The Function of Guns in Islamic Cities with Emphasis on Cities of Iran's Civilization

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Abstract

Islamic cities in the Middle-east have special features in terms of their structure, some of which are related to the pre-historic periods and some others have been formed in the special features of their period according to the problems and situations such as the effect of insecurity on city atmosphere and religious, cultural factors and geographical features. One of the most urbane elements in Middle-east cities is gates, which have had various functions during the history. The gates are so essential for the cities that during the history rarely can we find any city without a gate. The methodology of the present research is descriptive-analytic. The data were collected were collected based on the study of historic documents.

Keywords: Gate, Islamic City, Ray (City), Shiraz, Samarkand and Bokhara.

Introduction

Urbane gates have been the essential part of urbanization, however this part finds its meaning and function in relation with other parts; therefore studying the role of urbane gates is impossible without paying attention and knowing the general characteristics of Islamic cities. So in the present research firstly we will deal with this issue.

The review of literature proposed in the studies of the history of city and urbanization, from 18th century onward, shows that the Western experiences and urbanization issues in these studies have a pivotal position, and the study of the experiences of other societies is marginal. For example the situation of studies of cities in the realm of Muslim nations, not only has a small part of research literature in terms of both quality and quantity, but also has a long way to reach the proper situation (reaching the methodology and theoretical definitions special to the Islamic cities). Also the studies of cities that were among Islamic countries after the expansion of Islam (cities situated in Iran, Afghanistan and other similar areas), have more improper situations due to lack of main resources and suitable studies on methodology and pattern-making.

The multiplicity of Islamic cities and their dispersal in the realms of different countries indeed makes it impossible to analyze all of these cities one by one; therefore our focus in the present research is on cities which are contained in the civilization of Iran, before and after Islam. In the present research, after stating the main problem, various opinions about Islamic cities are proposed and analyzed and then elements and parts of Islamic cities are studies in general, and the importance of urbane gates in the cities of Rey, Shiraz, Samarkand and Bukhara are investigated in particular.

Statement of the problem: Identity is a phenomenon which is formed during the history of a society. With the passage of time this feeling of identity is internalized in the person and leads the behavior of the person and finally homogenizes the society. The behavioral unity created throughout the society, looks for a body to satisfy the behavioral and mental needs of the person and society. The Islamic city with its own special ideology, calls for certain behavior which can be implemented in its own special body[1]. The Islamic city is formed with the mosque at its center, and is developed and expanded with markets and neighborhoods. This defines the major activities of the Islamic city at the level of neighborhood, district and even national, and wherever Islam entered these elements can be found; so it can show its uniqueness in that land. Therefore the Islamic city has been the symbol of political-governmental, military, religious and economic activities.

One of the key elements in the structure of the city, to strengthen its symbolic quality and its identity, was the "gates". The gates of old cities can be mentioned as one of the urbane signs in the symbolic network of the city, which is among the main elements of the city.

The Definition of the Gate: The definition of gates can be dealt with from three aspects: semantic aspect, historical and symbolic aspect and functional aspect.

Semantic Aspect: The traditional term "Bab" (Door), whether regarding urbanization or literature, refers to a movement through a specified space done in a certain time. The gate is the entering point to a space which is closed by walls or an open space which is closed by fence. The gate is a passing area, passing from one form to another, in particular from external form to internal form.

The gate of the city and the chapter of a book are booth known as "Bab" (Door) and each are the beginning or the end of a trip. The entering and the gates are the connecting points, and have independently formed the linking and passing point in different types of connections between open areas to closed areas[2].

Historical and Symbolic Aspect: In the past the gates of the city and the areas around them, were seen as valuable and holy places. The rite of opening and passing from a gate called for a special ceremony[3]. Also, the gate has been as a witness for the social situation of the city; and ancient Eastern cultures held their judging events in these places. So, the very act of entering from a gate is a promise and vow toward whatever there is in the city and the role gate is to guide.

