

THE MONUMENTAL IWAN: A SYMBOLIC SPACE OR A FUNCTIONAL DEVICE ?

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1. This article is based on a lecture given by the author on 14th April 1992, at METU Faculty of Architecture, with the title of 'Cosmological Images in the Seljukid Monumental Architecture'. The author thanks Bruce Silverberg for reviewing the text.

2. For the iwans with mihrap niches in Anatolian Seljukid madrasas see Kuran (1969, Figure 25-28, 31).

INTRODUCTION

The architectural unit iwan consists of an empty vaulted space enclosed on three sides and open to a courtyard or central space on the fourth (Figure 1). Even though the history of its application on a monumental scale is characterized by modifications that appear subtle and mainly related to periodic changes in taste, the iwan was subject to continuous variation and interpretation in innumerable small-scaled buildings. This article concerns the monumental iwan, whose persistent application seems to have been governed by a definite cosmological scheme that dictated its orientation and function in the composition of an edifice (1).

In Persian, iwan means 'portico, open gallery, porch or palace' and the word *liwan* in Arabic covers the Persian concept (Reuther, 1967, 428). In Sassanid architecture, the monumental iwan was used as an 'audience hall' for the receptions of the kings. Its function in the Islamic period has always been a source of discussion. It is unknown whether iwan served an official function or even whether these spaces were called iwan. Some written sources define the word iwan as a room or hall opening, on the one side, directly or by means of a portico towards outside. In this period, it would have been any of the halls opening onto a courtyard and could also refer to different architectural forms, such as a wider and higher room or hall or a hypostyle (columned) hall (Grabar, 1978, 287-89). Today, regarding the word's contemporary usage, it can be surmised that the iwan in the educational institutions functioned in the manner of the seminar or tea room of our modern universities. Moreover, the iwan probably functioned also as a congregational room in a *ribat* which served residential as well as educational purposes. Its use as a praying hall as well, is not unusual: a wall niche standing as a *mihrap* is present more often than not in many madrasa iwans (2).

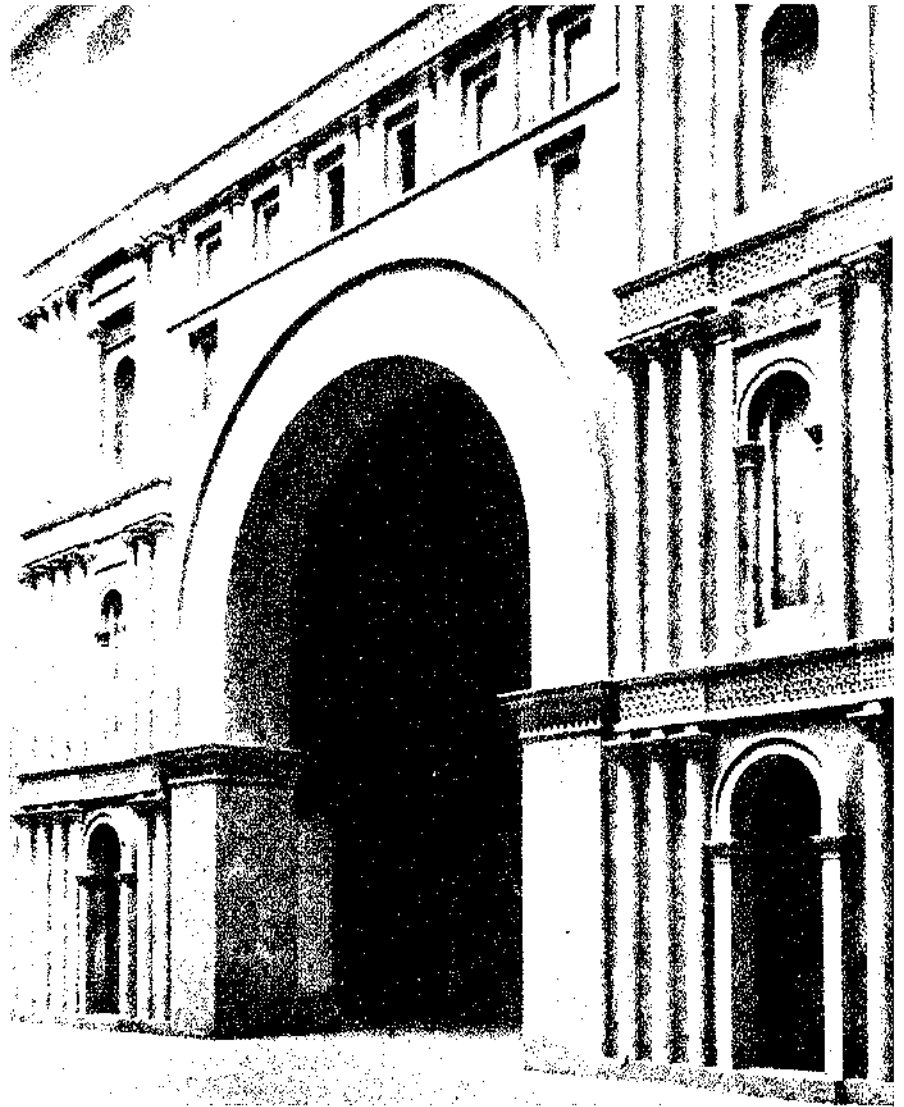


Figure 1. Assur Palace, iwan (first-second century) (Colledge, 1967, Figure 27).

THE EMERGENCE OF THE IWAN

Even though its origins are obscure, some researchers thought that the iwan, probably, developed in Mesopotamia (Downey, 1988, 85: 141, 178). However, Reuther (1967, 430) advanced the notion that iwans did not emerge from the habits of the sedentary people of Babylonia or Assyria, but rather from the tradition of a people accustomed to moving in open air, viewing the blue sky and living in tents or reed huts as shelters against sun and wind. Colledge (1967, 120) found it to be at home in Persia, for it is the standard feature of late Iranian architecture. On the other hand, iwan-like rooms of the late Hittite palaces (beginning of the first millennium B.C.) at Zinjirli and the barrel vaulted matted straw covered rush huts (*sarifa*) of the dwellers of the Babylonian marshes are considered to be the prototypes of the later iwans (Reuther, 1967, 429) (3). It seems more reasonable to accept the iwan-like room at Zinjirli as a fortuitous formation and to take *sarifa* as an unspecified model which could be engendered in an early period under similar life conditions *hic et ubique*, whence more evolved forms later developed from these primitive origins.

3. Rudolf Naumann refuses the existence of this kind of a room in iwan form in the Zinjirli Palace complex; for his view and for the plan of the palace, see Naumann (1985, 424, Figure 549).



Figure 2. Taq-i Bostan, central iwan (sixth century) (Pope, 1965, 66, Figure 58).

