

# Historical and Cultural Backgrounds of André Godard's Research Activities in Iran

Hossein Soltanzadeh\*

Department of Architecture, Faculty Architecture and Urban Planning, Central Tehran Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran

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## Abstract

Numerous foreign architects and researchers came to Iran from European countries in the first half of the contemporary century to carry out various activities. One of these figures was André Godard, whose cultural and research activities are of special importance in terms of variety and effectiveness. The present study hence aims to discuss the cultural and historical backgrounds that made it possible for André Godard to conduct different activities in Iran. The main objective of this study is to investigate the historical contexts and factors affecting André Godard's activities in Iran. The research question is as follows: What historical and cultural phenomena made a distinction between André Godard's cultural and research activities and those of other foreign architects in Iran in terms of breadth and diversity? The research theoretical foundation is based on the fact that the cultural and historical features of a country influence the activities of its architects and researchers in other countries. This was a qualitative historical study. The results showed that the frequency of historical and cultural studies on Iran with a positive attitude were higher in France compared to other European countries whose architects came to Iran during the Qajar and Pahlavi eras. In addition, the cultural policies of France in Iran were more effective than those of other foreign countries. On the other hand, no French military and political intervention in Iran as well as the optimistic views of Iranian intellectuals and politicians towards the French Revolution and liberalistic ideas there provided appropriate grounds for Godard's activities in Iran.

**Keywords:** André Godard; French architects; French cultural program; Contemporary Iranian Architecture

## 1. Introduction

Many of the non-European countries can be divided into two categories in terms of how they have interacted with Western colonial countries over the last few centuries; first, countries that were occupied by a large or powerful country for a while, such as India and Algeria, and, second, countries like Iran that were never occupied by another country for a long time. The countries of these two categories were influenced by the architecture and art of the colonial countries differently. In cases where a country was occupied by another country for a long time, the architecture of the colonial country used to dominate that of the colonized country. In cases where a country was not occupied by a colonial state, the architecture of countries would be influenced by other countries in different ways.

What happened in Iran actually reflected the plans and activities of countries that were actively present in Iran. Although countries like Russia and Britain invested more in economic issues and interests and their specialists and architects were involved in the design and construction of some of the buildings in Iran, it seems that they could not have long-term and considerable effects on the Iranian architectural culture. The political and cultural programs of the then German government led to the formation of a style referred to as the national style, inspired by partisan and racial ideals in architecture. Focused on the

architecture of ancient Iran, features of this architectural style can be found in the design of some architectural works such as Bank Melli on Ferdowsi Street and Shahr bani (Police) Palace in Mashq Square of Tehran. Although German experts were extensively involved in the design and construction of various industrial and infrastructural projects in Iran, such as railways and bridges, following the general policies of the German government, their influence diminished and did not last after they left Iran and the Iran government's policies changed.

The social, cultural, and political structure of France caused this country to focus on activities that were also cultural in nature and led to the presence of some French researchers in Iran. Many archaeological excavations and some anthropological and geographical studies were carried out by French researchers. Among the French researchers and architects present in Iran at the time, André Godard can be considered an exception who left valuable and dramatic effects on Iranian architecture due to both historical backgrounds and personal characteristics.

## 2. Historical and Cultural Backgrounds of André Godard's Activities in Iran

### 2.1 Some reasons why Iran is important to the French

\*Corresponding author Email address: h72soltanzadeh@gmail.com

One of the reasons why some French scholars, such as Joseph Arthur de Gobineau and Ernest Renan, paid attention to Iran in the past was their belief in the superiority of the Aryan race over the Semitic race. Kedy (1972) stated that the intellectual abilities of Sayyid Jamāl ad-Dīn Asadābādī were related to the fact that he was an Aryan and not an Arab (Hourcade, 1993: 13). This is one of the main reasons why Iran was important to the Germans during the rule of the Nazi party and also some Iranian officials at the time had positive attitudes towards the Germans.