The gate of the city is clearly symbolic. The threshold and the gate, are indicative of the way and a tangible and immediate solution for the unity of the space. A closed city is a reminder and symbol of the universe and its directions. In ancient Iran, the Sassanid city like Persian city, based on religious beliefs and affected by ideology, was ended with a fence, which had for gates toward the four directions of the world to remind the four directions and elements. In the Islamic city, at the level of important buildings, open public areas and finally at the level of the city, the gate takes special roles. In the architecture of the old cities in Iran, the gates and entering areas to the buildings and especially religious buildings were very rich in their variety[2]. This functions as a permanent concept to go from one space to another.

Functional Aspect: Gates can have different functional roles. The functional aspects of gates can be put into six groups: communicative function, defensive and security, economic, social, memorial and visual. Since in the modern city the framework of the old gates and their past function are disappeared, with a given gate, whether with regard to its framework or as a memory, only its memorial and visual aspect may be mentioned. In this way a gate beyond a simple function can be mentioned in the structure of the city as a "symbolic element"[3]. So with correct positioning of the gates, especially the main gates, it is possible to create a quality and aesthetic element, that besides making a pause space in terms of function and creating a feeling of surroundedness, it is a valuable element from a visual aspect in the city.

Different Opinions about Islamic Cities and their Analysis

Regarding the historical experience of the city in the Europe, the Western scholars have also judged the Islamic cities; and their opinions in this regard are full of Europe-oriented prejudices. In this part the main opinions are proposed and analyzed.

Regarding the urbane experience in the East and the reason for lack of the formation of independent cities, Karl Marx proposes Asian mode of production inspired by Oriental Despotism by Mentiskio. Marx in an introduction on the analysis of political economy mentions Asian mode of production. By mode of production Marx means the production means and forces. Marx sees the Asian mode of production as independent from ancient mode of production and feudal mode of production. Therefore it is incorrect to say he means feudalist feature or slavery in the East by Asian mode of production. Since he puts side by side the Asian mode of production with ancient and feudal mode of production[4]. Marx says: value added in slavery society is taken by the slave owner, in a feudalist society by the feudal, in a capitalist society by the capitalist and in the Asian society it is taken by the government; in a way that the government and offices are the exploiting power, and power centralization in the hands of the governments prevents the formation of independent cities in the East. Regarding the issue of irrigation, the mode of agriculture production and its relation with politics, he says: "the climatic situations particularly in vast lands like African Desert, Saudi Arabia, Iran and India, artificial irrigation through canals and irrigation issues which were the base for Eastern agriculture was necessary… this basic economic necessity and the common use of water, made the interference of centralized government power necessary; so an economic function was given to all the Asian governments to answer general tasks"[4]. With these features the Asian system has a natural economy and the villages are independent economic units.

The theory of "oriental despotism" which was developed by Mentiskio into its modern day, affected by "the central Europe"[5] and ignoring the role of ancient civilizations in cultural and social constructing of the world, had special definition for the Eastern world and consequently for Iran. Mentiskio saw the Asian political organization based on two definite natural factors i.e. vast plains and lack of proper weather and oriental despotism. This theory included the base for prejudices of most of European authors and scholars from Hegel to Jon Stewart in looking at Asian societies.

Another scholar which has discussed the city in the West and East is Max Weber, the German sociologist. Weber in the comparative analysis of the city asked: why a special form of urbane organization namely "commune" (which, in Weber's opinion, does not exist in the villages and are special to cities; and which is the main factor in differentiating the official structure of the city from village) appeared only in the middle-aged Europe and not in any other place?

Weber argues that the development of the cities in European culture (Western cities) like autonomous institutions with consultative rulers have been influenced by factors like Christianity, citizens' privileged legal base, religious hierarchies prompting the emergence of homogenous urban societies.

Weber regards city as a free organization in which everyone has his/her own personal right, a new political society with democratic organizations emerged in connection with the new class. Weber has two hypotheses for an urban society to appear:

i. Military and political autonomy (opportunities for autonomous organization's rulers elected by citizens.). ii. Ability to face feudal leaders of militant cities and villagers[6].