One of the most persuasive hypotheses about the origin of the iwan is that it was inspired by the antique niches which were carved for worship in natural rocks of Eastern Anatolia (Akin, 1985, 85, xxiii: 277). When we compare the monumental rock niches and the Urartian temple gates with respect to their form and scale, we discover some stylistic resemblances (Tarhan and Sevin, 1975, 396, Figures 1, 11). According to some researchers Medians later conveyed this tradition of carving niches into rocks to Persia (Akin, 1985, 85). Due to this influence, the iwans carved in rocks at Taq-i Bostan (sixth century) in Persia, remind us of the Urartian cave niches (Figure 2). These cave iwans coexisted with the monumental iwans of the Sassanid palace architecture.

THE EMERGENCE OF THE MONUMENTAL IWAN AND THE COURTYARD WITH FOUR CROSS-AXIAL IWANS

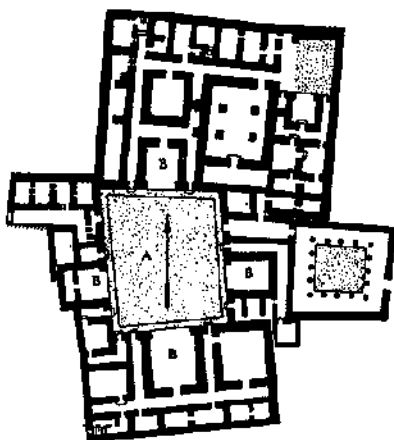


Figure 3. Assur Palace, plan (first-second century) (Pope, 1965, 48, Figure 34b).

In the Parthian Assur Palace (first and second century A.D.) we find the first known monumental iwan as a part of the 'four iwan courtyard scheme'. The four iwans of this building are asymmetrically oriented in the centers of the four wings of an irregular inner courtyard (Pope, 1965, 49) (Figure, 3). Scholars of art history advanced the view that the courtyard of the Assur Palace was a later outcome of two different construction phases, each one of which incorporated additional iwans (Pope, 1965, 49; Colledge, 1967, 123). On the other hand, in stating that the complete plan of a cruciform madrasa with four iwans, later so widespread in the Islamic period, already existed in the first century A.D., Reuther (1967, 433) implied that Assur Palace was a prototype. In any event, there was a tendency, at least, to create a cross-axial plan with four iwans during the formation of this courtyard. Nevertheless, the lack of gradual evolution between the construction of this extraordinary building and the subsequent establishment of a fixed scheme that was consistently applied does not allow us to admit the courtyard of the Assur Palace as a *fons et origo* sample. The reasons

Figure 4. Taq-i Qisra (third century)
(Pope, 1965, 56, Figure 43).

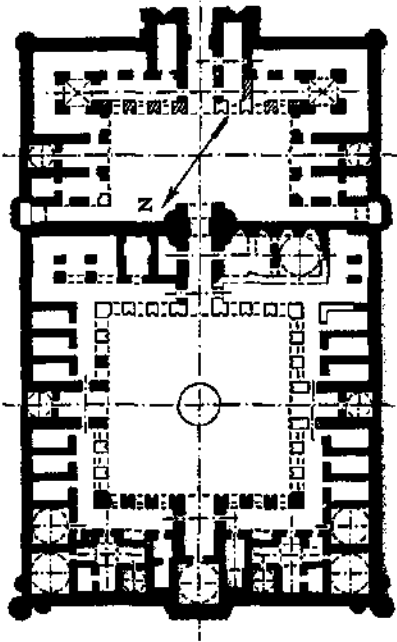


Figure 5. Ribat Sharaf (twelfth century)
(Godard, 1965, 296, Figure 211).

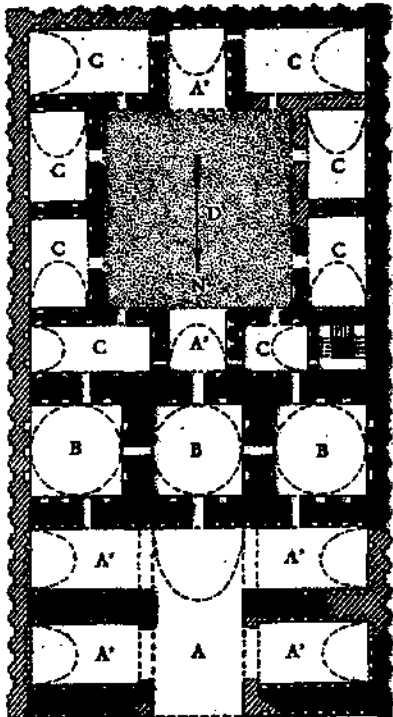
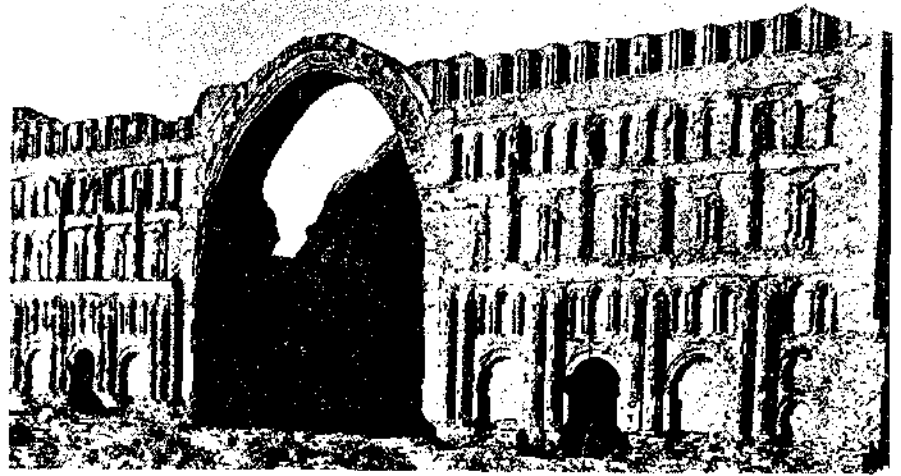


Figure 6. Firuzabad Palace (early third century)
(Godard, 1965, 191, Figure 160).



for this discontinuity, in our opinion, were certain practical and symbolic pre-determinations of the Sassanian palace architecture, which did not permit this kind of an extroverted open scheme to prevail in the sovereign's palace intended as an enclosed shelter for his eternal kingdom.

THE MONUMENTAL IWAN IN SASSANIAN ARCHITECTURE

Taq-i Qisra (second half of the third century) is an imposing edifice with its 22.86 m. wide, 27.43 m. high and 45.72 m. deep single iwan. On the two sides of this iwan we see multi-floored tiers of shallow arches separated with columns. The overall disposition of this facade, especially the line of wider arches on the lowest level can be regarded as the forerunner of the arcade row between the iwans in the Islamic madrasas or ribats (Figures 4, 5).

