Introducing the sarkuche mosque inscriptions in mohammadiye of Naein city

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Abstract

Naein is one of the famous county of Esfahan that is situated in northeast-160 kilometer of Esfahan. Sarkuche Mohammadiye mosque is situated in historical suburb of same researchers and history of masqus inscription is built in the half of fifth hejira century. This mosque introduces us another kind of mosques map originate with the new combination of substances of Iranian architecture like having four arcs and portico. One of the distinctive features of this mosque is using the rocking roof and the rectangular pylon and locating the dome on it this style is coming from sasani architecture. Also embellishment of paleographic are used in the interior of mosque that some notes of holly Quran in veneration of building mosque and name of ten missionary in koofis handwriting and lazuli are drawn in field of white chalk remind the drawing method of frosco (name of style) In this article the writer wants to check the embellishment of paleographic of this mosque in way of analictic-descriptire leaning on fields and libraries studying.

Keywords: Naein Mohammadiye •Mosque sarkuche •Paleeographic •Kofi hand writing
Introduction

Banning of sculpturing in Islam made the artist to stop face painting because it seemed that his lateut was against the faith, yet inevitably they used color and writing in imaginary decorations. The rigors caused the Iranian artist to become master in using different elements in which he conveys his intentions. (Imani,1381:61).

Since early Islam, Kufic was known as a holly writing that gradually evolved. This geometric structure that is based on angled lines, could be used everywhere and in every content whether on a silk cloth or surface of a wall (Mohseni,1381:139).

Kufic possess an special importance and prominence among different Islamic writings, so it is flexible and has curvature and also it is so easy to teach, write and learn. It is an straight line angled Writing and is arranged in various contents, therefore artists can use it in different shapes, decorations and kinds. Also it makes possible for architects and artists to use Kufic with proportionate composition in decorating buildings, paleeography and writing headlines and the title of a Surah.

The lines that are stamped inside and outside the grooves of the buildings or an other Islamic artistic objects are used apparently to mention the name of the client and the artist or stipulating the date and the quality attachments and belongings and recording holy words and sentences like - In the name of God- and various names of God , Muhammad and accessories of this prophet or Surahs of Holy Quran, appropriate to the building and reminding of religious and moral duties etc. But besides because Arabic and Persian scripts have special features and the quality of the words, are somehow decorative and also make a beautiful scenery when connected to flowers and bushes ( Zamany 1352:15). Word is the main substance of the script and is made by coming the words of a script into one piece, in other words the colligrapher is the one who summarizes these scripts. Inscription is an Arabic word, meaning Epiyoaply, the book, script, endownment, A letter, a script on the body of a mountain and the plural form is Inscriptions. The mentioned word refers to an iscription that is written on the head margin in of mansions, walls of mosques, monuments, tombs etc ( khanipoor1383:160).

Inscriptions Have played an important role in recording information and transferring thoughts, ideas. Human civilization from one generation to an other. In early Islamic, palleography among Muslims had of much consideration in order to give identity to religion, history and culture and because Muslims believed that verses of the holy Quran is a miracle both outwarad and inward did their best effort to write the verses outside and inside the Islamic buildings (Homan 161,163). Beside graphic decoration of buildings, script graphic decoration were more used as inscription and became Popular, so less Islamic building can be found not using inscription. Inscription mostly used in a round domes, surface of walls, heads of buildings and alters.
**Naein in the process at history**

Province of parse is one of the closest Provinces of Iran and was the establishment of official system for Achaemenid kings. After Islam the province like Sassanid Empire was divided into five towns. Every district consisted of big and small districts.

Istakhr is the biggest and the widest town in persian province. Also, Yazd is the biggest district of Istakhr which some important cities are: Kesseh(Yazd), Naein, fahraj that perhaps after Islam they all had mosque (Soltan Zadeh 1374:27)