Weber distinguishes three types of cities. Consumer cities: a city providing the purchasing power of the resident consumers, other merchants, officials and craftsmen. Producer cities: that is due to the existence of factories, handicrafts or family industries in which the population increases due to the existence of these industries. It offers its products outside the domestic realm. At last, merchant cities which are against consumer cities. A city in which most of its consumers' purchasing power depends upon retail to get benefits out of the foreign products in the local market.

Weber says that in times past, in ancient or medieval times, both within Europe and outside Europe, city was considered as a castle and fortress. The oldest special task (urban) of escort and garrison was with pieces of land given to the people. When these fortresses were occupied in usual conditions, the guards or servants were like permanent garrisons and received money or a piece of land as their salary.

However, historically, both villages surrounded by the fences and hedges and emergency fortifications are not considered as the forerunners of fortress. Fortress has been more like a castle for a lord. It was a fortress in which Amir and his appointees or followers resided there and his family with his servants lived there, too. The growth of politically independent middle class began with the emergence of castle in Italy. In northern Europe, the independence of "servants" depended also upon innumerable castles. The important point here is that Weber finds shared citizenship group the main feature of a city. Not economic city and not garrison with its residents having special political and administrative advantages are shared citizenship group. This term was only found in Bakhtar (the west) as a public phenomenon[7].

By this theoretical method sometimes stained with European egoism as well, he concluded that the process of city development was unique in Europe and it was completely different from the whole world. In spite of the fact that many of Islamic cities in the Middle East have been built within the fences of a castle and separated by the tower and walls of the castle like European cities in the medieval times, in these cities no structure distinct from the governmental structure has been observed; that is, commune has never been recognized as a special urban organization (distinct from the government) in Islamic cities.

By accepting Weber's opinion, the western cities in the middle Ages had also the features of real cities to a limited extent. Even cities in the 18th century are classified under shared citizenship group to a limited extent. Finally, according to this rule it can be said that Asian cities were also not part of shared citizenship group at all, except in special cases even if all had markets and military fortress.

Some contemporary scholars have dealt with the topic of city especially in the Middle East which is to some extent a critical attitude toward Western scholars. Dan Eickelman examines this topic in his book "the Middle East, an anthropological approach"[8]. Eickelman says that French anthropologists like Masginon attempted to find the concept of commune in administrative structures of Islamic cities. Of course, in Eickelman' viewpoint, they were not successful. Masginon believes that business and industry classes in the Middle East acting like non-official unions were in charge of commune; however, Masginon is not able to present a clear reason for this claim. Therefore, if European urban organization was distinguishable from European village organization by the concept of commune, city in the Middle East is not distinguishable from village with no organizational concept.

The theoretical impasse in investigation of cities in the Middle East made Lapidus to change his research questions in 1967 to edit his great and popular work "Islamic cities". Instead of explaining unique administrative urban structures (and distinct from village) as Weber did, he studies the structures existing in Islamic cities and organizing regular social behaviors in these cities practically.

Lapidus does not put emphasis upon the nature of the cities and urban structures as Weber does, he focuses mainly upon social structures existing among the people. In fact, Islamic cities are informal and non-administrative relations of grassroots groups which ensure social health and order and they are not formal structures like commune. These are common cultural and Islamic beliefs which organize social relations and not organizational and determined and statutory administrative structures[9]. For instance, it is possible to explain the way social order is applied by groups of people in terms of urban space making in North Africa. Many western scholars reached wrong conclusions in dealing with space making in North Africa which was due to not understanding this issue. In Islamic cities of North Africa, each district is distinguished from another one by a network of alleys and labyrinth by-lanes relating to each other in different ways but leading to impasses. The fact that they are labyrinth is so strange that is not possible to find your way by a map in mind unless using your experiences that you have lived in such districts. Not only such "strange making space" is not an indication of "local and illogical perception", but also it is rooted in "tribe" and "Sharia". Differentiation of districts was to such an extent that in North Africa and Morocco for example, if one from one district goes to another district (with no purpose) and wanders around there, the people of that district will be curious to an extent that they will ask him/her as an stranger what he/she looking for and doing here. On other hand, these districts are not distinguishable due to difference in cultural level, wealth or class, the poor and rich live together in each

district and even exterior walls have been designed in a way that they do not show any difference between people.