The 12.80 m. wide iwan of the Palace of Ardashir I (first half of the third century) in Firuzabad is in the center of the facade. At the back of this central iwan, onto which double iwans open on its two sides, are three domed (square) and eight vaulted (rectangular) rooms encircling an inner courtyard. This courtyard is flanked on either side, by two vaulted rectangular iwans facing each other (Figure 6). This scheme, in which iwans become integral with the building surrounding the inner courtyard and thus lose their distinction, can be considered to have been formed in accordance with the functional predetermination of the design for an enclosed palace building. As the sole point through which the palace opens to the outside, the iwan on the facade symbolically substantiates and essentially provides the sovereign's connection with the outer world.

Husrev I's Fire Temple (first half of the sixth century) was constructed facing a natural water source. This complex extends on the north-west of the temenos wall, and the main iwan of the temple was oriented in the north wing of the same wall. The sacred fire was preserved behind the iwan in a square room called *chihar taq*. Beside this centrally located iwan, two additional iwans were situated in the northwestern and northeastern corners of the temenos wall. The former existence of a fourth one in the center of the south wing is an apple of discord (Figure 7a). Later, Mongol emperor Abaga Khan ordered a palace to be built in 1270 on the ruins of this temple. The pristine *chihar taq* (Figure 7b) was transformed into an audience hall in the new edifice. Hence, having reconstituted a fire temple as a palace, Abaga Khan declared himself as the true heir to the Sassanian royal and religious prestige.

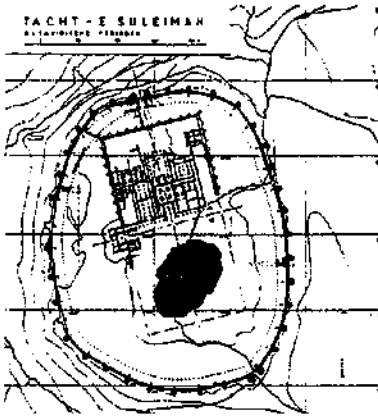


Figure 7a. Taht-i Suleyman Fire Temple (sixth century) (Akin, 1990, 213; Naumann, 1977, Figure 2).

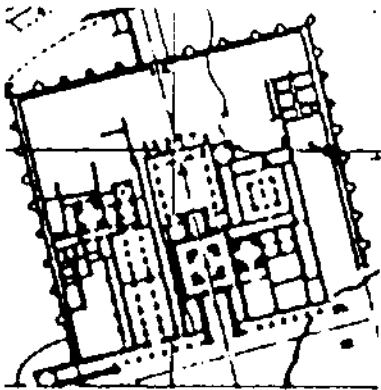


Figure 7b. Taht-i Suleyman Fire Temple (sixth century) (Akin, 1990, 213; Naumann, 1977, Figure 2).

THE MONUMENTAL IWAN IN POST SASSANIAN PERIOD

In the aftermath of their advance from Khorasan to the West, the Parthians probably introduced the iwan to Mesopotamia (Godard, 1965, 282), where we find iwans from a late period in Ukhaydir (eighth century) (Figure 8) and in Jausaq al-Khaqani (ninth century) (Figure 9) Islamic palaces, designed in the Sassanid tradition (Creswell, 1958, 190-01, 197, 259-66). These iwans were probably utilized as 'audience halls' like those of the prior Sassanians (Grabar, 1978, 149). This identical use conformed with the political atmosphere of the age. Following the shift of the Abbasid caliphate's capital from Damascus to Baghdad, Hellenistic influences from the West started to be replaced by Sassanian ones from the East. Paralleling this change, the Abbasids adopted the Persian concept of monarchy which deified the sovereign. Concomitantly, the vaulted space for public audiences in front of the throne hall in the Sassanian palaces performed a similar function in Abbasid palaces (Creswell, 1960, 624).

As it is shown above, the irregular courtyard of Assur Palace with four iwans arranged asymmetrically was the unpremeditated outcome of a construction process. Afterwards, the appearance of the courtyard with four iwans, not as recesses radiating from the center but as spaces attached to it from outside, was to become a standard architectural practice in the Islamic period following the heroic age of Persia. Nevertheless, if various hypotheses concerning the birth-place of this well-organized scheme are taken into consideration, it is clear that our knowledge of it is not so extensive. For example, van Berchem (1913, 429) advanced the view that this plan type originated in Syria, for the iwans of Amman Qasr (seventh-eighth centuries) are vaulted in the Sassanid manner. However, he adds that the cruciform arrangement of iwans around a central courtyard recalls the symmetrically planned Byzantine and Syrian churches with double axes. Hence, Amman Qasr combined architectural elements from different sources. Godard (1951, 8) proposed that this palace was created in the Persian mode by the Shi'a traders who settled in Amman. Creswell (1959, 120, 128) on the other hand,

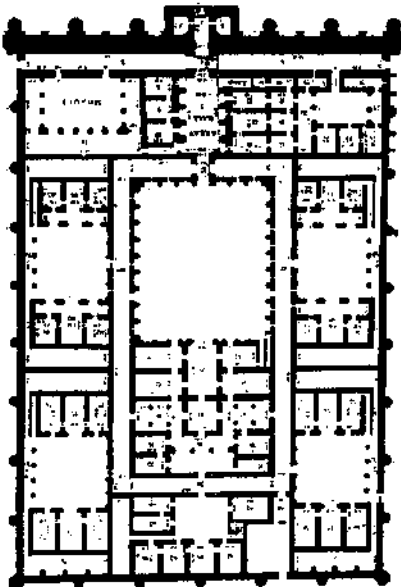
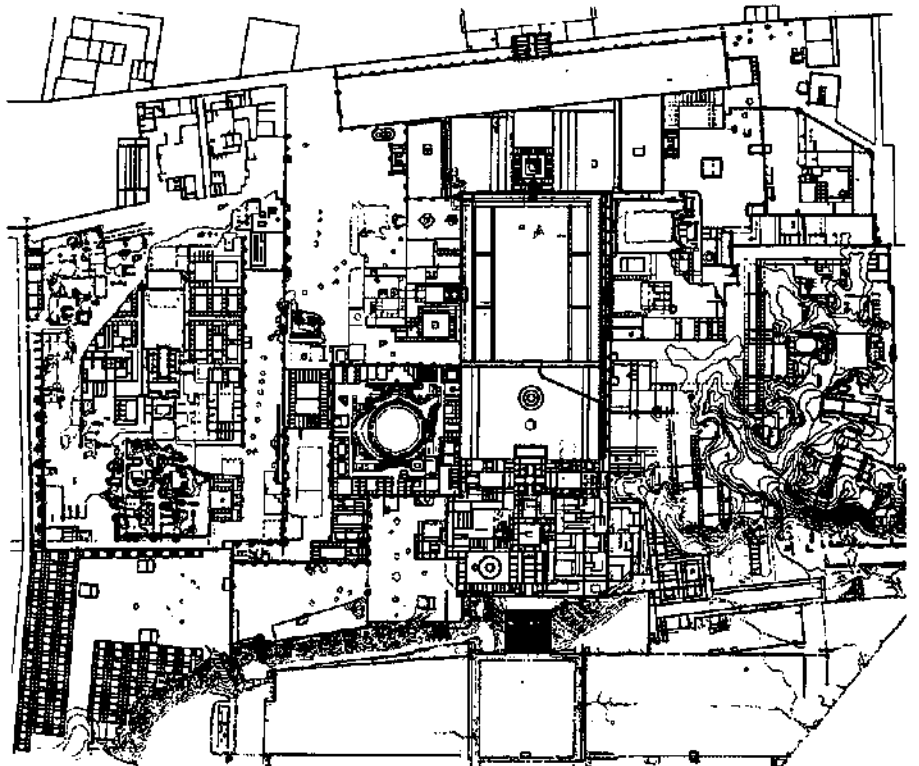


Figure 8. Ukhaydir Palace (eighth century) (Grabar, 1973, 63; Creswell, 1969).