Zarathustra was also regarded by Europeans as a thoughtful messenger. Their familiarity with the Avesta was another important factor that caused positive views of some European thinkers, including French ones, on Iran and its culture. Abraham Hyacinthe Anquetil-Duperron was one of the first who discovered the Avesta in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. In an article in "*Acta Iranica*", Jacques Duchesne-Guillemin mentions the originality of Zarathustra's thoughts and the possibility of his influence on Greek philosophy. He states, "One of Plato's pupils and contemporaries has analogized his master with Zarathustra. The Greek theory of dualism in cosmology has been questioned by the Iranian religion philosophy, but to what extent?" (Duchesne-Guillemin, 2009: 34). Referring to Simon Peterman's views, Duchesne-Guillemin discusses the fear of some scientists to introduce Zarathustra as a philosopher (Duchesne-Guillemin, 2009: 35).

In addition to the French, other Europeans also regarded Zarathustra as an intelligent thinker. For example, Thomas Hyde, an English scholar, he wrote a book titled "*Historia religionis veterum Persarum*" in 1700 and made attempts to correct the errors of the Greek and Roman historians who had described the religion of the ancient Persians and Zoroastrians. Hyde introduces Zarathustra as a theologian and a monotheist and revealed his solidarity with Christianity. As Voltaire states, "No Persian-speaking person has never known Zoroastrianism as well as Hyde did" (Hadidi, 1969: 32). He also adds that the Persians were never fire-worshippers and considered the Iranians to be the first people to believe in God, Satan, resurrection, heaven, and hell and to spread these thoughts throughout the world (Hadidi, 1969: 146). In the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century and the 18<sup>th</sup> century, many stories and books were translated from Arabic and Persian into French. Delacroix (died in 1695) was a professor of Oriental languages who wrote stories attributed to an Iranian dervish in France, which were later known as *Thousand and One Days*. Some stories and novels entitled "*Iranian Letters*" were written by some French writers in the 18<sup>th</sup> century that attracted the attention of some French people towards Iran.

Citations for Cyrus and the emancipation granted to the Jews by him in Torah attracted the attention of Europeans and the French. Awareness of the history and territory of the Achaemenids is another factor that doubled the importance of Iranian history and culture to Europeans. Perne Tie (1732), in a book titled "Rest of Cyrus", and Ramse (1723), in a book titled "Travels of Cyrus",

introduced both Cyrus and the Achaemenids. Their descriptions of Cyrus provoked discussions and challenges because Eastern civilizations were traditionally evaluated subordinate to Western ones by many of the Europeans (Hadidi, 1969: 41).

In the 17<sup>th</sup> century, which was one of the heydays of the French literature, Mademoiselle Doscore, who was the head of one of the literary circles, wrote a novel in ten volumes titled "Cyrus the Great" based on what she had read about the glorious past of the Persians and their greatness in the Greek texts of the Torah and the Bible (Hadidi, 1969: 50). Its ten volumes were gradually published over a period of 5 years from 1649 to 1653. In line with the same attitude, du Pré wrote a 5-volume book in 1668 titled "*Shahpour, King of Iran*" (Hadidi, 1969: 50).

In the introduction of a book titled "The Spirit of Iran", which was first published in 1951 in Paris and then reprinted in 1993, René Grousset points to an exhibition held in Paris in 1948 on the occasion of the World Congress of Orientalists as well as the Museum of Ancient Iran, where objects from the fourth millennium BC and the civilization of Susa are exhibited, and states, "Such a radiant and brilliant torch on the horizon of the history of the Iranian plateau has never turned off, and even the rise of the Macedonians did not interrupt its life" (Grousset, 2009: 27). While praising Iranian culture, he points out that the Achaemenid Empire is of higher importance compared to other superpowers of that time because of their non-hostile attitude towards other religions and races as well as their benevolent nature, according to the Greeks and the Torah.