Orient lists have put Islamic city in contrast with Western city, but it should be noted that Islamic city has been embodied according to Islamic rules – derived from tradition and Quran – and environmental, social and cultural conditions made for this city. It is so that cultural and spatial characteristics, historical background and social conditions are important factors to distinguish between sets in different cities and countries.

General characteristics of the Islamic cities

The ancient cities of Iran in the Sassanid period had three main components (gates and fences – county – internal flux – and external flux). Since the collapse of the Sassanid Empire, and the occurrence of certain changes in social structures and the gradual change of the religion, brought about a fundamental transformation in Iranian society, It should be expected that the effects of these changes would be reflected in the structure and shape of the Persian city[10].

Continued existence of the triple element of the ancient city's shape of Iran in Islamic period, does not confirm the continuation of the economic and social system of the ancient period in the Islamic period; but in terms of the transition from the particular social system of the ancient period and establishment and stabilization of a new socio-economic formation of the society of Iran in Islamic period, the main elements of Iranian city would re-arranged and organized based on the (new model), in a way that the new shape of Iranian city, like the prevailing resultant forces and social relations in Iranian cities, shows a dynamic and evolving situation. After conversion of Iranian people to the Muslim faith, naturally establishing Islamic sanctuaries for the Muslim people to perform their religious duties was necessary. Thus, the focal point in any traditional Islamic city was its mosques[10]. The centrality of mosques in the Islamic urbanism overshadowed the role and status of the gates; accordingly, the Jameh Mosques became one of the main characteristics of the cities in the Islamic era. The importance of this element is such that the establishment of the Jameh Mosque is considered as the biological focus of its surrounding. The Jameh Mosque in addition to its religious role, it also has a strong social and political role[11].

Beside the Jameh Mosque, there is another prominent element in traditional Islamic cities which is Bazaar that has focused on commercial activities[10]. The mosque is considered as the most central location of individual and social activity of Muslims. In addition to the Jameh Mosque, there were other mosques in different districts of the city to serve the inhabitants of that district. In the districts, the mosques, Tekies and Hosseinies, play the role of the Jameh Mosque that in the days of mourning and feast, Muslims form large gatherings in them that its atmosphere's reflection makes an identity for that district. The market revolves around the mosque and school and involves

them… according to the remained tradition of the Sassanid cities; the market sweeps the city and is stretched from the main square of the city – seat of government to the walls of the city. According to this, the market can be named as the backbone of the cities of the Islamic period.

A complete Islamic city has many markets that each one was for selling a particular good or some special goods together. The reason of the importance of the markets in Islamic period is linked to the increase of social relations and economic exchanges that had boom in fourth-fifth centuries AH, in Safavid dynasty, especially in the reign of Shah Abbas. The market is considered as the backbone of the Iranian cities that has the pulse of economic, social and cultural life of city in his hand and also connects the main gates of the city; thus the main and constant markets were placed along the main part of the city and started from the gate and ended in the center of the city.

