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# A description of fire temples of Ancient Iran from the perspective of Islamic historians

**Abstract**

Buildings with religious functions were among the extant buildings of Ancient times. Among the buildings having existed since ancient history in Iran and which were regarded by Iranians as places for worship and rituals, one could refer to fire temples, idol-temples and monasteries, (synagogue and convents). Unlike the aforementioned buildings, Catacombs in ancient times were places for burying the dead. Thus, like the aforementioned buildings, they had religious functions. Many writers of works belonging to Islamic era paid attention to many of these buildings. All of the authors admitted the existence of such buildings and their religious functions although the Islamic authors did not have profound knowledge about these archeological buildings and their descriptions and reports about such buildings were intermingled with legend. The present paper is an attempt to examine the religious functions of these buildings and search in descriptions and reports of Islamic authors with a descriptive-analytic approach. The assumption of this research is based on the fact that and the collection of reports from the historical texts of the Islamic period is very brief, and because of the time gap between the era of building prosperity and the time of recording and recording them in these monuments, it is scattered and somewhat legendary. The result of this research suggests that in the descriptions of most Islamic historians, the principle of the existence of these fire temples and their religious function is confirmed by the relative domination of Islam. But in part, the prosperity and the existence of the conquerors and the conversion of the peoples of the prominent countries into Islam have prevented the display of a clear image of these works.

**Keywords**

Sasanidis, fire temples, ahl ul-ḏimmah, the texts of Islamic history, Islamic historians, Conquered lands.

## Introduction

In descriptions and reports of Islamic era including general, local historic, geographic and literary texts, all of the religious buildings such as fire-temples, idol temples, monasteries, (synagogue and convents) are mentioned. These authors reported the existence of such places from ancient times till centuries after Islam although they did not have profound knowledge of the time and location of these buildings. According to these authors, most of the descriptions about religious buildings were devoted to fire and fire temples which were considered sacred and used as nearness to God.

Construction and destruction of fire temples happened in several eras, particularly, four historic eras namely, pre Gashtasb era, Gashtasb era, and Alexandra era and Ardeshir the first of Sasani. In these four major eras, the era for forming and using these buildings created. Regarding these four historic eras, we can have a more perfect knowledge of these buildings and their use. Even these fire temples remained for centuries after Islam and for this reason we can have a more precise awareness of these buildings in ancient times. Earlier on Islamic era, Islamic authors paid attention to idol temples along with fire temples. Many of the idol-temples were ruined during different historic epochs, however; many of the idol-temples particularly in Eastern Iran survived. Islamic authors mentioned buildings used as temples for Iranian in ancient times.

Later, some authors call some of the buildings as synagogue and convents in Iran. However, they do not give a meticulous report of these buildings. Ferdowsi, did not directly mention these buildings and idol-temples but, similar to many other Islamic authors, noted several Catacombs. Islamic authors noted the utility of these buildings when describing and reporting on the architects and the place which may lead us to a better understanding of these historic buildings.

## The emergence of fire temples in the views of Islamic authors

When describing ancient times, the authors of Islamic era noted many of these building which had religious functions. In ancient time, a kind of buildings was used as religious ones which were used as rituals and prayer by people. These descriptions pave the way for our understanding although Islamic authors' descriptions cannot lead us to a profound knowledge of certain functions of each of these buildings. Among the descriptions, fire temples received the most and probably the best descriptions of Islamic authors since fire temples were a major part of Iranian rituals in ancient Iran. According to ancient texts, a large number of these building kept their main functions even centuries after Islam and this is why they drew the authors' attention. Regarding Islamic texts, fire temples can be considered as the buildings with religious functions before the emergence of Islam in Iran. As the names suggest, these places could be considered as the place for fire and holding rituals and prayers related to

worshipping fire. Historians and geographers proposed some reasons for worshiping and revering fire by Iranians among which one could reach the common reasons for worshiping God. Among the most interesting reasons for worshipping fire, one could refer to fire as being the essence, not burning Ibrahim the prophet, being Kiblah for humans, and a salvation from the fire in the hell (Shahrestani, 1982: 439) which all suggest the religious reasons. The story of Ibrahim reminds us of the legend of Siavash which show the fire as a piece of evidence for innocence. Based on this legend, challenge of Siavash with fire caused his exempt from the accusation (tha'alebi, 2005: 82–83). His prosperity in this God's challenge was in Azerbaijan Fire temple (Hamedani, 1996: 47). Legends as such signify the sacredness of these buildings and fire. Ferdowsi, in his book, admitted the sacred aspect of worshiping fire in historic eras such as Houshang Pishdadi, Keykhosro Kiani (Ferdowsi, 2111: 24 & 320).

