

# REVIEW AND ANALYSIS OF THE SPATIAL STRUCTURE OF SELJUK CITIES IN IRAN, CASE STUDY: CITY OF REY

## İRAN'DAKİ SELÇUKLU ŞEHİRLERİNİN MEKANSAL YAPISININ İNCELENMESİ VE ANALİZİ, ÖRNEK: REY ŞEHİRİ

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### ABSTRACT

The spatial organization of cities during the Sassanid period includes three parts called Kohandezh, Shārestan, and Rabaz that the important political, religious and social sectors were located in Kohandezh. In the Islamic period, although the organization of urban space, has the same three parts of Kohandezh, Shārestan and Rabaz like the ancient era, according to historical texts, during this period the power of Kohandezh diminished due to some reasons, and Rabaz and Shārestan became the political, religious, economic and social center of the city. The purpose of the present research is to recognize the historical texture of Rey during the Seljuk period by spatial organization of the city and social level changes based on historical texts and archaeological data. Accordingly, some important questions are raised here: What is the role of Kohandezh, Rabaz, and Shārestan in the organization of urban space during the Seljuk period of Rey? How did this structure differ from the previous periods? As a result, it was revealed that the historical texture of Rey during the Seljuk period took a new form compared to the urbanization style of the previous eras. Archaeological data indicate that during the early Islamic era, especially the Seljuk period, the Rabaz and Shārestan sections boomed and expanded.

**Keywords:** Rey, Seljuk Period, Spatial Organization, Urban Texture.

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**ÖZET**

Sasani dönemi şehirlerinin mekansal organizasyonu, kohandej (kale kent), şehristan (açık kent) ve rabaz (dış odaklı büyüme) bölümlerini içerir ki önemli siyasi, dini ve sosyal alanlar kohandej kısmında yer alır. İslami dönemde de kentsel mekân organizasyonu eski çağlarda olduğu gibi kohandej, şehristan ve rabaz bölümlerinden oluşmakla birlikte, tarihi metinlere göre, bazı nedenlerle kohandej'in gücü azalmış ve rabaz ve şehristan şehrin siyasi, dini, ekonomik ve sosyal merkezi haline gelmiştir. Bu araştırmanın amacı, Selçuklu dönemi boyunca Rey'in tarihi dokusunun, şehrin mekânsal organizasyonu ve tarihi metinler ile arkeolojik verilere dayalı toplumsal düzey değişiklikleri yardımıyla anlaşılmasıdır. Bu saptamalar sonucunda ortaya bazı önemli sorular çıkmaktadır: Selçuklu dönemindeki Rey kentinin mekân organizasyonunda kohandej, rabaz ve şehristanın rolü nedir? Bu mekân organizasyonu ile önceki dönemler arasındaki fark nedir? Sonuç olarak Rey şehrinin Selçuklu dönemindeki tarihi dokusunun, önceki dönemlerin kentleşme tarzına göre yeni bir şekle sahip olduğu anlaşılmıştır. Arkeolojik kanıtlar, İslam döneminin başlarında, özellikle Selçuklu döneminde, rabaz ve şehristan bölümlerinin geliştiğini ve büyüdüğünü göstermektedir.

**Anahtar Kelimeler:** Ray, Selçuklu dönemi, mekan organizasyonu, kentsel yapı.

## INTRODUCTION

Undoubtedly, archaeological data along with historical texts can be regarded as the most reliable sources to retrieve the spatial organization of ancient cities. These two sources can effectively be used in recognizing the developments and changes related to the formation, growth, expansion, continuity, and or destruction of the cities. The spatial organization of cities during the Sassanid period included three parts (Kohandezh<sup>1</sup>, Shārestan, and Rabaz). In the Islamic period, although according to historical texts the organization of urban space consisted of three parts, like the ancient era, the power of Kohandezh diminished due to some reasons, and Rabaz and Shārestan became the political, religious, economic and social center of the city. In general, the cities of this period had greater developments and expansion in Rabaz and Shārestan sections<sup>2</sup>. Meanwhile, the spatial organization of Rey in the early Islamic centuries implies the continuation of the physical pattern of pre-Islamic Iranian cities, so that in this period Kohandezh was located on the north side of the city and south of Mount Bibi Shahr-bānu, which is referred to as the outer city in Islamic sources<sup>3</sup>. Over a long time, the main military fortifications of the city were located in the northern part of the city and beside the mountain in order to use the natural protection status of the mountain in consolidating the position of Kohandezh<sup>4</sup>. Other parts of the city were also Shārestan and Rabaz, which were created around and outside of the Kohandezh section.

The historical texture of every city is an organized and arranged structure with a physical and visual order which is based on certain rules<sup>5</sup>. Since the study of urban spaces is not possible only by introducing their components and elements, it is inevitable that historical information must be combined with tangible evidence from the past, and then this information should be used to retrieve the historical context of cities<sup>6</sup>. In pre-Islamic cities, attempts were made to form the city in full compliance with its social structure. In other words, the spatial organization of these cities was able to respond to the social texture of Iranian people during this period<sup>7</sup>. After the fall of the Sassanid dynasty, and the change in the social organization of the Iranian people, it was thought that urban spaces would also undergo fundamental changes, but after some time the Islamic rulers imitated the Iranian urbanization method. As a result, similar to the Sassanid

cities the Islamic city was also formed by having different parts which were distinct from each other<sup>8</sup>. The only difference was that in some of the cities of this era the importance of those triple sections mentioned-above (Kohandezh, Shārestan, and Rabaz) changed relative to each other, and perhaps Rabaz and Shārestan were given priority over Kohandezh due to several reasons, including the development and changes of social, economic, and political relations of the city<sup>9</sup> and the city of Rey was no exception in this regard. Despite the archaeological excavations carried out in some parts of the city, which have provided important information about the region, due to the destruction of the city's historical texture, it is difficult to establish links between the remaining elements<sup>10</sup>.