Naein which before Islam was the center of official services of Yazd district, after Islam more or less kept its position. Based on a report from an unknown person (belonging to second half of fourth AH) Naein was full of blessings. Nasir khusraw traveled there on the first half of fifth AH, but there is not much information of it’s economical cultural and physical situation. Establishing Jameh Mosque of this city has been related in some historical sources to one of Umayyad Caliphates called Umar ibn Abd Al-Aziz in the first AH, but based on archeological sources this mosque belongs to end of third or early fourth AH. Naein was not away of economical cultural changes in the time which people like Khaje Rashid al_Din fadlullah, Ghazan Khan and öljaito lived and important and valuable antiquities like Baba Abdullah mosque, mansion of Imam Zadeh Sultan Seyyed Ali and minaret of jameh mosque were built in this city. There exists a brief report of the attack of Malek Ashraf in Muharram, the year 744 AH in Naein. In that time the city had a rampart that somehow protected the city from dangers.Hamdllah Mustawfi describes Naein a small city in Nizhat al- Ghloob that around it’s castle was about four thousands feet. In that time also the court (first half of the eighth AH) also was about two Tomans and two hundred Dinars. Economical development in Safavieh was not effectless in becoming the city of Naein. In that time perhaps part of the rampart was repaired and also some buildings were built. According to a report from an unknown author in Mulak biography (belonging to Safavieh time). The ruler of Naein was determined by chairmans property in Isfahan. In ancient times Naein was mostly subordinate to Yazd, but in some other times like Safavieh it was subordinate to Isfahan. The city in the time of Naser al-Dinshah Was subordinate to Yazd, but in Pahlavi again it’s official affairs was subordinate to Isfahan. In ancient times Naein was mostly subordinate to Yazd, but in some other times like Safavieh it was subordinate to Isfahan. The city in the time of Naser al-Dinshah was subordinate to Yazd, but in pahlavi again it’s official affairs was subordinate to Isfahan.

Today, Mohammadye which is quarter of the city Naein, according to Andre Godard in the book Artifacts of Iran volum 2, page 331 has been the first place in Naein. Existence of legends from the city Wahome narrated by the ancestores and aged ones, discovery of a crypt in Rig Castle, a castle in the west cemetery of Mohammadiye which was ruined two decades ago and currently Islamic Revolution kindergarten and some houses have been built instead canals and plumes existed around in Mohammadiye, underground mill, castles of Mohammadiye, Shahdad, Shah Bahram, some hilles around Shah Jahan also the basement of Jameh mosque in Mohammadiye that was built according to saying in the place where the fireplace was ruined and now is a temple with twelve corners for seclusion and secretions or Sarkuche mosque with architectural style related to Sassanid and paleegraphy decorations have been written with Kufic on the walls the alter and the dome so that each one can be a proof on the claim of Andre Godarad his sympathizer and proponents on this case. Despite lateness and antiquets of Mohammadye, no written artifacts or a historical script mentioned it’s name or prior name.
About a millennium ago when Nasir Khusraw Qubadiani passed there, he just mention the town Naein and writes: on the day twenty second we came by, came across a village called Hissam Abbad, then moved on to the desert and the Maskinan mountain to arrive to the city of Naein which was about three parsang to Naein and from there we went forty three parsang to the village Garmeh by desert that this district is divided into twelve villages (Mirzabeigi- Neeinni, Marzeogh, Mephtoh 1393:128).

**Sarkuche mosque**

Of some historical and valuable buildings that have been studied on and repaired before 1358 Hijri is Sarkuche mosque. (p1 and 2).

![P. 1 and 2: three dimensional pictures of Sarkuche mosque, the whole right pictures, left picture is the inside of the mosque (source: Iman talab 1392:13).](image)

Although local people call it Sarkuche mosque, Andre Godera calls it an Antechamber mosque and Dr. Abbas Zamany know it as a rectangle hall with a dome.

This mosque is located on one of the oldest neighborhoods in Mohammadiye so this well known as Sarkuche mosque. Although it is a simple mosque it’s beauty is unmatched and all it’s architectural elements even the decorations that is paleographic are adopted by the drawing in Sassani and parthian empire; a sign of continuity of tradition in Sassanid.

This mosque shows us some other kinds that are built from new architectural elements of Iran called Chahartaq(architecture) and Iwan(architecture) and the way the dome is built on a rocking roof with a rectangular plan, showing a rectangular hall with a dome is considerable.
Apparently the title of a rectangular hall with a dome is something abstract because usually a rectangular hall has a racking at flat roof but in fact the mentioned hall is a rectangular that the mid roof is formed by a dome and the roof sides are formed by two rockings. In this case, for preparing this kind of dome some preparation like: four pillars, four arcs, four corners will be necessary, in this case four pillars connected to the wall are considered as building columnes and the two rectangulars on the other sides will be looked like a closed view (Zamany 1390: 139).

The building of the mosque even the dome has been built with raw clay and obviously before plastering it was covered with thatch; probably then it was plastered with time for paleography and the floor of the mosque is covered with plaster. Sarkuche mosque is built with a three- part plan of combination of Chahartaq and Iwan elements. (Plan 1):

![Plan 1](image)

Plan 1 : Sarkuche mosque plan is comparable with Karkhe and Damghan palace (source: Zamany 1392: 114).