Iranian regarded fire as sacred in order to avoid Hell. As such, they lit fire in combustion chamber so that they could remember the Hell and recalled the burning nature of fire in their thoughts (Ibn Khordabeh, 1992: 55). As evidence, we could refer to rituals in which people sat in fire temples and put a mortar made of stone before them and poured water in it smiting the water with a wooden pestle moving it. Their assumption about this ritual was that they are in pain because of fire (Masoudi, 1991: 98). There were, in addition, other authors who confirmed the sacredness aspect of fire, i.e. God and its nearness in the sense that noted individuals achieve God's guidance through worshipping fire and this guidance is not completed by logic (Hamedani, 1996, 43–4) and *Ostoghosat* (أسطُقُسات *The four elements, water, Soil, wind, fire* (was among the mightiest (Moqadasi, 2011: V. 1, 168). However, according to Iranian beliefs, fire was the mediator between them and God for which there are complex issues regarding light (Masoudi, 1995: V. 1, 603). Reports on Iranian worshipping fire could be the only description that expresses the scientific reasons for their worshipping fire. Thus, in the description of Hormoz, the son of Shapour, in one of the Festivals, he put the fire on heights for consecration so that its heat could purify the atmosphere, burn the evilness and destroy infections causing corruption (Birooni, 1973: 295). However, given the presented religious reasons for worshiping fire and other reports which directly noted the religious aspect of these buildings, it could be mentioned that such buildings had religious functions from the beginning.

## Eras of Iranian attention to fire temples with the perspective of Islamic historians

The authors of these reports in four significant historic eras talked about these fire temples which show the reason for Iranians' attention toward these religious buildings. These four eras could respectively be called 1. Before Gashtasb era, 2. Gashtasb era, 3. Alexandra era, 4. First Ardeshir Sasani. Historians paid

detailed attention to other historic eras. However, since these four eras had their distinctive features, the buildings in these eras received more attention. Descriptions of the first era, i.e., before Gashtasb, does not provide a perfect picture of the time of construction and their usage since the providers of such descriptions did not have an accurate picture of Iranian religion and rituals. Thus, when talking about Houshang Pishdadi, he talked about worshipping fire but not fire temples in the sense that not only he talked about theism but inhibition of worshiping fire (Jozejani, 1984: V. 1, 134). It is not clear what made Houshang forbid people from worshipping fire. In identifying his religion, it is not clear what his religion was. Magus and Jewish consider him fire worshipper and Jewish respectively (Bal'ami, 1999: V. 2, 876–7). Ferdowsi considers Houshang as fire worshipper and noted that Sadeh Festival was created in his time but does not mention a building as fire temple in his time (Ferdowsi, 2011: 24). Some Islamic authors clearly stated that the first fire temples in Iran were built by Fereydoun in Toos City (Shahrestani, 1982: 437; Masoudi, 1995: V. 1, 603). Ferdowsi discussed the fire temples for the first time in Freydoun's era for his battle with Zahak (Ferdowsi, 2011: 34).

Even Ferdowsi, in his poem, refers to the political aspect of using these buildings as the place for declaring war with enemies. He has a contradictory report that, like Houshang, he mentions theism and the destruction of fire temples (Jozejani, 1984: V. 1, 137). Although the reason for denial is not clear, however, the reports suggest that these buildings existed in Freydoun era which he commanded their destruction. Given the reports and descriptions of some Islamic authors, it could be concluded that fire temples existed in Jamishd's era. According to some Revayat, he is considered as founder of the first fire temples in Iran. Some authors refer to Jamshid's fire in Kharazm who were respectful (Shahrestani, 1982: 437; Masoudi, 1995: V. 1, 604–5) and called AzarKhorre (Hamedani, 1996: 46–75, Hamedani, 1970: 76). Fakhrodin Gorgani in his *Veis and Ramin* attributes the fire temple of Marv to Jamshid which was dedicated for noble women and men (Gorgani, 1970: 508–9). Since there are not precise reports by authors about fire temples belonging to which class, it is difficult to come up with a preemptory idea. However, based on the reports, it could be said that the authors of these descriptions admitted the existence of these fire temples in Pishdadian era although they did not have a profound understanding of these eras. Given the ancient Islamic text, the significant feature of the second era was the construction and destruction of these religions with respect to two religious and political events which were the reason for Gashtasb's attention to such buildings. It is better to say that these two events influence Gashtasb with respect to construction of fire temples and their use. The first Event, mainly a religious event, was the emergence of new Zoroastrianism religion at the time of Gashtasb's dynasty which started constructing fire temples in all of the cities. Most authors have consensus on this issue (Moqaddasi, 2011: V. 1, 506; Ibn