In the present paper, the research methodology applied by the authors is a descriptive-analytical one and the data have been collected using field and documentary information with a theoretical approach to cultural history studies. Our purpose was to find out that how the spatial organization of this city has changed during the Seljuk period in terms of urban texture, using ancient archaeological data in the old texture of the ancient city of Rey.

## RESEARCH BACKGROUND

Among the valuable works on the history and ancient relics of Rey is a book called *The Ancient Rey*, written by Hossein Karimān in two volumes<sup>11</sup>. Robert Ker porter in the year 1821-22 prepared a map of the ancient city of Rey and has referred to Castle Gabri as the fortified fortress in southeast of the city<sup>12</sup>. Rashkān fortress was excavated for the first time in 1934-35 by the American Archaeological Exploration Board, headed by Eric Schmidt. Nothing has remained of this fortress after the death of Schmidt's death, except for a few photographs and aerial images<sup>13</sup> (Fig. 1, 2). In 1983, All Asghar Mirfattāh, Yahyā Kowsari and Hushang Khazaei conducted boring operations in Rashkān fort. According to the report of this excavation, Rashkan fortress has been known as the city center of the Seljuks<sup>14</sup>. Yahyā Kowsari excavated the Gabri castle in 1991 and presented the result in a paper<sup>15</sup>. In 2002, Ghadir Afround and Khosro Pour-bakhshandeh studied the monuments of the region during a project titled "Investigation and Identification of Historical and Cultural Activities of the City of

<sup>1</sup> Citadel

<sup>2</sup> Yousefifar and Mohammadi 2004:178.

<sup>3</sup> Hamavi 1986: 599.

<sup>4</sup> Ibn Rasta 1986: 198, Hamavi 1386: 149.

<sup>5</sup> Latifi et al. 2005: 187.

<sup>6</sup> Karimian and Seyedin 2010: 71.

<sup>7</sup> Karimian 2010: 454.

<sup>8</sup> Karimian and Rahimnejad 2016: 31.

<sup>9</sup> Taghavi Nejad Deylami 1984: 171.

<sup>10</sup> Rante 2007; Mortazaei and Sadraei 2014.

<sup>11</sup> Kariman 1975; Kariman 1977.

<sup>12</sup> Ker porter 1821: 359.

<sup>13</sup> Schmidt 1935, 1936.

<sup>14</sup> Mirfattah et al. 1986.

<sup>15</sup> Kowsari 1996: 494-453.



Figure 1: Aerial Image by Schmidt- details provided by the authors (1- the old cement factory of Rey 2- Kohandez or Rashkan Fortress 3- Shārestan 4- Fence of Shārestan or the Seljuk Citadel) (Schmidt 1940, pl. 31) / *Aşmit'in havadan görüntüsü-detaylar yazarlar tarafından belirtildi (1-Eski Ray Çimento Fabrikası 2-kohandej veya Raşkan Kalesi 3- şehristan 4- şehristan duvarı veya Selçuklu Kalesi)*

Rey<sup>16</sup>. Rocco Rante, accompanied by Ghadir Afround, conducted an excavation in Rashkân fortress in 2006 and 2007<sup>17</sup>. Mohammad Mortazaei, Ali Sadraei, in 2012, excavated the remnants of a city related to the early Islamic centuries on Imam Ali Highway<sup>18</sup>.

### Historical Geography of Rey During the Seljuk Period

With the death of Massoud Ghaznavi in 431 AH by the Seljuk descendants, the Seljuks suddenly gained power and the scattered troops around Khorasan also joined them. In 433 AH, Ibrahim Inal was stationed in Rey. When Rey was under the control of the Ghazan and as they became aware of Abraham's attention to Rey, they deemed that resistance was not expedient and then left Rey. Ebrahim Yanal conquered Rey and the neighboring districts<sup>19</sup>. After a while, Tughril came to Rey in 434 AH and liberated it from the capture of Ebrahim Yanal. Rey experienced a lot of damage due to Oghuzs' attacks in the 5th century AH, but Tughril ordered to repair the destruction and rebuild the city. According to the background and status of Rey, Sultan Tughril moved his

capital from Isfahan to Rey in 442 AH. After the death of Tughril in 455 AH, he was buried in a magnificent graveyard, which seems to be part of today's Tughril's tower<sup>20</sup>. During the reign of Malek-shah, Rey prospered greatly, and according to his own and his children's covenant, Barkiyaruq and Muhammad, science and culture were highly flourished in this city and huge madrasa and large monasteries were built there<sup>21</sup>. The name of Tabarak castle (Rashkân fortress) has been mentioned in the story of Takesh Khawrazm-shahi's attack on Rey in 588 AH and it has also been stated that the city had been besieged and conquered in two days<sup>22</sup>. There is no exact knowledge about the state of castles of Rey after the terrible earthquake of 571 AH as wells the destruction of the city, the death of many people, and religious strife between Hanafis, Shaafeis, Shiites and Ismailis, which caused the people to leave the city and resulted in the destruction of this city<sup>23</sup>.