Referring to poets such as Saadi and Hafez, Grousset states that these poets are famous not only in Iran but also across the Islamic world, Asia, and the Arab world, and many European poets, from Goethe to other French poets, have tried to introduce them to Europeans in their works. He also adds that Iran has played the role of a link between East and West without losing its originality; Sassanid contributed to the formation of Byzantine art, and the Persian language inspired the Muslims in the Indian subcontinent. Iranian architecture and miniature underlay the development of these arts in Islamic India (Grousset, 2009: 30).

Louis Massignon, a professor at the French College and one of the former directors of the Higher Institute of Iranian Studies, was another French researcher who conducted many considerable studies on historical geography and history of Sufism in Iran. Many of his works have been translated into Farsi. In an article titled "The international value and importance of cooperation between Iranian and French thinkers in the Middle Ages for the promotion of the Islamic civilization", he shortly and concisely identifies valuable aspects of Iranian culture and civilization. For example, he points to the international role of the Achaemenid Empire in the ancient world and the importance of its special identity through distinguishing ancient Iran from neighboring cultures such as India. He pointed to the importance of the Persian language for parts of Indian and Ottoman empires

and the penetration of some Persian words into the Islamic culture. He also discussed Muhammad Iqbal's sense of belonging to Iranian culture and the Persian language (Massignon, 2009: 96).

Considering the Persian language to be used for expressing moral thoughts and religious ideas, Massignon states that Iranian thinkers were influential in the Arabic language and script. He also introduces Salman al-Farsi who was the first Iranian thinker among the sincere friends of the Prophet of Islam (PBUH) and the stalwart supporter of Fatimah bint Muhammad, Imam Ali (AS), Imam Hassan (AS), and Imam Hossein (AS), as he was greatly honored by the Ismailis (Massignon, 2009: 104).

In an article titled "Iran is the birthplace of poets and thinkers", Henry Corbin (1946) states, "Without any introduction, I try to describe the conditions and moods of these lovely people who have never lost their high position in the field of literary thinking throughout history" (Corbin, 2009: 21). In this article, he analogizes the colorful background of nature and historical monuments of Isfahan with a "sweet eye-catching dream" and points out that the ruins of Persepolis reflect the glory of the Achaemenid Empire.

## 2.2 Role of tourists and merchants in the familiarity of the French with the Iranians

Due to the publication of anecdotes and books of some merchants and tourists who came to Iran, some groups of the French became more familiar with Iran from the 17<sup>th</sup> century onwards. *Shirley's Travelogue*, translated by Penson from English to French in 1651, and *Olearius' Travelogue*, translated from German into French in 1656, are two examples of such books (Hadidi, 1969: 23). Jean-Baptiste Tavernier, the son of a French geographer and cartographer, traveled to Iran in 1632 and stayed in Isfahan for a while and then went to India. In total, He made six trips to Asian countries between 1632 and 1668. In every 9 times he traveled to Iran, he stayed in Isfahan for a while. Through his job as a jewelry trader, Tavernier became acquainted with Shah Abbas II and his courtiers. In his travelogue, Tavernier states that the king and his courtiers were good dealers and Iranians were open-minded in treating the followers of other religions (Hadidi, 1969: 27).

Jean Chardin was another French jeweler who moved towards the east in 1664, lived in Iran and India for 6 years, and learned the Persian language. He came to Iran through Turkey twice in 1671. As Chardin really loved Iran, he wrote a book about Isfahan containing very valuable and unique information from that period that cannot be found even in Iranian references related to that time. As Chardin states, he knew Isfahan better than London, where he had lived for many years. His 3-volume travel notes (1686) was reprinted four times in about two years and translated into several languages, including English and German. However, it took about 25 years for Chardin to compile his memoirs and notes, and he finally published them in 10 volumes in 1711, 2 years before he dies (Hadidi, 1969: 32).