Balkhi, 1984: 50; Beyzavi, 2003: 26; Jozjani, 1984, V. 1, 144–5; Birooni, 12, Ibn Athir, 1992: V. 3, 107; Bal'ami, 2003: 592; Mojmal al-Tawarikh, 51–2). The other Event, a political one, was the turkish Arjasb or Kharzasf attack to Gashtab's territory which caused destruction, and the death of religious crew and gurus (Ibn Balkhi, 1984: 62; Thaalebi, 1989: 131; Bal'ami, 2003: 605; Ofi, 1995: 86; Gordizi, 1984: 51–2, Ibn Athir, 1992: V. 3, 144).

In the most ancient remaining text, when fire temples come up for the first time, exactly the same report is mentioned (Tabari, 1983: V. 2, 477–481). Thus, it could claimed that these two Events happened simultaneously contemporary to Gashtasb's era. Accordingly, we cannot say that Gashtasb paid attention to Zoroastrianism only for religious reasons but, this political Event influenced him in constructing and using such buildings. In fact, he wanted to have a bulwark and shelter against Turkish by constructing these buildings as similarly, Ferdowsi, refers to the destruction of Azarnoush fire temple and death of gurus in Gashtasb's era by Arjasb (Ferdowsi, 2011: 361, 363).

However, the construction of this fire temple is deemed to be after Gashtasb's success over Arjasb (tha'alebi, 1989: 127). Nevertheless, whether this fire temple existed before or after Arjasb's attack was influenced by this political event. the feature of the third era was the destruction of such religious buildings by Alexandra about which there is a consensus among the authors (Ibn Maskovie, 1997: V. 1, 94; Tabari, 1983: V. 2, 493; Moqaddasi, 2011: V. 1, 509; Taalebi, 1989: 258). According to Ferdowsi, one of Dara's testaments to Alexandra was that Zoroastrianism religion should not be ruined (Ferdowsi, 2011: 422). Thus, Ferdowsi implied that Dara, the King of Iran, knew that Alexandra would destroy the fire temples and thus appealed for the survival of Zoroastrianism religion in Iran. As a proof to this, is the Alexandra's letter as a response to Dara's letter in which he mentioned the destruction of fire temples as one of his aims (Nezami, 1997: 192). However, Alexandra did not take care of Dara's testament and commanded on the destruction of fire temples (Ofi, 1995: 108; Taalebi, 1989: 258). Other authors, without referring to this testament, witnessed the destruction of these buildings (Tabari, 1983: V. 2; Ibn Maskovieh, 1997: V. 1, 94; Moqaddasi, 2011: V. 1, 509). According to the information, we cannot propose a decisive reason for the destruction of religious buildings by Alexandra. It should be said, that, first, similar to any stranger, he did not have a good idea about the buildings that people used to have rituals. Perhaps, the treasure and gold in the fire temples drew Alexandra's interest. Nezami Ganjavi in his *Sharafname*, which should be called Alexandra Name, noted about the wealth of fire temples at the time of Alexandra's attack (Nezami, 1997: 238–239). However, Alexandra commanded on the destruction of these buildings in order to show his power to Iranians. Islamic authors' main attention to fire temples was in Sasani era, particularly, in Ardeshir Babakan's era, the founder of this empire. The reason could be, as it was mentioned in Gashtasb's era, that so many fire temples were