<sup>16</sup> Afround and Pour-Bakhshandeh 2002.

<sup>17</sup> Rante 2014.

<sup>18</sup> Mortazaei and Sadraei 2014.

<sup>19</sup> Ibn Athir 1991: 341.

<sup>20</sup> Ravandi 1985: 116; for more information on the successors of Tughril, see Bondari Esfahani 918: 31; History of the Seljuk Dynasty 1996: 48.

<sup>21</sup> Ibn Athir 1991:94.

<sup>22</sup> Ibn Athir 1991:105; Javaherkalam 1946:21.

<sup>23</sup> Hamavi 2004: 598; Ibn Athir 1991: 237.



Figure 2: Aerial image by Schmidt- details provided by the authors (1- Mount Bībī Shahr-bānu 2- Rampart of Rabaz 3- Imam Ali Highway limits 4- Rampart and fence of Shārestan 5-the Old cement factory of Rey) (Schmidt 1940, pl. 32) / *Aşmit'in havadan görüntüsü-detaylar yazarlar tarafından belirtildi (1-Bibi şahrbanoo Dağı 2- Rabaz suru 3- Imam Ali Karayolu Bölgesi 4- şehristan suru 5- Eski Ray Çimento Fabrikası).*

### The Organization of the Urban Space of Rey in the Seljuk Period

In the early Islamic centuries, the ancient city of Rey, consisting of Kohandezh, Shārestan and Rabaz, implies the continuity of the physical pattern of pre-Islamic Iranian cities. Since a long time ago, the main military fortifications of the city were located in the northern part of the city and beside the mountain, so that during this period Kohandezh was located in the north of the city and south of Bibi Shahr-bānu Mountain to use the natural conservation status of the mountain in consolidating the location of the Kohandezh. In Seljuk architecture and urbanization, each city consists of three parts called “Kohandezh”, “Shārestan” and “Rabaz”. In the following, architecture and urbanism of each of these parts of the Seljuk period are individually studied:

#### Kohandezh (Rashkan Fortress)

Kohandezh of Rey in the Seljuk period was located in a highland region, which is composed of two parts at the bottom, facing each other: the northern and southern parts. The topographic analysis of the northern part seems to be difficult due to the destructions made by the cement factory, but Schmidt's photographs of this

factory during its operation can clearly demonstrate the region<sup>24</sup> (Fig. 3) However, fortunately, the southern part still remains. Edward Keall<sup>25</sup> provides some information on the excavations performed in this part of Kohandezh, although it does not provide us with any significant information about the architecture. Today, no old fence and rampart has remained the Kohandezh, and all its walls have been destroyed. All of Schmidt's excavation traces are gone, and the current situation only shows today's urbanization. However, erosion and wear on the southern part of the mound, show some architectural buildings at Schmidt's time; these structures are visible on the lower mound on the west side. The eastern part of the Kohandezh is completely covered by agricultural activities. At the top of the mound, there is a circular structure, part of whose wall extends towards the south direction. It seems that this structure may have had a defensive function. Damage caused by the cement factory is located in the vicinity of this part of Kohandezh.

In the southern part of the Kohandezh, there is an architectural structure consisting of two rectangular rooms. In the lower part of this complex, there is a defensive wall with a diameter of about two meters.

<sup>24</sup> Schmidt 1940: P133.

<sup>25</sup> Keall, 1979: 540-541.



Figure 3: Schmidt's Aerial Image of Kohandezh and Shārestan Areas, details provided by the authors (1- Kohandezh 2- The excavated mosque in Shārestan 3- The limits of Shārestan, which is surrounded by the fence of Shārestan) (Schmidt 1940, pl. 33a) / *Kohandeh ve şehristan'ın havadan görüntüsü, detaylar yazarlar tarafından belirtildi (1-kohandeh 2- Şehristan'da kazılan cami 3- Şehrin kale ile çevrili alanı).*

The design of this wall is elliptical and it is considerably thicker in its central part. This structure may have probably been part of a defensive wall surrounding the Kohandezh. The western part of the Kohandezh is visible by a rectangular structure composed of stone and mortar. In this section, the defensive and military features of Kohandezh during its life time have been clearly shown by loopholes created in the well-established thick walls.

To this date, Kohandezh has had defensive fortifications, some of which are referred to as prisons<sup>26</sup>. Several settlements and reconstruction have been carried out so far in the Kohandezh, and the poor conservation condition of architectural structures has not allowed a general plan to be drawn up so far. Before analyzing other parts of the city, it seems a good idea to mention some of the missing structures. For example, in the northern part of the Kohandezh, there has been a rampart connected to the Shārestan's rampart in the current Cheshmeh-Ali. It is noteworthy that in the northern part of Kohandezh, due to the destructions made by the cement factory in this area, there is no detailed and precise information on the existence of relics in this area.

