part of their career became versed in Arabic and later contributed to the advance of Arabic literary and writing techniques.

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