built after the emergence of Zoroastrianism. Therefore, in Gashtasb's era, these buildings were considered as the most common religious buildings. After that, there is not reliable information about these buildings until before Ardeshir Babakan's dynasty. Nonetheless, in Ardeshir Babakan's era, it seems that these buildings were recognized when Zoroastrianism was recognized by him. This could be inferred from Ibn Esfandiar's report: "it should be remembered that the King took the fire from the fire temples and broke and destroyed them and no one did such a blasphemous act in religion. It was not hardship since after Dara, the kings built fire temples for themselves and opposed to previous king. The King abolished them and took back bread and ordered them to return" (Ibn Esfandiar, 1997: 25). By paying attention to fire temples and transferring them, Ardeshir, in fact, desired to renew Zoroastrianism and recognize it and terminate the religious disputes of his time (Ferdowsi, 2011: 462). Ardeshir believed that the kindness and peace which used to be among people with regard to religious issues was the best solution for terminating religious conflicts (Isfehani, 1988: 32). Thus, in order protect his power, Ardeshir tied the religious function of fire temples with politics in the sense that this tradition continued to exist by the end of Sasani era. Then, he started constructing fire temples given the political issues. Two days after taking control of Iran, Ardseshir built Barnava fire temple (Masoudi, 1995: V. 1, 606). this fire temple must be the same as Barin fire temple in Berke Jor on which there was a writing in Pahlavi language that the cost for constructing the fire temple was written (Ibn Hoqal, 1987: 43; Jeyhani, 1989: 112; Estakhri, 1989: 106) [1]the existence of the writing confirms the construction of this fire temple in Sasani era. Moreover, by writing such texts on the threshold of fire temples, the kings, in fact, intended to show their political and economic as well as religious power to their enemies. However, about the fire temple of Jor City, we can discuss the construction of two fire temples by Ardeshir. Nevertheless, there are not precise reports about the time of construction and their use (Ibn Balkhi, 1984: 137–8)[2]. perhaps it is possible to consider the two cited fire temples by the authors as Barnava and Jor City fire temple. Or, perhaps the two cited fire temples were, in fact, a single one but, due to lack of accurate awareness about the time and use of these fire temples, it was mentioned as two. There is consensus among Historians and geographers about the construction of Jor City fire temple by Ardeshir Babakan and the construction of two fire temples (Ibn Hoqal, 1987: 48; Homawi, 2004: V. 2, 99; Bal'ami, 1999: V. 1, 602; Bal'ami, 2003: 774–5, Ibn Athir, 1992: V. 4, 192). However, like Barnova fire temple, in constructing Jor City fire temple

[1] Jeyhani noted that the fire temple was near Khozestan and must be in Fars. The cost of construction, in his opinion was 30000 Deram. Ibn Hoqal believed it cost 30 milion Deram and Estakhri maintained it cost 30000 Dinar.

[2] When he constructed Firuz Abad City, there were already two wells in it beside which he built two fire temples.

by Ardeshir, the political aspect was intended. Similarly, reports suggest that Ardeshir built it after conquering his enemies (Hamedani, 1996: 431, Jeyhani, 1989: 117). Another report suggests that Ardeshir constructed the fire temple after defeating Ardavan and being called the King of Kings (Yaqobi, 1992: V. 1, 194). Tabari mainly deals with the political function of this fire temple. According to him, when Ardavan sent a reproaching letter to Ardeshir Babakan, for construction Gor City, he as a response to his letter, threatened him about his death and hanging his head in this fire temple (Tabari, 1983: V. 2, 582–3). This fire temple existed for centuries after Islam.

## The function of fire temples after Islam based on Islamic historian reports

Since this fire temple had other functions as well as religious ones, in late third Century, it was used as a promenade (Masoudi, 1995: V. 1, 605) and in the fourth century, Zoroastrianism were there who had access to one of the Avesta's versions and read and interpreted it (Moqaddasi, 2011: V. 1, 168–9). It should be noted, according to Islamic texts, other Sasani Kings paid attention to fire temples which implies the importance of these building till the end of Sasani era. Among them, Khosrow Anoshiravan assigned servants and gurus for fire temples (Tabari, 1983, V. 2, 629; Bal'ami, 1999: V. 1, 685). There is consensus among authors about transferring of Jamshid's fire, called Azar Kharreh, to Karian by Khosrow Anoushiravan. They also talked about saving of this fire by Zardoshtian at the time of emergence of Islam that they transferred it to another city due to fear of its destruction (Hamedani, 1996: 46; Hamedani, 1970: 75–6; Masoudi, 1995: V. 1, 604–5; Shahrestani, 1982: 438). Other writers acknowledged the importance of respectfulness of Karian fire temple in Islamic era (Ibn Hoqhal, 1987: 43; Moqaddasi, 1982: V. 2, 637; Hodod Al Alam, 1983: 135; Jeyhani, 1989: 112). It seems that the reports suggest that the reason for transferring fire by Khosrow Anoshirvan was religious and by doing this, he intended to keep the sacred and religious aspect of this fire temple. Although there is not a clue of Mazdak in the reports, however, by transferring the fire, Khosrow Shiravan intended to protect his political power against Mazdak's religion and doubts. There are some reports which confirm this although they do not directly point it out. According to these reports, after commanding on killing many Mazdakis, Khosrow Anoshiravan established Zoroastrianism religion based on new principles (Jozejani, 1984:V. 1, 164–5; Ibn Maskovieh, 1997: V. 1, 162)[3] Ferdowsi, moreover, point out the significance of fire temples after the death by Mazdak by Khosrow Anoshirvan (Ferdowsi, 2011: 544).