### Shārestan

Shārestan, which has also called the public sector<sup>27</sup> and the inner city, is located in the south and southwest of

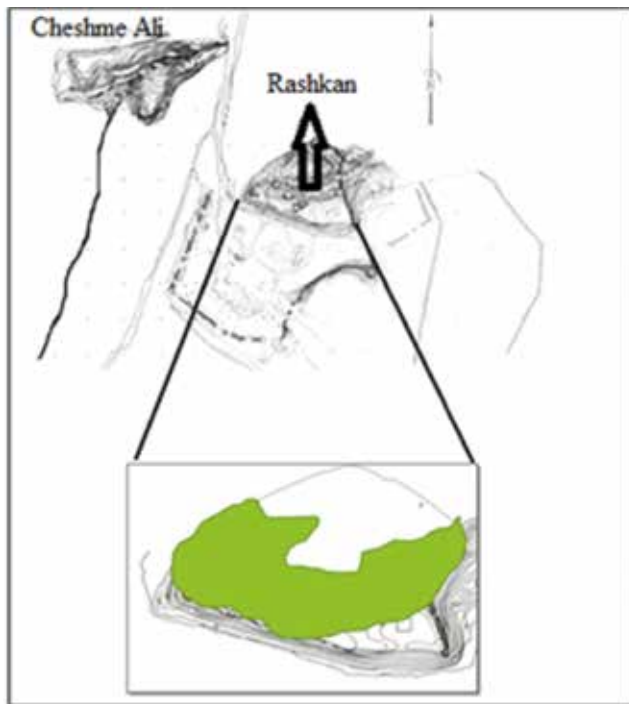


Figure 4: Kohandezh area and city on the map based on the Ker Porter map (Saadati et all. 2020: 11) / *Ker Porter haritasına göre haritada kohandeh bölgesi ve şehir*

Kohandezh (Fig. 4). Rampart and the fence of Shārestan in its eastern part are now completely destroyed. Reducing the thickness of the wall in this part of the city and, as a result, the ease with which to defend it can be one of the reasons for creating the entrance at this place. Rampart of Shārestan<sup>28</sup> is made of bricks 42 x 42 x 12 cm in size. In its central part, the rampart has been slightly deviated to the north, whose extension towards the point that was once connected to the Kohandezh has disappeared. Some parts of the Shārestan's rampart are reinforced by other sections, which is about 30-25 cm in thickness. Almost most of the fortifications of the Shārestan have been destroyed due to urban development, activities of the cement factory and agriculture. But what is clear is that the rampart must have been connected to the wall of the Kohandezh in its northern part. The eastern part also passes through a large canal that crosses the north-east of the castle and continues to the south. Today, the historical city is almost totally destroyed by the constructions performed in new city, and therefore a few pages that Schmitt briefly published from its excavation reports<sup>29</sup>, sporadic papers by Edward Keall<sup>30</sup> and Shahriār Adl<sup>31</sup> can help us to some extent regarding the architecture and urbanization existing in the Shārestan. One of the important centers in the Shārestan is the mosque located

<sup>26</sup> Hamavi, 1986: 159.

<sup>27</sup> Schmidt refers to this section of the city as a "public or governmental sector" in his excavation report.

<sup>28</sup> Today, rampart of the Shārestan is known as Seljuk Citadel.

<sup>29</sup> Schmidt 1935, 1936.

<sup>30</sup> Keall 1979.

<sup>31</sup> Adl 1979.

in the central part of Shārestan which has now been disappeared, and it is only visible in the scheme proposed by Schmidt in the 1930s<sup>32</sup>. On the eastern side of this section, several plinths have been identified, which were right in the direction of the Qibla. Unfortunately, no signs of mihrab have been found, but this great building is known as a mosque by the excavator. Schmidt stated that an Umayyad layer has been found under the mosque layer, which was confirmed by the discovery of numerous coins related to this period<sup>33</sup>. Also, in the west of the Shārestan section, in another trench, there was an open courtyard with a porch. Schmitt argued that it may have been a mosque<sup>34</sup>.<sup>35</sup>

Another building in the Shārestan is a school. In 1937, Schmidt discovered a four-porch plan in Shārestan section area, known as stucco pieces, which he believes to belong to the sixth century AH and referred to it as an “Islamic school”<sup>36</sup>. On the plan of this school, published by Pope, the northern and southern porches are smaller than the eastern and western ones<sup>37</sup>. Krusel believes that this building has been a home since this school has no student chambers<sup>38</sup>. But according to the Kufi inscriptions and the large plan of the building, it seems that this building has been a school or a public building.

The only remaining trace of the rampart and the fence of Shārestan is an area in the southern part of the Kohandezh which is now known as the Seljuk citadel, located at 51° 27' 21" eastern length and 35° 36' 21" northern width and latitude of 1115 meters above sea level. However, today only the wall and the northern fortifications have remained of the Seljuk citadel, and most of its eastern, western and southern parts are completely destroyed. The height of the highest point of the citadel is about 8 meters. Materials used in constructing the citadel are adobe and clay walls (Fig. 5).

### Rabaz

The cities of Islamic era, in addition to Kohandezh and Shārestan, had a place called Rabaz or the suburb, which included ramparts and fences distinct from those of Shārestan. The existence of a rampart in Rabaz can be attributed to different reasons: geographical location of the city, political or economic reasons, or the motives of the public culture. This change in the urban- architectural space visualize the new development of this part of



Figure 5: Rampart and Fence of Shārestan or the Seljuk Citadel (authors). / *Şehrستان veya Selçuklu kalesinin surları*.

the city and the construction of new units. Today, this section of Rabaz is only visible through archaeological excavations on Imam Ali Highway<sup>39</sup> and some of Schmidt's aerial images (1940). The new constructions in Rey have eliminated almost all parts of the historical texture of the Seljuk period, and only some relics, which are sparsely scattered in different parts of the city, indicate that the various parts of the modern Rey belong to the Seljuk period.