Figure 9. Jausaq al-Khaqani Palace (ninth century) (Grabar, 1973, 90; Creswell, 1969).



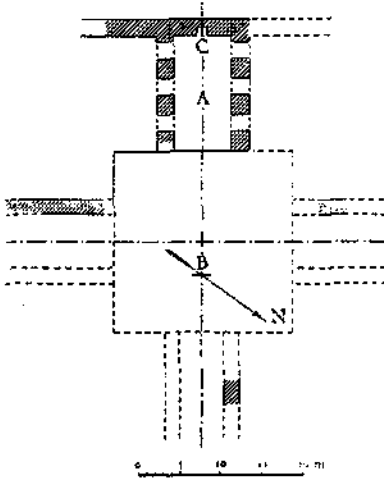


Figure 10. Hargird Nizamiya Madrasa (eleventh century) (Godard, 1965, 291, Figure 204).

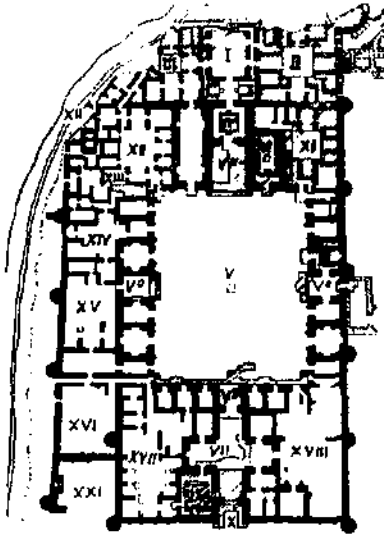


Figure 11. Lashkari Bazaar Palace (eleventh century) (Schlumberger, 1952, Figure 3).

pointed out that in Syria not less than thirteen madrasas were built before 1270, none of which having four iwans opening onto a central space; therefore, Zahiriye Madrasa (1270) in Cairo was the first *madrasa* with a cruciform plan. Godard (1965, 291) considered neither Berchem's nor Creswell's views acceptable, because their narrow scopes included only Mesopotamia and Egypt. He proposed that the earliest *madrasa* with four iwans around a central courtyard was Hargird Nizamiya Madrasa (1087) in Northeast Persia (Figure 10).

In the city of Gologola (Bamiyan), which was devastated by the Mongols in 1221, there are ruins of secular buildings and vaulted mosques together with Buddhist cave temples, all of which were built before the Mongol invasion. Bamiyan mosques consist of either a rectangular prayer space with a single iwan or a square domed space flanked by two iwans perpendicular to the facade. In addition, Bamiyan houses with centralized courtyards encircled by four iwans merit a special interest. These houses commonly adopted a cross axial plan (Godard, 1951, 5). In the complex of Ghaznavid Lashkari Bazaar Palace (1030) in Afghanistan, we see inner courtyards designed with the four-iwan scheme, one of the earliest examples of this genre (Figure 11). The prevalence of this scheme in Eastern Afghanistan is remarkable, lending support to Godard's hypothesis.

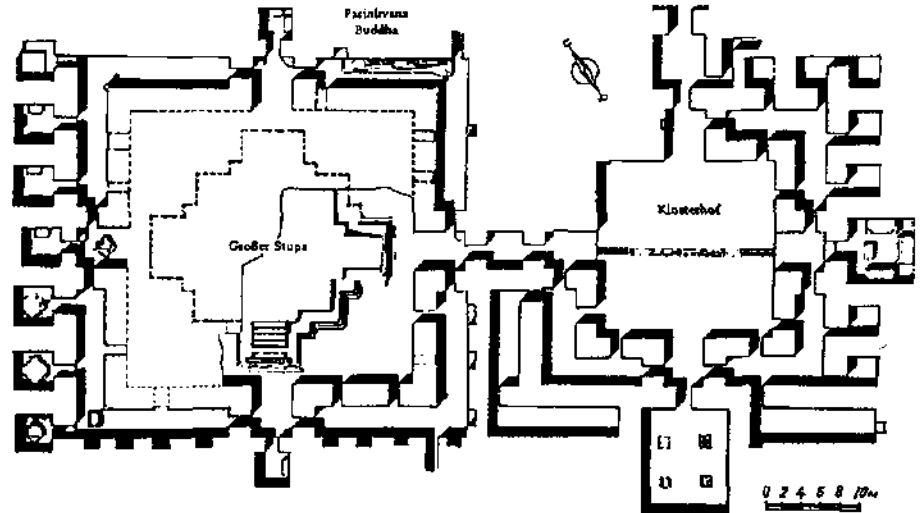
Godard (1951, 9) thinks that the well-organized plan of the Horasan madrasas was developed from secular houses with four iwans, which prevailed in Afghanistan proper. Horasan madrasas in turn were the progenitors of the late madrasas founded by Nizam al-Mulk. Grabar (1978, 287-89) advanced a similar view in stating that the impact of the Persian culture was the main reason behind the use of this form in monumental architecture, which had been invented in Northeast Persia or Central Asia. According to him, the iwan never reached the same degree of popularity in the Arab Near East as it had in Persia. Nevertheless, the origins of the courtyard with four cross-axial iwans remains a question at issue.

In the valley of Buddhas in Bamiyan, there are domed or flat roofed circularly or octagonally planned monasteries with entrance vestibules formed as iwans opening onto the valley (Godard, 1951, 5:22). These monasteries predate the mosques with iwans erected in Gologola. As a matter of fact, just as the Bamiyan Buddhist monasteries are not the sole monastery type to influence later Islamic architecture, neither is the mosque with single iwan the only later type to have been influenced by Buddhist architecture. Viharas (Buddhist monasteries) in Balkh and Bukhara are identified as the model for the *madrasas* with an open courtyard (4). According to Kuran (1969, 10), in the foundation of Jaulian monastery in Taxila (second century), which consists of cellars placed on the four sides of a courtyard, we find a primitive precursor of the double-axis scheme. Esin (1976, 80), quoting from Litvinsky, states that in Adzina Tepe Buddhist Vihara (seventh-eighth century) in Tajikistan, we find the prototype of the courtyard with four iwans (Figure 12). As a matter of fact, before the coming of Islam, Buddhist viharas were spread in Central Asia. The city of Balkh, once the seat of the Toharistan Yabgus, who were a branch of the Kagan Turks, boasted about a hundred viharas before invaded by the Muslims in 633. In the aftermath of the Muslim invasion, ribats for travellers, dervishes and traders were constructed along the trade routes by an Arab governor named Fadl bin Yahya. These ribats were the replicas of the early viharas, whose function was probably transferred to this new type of building (Esin, 1976, 77) (5). In western Asia the ribat was originally a military stronghold, but towards the end of the ninth century it started to be used as a dervish monastery (*tekke* or *zaviye*) in Central Asia and it was merged into the Persian Khanaka (Cezar, 1977, 171, 178; Marçais, 1936, 1152). The vaulted vestibules, centered in each side of a vihara's square courtyard and giving way to the vaulted corridors behind, were revived as iwans in a ribat.