Because of the geographical position of Iran, those who wanted to travel to India, Siam, China, and Japan had to pass through Iran. That is why more than 50 travelogues were written about Iran and its neighboring countries by the French in the second half of the 17<sup>th</sup> century (Hadidi, 1969: 37). Investigations show that after the publication of all volumes of Chardin's travelogue in 1711, about 36 more travelogues were published exclusively about Iran or Iran and its neighboring territories in 78 years; 15 travelogues from 1711 to 1722, when the Safavid dynasty became extinct, 9 travelogues from 1722 to 1732, a period marked by the Afghan insurgency, 6 travelogues from 1732 to 1742, 2 travelogues from 1742 to 1752, and 4 travelogues from 1752 to 1789. This indicates that Iran was an attractive and safe destination for European tourists and merchants during the Safavid era. However, Nader Shah's conquests and some other events increased the number of historical books published about Iran in the second half of the 18<sup>th</sup> century (Hadidi, 1969: 188).

## 2.3 Iran-France relations

France used to have colonial and military ties with some countries such as Morocco, Tunisia, and Algeria. However, such relations never established between France and Iran. The attempts made during the Safavid era to establish a political relationship with France were unsuccessful due to political changes in France. Iran-France political relations began with the arrival of a French military group in Iran during the reign of Napoleon Bonaparte and gradually extended to some other areas. These relations faced many internal and external obstacles and problems, because the British government of India sent a person named Mehdi Ali Khan Bahador Jang to the court of Fath Ali Shah in 1799 (equivalent to 1214 according to Persian calendar) to prevent the expansion of Iran-France relations. He was commissioned to convince the king of Iran the French Republicans overthrow the monarchy wherever they find their way. As a result, Fath Ali Shah ordered that all French nationals to be arrested and their property be confiscated (Admit, 2006). However, he adopted a more moderate approach a few years later. This was because the French brought a new understanding of human society to any land they entered after the French Revolution, according to which citizens had equal rights (Mitrovic, 2017: 140).

The oldest political connection between Iran and France during the Qajar era was related to a letter that Napoleon sent to Fath Ali Shah in 1801 when there was seemingly no one in the court who knew France well (Entekhabi, 2001: 28).

At the time, the British monopolized oil extraction while interfering in political affairs, the Belgians gained the privilege of managing Iran's customs affairs, and the Russians also gained concessions in the north of Iran. Nevertheless, France took a different path by monopolizing archeological excavations in Iran.

Few courtiers, such as Crown Prince Abbas Mirza, wanted to expand ties with the West to develop the

country. Following the arrival of General Gardane to train the Iranian military forces, it was decided to send some Iranian young students to France for education. However, two Iranian students named Mohammad Kazem and Haji Baba Afshar were sent to England after the darkening of Iran-France relations (1809). Mohammad Kazem died in London and Haji Baba returned to Iran and became Abbas Mirza's physician (Behnam, 1996: 23). The reason for the strained relations between the two countries was that the Treaties of Tilsit were signed between France and Russia in 1807 shortly after General Gardane came to Iran, which put an end to France's cooperation with Iran (Hourcade, 1993: 15).

Since France did not have hostile military and political activities in Iran during the Qajar era, many Iranian people and intellectuals had optimistic views of the French. Moreover, due to the familiarity of some Iranian students educated abroad and intellectuals with the French Revolution and its constitution, the influence the French literature and vocabulary can be traced in the works of that period. Even some Iranian intellectuals, such as Talibov, praised the French (Alizadeh, 2012: 88).

The French government decided to send a political delegation to Iran to visit Mohammad Shah in 1839. When the Academy of Fine Arts was informed of this visit, it asked the French Ministry of Foreign Affairs to include two artists named Pascal Coste, an architect, and Eugène Flandin, a painter, in this delegation in order to increase the awareness of the European scientific community about the historical monuments of Iran. During their 2-years stay in Iran, these two artists prepared maps and paintings of Iranian historical monuments that were published in a book titled "Ancient Monuments of Iran" in 1844 and an album of Pascal Coste's designs in 1867 (Coste, 2011: 10).

The French Ministry of Public Education received the monopoly of archaeological excavations from the Iranian government during the Qajar period in 1894. The French had activities in Iran in the fields of archeology and the like until Reza Shah revoked this monopoly in 1931. Jacques de Morgan was commissioned by the French Ministry of Public Education to carry out scientific activities in the fields of botany, geology, and archeology in the 1890s (Hourcade, 1993: 19).