The most important work related to the Seljuk period in the Rabaz section of Rey is a tower attributed to Tughril Beg Seljuk in the southwest direction of Rabaz and at 51° 26' 54" eastern longitude and 35° 36' and 13" northern latitude and 1105 meters above sea level. The height of the tower, which has no roof currently, is about 20 meters. The internal diameter of the building is about 11 meters and the external diameter of the building is about 15 meters. The design of this building has 24 cracks in the outside.

At the top of a mountain in the south of Mount Bibi Shahr-bānu, overlooking Rey plain, there is a monument known as Naghāreh Khāneh. This building has an octagonal plan. The plan and materials used in this monument are similar to the works of the Seljuk period. Due to the geographical location and shape of the building, various applications, including the guiding shaft, tomb, guarding place, etc. can be attributed to this building.

In the south of the city of Rey, there is a strong and defensive castle known as Qala Gabri. The castle is a strong fortress with four defensive and watching towers on each side. Gabri Castle (Qala Gabri) with an interior

<sup>32</sup> Schmidt 1940, p. 31.

<sup>33</sup> Schmidt, 1935: 82.

<sup>34</sup> Ibid, 82.

<sup>35</sup> Unfortunately, no plan or map of the mosque has been provided by Schmidt or the subsequent excavators.

<sup>36</sup> Schmidt, 1940.

<sup>37</sup> Pope, 1956: 123

<sup>38</sup> Krusel 1963: 118.

<sup>39</sup> Mortazaei and Sadraei 2014.

space of about one hectare is a solid quadrangle high fortress each outer side of which has four defensive towers. The area of the castle in the outside is about 160 x 180 meters and its area is about 140 x 130 meters in the inside. Regarding the towers on the corners it should be stated that though mostly destroyed, according to the existing remains, it seems that each tower has had a diameter of about 10 to 15 meters. In 1991, during the boring operation conducted by Yahya Kowsari in Gabri castle, pottery findings showed the evidence of the Seljuk period from 5-7th centuries<sup>40</sup>. Hossein Kariman considers the Gabri Castle which is located near the

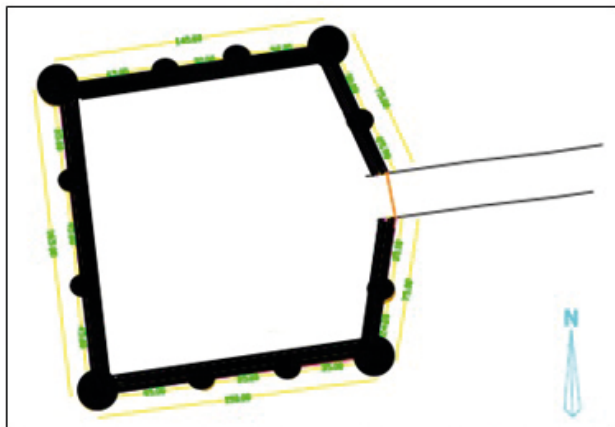


Figure 6: Plan of Gabri Castle in the City of Rey (Saadati et al, 2020: 11). / *Rey'deki Gabri Kalesi'nin haritası*

shrine of Abdul Azim as “Dar-ābes” place in the rampart and the fence of Rabaz<sup>41</sup>. In Al-Naghz, it is stated that “Dar-ābes” was located near the shrine of Abdul Azim, one of the most important Shiite centers during the Seljuk period<sup>42</sup> (Fig. 6).

The rampart and the fence of Rabaz are currently destroyed due to some reasons such as its extension and dispersion as a result of the destruction caused by the new urbanization; and the remaining parts of it are nowadays referred to by different titles, such as the rampart of Cheshmeh Ali, rampart of Imam Ali Highway etc. The span of this rampart has been about 1,800 x 2,500 meters. Parts of this rampart are nowadays visible in the northern region or Rey, especially in Cheshmeh Ali area, and other parts of it are now observable in the eastern part of Rey and within the limits of Imam Ali Highway. Unfortunately, the southern and western parts of this rampart have been lost due to the new urbanization

<sup>40</sup> Kowsari 1996: 478.

<sup>41</sup> Kariman 1976: 243.

<sup>42</sup> Kowsari 1996: 478.

in Rey. The height of the rampart is approximately 15 meters in the intact parts. The remains of the Rabaz rampart in Cheshmeh Ali area along Ibn Bābuyeh Street to its westernmost point is about 450 meters long and the Rabaz rampart in the area of Imam Ali Highway is about 700 meters long (Fig. 7).

In 1818, Sir Robert Ker Porter (1821) provided a valuable map of the rampart and the fence of Rey. The map has



Figure 7: Rampart and Fence of Rabaz alongside Imam Ali Highway (authors). / *İmam Ali Yolu yanındaki Rabaz suru.*

almost a triangular shape, the upper part of which lies on the northern slopes of the Rey located on a mountain, known as Sorsoreh. In the northwest of the map, the highlands and the wall of Cheshmeh Ali are seen, and in the east it is also limited to Rey Mountains. The south-eastern corner of the map leads to Gabri Castle which has been introduced as the south gate of Rey on the map.