[3] Ibn Maskuye calls Mazdak the second Zoroaster. Jozani noted the event of killing 80000 people after Mazdak's emergenece which must have been Mazdakians.

Khosrow Parviz commanded on constructing fire temples as well as assigning servants for these places (Tabari, V. 2, 766). What makes the importance of fire temples effective, whether with regard to religious or political aspects in the dynasty and destiny of Sasani, particularly, in later stages of the era, is succeeding Yazgerd the Third to power in Ardeshir fire temple by the elderly noble individuals of Estakhr City of Fars (Tabari, 1983: V. 2, 585; Ibn Masovieh, 1997: V. 1, 225) and transferring the fire of Rey City fire temple with him to cities and locating it in Marv City because of security in there and construction of fire temples (Ibn Maskovieh, 1997, V. 1, 366; Tabari, 1983: V. 5, 1997–8; Ibn Athir, 1992: V. 9, 54–5, Bal'ami, 1999: V. 3, 536–7). Yazgerd definitely sought to protect this sacred fire out of religious reasons. Similarly, Khosrow Anoshiravan transferred the sacred fire to river because of idols in Rey fire temple (Masoudi, 1995: V. 1, 604). Such religious reasons caused the destruction of Rey fire temple in Islamic period. The conflict among Shites, Hanafian, and Shafian brought about the destruction of this fire temple before Mangol attack (Homavi, 2004: V. 2, 57–8).

Thus, Rey fire temple has kept its religious function centuries after Islam. Accordingly, the main reason for protection and destruction of fire temples, whether before Islam or after it, was related to Islamic issues and thus Islamic authors' reports confirm it although with regard to the destiny of Iranian fire temples, their reports are contradictory. In this way, some Islamic writers testify the extinguishment of such fire temples at the time of the prophet's birth (Hamedani, 1996: 123; Ibn Athir, 1992: V. 3, 107; Jozejani, 1984: V. 1, 172; Bal'ami, 1999: V. 2, 748–9). However, the majority of the reports suggest the existence of such places and their functions for centuries after Islam all over Iran. The fire temple of Fars City received the most descriptions of Islamic writers. The reason for the writers' attention to the fire temples of Fars City was because it used to be the capital of Iran from the beginning of Sasani Empire. Estakhri points out the existence and the large number of fire temples in Fars (Estakhri, 1989: 97, 106, 121). Other historians testified, in addition, the value and pilgrimage by Zoroastrianism in Islamic period (Hodod al alam, 1983: 130; Jeyhani, 1989: 112; Ibn hoqhal, 1987: 35; Tabari, 1983: V. 6, 2674). According to the reports, these buildings still kept their function in Fars during Islamic period. One of the sources for protecting them was Divans. The abundance of such buildings caused them being written in Divans through which it was possible to identify the buildings (Ibn Hoqhal, 1987: 43). In ancient Islamic texts, particularly, in fourth century, the Persian fire temples were mentioned. There were two fire temples in Kazeroun City which were only different by their names (Jeyhani, 1989: 112; Estakhri, 1989: 106; Ibn Hoqhal, 1987: 43)[4]

[4] Jeyhani called the two fire temples Hafe and Keladeron; Ibn Hoqal called them Jafte and Koazen; and Estakhri called them Chafter and Kelazen

which were respected by Zoroastrianism (Hodod Al alam, 1987: 132). Perhaps, Moqaddasi's point, a 4th century geographer, in *Ahsan al taqasim* to a dome in near Kazeron be related to one of these fire temples and this dome was regarded as in the middle of the world and had a festival in one day of the year (Moqaddasi, 1982: V. 2, 663).