4. Vogt-Göknil (1975, 80) quoting from Diez and Glück (1925, 54), states that 'le plan de la madrasé-cour entourée de cellules existait de longue date dans le monastère indien (Vihara). Il trouva son épanouissement architectural en perse, grâce à l'intégration d'iwans monumentaux disposés sur deux axes orthogonaux et la répartition symétrique des cellules, souvent sur deux étages'.

5. For detailed information on the Islamization of the Buddhist Turks and the connection between ribat, buyan or muyanlik (Buddhist monastery complex), see Esin (1972, 83-91).

Figure 12. Adzina Tepe Vihara (seventh-eighth century) (Akin, 1990, 36; Franz, 1977, 66).



THE SYMBOLIC PURPOSE OF THE MONUMENTAL IWAN

6. In another place Grabar (1980, 4) asserts that 'it is indeed as though Islamic culture as a whole consistently rejected any attempt to compel specific symbolic meanings in architecture'.

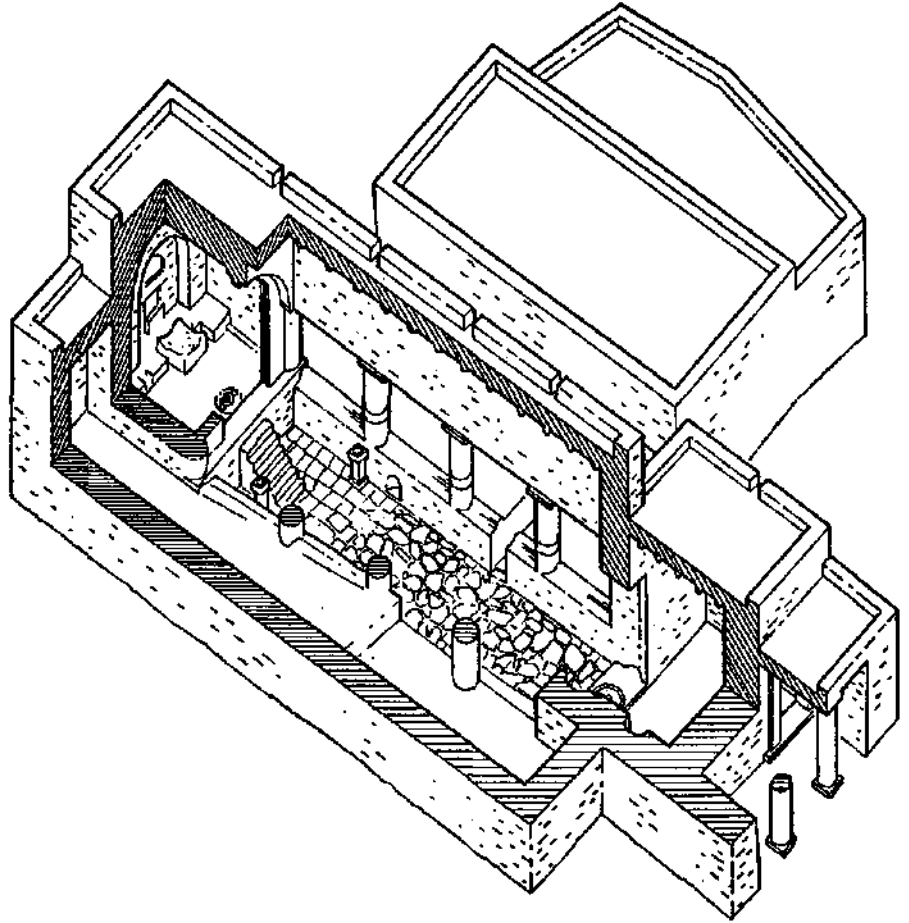
Oleg Grabar believes that in any Islamic period the iwan could have been used for various purposes defined by the needs and tastes of the people, and it is preferable to interpret it as one of the ways with which Islamic architects solved the problem of architectural space without attributing to it concrete symbolic meanings (Grabar, 1978, 288) (6). On the other hand, Creswell (1959, 121) proposed that in Egyptian madrasas each iwan represented one of the four Islamic sects. But this latter view is not so convincing, for according to Kuran (1969, 7-8), if the buildings of the Anatolian Seljuks are taken into consideration, then even though the Seljuks were from the Hanefid branch of the Muslim faith, we find the courtyard with four iwans present not only in madrasas but in mosques and caravanserais as well.

The use of the iwan in the Islamic period does not suggest any certain conclusions about its symbolic meaning, nor does it establish that this meaning was recognized by consensus among Muslims. It is reasonable to seek related images from archaic cosmology, since the iwan was an invention of the pre-Islamic cultures that flourished in and around Mesopotamia.

It is stated above that the grottos of the Urartians were identified as the forerunners of the late iwans (Akin, 1985, 85-88). One of the most convincing hypotheses on the function of the Urartian cave niches is that gods were thought to have appeared from inside of these niches (Tarhan and Sevin, 1975, 397). Relying on this premise, it can be surmised that the iwan was a kind of symbolic gate giving way to the underworld where supernatural powers dwell (Akin, 1985, 85-88). These cave niches in Eastern Anatolia preceded the carved temples of the Mithras cult. God Mithra, as the life renewing and light generating (*genitor luminis*) creator, was believed to have appeared from inside a birth-giving rock near a river bank under the shadow of the sacred fig tree. Accordingly, people venerated Mithra at a natural rock near a natural water source (Vermaseren, 1963, 75; Carnoy, 1964, 287).

Evidently, at Taq-i Bostan a figure of Mithra is carved in high relief in the iwan near to the water source (Godard, 1965, 177), for iwan was the gate of the fertility source and of the underworld from which this source emanates, so iwans usually contain a fountain or a well (Akin, 1985, 87). On the two sides of the central iwan at Taq-i Bostan we even find representations of 'sacred fig tree' compositions rendered with acanthus leaves (Figure 2).

Figure 13. Mithraeum at Dura (Vermaseren, 1963, 39, Figure 5).