Also, regarding the rampart and the wall of Rabaz along Imam Ali Highway, it should be stated that as a result of the excavations carried out in 2012 in two parts, i.e. the western and eastern ramparts, the archaeological evidence indicates the existence of a regular construction network



Figure 8: Discovered Architectural Relics in the Excavation of Imam Ali Highway inside the Rabaz of Rey (Mortazaei and Sadarei, 2014: 116) / *Rabaz'da Imam Ali Yolu kazılarında bulunan mimari eserler.*



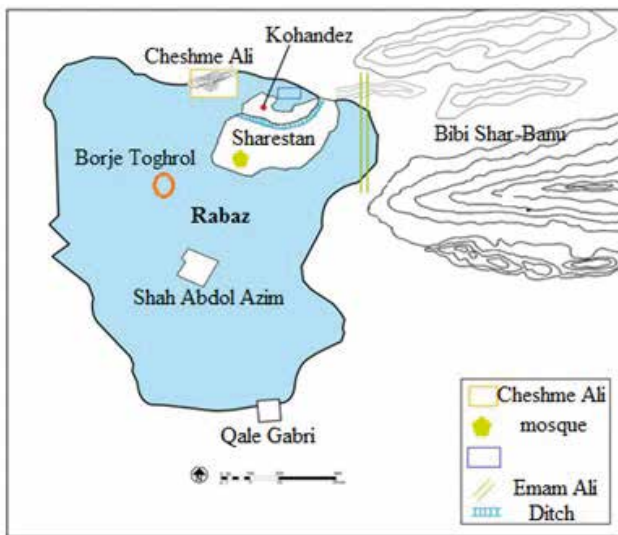


Figure 9: Schematic Representation of the Kohandezh Spatial Organization, Shārestan and Rabaz of the Seljuk Period (authors-This map is designed schematically and hypothetically from the city of Rey during the Seljuk period.) / *Selçuklu Döneminde Kohandez, Şehristan ve Rabaz'ın Mekansal Organizasyonu* (Yazarlar tarafından şematik ve varsayıma dayalı olarak hazırlanmıştır)

in the suburb of the city. According to the excavators, in this section, evidence of urban floor covering has been obtained in the form of brick paving and water supply structures, including water transfer channels, clay water pipes, cisterns for storage and distribution of water and water structures. In terms of chronology, all the excavated parts are related to the time period ranging from the early Islamic centuries to the fifth century AH<sup>43</sup> (Fig. 8).

### SOME CITIES COMPARABLE TO REY OF THE SELJUK PERIOD

The physical urbanization form of Rey in the early Islamic centuries consisted of Kohandezh, Shārestan and Rabaz that in terms of the location of each part and the urban form it is comparable with different cities inside and outside of Iran, which are referred to in the following.

Merv: The oldest building of this city dates back to the first millennium BC. The city was located in a small 50 x 50 meter citadel, later enclosed by a circular defensive wall. At that time, the city consisted of three main parts: the citadel, the Shārestan and the suburb. Kohandezh, as well as Shārestan have been surrounded by defensive walls and the defensive walls of the suburb were also built in the Islamic era<sup>44</sup>. Merv is similar to Rey in terms of defensive function and suburbs, but it is different from Rey in terms of size. Merv is larger than Rey, but just like Rey, it is consisted of Kohandezh on the north side and Shārestan and a larger suburb on the south side (Fig. 10).

<sup>43</sup> Mortazaei and Sadraei 2014: 120.

<sup>44</sup> Williams 2011: 56.

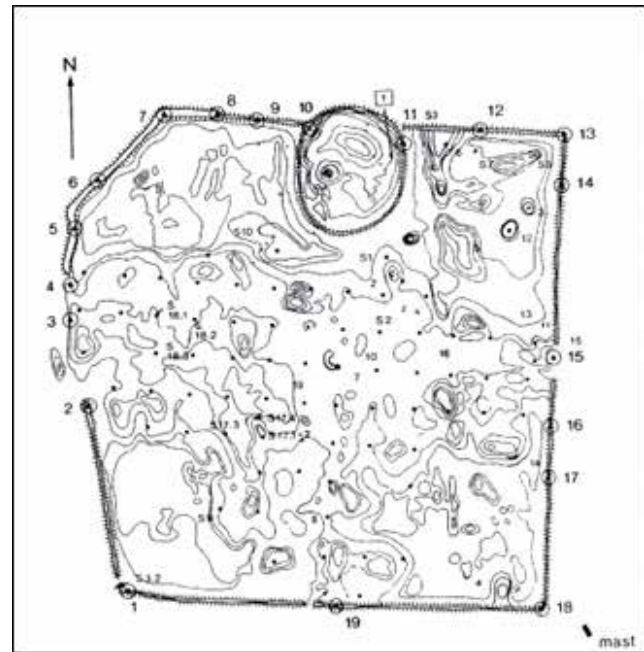


Figure 10: The Map of Merv (Williams 2011: 55) / *Merv Haritası*

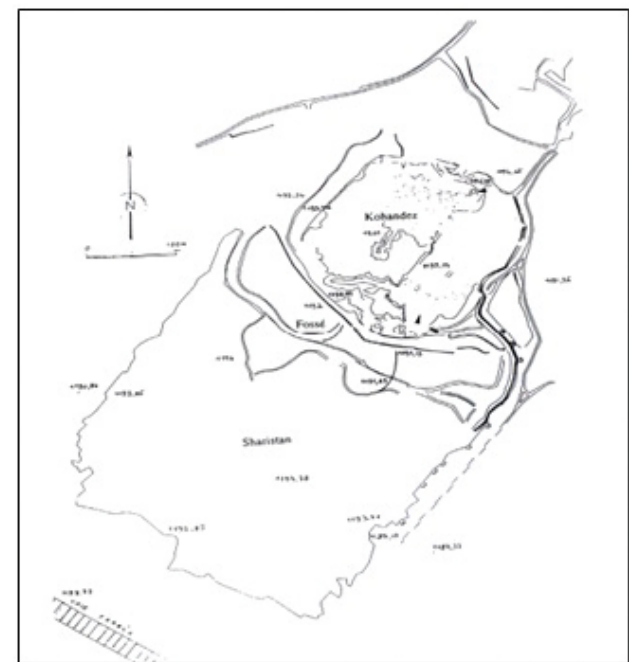


Figure 11: The Map of Neyshābur (Labfaf Khaniki & Kervran 2007: 26) / *Neyshabur Haritası*