Part of the French archeological activities was conducted in the ancient city of Susa. These activities were first begun by de Morgan in 1897 and continued from 1912 to 1947 under the supervision of Dominum and then Roman Ghirshman. He presented the results of his studies in two books entitled "Iran from the beginning to Islam" (1951) and "Parthians and Sassanids" (Hourcade, 1993: 24). André Godard was a French architect and researcher who came to Iran in 1928 within the Iran-France cooperation plan and carried out many valuable activities in the fields of archeology, architecture, and restoration. His research activities will be comprehensively discussed in this study. Maxime Siroux, one of the colleagues of André Godard, also carried out valuable architectural activities alone or in collaboration with André Godard.

Henry Corbin established a department of Iranology at the Iran-France Institute in Tehran in 1947 corrected and published some important cultural and philosophical texts in collaboration with some Iranian researchers such as Seyed Jalaluddin Ashtiani, Mohammad Mokri, and Mohammad Moin. He met and talked with some Iranian scholars and thinkers such as Allameh Tabatabai and interacted with figures such as Seyed Hossein Nasr, Karim Mojtahedi, and Dariush Shayegan. Although Mohammad Mossadegh ordered the closure of foreign cultural centers in Iran in 1951, he allowed the French Cultural Center in Iran to continue its activity (Hourcade, 1993: 28).

### **3. An Overview of André Godard's Research Activities**

#### *3.1 "The Art of Iran"*

The book "*The Art of Iran*" was written in 1962, about 58 years ago, by André Godard. At the time, the traditions and methods of research and compilation were not been acceptably developed the Iranian architectural community, there were not enough references for the history of Iranian architecture, many antiquities were not discovered, and many of the historical inscriptions, documents, and texts were not available. Therefore, this book, like any other work, needs to be evaluated in proportion to the time it was written.

#### *3.2 Observance of scientific ethics*

One of the important principles of scientific ethics is to pay attention to documents and evidence to express each point. This point seems to be acceptably observed in André Godard's book. In many cases that he did not have enough documents, he discussed the issues very cautiously. Considering the shortage of valuable data, he writes in the introduction, "Although we have now succeeded in solving many fundamental problems, we have not yet gone beyond the stage of historical studies and hypotheses" (Godard, 1979: 4). When he discusses the reasons for the abandonment of Pasargadae, he uses the word "maybe" several times in a paragraph. He says, "Maybe the sequence of events leads us to the truth. However, the kingdom passed to Darius, who belonged to another branch of the Achaemenid family, after the death of Kambiz. Maybe that is why Pasargadae was abandoned and Persepolis, which was under construction, became the capital of the Achaemenid Empire. Like others, we may also believe the fact that Darius would do so immediately after ascending the throne if the duration of constructing Persepolis was not an obstacle" (Godard, 1979: 140).

About the Persian daric minted of pure gold during the reign of Darius, Godard states that some of these coins have been found in Greece and Asia Minor (Anatolia). He adds, "As I know, no treasure of daric and siglos has ever been discovered inside Iran" (Godard, 1979: 170). The frequent use of terms such as "it seems", "it does not seem", "it is possible", and "we assume or hypothesize that" throughout the book indicates that Godard tried to

observe scientific ethics and cautiously discuss the issues he was not sure about. However, this does not mean that all the points he has written with certainty are necessarily true.

In this book, Godard frequently cites the views and comments of archeological groups and other researchers. For instance, about the settlement of the Kassites, he says, "We assumed that the present-day tropical areas of Lurs are the same as the areas from which their Kassite ancestors use for this purpose. However, the results of excavations of the archaeology group of the University of Chicago add to our knowledge in this regard. This archaeology group found temples and objects made of the same metals with the same function but with a completely different spirit in Kuhdasht, located in Central Lorestan, where the farmers used to live (Godard, 1979: 41). Godard mentions the discoveries of the archaeology group of the University of Chicago in several other parts of the book. For example, he states that this archaeology group discovered Kartir's inscription at Naqsh-e Rostam (Godard, 1979: 307).