Iwan, as an architectural embodiment of the Mithraic image of sacred cave, is not solely related to the underworld symbolism. The Mithraic temple, called a Mithraeum, is also a symbol of the heavenly vault and cosmos (Figure 13). Besides, the rock into which the cave is sculptured is a symbol of the sky from which light descends to earth. For this reason, the roof of a Mithraeum is usually vaulted and decorated with stars (Vermaseren, 1963, 37, 75; Campbell, 1968, 49). Therefore, Mithraic caves were related to heavenly as well as earthly symbols. Eubolos, one of the first historians of Mithraism informs us that in the mountainous district near Persia, Zoroastria consecrated 'a rock in greenery' close to a natural water source, because the rock represented an image of the cosmos created by Mithra, and the 'spaced objects' inside the cave contained the symbols of cosmic elements and climates. According to Porphyrius, the theologians dealt with the cave as a symbol of invisible powers, for caves are dark, and the essence of power is vague and inconceivable (Campbell, 1968, 6, 49-50). In Pahlawi Rivayat, sky (*asman*: firmament) is above as well as below the earth, and the mountains arise in two directions, upward and downward. Between the *asman* above and 'this place' below, the station of the stars, the station of the moon and the station of the sun, the highest one, stand in an ascending order. In the Rivayat text, *asman* is encircled by a wall called Harburz. Elsewhere, the world is stated to be in the form of a yolk which is equidistant from *asman* on all sides and beyond *asman* (lit. stone) rise the *empyrean* realm (lit. endless lights), the abode of Ormazd and his angels (Campbell, 1968, 95-96; Jackson, 1921, 85). Cosmos, in an egg's or sphere's form, is circumscribed by the zodiac of fixed stars and illuminated by the sun and moon outside the egg. The void in between the world and Harburz is described as the zone of the mixture of light and darkness, between pure light above and darkness below (Bundahishn 1.5). This zone corresponds to the

interior space of the Mithraic cave (Campbell, 1968, 95-96), which is carved inside a rock whose essence could be equated to that of Harburz and *asman* (lit. stone).

In the tenth Yasht of Avesta, Mithra is described in a golden gleam staring at the land of the Aryans from the top of the mythic mountain Hara Berezaiti (High Mountain). His mansion, said to be in harmony with the sun, stands on the summit of Hara Berezaiti around which heavenly globes circle (Carnoy, 1964, 280-81; Campbell, 95-96). Hara Berezaiti is identified with Harburz and is situated in the Elburz mountains. In Persian mythology it is stated that from a summit of Elburz the sun, the moon and the stars ascend up, and from another one on which the life giving plant Haoma stands, Ardvi Sura Anahita water flows down (Carnoy, 1964, 280-81). In the Babylonian Epic of Creation we find this kind of mountain range related to the heavens as well as the earth, on which grows the 'tree of light' belonging to the Sun-god Shamash (Wensinck, 1921, 9, 44). On monuments the mountains represent one of the 'gates of the earth', which are at the same time the 'gates of heaven'. Moreover, the 'gate of heaven' is sometimes realistically represented by the interrupted mountains in the four quarters of the earth (Wensinck, 1921, 9, 44). Likewise, Hara Berezaiti surrounds whole world and at the same time is a lake called Wurukasha. Similarly the mountain range rising upon utter darkness, separating the sensible world from the insensible, is called Lokoloka or Hindu Kus in Hindu Cosmology (Streck and Miquel, 1978, 400-01).

The sacred book Bundahishn informs us about another mountain called Kaf. The name Kaf was given to both the mythical mountain Alburz bordering the Persian lands on the north and to the mountain range embracing the earthly world (Streck and Miquel, 1978, 400). Some writers of the Islamic Middle Ages like Mutahhar binTahir al-Makdisi, Yaqut, Qazwini and Ibn al-Wardi describe Kaf as an emerald whose color is reflected in the sky. Ibn al-Wardi specifies that the mountain Kaf has as its base the rock of hyacinth. Kaf marks the edge of the world and can not be overstepped by men; thus, no one can apprehend what is extending on the other side of it. Some, however, thought that this 'other side' belonged to the land of eternal life. Kaf is the nest of the bird Simurg, a kind of griffon, which has the features of the bird Anka in Arabic Literature. Simurg existed since the beginning of the world and retreated to Kaf. He lives there as a vice counsellor to kings and heros. For this reason Kaf is known as the 'mountain of wisdom' or 'mountain of contentment' (Streck and Miquel, 1978, 401) (7).

7. Monstrous bird Zu of the Sumerio-Akadian mythology, which is the prototype of the bird Simurg, has a nest in a similar mountain called Sabu (Langdon, 1964, 102).

8. The writer of this article demonstrated somewhere else that Simurg was the same fabulous creature as the Islamic double-headed eagle, the symbol of the metaphysical sun derived from the Sumerian solar symbol, the eagle. Sumerian eagle was a guardian and symbol of the 'sun-gate' which was later to be accepted as the 'sky-gate' by the Assyrians. The double-headed eagle of the Seljuks represented on the entrance of some madrasas behind the vestibule-iwan symbolizes the 'sky-gate' image Peker (1989, 216-25; 1993, 199-206). For a Sumerian cylinder seal impression in which the solar eagle is depicted on top of the 'sun-gate', see Ward (1910, Figure 100).

Persian poet Ferid al-Din Attar (born 1142) describes the voyage of the sufis to Kaf in search of their God-king Simurgh (Attar, 1944, 9) (8). It is evident from the text of this philosophical work that Kaf draws a boundary between the actual world and the world of the heavenly kingdom, where Simurgh (God) dwells in an invisible space beyond the perceivable world. At this point recall that Harburz (the Wall encircling the sky, the domain of the zodiac of fixed stars) which was identified with Hara Berezaiti (High Mountain) stands between the *empyrean* realm (the zone of the pure light above) and the atmosphere (the zone of the mixture of light and darkness). Harburz, like an egg's shell, encircles the cosmos in whose center is the yolk, *i.e.* the world in which there is the zone of darkness. The interior space of the Mithraic cave corresponds to the atmosphere between the mountain above and underworld below. That is why we find stars depicted on the roofs of Mithraeums, which represent the zone of the zodiac of fixed stars (*i.e.* the mountain). Out of the mountain is the zone of pure light (the abode of Ormazd and his angels) corresponding to the realm of the heavenly kingdom behind the Kaf Mountain.

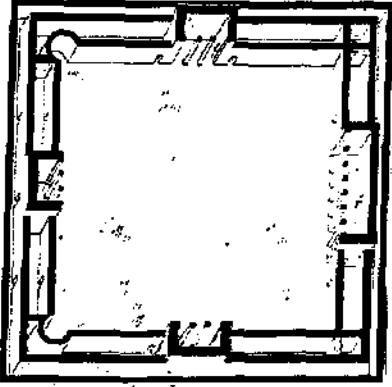


Figure 14. Ai Khanoum Gymnasium (second century B.C.) (Veuve, 1987, Figure 1.4).