Neyshābur: It seems that from among the cities inside the current Iranian borders, Neyshābur has the most similar features to Rey. The last excavations carried out by Kervran and Rajab-Ali Labbāf Khāniki in Kohandezh sections indicate the layers of the Sassanid period<sup>45</sup>. The topographic map of the city suggests the expansion of the city based on Kohandezh, Shārestan and Rabaz (Fig. 11).

<sup>45</sup> Labbaf Khaniki and Kervran 2007: 26.

The map of Kohandezh and Shārestan is very similar to these places in Rey. Kohandezh with huge fences and large circular towers is approximately similar to the Rey fence. The size of the two cities is almost the same. In Neyshābur, like Rey, the Rabaz section has been expanded and developed during Islamic era.

Jorjān: Currently, its ruins are located in the western part of the city of Gonbad-e-Kāvous, it was erected in the form of an irregular polygon in the Sassanid period, and its prosperity culminated in the 5th and 6th centuries. The two important rivers of Gorgān Plain, i.e. Gorgān Rood



Figure 12: The Aerial Map of the Ancient City of Jorjān (Mortezaei 2007: 142). / *Jorjān Antik Kenti Hava Haritası*

and Chehel Chāy, have played an important role in the formation and development of the city during the Islamic eras. In this city, the citadel is located in the central part and has a hexagonal form. Religious, state and industrial workshops were concentrated around the city and around the citadel<sup>46</sup>. In terms of the development and expansion of the city in Shārestan and Rabaz sections, this city was similar to the city of Rey, so that in the Islamic era, the areas around the citadel prospered in residential, commercial, political and religious aspects (Fig. 12).

Nātel: This city is one of the most well-known cities of the early Islamic centuries in the north of the Alborz mountain range, located in the city of Nur in Māzandarān province. The urban pattern of this city also includes Kohandezh, Shārestan and Rabaz<sup>47</sup>. The city of Nātel is surrounded by a ditch like the Kohandezh of Rey (Fig.

<sup>46</sup> Mortazaei 2007: 141.

<sup>47</sup> Mohajeri nejad et al. 2017: 245.

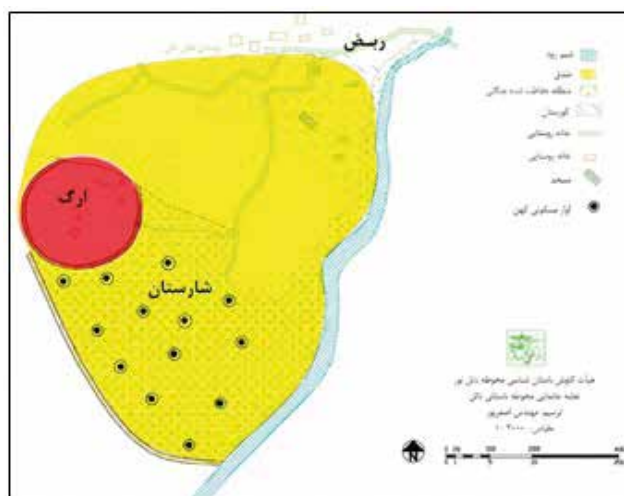


Figure 13: The Map of Nātel (Mohajernejad et al. 2017: 252). / *Nātel Haritası*



Figure 14: The Map of the Old City of Bam (Farahbakhsh and Mansouri 2016: 222). / *Bam Eski Kent Haritası*

13).

Bam: The ancient city of Bam is known as a state-military city that during its formation history has had castle structures, Shārestan, ditch, and gates since the pre-Islamic ages afterwards<sup>48</sup>. The location of Kohandezh in the north of the city is similar to that of Rey city, and also the Shārestan in this city is located in the south just like the city of Rey (Fig. 14).

<sup>48</sup> Farahbakhsh and Mansouri 2016: 219.

## REVIEW AND ANALYSIS: FACTORES INFLUENCING THE POWER TRANSFER

After the collapse of the Sassanid government, it was possible to bring about changes in social structures of the society; especially at this time, a gradual change is witnessed in the religion of peoples. As a result of religious, social and political changes, the change in the structure and body of the Islamic cities should also be expected<sup>49</sup>. The emergence of a situation of growth, development or degeneration of the urban economic relations was considered as one of the major causes of transformations and changes in the spatial organization of the Seljuk cities. The development of urban economic activities, such as the production of goods, the manufacturing sector or the exchange and distribution sector required the expansion and creation of suitable spaces to meet the needs of such activities. Increasing the size of the cities during the Sassanid era, which has led to an increase in the location and settlement of craftsman groups around the Kohandezh, has extended the spatial structures surrounding the Kohandezh. The emergence of the Shārestan region in the cities of the ancient period has been realized in the continuation of this situation. As a result of the transformation that took place in the social and economic relations of cities in the first centuries after Islam, the centrality of urban life and activity was located in Rabaz section and gradually most of the main institutions of the city, such as mosques, Dār al-‘Imāra (capital), the market, public bath, caravanserai, etc. were erected in the Rabaz section.