Godard has repeatedly referred to the activities and views of Ernst Herzfeld in various sections of the book. For example, concerning Herzfeld's hypothesis about the tomb of Kambiz, he states, "In 1931, Herzfeld found the lower stone blocks of a building similar to the tomb of Cyrus in Pasargadae in the vicinity of Persepolis and the rocks where the tomb of Darius and her first successors was dug. Although he assumed that the place really belonged to the tomb of Kambiz, no one wanted to believe his opinion because it was difficult to understand why the tomb of this king was built so far from his capital, Pasargadae" (Godard, 1979: 139). In another section of the book, Godard introduces two small archaeological sites, including Takht-e Soleymān, which were first discovered and introduced by Herzfeld (Godard, 1979: 262). Herzfeld's discoveries and views have been also referred to in other parts of Godard's book. Referring to the book "The History of Architecture" written by Auguste Choisy, Godard both appreciates the importance and value of the book and then criticizes part of it where Choisy states that Gothic architecture is inspired by the architectural style of Persian arches, quoted from Jane Dieulafoy, a French archaeologist, explorer, novelist and journalist (Godard, 1979: 131).

### 3.3 Godard's familiarity with Iranian culture

In addition to the general familiarity of André Godard with the history of Iran based on archaeological discoveries, investigation of historical monuments, and some documents and texts (e.g. he praises Nizam al-Mulk as one of the wisest ministers in the East) (Godard, 1979: 331), he also discusses some cases of the influence of Iranian culture on Western culture. For example, about the influence of Zoroastrianism on Plato, he states, "Plato, who was accepted and honored by Islamic thinkers, was also influenced by the two principles of Mazdaism" (Godard, 1979: 178).

When it comes to the penetration of Mithraism in Rome as well as the importance and spiritual influence of this religion in the West, Godard says, "From the perspective of civilization, it should be noted that Mithraism and the worship of the sun god surprisingly re-popularized and developed during the reign of the Parthian Empire in a way that it was about to be recognized as the official religion of the Roman government in the third century AD. Undoubtedly, the emphasis on Mithraism on emotions, conscientiousness, justice, and truth paved the way for the progress and development of Christianity in the declining environment of Roman polytheism and idolatry. As a result, some Christian feasts replaced Mithraic ones (e.g. Christmas replaced the winter solstice, which is the birthday of the 'Sun of Justice'). The Roman Empire was so influenced by Mithraism that the Romans state that this religion could conquer the whole world if Christianity had stopped in course of its development for any reason" (Godard, 1979: 181).

### 3.4 Influence of André Godard on Iranian researchers

The results of Godard's research and works were useful for many Iranian thinkers and researchers, and it seems that its direct or indirect reflection can be seen in the works of some Iranian researchers. For example, Godard's emphasis on Achaemenid and Parthian architecture may have influenced the way Pirnia named architectural styles as Persian and Parthian. In addition to being influenced by Khorasani style in the literature, naming of Khorasani style in architecture seems to be influenced by Godard's emphasis on Khorasan as the homeland of Parthians as well as the Iranian porch that was probably taken from Khorasan to Mesopotamia by the Parthians as a souvenir (Godard, 1979: 410). In addition, the point that Ardeshir Palace was built before the Parthian decline and therefore belonged to Parthian architecture has probably influenced Pirnia's attitude. He introduces Parthian architecture as the second Iranian style of architecture that was rooted in Khorasan (Pirnia, 1990: 73). However, he has not dealt with the following question: Why did not the 400-year Sassanid rule lead to the formation of another style? Although Pirnia also states that Parthian style began shortly before Alexander's invasion, he has not discussed why, how, and where (Pirnia, 1974: 70). It seems that the assumption made by Godard that Ardeshir Palace was constructed in the last years of the Parthian period has influenced some Iranian researchers (Godard, 1979: 182). However, he believed that it should be considered among the buildings of the Sassanid period. It seems that Pirnia has addressed this issue by eliminating an architectural style called Sassanid. Many points raised in André Godard's "The Art of Iran" seem to be referred to in Pirnia's writings (without referencing) and numerous books written by others about Iranian architecture, such as referring to Abu Muslim mosques (Godard, 1979: 376; Pirnia, 1992: 40) and Arab style mosques (Godard, 1979: 379; Pirnia, 1992: 41). Nevertheless, Pirnia seems to have criticized Godard in this regard without naming him.