The other shaping parts of the Islamic cities are the residential spaces inside the fence that almost organize the dense districts. The concept of district is familiar concept in urbanism tradition of Iran. Forming districts based on the caste or citizenship system in not specific but in contrast we are faced to establishment of districts based on tribe, race, religion, language, sect and.... The districts association with their tribal social organization is much more than their relationship with the adjacent districts[12].
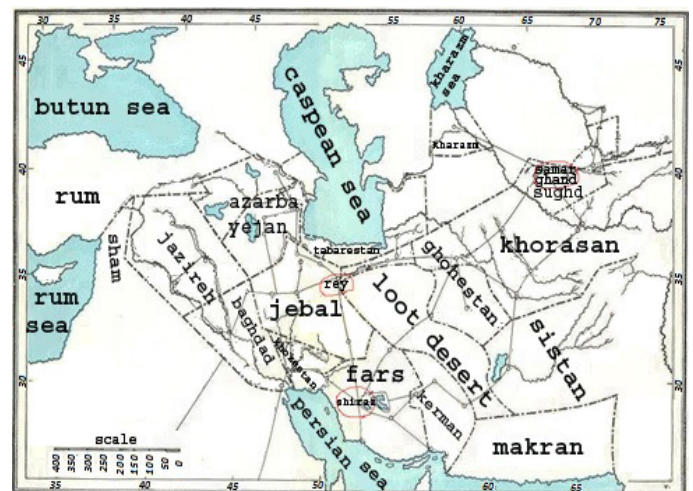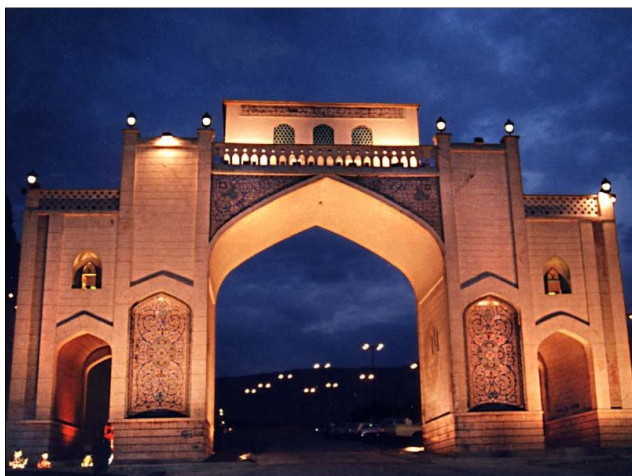

Figure-1
Geographical location of the cities of Shiraz, Ray, Samarkand and Bukhara in the domain of Iranian civilization

Gates of the old city of Shiraz

Gates are one of the iconic elements of the original structure and old urban fabric of Shiraz. The gates of the old city, in each historical period, has developed and gradually transformed. With the new developments since 1921, however, the gates had lost their physical appearance, but still they have maintained

their value as an important physical and functional center of the original structure of the city, so that their footprint is almost completely clear and generally is evident in the main access routes of the city, as a joint communication of the old urban fabric of the city.

In addition to an overview of the historical development of the old city's gates of Shiraz, we will investigate the various functions of gates in each period.

Figure-2
The gates of the old city of Shiraz

Founding to Buyid dynasty era: Since the original city did not have any rampart and fences, a gate cannot be imagined for it.

Buyid dynasty era: In the Buyid dynasty era in the fourth century (solar year), Shiraz had a land area of one parasang (6.24 km) and Aboukalanjari fence around it. The city had eight gates. Estakhri gate, Shoushtar gate, Bande Astane gate, Ghasan gate, Salm gate, Govar gate, Mandrod (Manzer) gate, Mahander[13].

Atabakan period: About the land area of the city in this period as the second stage of historical development of the city, Hamdollah Mostofi Dor Bavari have written that Shiraz in that period had seventeen districts and nine gates. These gates were: Estakhr, Darak-Drak Mosa, Beyza, Kazeron, Salm, Fasa, No, Dolat, Sa'adat gate[13].

Safavid period: The third stage of historical development of the city's gates is in Safavid. In that period the scope and fence of the city expanded, especially in the North West, and opening of Allahu Akbar gate or the Koran gate in the North side of the city. In this period, like pervious period, a fence surrounds the city and a moat separates this fence from surrounding countryside and gardens. Although Chardin has seen Shiraz in the late Safavid era, he has described its fence, ruined and believes that Shiraz had four gates, however, since we know that in the Karim Khan Zand period, Shiraz had twelve gates, so in the Safavid era there must be other gates as well. But the other gates were not as important as the gates that Chardin has mentioned[13].

Figure-3
Surviving gates of the Safavid era

Zandieh Era

Shiraz had 12 gates and 15 stages at Mamouri's era and its reproductive cycle was nearly one and a half miles. Karim Khan Zand made its environment a little smaller in the city walls rebuilding in 1180 AH. He limited the twelve gates into six gates. These six gates maintained their old names until the late Qajar era and early Pahlavy dynasty, but as the result of city developments the issue related to them was stopped and all the gates had been placed in the city in a certain location, but in some places they are called with their old names. The six gates of Bayza, Jabachi, Saadat Abad, Fasa, Gusfand and Khatun were removed in city walls rebuilding and only the six gates of Baghshah, Isfahan, Saadi, Ghassabkhaneh, Shahdaii and kazerun were remained[13].