The socioeconomic development of the Rabaz section and its expansion, as an important urban area, required that a wall be built around it in order to provide the security in that section, and thus, the Rabaz section was added to the physical structure of the city like a new layer and affected its shape<sup>50</sup>. For instance, when such a situation occurred in Bukhara, the residents of Rabaz section asked the Emir of Bukhārā (Ahmed bin Khalid) to build a wall around the Rabaz area in order to secure the financial and life security of the people<sup>51</sup>.

The process of transferring the centrality of the socio-economic relations of urban life from Kohandezh to Shārestan area and mostly to Rabaz area in cities of the Islamic period was influenced by several factors: the rapid growth of trade relations and commodity manufacturing in the cities of the middle centuries forced the craftsman groups and other economic activists, who had settled in the city of the Sassanid period, to inevitably settle in new spaces along the main roads of

the city. Accordingly, important physical spaces such as the bazaar and residential areas of merchants, tradesmen and craftsmen in the Shārestan and Rabaz areas, located outside the physical space of rulers' residence of the Sassanid period were established<sup>52</sup>.

Another important feature of Islamic is the lack of separation of religious affairs from political affairs. This feature of Islam led the government and the administration of the affairs of the community to take a religious aspect and, naturally, the ruler of the Islamic society also had to be religiously legitimate. The caliphate represents the succession and the continuation of the simultaneous religious-political role, and also Imamate, meaning the leadership of society, it has two political and a religious meanings<sup>53</sup>. Therefore, Islam as a religion, is the main factor affecting culture and social relations since its rules emphasize the equality of all the people who believe in it<sup>54</sup>. The very same doctrines and beliefs of the new religion have affected the texture of cities and the composition of the city's buildings and facades<sup>55</sup>. In general, it can be admitted that Islam has indirectly influenced the spatial organization of cities; that is, Islam first of all, has influenced the culture of Iranian people, and culture has in turn changed the structures governing the cities. With the changes made in these structures, the lifestyle of the people living in the city also changed, and with this change in lifestyle, the spatial organization of the city and the layout of buildings in the cities took a different appearance<sup>56</sup>.

In Rey of the Sassanid period, Kohandezh was considered as a state area as well as a ruler's residence place and Shārestan and Rabaz were the settlement place of the middle and lower class peoples, respectively (Fig. 1). However, with the advent of Islam in the region, according to the mentioned reasons, as well as the archaeological evidence, the importance of the Kohandezh was reduced, and archaeological evidence such as the existence of a fence and rampart, a mosque, a school, etc. in Sharestan and the strong rampart and fence, the existence of brick paving, water structures and urban facilities in the Rabaz area indicates the development and expansion of the city in Sharestan and Rabaz sections (Chart 2).

## CONCLUSION

Now, relying on archaeological data and historical texts, the question that was raised in the introduction section of the present paper about the role of Kohandezh, Shārestan

<sup>49</sup> Yusefifar 2006: 220.

<sup>50</sup> Yusefifar 2006: 335.

<sup>51</sup> Norkishi 1993: 48.

<sup>52</sup> Ashraf 1974: 21.

<sup>53</sup> Sultanzadeh 2011: 231.

<sup>54</sup> Castello 1989: 35.

<sup>55</sup> Farshad 1956: 195.

<sup>56</sup> Khaledian et al. 2014: 9.

and Rabaz in the city of Rey in the Seljuk period and the changes that happened in these sections compared to the previous periods, can be answered. The archaeological evidence in the Shārestan section, including the discovery of a mosque, a school, as well as the existence of a rampart and fence in the Rabaz section, and also the presence of some relics in the area around the rampart of Sharden, in addition to the other relics remained in this area indicate its expansion in Islamic era, especially the Seljuk period. What is certain is that archaeological data support the information in the historical texts (Fig. 9).

The result of the present study, through the use of archaeological data in Kohandezh, Shārestan and Rabz, revealed that during the Seljuk period, the importance of Kohandezh decreased, and Rabaz and Shārestan areas developed and expanded to a great extent. It is worth mentioning that in the Seljuk period, the form of the urban space organization did not change, but the importance of Kohandezh was reduced while the significance of Rabaz and Shārestan was enhanced. Accordingly, Kohandezh still existed during the Seljuk era, but it lost the previous function and significance it had in the Sassanid period.

In general, the growth of the commodity production system and the development of the city's economic sector and the social relations required a space and physical structure in accordance with the new conditions. Therefore, in the Seljuk period, the physical space needed for the expansion of activities and the settlement of grown groups of the urban economy was expanded in Rabaz area of Rey. Accordingly, the Rabaz area of Rey, which could respond to new conditions, developed very quickly and became the main nucleus of the urban space of the Seljuk period. The importance of the Rabaz area, the transfer and final settlement of the major urban elements from Kohandezh to Rabaz, took place at the expense of the reduced importance of other parts of the city, as Ibn Hawqal wrote: "... and most of the city is ruined, and prosperity has occurred on its outskirts (Rabaz)". As the importance of Rabaz was increased, one witnesses the emergence of other components of the urban space organization, including neighborhoods, mosques, Bāzār and Dār al-‘Imāra, which includes the political section of urban space.

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