

Original Research Article

Studying the Abash Khatūn (Khatūn Qīyamat) tomb in Shiraz and its architecture with historical documents and existing evidence

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 : 10.22034/AHDC.2023.19675.1723

Received:
February 6, 2023

Accepted:
April 30, 2023

Keywords:
Ilkhanid,
Safavid,
Attābak Abash,
Umm Kolsūm,
Khatūn
Qīyamat,
Tomb tower

Abstract

The tomb of "Abash Khatūn" or "Khatūn-e Qīyamat" is part of the lesser-known architectural heritage of Shiraz. Its attribution to Attābak Abash is a point of dispute and, due to the extensive destructions of the last century, a small part of it is left. The importance of this research is that the mansion is one of the few buildings that have remained in Shiraz from the Safavid era or before. For this reason, the study of architecture and its decorations can clarify at least a part of the Safavid heritage. The aim of the current research is to obtain a view of this building and its surroundings based on the evaluation of the existing hypotheses and to perform the visual reconstruction of this building. The research seeks to answer the questions 'what is the background of the building?', 'what was the role of the governors and women supporters in its formation and prosperity?', 'what features does the available visual evidence of this building reveal?', and 'how are the architecture, geometry of the building and its decorations?' The research method is interpretive-historical. The results show that this field found its initial form as "Mashad Umm Kolsūm" in the days of Dilmian (11th) and flourished in the Seljuk era. The greatest contribution to the prosperity of this field occurred in the first half of the 14th century when it became "Al-Solghor Cemetery". Attābak Abash built a rabat named after him and later Kurduchin built a new mansion or returned Abash Khatūn's body to the same rabat. The available documents, especially the photos and maps, show that, from the 19th to the 21st centuries, this building has always been known as the "Khatūn Qīyamat". The building has a symmetrical geometry in plan, and the north-west and southeast sides of the arches are longer than the other two sides. This issue is evident both in the remains of the walls and in the historical photos. Any comment about the tomb entrance will be wrong. However, it can only be assumed that the entrance of the building on the northwest side was one of the weakest parts of the building because its wall was highly destroyed over time. Probably, the final height of the building was about 22 meters, and the interior of the dome was decorated with simple applications that have not been left. The exterior decorations of the building are limited to simple brickwork and mosaic tiles. The most important decoration of the building and its only remaining inscription is an inscription in the Thuluth without a date and the author's name, which includes up to the middle of the 10th verse of Surah Fath of the Qur'an. Although it is decorated with mosaic tiles, its square plan and symmetrical view are such that the ratio of height to width and the height of the external dome are the reminiscent of the construction pattern of the tower tombs of the Ilkhanid period, which perhaps got their current form with successive restorations in the early Safavid era.

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Extended Abstract

1. Introduction

The eras of Al-e-Solghur, Al-e-injoo, and Al-e-Muzaffar is among the important and influential periods in the history of Shiraz architecture, of which few of their works remain, and there are still many unknown facts about the antiquity and attribution. One of these buildings is a tomb called "Abash Khatūn" or "Khatūn-e Qīyamat," the attribution of which to the grave of Saad's second daughter or even the mausoleum of Emakulthum is the subject of numerous doubts. Also, historical sources, context, and surroundings have introduced it a mansion which adds to the complexity and difficulty of this study. A significant part of the current research is focused on a better understanding and recognition of the dedicated area formed around the tomb of Umm Kulthum, which flourished during the reigns of the Al-Sulghur and Al-Muzaffar dynasties. Another part of it emphasizes the visual reconstruction of a building which is the only remaining relic of the previous innovations in this area. Another important finding of this research is that this building is one of the few structures that have remained in Shiraz from the Safavid era or before it. Thus, the aim of the research is, in the first step, to examine existing hypotheses and reach a somewhat coherent view of the past and its limits. In the second step, along with field observations the research attempts to visually reconstruct this mansion by studying visual documents, photographs, and maps that have survived from the Safavid era until the first Pahlavi era.

2. Research Methodology

In this research, the interpretive-historical strategy has been used as the research method, and determinative, contextual and inferential pieces of evidence are applied to create an explanatory and holistic view in a complex context. Short-range photogrammetry has also served to document the decoration of the building. The photos are taken with a Canon M10 camera, and the AgiSoft Metashape software version 1.7 is used for the model creation and orthomosaic output. The field survey along with the findings of historical studies provides the possibility to reconstruct the plan and the main view of this building.

3. Results and discussion

From all the available historical data, it can be concluded that the area of "Mashhad Umm Kulthum" has been of interest since the time of Azad al-Dawlah Daylami and that the first tomb was built for him in the middle of the 4th century AH. After that, during the Seljuk era, it gained double prosperity with the construction of a mausoleum school by Atabek Mankobars. After the death of Atabek Bozapeh, his wife Zaheda Khatun was also assigned to the construction of Umm Kulthum's mausoleum. With the burial of Atabak Saad bin Zangi (in the first half of the 7th century AH) and some other members of Al-Sulghur, clerics and religious scholars, this area became "Al-Sulghur Cemetery". This made Atabek Abash Khatun to build a ribbon on the tomb of Saad bin Zangi, and perhaps this ribbon included the tomb of Umm Kulthum too. It is possible to imagine that Princess Kordochin (daughter of Atabak Abash Khatun), later in the first half of the 8th century AH, moved the mother's body to this same Rabat or built a special building for it. But

there is no sufficient documentation in this regard. Over time, from the 8th to the 14th century AH, the assignment of names to places in this area is confusing. This similarity is because the word "woman" existed in the titles of all patrons and the owners of the tombs attributed to these buildings were women. Ali Sami believes that, because the style and shape of the building are similar to those of Al-Jaytu's tomb in Soltanieh and it has been known as "Abash Khatūn" since the past, it was probably built by the same queen and in the style of the buildings of the Mongol period. However, the visual documents including photos, maps and designs from the 12th to the 14th century AH all refer to this building as "Khatūn-e Qiyyamat".

4. Conclusion

There are various doubts regarding the dating of the building. At least, this building can be seen in the engravings left from the middle of the Safavid period. The mosaic tile decorations and their inscriptions all reflect the style of Safavid decorations. The Safavids' attention to this building can be a proof to consider this tomb the same as Mashhad Umm Kulthum, which has survived with changes over time. The geometric structure of the plan and its symmetrical view are such that the "ratio of the height to the width of the inner space" and "the height of the external dome" all represent the common pattern of tower tombs in the Ilkhanid period, which may have found its final form with successive restorations in the early Safavid era. In this way, although this building cannot be considered the main architecture from the time of Sulghorians or Al-Muzaffar of Shiraz, it is another example of tower tomb structures in the history of Iranian architecture. It is also evidence for the local history of Shiraz architecture at least from the Safavid era or a little earlier. Undoubtedly, the laboratory findings in the framework of archeological research can verify the results of this study or propose new hypotheses. Since findings like this should be the basis of any restoration action in the future, it is necessary to prioritize conservation measures. Based on the results of this research, it can be expected that parts of the destroyed foundation of the building in the southwest and southeast parts of the mausoleum will be reconstructed based on the archaeological excavations while the integrity of the plan is maintained. In addition, by adding the lands of the southern part of the mausoleum to it and removing the current walls of the park in those parts, the tower-shaped feature of the mausoleum will be restored once again and access to its interior section will be possible for everyone.

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