1. The East part is the entrance of the mid part. The building of this part is totally opened and because it is like Iwan there is a doorway in the north side that leads to the end of the mosque (Zamany 1390. 115)

2. The Mid part is like fireplaces which their buildings are Chahartaq and South part it is closed from the South then the alter is located there, the East and West part also are opened and there is a doorway in the North which connects to the end of the mosque. The North arch of the dome had a way to the outsiders, but it is still undear wether there was a yard or a little space( 1392: 1440). The building of this part is like a square hall which is settled with four pillars and there is a round dome on the top (Zamany 1390:115). The dome has divided into some eight tholobate that truly make a thelebate. But about the corners, the squinches are embeded as wide acardings. All doorways have painted crimson which makes them distinguished. They also look old, because the abutment of the arch has moved forward and the doorway walls are subsided and crooked down which this feature is only seen in Sistan and Khorasan provinces (finster 1392: 145). The alter is located here in the heart of the wall that is made of a car touches so the inscription frames it like a strip.
3. The West part is apposite to the East. It’s area is the same as the first part and they both have barrel roof. But this part is like a room that not only has a connection with the central part, but leads to a doorway to the outside (Zamany 1390:115). Buildings like this are rarely built but there are two of them in Sassanid era which are the combinations of elements of Iwan and Chaharbaq: First Iwane Karkhe (plan 3) which is related to the time of Shapur 11th (309-379 ab), generally induces a rectangular hall like Mohammadiye Mosque but in fact compound of one square part and two other sides and the roof of the mid part is domical and the other sides have rocking roof with different that the entrance is only accessible form the square sides of the building. Second is the Damghan palace (plan 4) which is related to end of Sassanid era and like Mohammadiye mosque is built from three different parts: Iwan, an square hall and a rectangular chamber at the end of the building with difference that Iwan of the palace has three parts and the rectangular room at the end of the building is smaller than Iwan.

The real concept of Sarkuche mosque is the result of expansion and intention of adding a domical inlet to the building. But as the history of architecture tells us the mosque may have first get the idea of this concept presumably in 11th century, when the increasing interest in such domical buildings were recognizable. The old mosque was kept but expanded to the East, somehow the square space of the dome has added. The domical pillars of the square space do not observe the old altar which are half blacked in southwest with pilasters. (figure 1)(Finster 1392:144).

![Figure 1: transverse section of Sarkuche mosque (Finster source)](image)

**Sarkuche mosque inscriptions**

Sarkuche mosque inscriptions are written in assistant and mashin Kufic, without any dots and the role of the words on a gypsum plaster with azure which remind Fresco technique of Sassanid and parthian era. The inscriptions of the walls which are in assistant Kufic have about thirty centimeters width and two and ten centimeters height. Also the square inscription of the dome is written with the same script which has thirty centimeters width and the tholobate inscription, too, which is written in Mashin Kufic has twenty five centimeters width.

Inscription with Kufic script corresponds with the whole inscriptions of the dome of twelve Imams in Yazd. But the circumstances are completely different here: vertical lines of the words which ends in palmele are reserved for the underneath inscription, whereas the horizontal words can be found in the inscription of the dome which are pampini form. (although they are pampini form, they are observable in the inscription). Anyway, the whole inscription of Mohammadiye mosque looks stronger and formulaic and the vertical lines of lengthy words are not visible, however there are some curvatures in vertical lines of twelve Imams to consider this inscription older, saying that Mohammadye mosque is older than the dome of twelve Imams in Yazd.
Introducion and description of Sarkuche mosque inscriptions: East wall inscription:

Baqare sura, verse 55

The first part of Baqare Sura in the inscription have got cleaned but the rest of them exists as the following pictures

Baqure Sura, verse 255:

Allah. There is no god but He, the Living, the Self-subsistng, Supporter of all. No slumber can seize Him nor sleep. His are all things in the heavens and on earth. Who is thee can intercede in His presence except as He permitteth? He knoweth what (appeareth to His creatures as) before or after or behind them. Nor shall they compass aught of His knowledge except as He willeth. His Throne doth extend over the heavens and the earth, and He feeleth no fatigue in guarding and preserving them. For He is the Most High, the Supreme (in glory).