While Godard categorizes the Palace of Ardashir as a palace (Godard, 1979: 410), Pirnia argues that it is a fire temple (Pirnia, 1990: 95). Pirnia criticizes those who introduce this building as a palace merely based on the assumption that there were no ancillary facilities next to the palace. Nevertheless, it seems that most of the large buildings that have been abandoned included ancillary facilities constructed with less durable and simpler materials, which have disappeared throughout history.

### 3.5 How did Godard use the studies and opinions of other researchers?

In various parts of his book, André Godard refers to the results of studies or the views of other researchers and cultural institutions and honestly referenced them. For example, when he discusses the settlement of the Kassites, he says, "The results of excavations of the archaeology group of the University of Chicago add to our knowledge in this regard. This archaeology group found temples and objects made of the same metals with the same function but with a completely different spirit in Kuhdasht, located in Central Lorestan, where the farmers used to live (Godard, 1979: 41). Referring to Herzfeld's opinion about the reasons behind architectural differences between Pasargadae and Persepolis, Godard states, "Herzfeld correctly points out that Cyrus was still the ruler of one of the provinces of the Medes when he built Pasargadae, whereas Darius was the absolute emperor of the largest empire ever created in Asia when he began the construction of Persepolis" (Godard, 1979: 143).

While writing his book, Godard cited the works of researchers in the field of Iranian history and culture. For example, in part of the opening lesson of James Darmesteter's class at the Collège de France in 1885, he states, "The first Iranian dynasty was the Achaemenids that was established by Cyrus the Great in 559 BC and fell two 230 years later, in 331 BC, during the reign of Darius III. Iran has never been as large as it was during this period. After the conquest of Media, Babylon, and Lydia during the reign of Cyrus, Pasargadae inherited Ekbatan, Babylon, and Sardis. When Kambiz II was in power, Iran replaced the Pharaohs in the Nile Valley. During the reign of Darius I, Iran bordered the Indus River to the east and Greece and Europe through the Mediterranean Sea to the west. Then it hit Athenian warships and returned to its Asian borders. When a skilled, talented, and wise manager named Darius, the son of Hystaspes, came to power, Iran became the largest empire ever seen in Asia that lasted for two centuries. This was a great period in the history of Iran taking into account the diversity of racial, religious, and linguistic factors that were supposed to be observed by governors sent to rule provinces in a vast area from the coasts of the Indus River to Cyprus, Memphis, and Armenia" (Godard, 1998: 136).

### 3.6 André Godard's views on Iran and Iranians

In an article published in the fourth issue of Journal of Iranian Works (which was published from 1936 to 1949) that deals with a report published in the Third Congress of

Iranian Art in Leningrad in 1937, Godard discusses talks about some mosques of the first Islamic period, which are referred to as Arab style mosques, and states that this architectural style disappears from "living and dynamic Iranian" architecture and the whole Iran, which is "the country of continuity and survival". He also says, "Eric Schmidt has recently discovered the foundations of a mosque built by Caliph al-Mahdi in Ray. The rest of them seem to be completely destroyed. There are small remnants left from these mosques, such as the Jāmeḥ Mosque of Nā'īn belonging to the fourth century AH, a mansion whose small parts still exist in the Jāmeḥ Mosque of Ardestan, and the Jameh Mosque of Damavand belonging to the next century. Although the architectural methods remained completely Iranian, but the Arab style of maps has changed and considered despicable in Nain in a way that it can be clearly found that these imported designs had not achieved much success in Iran. Although powerful sultans such as the Abbasid caliphs were able to build some mosques in Iran based on their own tastes and desires, they failed to popularize and fix an alien architectural style in the country of continuity and survival. After Iranians accepted Islam, they began to construct mosques but according to their own traditions, artistic tastes, and architectural methods. As a result, the Arab style mosques shortly disappeared from the living and dynamic Iranian architecture" (Godard, 1989: 18).