Therefore, this fire temple with its festival kept its religious function during Islamic period. Reporters of the Kazeroun fire temple reported two fire temples in Shapour City which, similar to Kazeroun fire temple, had different names (Jeyhani, 1989: 112; Ibn Hoqhal, 1987: 43; Estakhri, 1989: 106)[5]. Other historians do not propose precise information about these fire temples. Masoudi, without mentioning the name, only noted one of these fire temples in Shapour which was respected by Zoroastrianism (Masoudi, 1995: V. 1, 605)[6]. The anonymous author of Hodod al alam after visiting these two fire temples in his time reported an inscription in this city which thought that there could be a king or Zoroastrian priest wrote his biography on it (Hodod al alam, 1983: 133). Perhaps, these two fire temples made the author think that the inscription was written by Zoroastrian priest. This shows that authors did not have profound knowledge about the buildings and the constructors. Perhaps, similar to these fire temples, we can mention the fire temple of Arjan City about which there is not an accurate description. Historians attributed the fire temple to Behrasf (Masoudi, 1995: V. 1, 604; Shahrestani, 1982: 437).[7] What makes the understanding of the fire temple unclear is Ibn Hoqal's report in his travelogue. He mentioned Iranians' memories in Jas Citadel claiming that Zoroastrianists stayed there and discussed their knowledge and he did not mention the fire temple (Ibn Hoqhal, 1987: 42). Zoroastrians' attendance suggests that it was a fire temple. There was also a fire temple in Fars in which Zoroastrian women went there for certain disease and at the time of their pregnancy and gurus helped them recover (Estakhri, 1989: 106; Ibn Hoqhal, 1983: 43)[8].

According to this report, we can talk about fire temples special to women which were used in certain situations. Islamic authors, after mentioning Fars, presented interesting descriptions about fire temples in Isfahan which help us to have a better understanding of their functions. According to the texts, we can talk about three types of fire temples in the city: 1. Fire temples built in mountains, 2. Fire temples built in villages, and 3. Fire temples in citadels. Among the fire

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[5] Jeyhani called them Sarakhs and Chand Kloni; Ibn Hoqal called then Siavashan and Janbez Kawsan; Estakhri called them Shabarakhshin and Kloshan. Estakhri mentioned that Kloshan Fire temple was close to Sasan's Bab.

[6] Masoudi believed that the constructor was the son of Dara

[7] Shahrestani believed that its constructor was Gashtasb's ancestor who must be Behrasf or Lohrasb.

[8] Ibn hoqal considers the name of the fire temple Monserian which was in Sokan village in Shiraz and Estakhri called it Masoban.

temples built in the mountain of Isfahan, one could refer to a fire temple built by KeyKhosrow (Shahrestani, 1982: 437; Majma al Tavarikh, 50; Masoudi, 1995: V. 1, 604)[9]. The fire temple is on the top of the legendary mountain. According to the legend, in a red mountain called Sorkhi there was a monster which had dominance over the people and lands. Keykhosrow, along with his companions, went to the fire temple and killed the monster building a fire temple called Koshid afterwards (Isfahani, 1988: 37)[10]. In the legend, the monster symbolized cruelty which keykhosrow built the fire temple after conquering in the mountain. Given the time of construction and other existing reports about Isfahan fire temples, this fire temple could be regarded as the first fire temple in Isfahan. According to ancient Islamic texts, the majority of Isfahan fire temples were reported to be in villages. Among them, there is a fire temple in Namivar village built by Gashtasb which had devotions (Majmal al Tavarikh, 52; Isfahani, 1988: 37)[11]. Qomi in the history of Qom in addition to presenting the same descriptions, reported pictures and ancient sketches in this fire temple which, in his opinion, it was as if being sketched recently (Qomi, 1982: 73–4). Hamedani, moreover, reported these pictures as incorporating extraordinary pieces of advice and did not mention the fire temple (Hamedani, 1970: 102)[12]. However, remaining in good quality or having some advice attracted islamic authors. Similar to this report, there were other fire temples in villages of isfahan. despite the fact that the reason for these devotions are not clear and devotion is an Islamic term used by Islamic authors, however, the term shows the religious function of these buildings since devotion is a religious deed used for economic issues. Therefore, by this, kings in ancient times intended to meet the economic needs of the religious buildings. Among other fire temples which had devotion, we can refer to Soroush Azaran in Harvan village which Shapour II of Sasani Emperor devoted some villages of Alnajan to this fire temple (Isfahani, 1988: 51)[13]. The fire temple mentioned by Ibn Balkhi in Joravan of Isfahan is exactly this fire temple (Ibn Balkhi, 1984: 75)[14]. At the time of Firuz of Sasani Emperor enslaved Jewish in the fire temple. (Isfahani, 1988: 53–4). Thus, in ancient times, in cities in which religious minorities lived, fire temples were used. Among other fire temples in Isfahan we could refer to three important fire temples in villages and citadels. These are called Shahr Ardeshir, Zarvan Ardeshir and Mehr Ardeshir