9. La présence d'exèdres à colonnade est également un trait qui rapproche notre ensemble des palestres grecques. Il n'en est aucune cependant où elles soient disposées avec une symétrie aussi rigoureuse au centre de chacun des quatre côtés de la cour (Veuve, 1987, 104, illst: 4-7). Moreover, for Ai Khanoum Palace which was rendered by a juxtaposition of a plan scheme from the Persian palace architecture of Babylonia and Greek architectural elements see Bernard (1976, 253-54, Figure 1-3).

In the etymology of the word *kaf*, we have references to the cave image. *Kof* (*kaafa*, *kaofa*), which is an extension of the root reflecting activity and power, should be connected to the Sanscrit words *kup* (foaming), *kupa* (spring, source) and *cvabhra* (cave). Persian *Kof* means a vast mountain or cave (Campbell, 1968, 110). According to Campbell (1968, 110), the English words heap and heave may be related to the same root. Heaven is the sky that is heaved upward like a mountain top or a cave roof.

CONCLUSION

Afghanistan, where we observe the imposition of iwans upon a cross-axial scheme, bridges between the Mesopotamian and Indus valleys, gathering influences from east as well as from west throughout its history. The city of Ai Khanoum was a Greek colony (from the end of the fourth century to the middle of the second century B.C.) in the Seleucid province of Bactria (Bernard, 1976, 245, 255). The gymnasium of this city (end of the second quarter of the second century B.C.) juxtaposed architectural elements from different sources (Figure 14). Veuve (1987, 104) stated that in this building we discover four Greek type exedrae curiously placed around an open courtyard in a cross-axial Asiatic scheme, a manner alien to Greek architecture (9). Then, before the adaptation of the iwan to a cross-axial courtyard, we find in the same country another device from the West: exedrae assimilated into the same plan scheme, whose persistence for centuries can be connected with the determination of an image from Asiatic Cosmology.

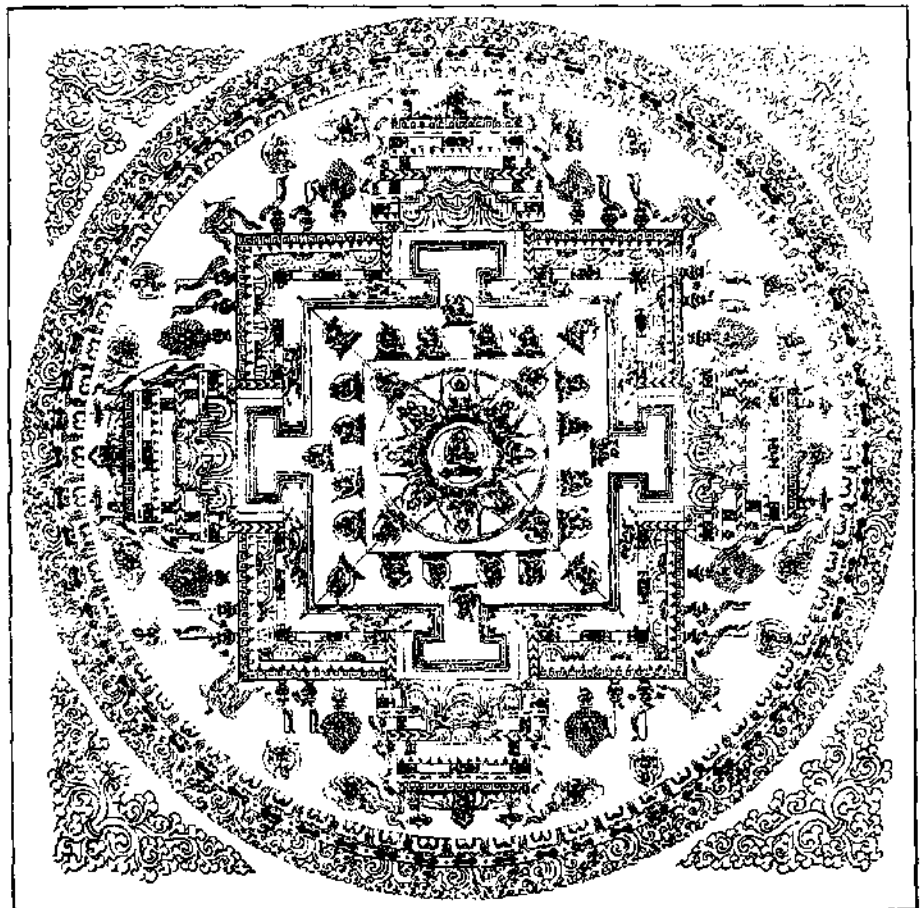


Figure 15. Durgatiparisodhana Mandala (Argüelles, 1972, 90).

10. Considering the practical function of the monumental iwan and quoting some Coranic verses about heavens, Vogt-Göknil on a firmer ground asserts that 'les voutes étoilées des iwans forment la transition avec la voute céleste elle-même. Malgré leur dimensions majestueuses, ils ont une apparence éthérée. En effet, il n'est pas nécessaire que les iwans manifestent de puissantes structures pour porter la charge céleste et leur splendeur et leur éclat n'ont d'autre but que de les rendre dignes d'une telle fonction' (Vogt-Göknil, 1975, 118).

11. 'L'iwan de la mosquée persane est d'abord un lieu de passage, un seuil' (Vogt-Göknil, 1975, 79).

The general disposition of a Buddhist Vihara with an inner courtyard flanked on all sides by vestibules fits into the cosmic diagram Mandala (Figure 15). In Sanscrit mandala means circle and center. Circle, symbol of the cosmos, and square, symbol of both the earth and the manmade world, are the essential elements in the design of a traditional Mandala. The center of Mandala represents the center of the cosmos. On the circumference of the circle are the cardinal points, symmetrically oriented, symbolizing the directions, elements and seasons (Arguelles, 1972, 13, 15). The square within the circle symbolizes a kind of monastery courtyard with four gates, signifying sacred seclusion and concentration (Jung, 1969, 356). As a matter of fact, circular or square diagrams based on the concept of four directions and the idea of the center of the world are thought to be the products of primordial images, the archetypes (Jung, 1969, 384).

Hence, it is clear that iwans flanking square opened courtyards are related with various cosmological images, one of which is the 'sun-gate' through which the sun is believed to be passing from different directions during the seasons. The 'sun-gates' are four in number around the circumference of the Mandala circle. The 'gate of the sun', later to be called the 'gate of heaven', was a Sumerian invention symbolized by the interrupted mountains in the four quarters of the earth. Later, Urartian cave niches carved in mountains probably continued the substantiation of the same image. Then, we find it developed within a philosophical framework in the ideology of the Mithras cult. Mithraeum could be accepted as a passage or gateway between two different realms, i.e. earth and heavens. At Taq-i Bostan the image attained its best expression as an iwan carved into a rock (Figure 2). The crescent on top of the central iwan is a replica of the Assyrian winged disk representing the 'sky-gate' which was formed under the Mitannian influence (Frankfort, 1954, 67, 117) and the god Mithra is carved in high relief facing prince Ardashir II who is depicted receiving his investiture from the god Ahura Mazda before the 'gate of heaven' in the iwan near to the water source (Godard, 1965, illst. 105). Moreover, we even find the Mesopotamian 'tree of light or life', which was believed to be standing in the sacred-mountains or heavens. The iwan in palace architecture probably represented a similar concept as a passage or vestibule giving way to the realm of the god-king. On the other hand, the use of iwans in ribats in place of the four vestibules in the plan scheme of a Buddhist monastery which represented the layout of the cosmic diagram Mandala, was merely a new outcome of the general tendency for merging similar symbols.