He know what will be before their hands

And what was behind them
And they do not comprehend anything of his knowledge except what he willed

his seat embraces the heavens

And the preserving of them does not weary him.

is the high, the great.
West wall inscription:

Al Imran Sura, verse 18,19

In the rest of the inscription of Baqure Sura, verse 255, there is Imran Sura, verses of 18,19. The inscription of the verse 18 has written completely but of the verse 19, some words are just remained. But the rest of the inscriptions exist as the following pictures.

Al Imran Surah, verses 18,19

Allah witnesses that there is no deity except Him.

And [ sodo] the angels and these of knowledge [ that He is ]

Maintaining [ creation] in justice. There is no deity except Him,
The exalted in Might, the Wise.

Indeed, the religion in the sight of Allah is Islam. And those who were given.

The inscription of the domes: Al_Tawbe sura, verse 18 and Al_Jinn sura Verse 18

Tholobate inscription of the dome includes the verse 18 of Al_Tawbe sura and the last words of the verse 18 of Al_Jiin have crumbled, but the rest of the inscription exist as the following pictures.

The verse 18 of Al_Tawbe sura:

The mosques of Allah are only to be maintained by these who believe in Allah and the Last Day and establish prayer and give zakah and do not fear except Allah for it is expected that those will be of the [rightly] guided.

The mosques of Allah are only to be maintained by those who believe in Allah and the Last Day
And establish prayer and give Zakah and do not fear except Allah

For it is expected that those will be of [rightly] guided.

The verse 18, Al Jiin sura:
And [He revealed]

led] that the masjids are for Allah, so don't invoke with Allah anymore.

And [He revealed] that the masjids are for Allah, so do not invoke with Allah anyone.

The square inscription of the dome:

Around the four corners of the inscription, the Hadith of the ten promised paradise plus the sentence “In the name of the God” has written but some part of it has destroyed. In addition the full name of Abdur Rahman bin Awf and Abu Ubaidah bin Al- Jarrah have not written of the top maybe because of not being enough space and probably the other names are written on top of the alter so that part has lots of writings and over times the color have faded. (Ghoochani 1367:138)

The full text of the inscription:

that the Messenger of Allah said: "Abu Bakr is in Paradise, 'Umar is in Paradise, 'Uthman is in Paradise, 'Ali is in Paradise, Talhah is in Paradise, Az-Zubair is in Paradise, 'Abdur Rahman bin Awf is in Paradise, Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas is in Paradise, Sa'id ibn Zayd is in Paradise, and Abu Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah is in Paradise."
In the name of God (the south square inscription of the dome)

Uthman is in Paradise (the East square inscription of the dome)

'Ali is in Paradise, Talhah is in Paradise, Az-Zubair is in Paradise (the north square inscription of the dome)

Sa'd bin Abi Waqqas is in Paradise, Sa'id ibn Zayd is in Paradise, and Abu 'Ubaidah bin Al-Jarrah is in Paradise.

In the North vault, right face to the alter the date when the mosque built or time when the inscriptions have written are known with azure but most of it have faded over the time (picture3). The date is the year 469 AH. The text of the date is like this: Four hundred and sixsty nine. But because the color of the inscriptions have faded and being clear of the texts it might not be original pattern.

Near the old alter, on it’s south side, an alter with the same color. Which the inscriptions have written has drawn but it is not clear enough because the most part of it have destroyed. It looks like that a picture of an alter with same lines next to each other is in Qibla side.
Conclusion

The early building of Sarkuche mosque is like a rectangular hall without the dome, probably later in the time of Seljuq dynasty a dome and then paleography decorations added to the building. The claim is provable with two reasons:

1. Third of the old altar which was located in the Southwest behind the pillar, was coated with thatch that proves before building the pilaster and the dome there was the old altar and then it was destroyed after building the new altar and the dome, because it was behind the pillar.
2. The distance between pilasters and the wall are observable and makes it clear that the pilars were built to add the dome to the building and not existed before. The paleography decorations used in this mosque are suitable for a local mosque, because the paleography is cheaper in cost and faster is done than plastering. Rocking roof, round huge and small pilasters, square capitals and building the dome inside the hall like Iwan-e Karkhe shows that architectures still built mosques as the way before Islam and based on what Dr. Abbas Imany says there are no signs of early Arabic designs used in mosques in Iran.

However, this mosque was not a general one but it be a private mosque like Sheik Lotfollah mosque that maybe a special incident made it a memorial one. In the square inscription of the dome there are name of the first official rulers of Islam and also Sahabah in early Islam the gives us information about the importance of the hadith of ten promised paradise among Sunni Islam. But it is not acceptable among Shia Islam. Maybe the establishment history of the mosque has connections with the mentioned names.
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