[9] The writer of Majma al Tavarikh and Hamze Isfahani called it Koshid while Shahrestani and Masoudi called it Kosieh and Kosejeh respectively. Shahrestani and Isfahani identified its location between Fars and Isfahan. Given the reports by two other authors, it was located in Isfahan. Islamic authors did not include it in Fars fire temples

[10] The author of Majma al Tavarikh called it as Red Mountain without mentioning the legend.

[11] Isfahani called it Mamnour.

[12] Hamedani regarded it as Namour building which was a village in Isfahan.

[13] These are called Yavan and Jajah.

[14] Since Ibn Balkhi, like Isfahani, believed that its constructor was Shapour II.

which Bahman built in one day according to sunrise, reaching to the pole, and sunset in Marfanan citadel, Darak Village in Barkhar and a village in Ardestan respectively (Mojmal al Tavarikh, 54; Isfahani, 1988: 38). The construction of the fire temples in one day seems impossible. However, their construction in one day could certify that each had a function at a certain time. In this way, the fire temples of Ardeshir city, Zarvan Ardeshir and Mehr Ardeshir were used in the morning, at noon, and in the evening respectively. Thus, astronomic aspects in constructing such religious were effective and each had a certain function in certain time[15]. The fire temple of Marafanan citadel, which were noted in earlier Islamic centuries, is the fire temple in Marbin citadel which kept its religious function (Ibn Khordadbeh, 1992: 24; Ibn Rosteh, 1986: 180–1). Thus, these fire temples were used after Islam. For example, the fire temple in Darak village existed till it was conquered by Abdollah (Abu Noaim, 1998: 142). Ibn Hoqal pointed, in his travelogue, to a fire temple in Mehrin of Isfahan which had old fire. He mentioned that at the time of Hoqal, the servants and guards of the fire temple were among the rich who kept beverage, made them old and sold to people in order to make a fortune since Zoroastrians thought that the beverage gets better (Ibn Hoqhal, 1987: 108–9). Economic misuse in these religious buildings by servants and officials in ancient time seems impossible and there is no report available in this regard. In ancient times, these buildings were sacred for all people and never did they try to misuse it. Probably, the reason for this deed in ancient times was that they intended to have income since Zoroastrians lost their status. Therefore, the fire temple, like others, had other functions rather than religious one during Islamic period. Historians and geographers talked about many other fire temples in Azerbaijan. Some of the authors even attributed the name of Azarbaijan to Azar due to fire temples in there (Bal'ami, 1999: V. 3, 529; Homawi, 2004: V. 1, 160). Then, the religious fire temples were among the most common buildings in Azerbaijan during ancient times; however, most of the authors' descriptions in Azerbaijan were devoted to Shiz City. Despite the fact that most of the descriptions were devoted to the fire temple of Shiz City and its religious function, we d not have information about its exact time and its importance (Hamedani, 1970: 76, 77, 128; Hamedani, 1996: 45–47, 458; Ibn Balkhi, 1984: 50; Majmal al Tavarikh, 48; Qomi, 1982: 88–90)[16]. However, in the descriptions, the name of the fire temple is tied with the name of the kings. It appears that this fire temple was specific to the kings in the sense that each king had a pilgrimage to the fire temple when succeeded to power (Ibn Khordadbeh, 1992: 120; Masoudi,

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[15] Hamze Isfahani called Marfanan Citadel as zigzag and called Zaravan Ardeshir fire temple as Zaravan Ardeshir.

[16] These authors, except for Balkhi, believed the fire temple as Keykhosrow's fire. Ibn Balkhi believed that it was built by Vishtasb.