The practical function of the iwan in monumental architecture has always been a subject of debate. Leaving this question totally aside, some researchers interpreted the monumental iwan from a metaphysical viewpoint as the way or transitional space capable of uniting man to the 'universal spirit' (Ardalan and Bakhtiar, 1973, 71) (10). On the other hand, even from a functional point of view its use in palace buildings as an 'audience hall' implies symbolic aims that transcend its role as a simple architectural device, for in the Orient a prominence had always been purposefully attached to the entrance of the god-king's residence, which was called the 'gate of heaven' in Mesopotamia and 'horizon of heaven' in Egypt (Smith, 1956, 14). Furthermore, in a mosque and in a madrasa the iwan was not a *sine qua non* functional device (Ögel, 1986, 65-66) (11). Therefore, it can be stated that the emergence of the monumental iwan was determined by its invocation of an age-old image, i.e. the 'gate of heavens and earth' and that this symbolic function preceded its mundane, utilitarian purposes.

ANITSAL EYVAN: SİMGESEL BİR MEKAN MI YOKSA İŞLEVSEL BİR DÜZENEK Mİ?

ÖZET

Alındı : 27.1.1993
Anahtar Sözcükler: Mimari Tarih, Eyvan, Çift-Eksenli Eyvanlı Avlu, Kozmoloji ve Mimari.

Bu makale 'anitsal eyvan'ın pratik işlevinin İslam dönemindeki belirsizliğinin yarattığı sorunsal üzerine yoğunlaşır. Mimari örgenlerin oluşum sürecinde anlamsal ve işlevsel belirlemelerin içiçe gelişen etkenler olduğu yönündeki genel kanaata rağmen, eskil bir kozmolojik imgeye atıfta bulunan sıradışı mimari örgenlerden biri olan eyvan sözkonusu olduğunda bir çekince söz konusudur. Eyvanın mimari mekan sorununa getirilen bir çok çözüm yolundan biri olduğu, anitsal eyvan değil ama onun yanında ikincil konumda olan ve ara mekan olarak kullanım alanı bulan boyutça küçük eyvanlar dikkate alındığında kabul edilebilir bir varsayımdır. Anitsal eyvan, Sasani ve Sasani etkisi altındaki İslam saraylarının giriş bölümüne, ribat, medrese ve camilerde ise bir dörtgen avlunun dört kenar ortasına konumlandırılarak gündelik işlevinin ötesinde ideolojik bir işlev de konusu olmuştur. Bu ideolojik işlev bir saray yapısının 'kabul salonu' olarak kullanılan eyvanı civarında resmi kabulere katılan toplum bireylerinin bilincinde ortak bir paylaşım ile değil ama, imgesinin eyvanı önsel belirleyiciliği sonucu biçimlemesi ile gündeme gelir. Eyvanın yapısal kökenine ilişkin belirsizlikler geç kullanımının çağrıştırdığı kozmolojik imgeler gözönüne alındığında bir ölçüde giderilebilir. Tapınım mekanı olarak bir mağara içine kotarılan Mithraeum ile olan ilintisi tartışılmaz gözükmektedir. Dolayısıyla eski İran kozmolojisinden Mithraeum'a yüklenen anlamlar ile doğrudan etkileşim içinde bir mekandır. 'Kozmos'un ve 'göksel tonoz'un simgesi olarak mağara mekanının Mezopotamya'nın en erken çağlarına dek giden 'kozmetik dağ' imgesi ile bağlantısı açıktır. Algılanabilir dünyayı algılanamaz olandan ayıran ve dünyayı kuşattığına inanılan 'kozmetik dağ', güneşin her mevsim dört farklı yerden yeryüzüne girip çıktığı 'yer ve gökyüzü kapıları'nı içerir. Dolayısıyla bir kaya mekanı olarak Mithraeum, içine oyulduğu dağın simgelediği üst sınır ile yeraltı arasında bir geçiş mekanı olarak yeryüzü ve atmosferin üst sınırı arasındaki hissedilir alanı içerir. Bu nedenle Mithraeum'un tavanı da Harburz (gökyüzünü çevreleyen duvar) ya da Hara Berezaiti (yüksek dağ) üzerinde yeraldığına inanılan sabit yıldızlar kuşağını simgeleyen yıldızlar ile süslüdür. Bir avlunun dört kenar ortasına konumlandırılan eyvanlar da birer simgesel ara mekan olarak 'gökyüzü ve yeryüzü kapısı' imgesini somutlaştırır.

Dört eyvanlı avlu düzeninin İslam döneminde Batı Asya'da yaygınlaşmasından önce ilk olarak Doğu Afganistan'da kullanım alanı bulması anlamlıdır. Bunun nedeni ise dört coğrafik yön simgeselliği üzerine düzenlenmiş bir kozmik diagramın (Mandala) mimari tasarımı doğrudan etkilediği Hindistan ve eyvanın olasılıkla kökenlendiği İran arasında bir geçit olan Afganistan'ın, tarihi içinde örneklerini gördüğümüz gibi yapısal dönüşümlere taban hazırlayan bir bölge olması olmalıdır. Mandala içinde temsil edilen dört kapılı manastır avlusundaki geçiş mekanlarının yerini bir ribat bünyesinde dört anitsal eyvan almıştır. Ribat (Derviş Manastırı) ile Vihara (Budist Manastırı) arasındaki işlevsel benzerlik de dikkat çekicidir. Anitsal eyvanın İslam öncesi ve İslamiyet dönemi saray yapılarının kabul salonu olarak kullanımını, dört anitsal eyvanlı avlunun da İslamiyet döneminde medrese, ribat ve kervansaraylardaki özel pratik işlevi tam olarak tanımlanamayan kullanımı, simgesel işlevini yaygın kullanımında önemli bir etken olarak gündeme getirir. Yapısal kökenini tanımlamak için bir ilk örneğin eksikliği yanında üç yönden kapalı ve bir kenarı ile dışa açılan bir geçiş mekanı sunan biçiminin 'gökyüzü ve yeryüzü kapısı' imgesinin mimari uygulamadaki yapısal gereklilikleri ile doğrudan ilgisi, bu imgenin eyvanın biçimlenmesinde işlevsel etkenin belirleyiciliğini öncelendiğini gösterir.

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