André Godard's views on Iran and Iranians can be found in his book "*The Art of Iran*", which was written in 1962 after more than three decades of his stay in Iran. It seems that "*The Art of Iran*" was the briefest, richest, and most original book ever published about the Iranian architecture at that time. However, it is necessary to compare this book with books published at that time, 58 years ago. Nevertheless, valuable activities have been done by Iranian and non-Iranian researchers during the past 6 decades, and there are now many data that have created a very different situation than in the past. To better understand the real feelings of Godard about Iran and Iranians, it is better to review the last two paragraphs of her book, which was completed in Paris in 1962. In these two paragraphs, Godard says, "In the last days of writing this book, I cannot refrain from expressing my strong and sincere wish about the survival of the independent life of Iran and its art. If these efforts are pursued wisely, the result will be the comfort, increased quality of life, health, and happiness of Iranians. I wish that Iran benefits from more balanced and healthier organizing in all social classes. This is my heartfelt wish for Iran and Iranians, after many years of living in the shadow of the ancient buildings of Iran" (Godard, 1979: 475-476).

## 4. Results

The study results show that some French writers, philosophers, and intellectuals paid attention to several issues due to their knowledge of the history of ancient Iran. The first thing was the importance and originality of Zoroastrianism and its influence on some ancient Greek

philosophers. As a result, the Avesta was translated into French and many books were written about Zarathustra.

Another issue was the importance and authority of the Achaemenid rule and the liberal thoughts and behaviors of Cyrus the Great, which led to the compilation of numerous books about the Achaemenids and Cyrus.

Some French thinkers and scholars were familiar with the history of Iran in the Islamic era, recognized the role of Iranian scientists and philosophers in shaping Islamic civilization, and respected and valued some Iranian eminent poets like Hafez and Saadi by translating some of their works into French.

These historical backgrounds can be considered effective in the interest of some French scholars, such as Henri Massé, Henry Corbin, and André Godard, in conducting research activities in Iran.

Additionally, the special personality of André Godard, as a graduate of the *École nationale supérieure des beaux-arts* who had valuable experience in the field of architectural design both during their education in France and his years of stay in Iraq, along with his interest in history and archeology led to designing valuable architectural works. Among the foreign architects who came to Iran in the first half of the contemporary century and even among Iranian architects, it seems impossible to find a person like Godard who has done such valuable activities in Iran in various fields of archeology, restoration of historical monuments, design and construction of monuments, and educational management in a period of about 30 years.

#### Notes:

- 1- The original text written by Mr. Pirnia in the book "*Art of High School*" did not contain references. It seems that Gholam Hossein Memarian has added some quotations from various books in books attributed to Pirnia.
- 2- It is not clear to me why Pirnia did not have positive attitudes towards André Godard. This can be inferred from Pirnia's interview with *Abadi Journal* (No. 19) in 1995. In a part of this interview, Pirnia states, "Pope loved Iranian art but he was not an artist, he was a historian and a researcher and worked in this field as much as he could. Godard began his activities in Iran enthusiastically, but later he got upset because he could not stay in Iran and expressed things that did not suit his character and dignity. For instance, he said that Jane Dieulafoy had attributed even the invention of apple and peach to Iranians. Their works, including *The Art of Iran* or *Iranian Works*, were also compiled and translated by the late Mostafavi and the late Dr. Bahrami (Pirnia, 1995: 86, quoted from Soltanzadeh, 2012: 86).
- 3- For a more detailed read on André Godard, refer to the book "*Architecture of André Godard*" written by Victor Daniel, Bijan Shafeiy, and Sohrab Soroushiani in 2015.

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