1986: 89). However, some reports suggest that the fire temple was not only specific to the kings, but were used by the noble and people with high profile. Ferdowsi's intention about Zerasb ethnic in the poem was the noble people (ferdowsi, 2011; 323) or the noble people went there with Keykhosrow (174). It was even mentioned that it was destroyed by the kings and conquerors (Abu Dolaf, 1975: 42). Islamic authors reported its religious function from the early construction till the end of Sasani Emperor. Political events such as wars and victories in them attracted the kings' attention more than before. Among the political events were the Afrasiab's escape to Azerbaijan and Keykhosrow and Keykavos's departure to the fire temple with his armies where his prayer for defeating Afrasiab was answered. (thaalebi, 2005: 105). Ferdowsi reports this historical event (Ferdowsi, 2011: 320). What represents the political significance of the fire temple in Sasani Emperor is the fifth Bahram's victory over Turkish King and bestowing the crown and jewelries to this fire temple (Ibn Meskoye, 1997, V. 1, 148–9; Bal'ami, 2003: 824–5). In addition, it was mentioned that the king's wife became a servant in the fire temple (Tabari, 1983: V.2, 622–3)[17]. Another report suggested that Khosrow Parviz regained power with the help of Bandwieh in this fire temple (Bal'ami, 1999: V. 2, 781). Therefore, the fire temple was politically of crucial importance to the kings.

The point in this case is that Muslims after entering Iran, In accordance with the treaties that were enacted with the peoples of the Conquered lands, Attempted to respect the religious beliefs of the people of the conquered areas, They committed that the fire temples of the people would not be destroyed by them Or Is mentioned from securing people. Some documents also talk about freedom of the people at their ceremonies and festivities (Safari Forushani, 2000: 57). Muslim reporters reported fewer fires that were destroyed by Muslim conquerors, Of course, this is relative, And the destruction of the fire temple in the areas conquered was likely Or after a contract with Muslims, they rebelled, This is the exception.

Another point is that in these sources there is a difference between the main fire temples and the conversion fire temples, (Temples and religious structures that have become a fire temple). Referring to the great religious policies of the priests in the Sassanid period to instill Zoroastrianism in non-Zoroastrian areas**,** And the existence of the financial term "Gazzit" جزیه, accepting the fire temple's imposition in at least two large regions in the west and east of the Sassanid kingdom as well as non-Zoroastrian dissidents, will distant not be away from the mind.

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[17] Ibn Balkhi, on page 79 of Farsnameh, and Beyzavi on page 44 of his Nezam ol Tavarikh, mentioned that Bahram went to this fire temple before war with Turkish kings.

## Conclusion

In an attempt to find these religious buildings and identify their function in descriptions and reports by authors in Islamic period, it is made clear that many of these buildings could keep their religious functions from the early to centuries on. Fire temples which, in authors' view, were considered as the majority of buildings in ancient time and are frequently noted in four historical eras were intended to have religious function and kept their use centuries after Islam. Despite the fact that authors in Islamic era talked about destruction and construction of the buildings, they emphasized its main role as religious. According to Islamic texts, these buildings, in four eras, primarily were constructed in Gashtasb's era and were religiously used. In Gashtasbs' era, the construction of such buildings became common with the emergence of Zoroastrianism. Even in this era, political events such as Arjasb's attack drew Gashtasb's attention to such buildings. In Alexandra's era, despite being mainly destructed, these buildings continued to exist and maintained their religious function. Idol temples after the fire temples, attracted the authors. Despite the fact that the authors do not provide us with precise information about the buildings, the cursory descriptions revealed that they we constructed by Iranians for religious purposes. Although the majority of idol temples were destroyed in different historical eras or changed into fire temples, this change helped them to maintain their religious function. According to Islamic texts, Idol temples were the main monuments in East of Iran which, in addition to Iranian, since they were close to Budhist regions, they played a key role in their construction. Ferdowsi in his *Shahname* did not mention idol temple, monasteries, Abbey, convents which demonstrates that, similar to other authors, he did not have an accurate understanding of these monuments. For instance, Nobahar did not consider Balkh neither as idol temple nor as fire temple while confirming its religious function. Moreover, talking about the fire temple of Bokhara, Ferdowsi mentioned Ejdeha (monster, by which he means a picture or idol of it) showing its religious function before becoming fire temples. Thus, many of the monuments maintained their religious function even after changing into fire temples. According to Islamic texts, soil, along with fire, was regarded as religious for ancient Iranians; therefore, Iranian built monuments as catacombs in order to keep them sacred while burying which testifies their religious function. Islamic authors noted such monuments for several purposes, particularly for burying the corpse of the kings. Even it was mentioned that there was a catacomb for the family members of ancient kings. Similar to Islamic authors, Ferdowsi noted that many of the catacombs were for burying the kings. It is important to note that although Islamic authors mentioned different ways for burying the dead in ancient times, most of the kings were buried catacombs and the subjects were not allowed to be buried there. So many of these buildings, while becoming a fire temple, retain their original function, but do not mention the history of these changes.

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