Qajar Era

The Skeletal transformation of Shiraz city in Qajar era is negligible compared to Zandieh era; during this period no significant changes were observed within the city limits which were confined to Zandieh's walls. City walls were also destroyed and the moats around the city were remained in the form of pits. In addition to the six Kharim Khani gates, people had chosen some districts of the ruined fence for commuting and called it "Kal". Kal Mashir, Kal Shahzadeh Ghasem and Kal sheikh Abuzaree were among these places.

In the past, city gates had been playing the role of threshold and a transition area from outside to inside. Many of social, economic and ritual activities were being formed beside these gates. The city's main tracks were typically started from one gate and ended in another.

During the city developments and the loss of historical walls in Zandieh era's subsequent evolutions, the main tracks were still remained and the main streets of city had been built instead of city walls and many of the main tracks. These streets are still acting as communication links between the old and new texture of the city and are of special position in terms of place. As a result, in many parts circles, squares and main intersections were built instead of old gates[13].

Figure-4
An example of Qazvin gates in Qajar Era

The Gates of Shahr Rey

A review of historical revolutions indicates that Rey was under many developments throughout history. The most important development of Shahr Rey was related to the collapse of Tehran walls in Naseroddin Shah Era (1248 AD.) for expanding the boundaries of Tehran city; as a result Rey was being placed in the boundary of Tehran followed by the construction of a line for Tehran-Rey earliest cars, and this was the beginning of serious changes in Rey area[14].

When Rey was the center of government and before the arrival of Islam, it had been held the stronghold of state and government apparatus and therefore caused an economic and social growth in its own region and boundary. After the arrival of Islam and by the construction of Grand mosque, a governmental, political, economic and cultural centrality was being shaped. After the establishment of holy shrines, the religious role of Shahr Rey became more notable and a new history of this city was begun. Thus, the subsequent growths of Rey were followed by these shrines. In the course of historical evolution, Rey has been repeatedly destroyed and rebuilt. Shahr Rey has been a major residential place in its area from the beginning and enjoyed all the urban elements of its time both in the city before Islam (temple, county and trade centers) and in Islamic period (Grand mosque, residential localities and markets).

Religion plays its role in an Islamic society in the Grand mosque which is conducting political and social-cultural activities. Economy is institutionalized in the markets which have been under Islamic orders. And finally, social life will be constituted in neighborhoods.

Grand mosque has been the pivotal skeletal element of an Islamic city and a center for all social, economic, cultural and even political features. In Rey, the shrine of Hazrat Abdul Azim (AS) plays the same role as this element. In the old days, this center was the basis of many developments and even determinant of movements and directions in the city, in such a way that all movement paths in the city were ended there. Although modern developments and appearance of cruciform streets had made structural changes in Shahr Rey, but we still see that the overall atmosphere of the city follows the position of shrine, directions will be end here and it manifests its main function (a place for social, cultural and even economic activities); not only it retained its old markets, but also promoted some new kinds of markets in the form of commercial complexes; thus it has not lost its role during the developments of modernism and adopts a stronger role[14].

With respect to the holy shrines and various mosques in Rey, the gates of this city were mostly regarded as entrances to religious places.

In the old days, markets were both a place for economic transactions and a place for the formation of social and union activities, in a way that many social and human interactions have been taken place there. The location of this element was heavily influenced by the seat of the Grand mosque and has provided the main rout of traffic in the city. The main function of this element which is a place for economic activities has been maintained and strengthened and its another task i.e. the access rout has been weakened after the evolutions of modernism in Rey. This function has been assigned to highways, streets and established boulevards in the Rey area.

Quarters were dispersed as distinct elements in the Rey area during the time when Shahr Rey was acting as a governmental and political center in Iran; the structural relationship between them was not too much and they were grown and lived as isolated tissues of a body. This feature creates a gap and difference between these quarters and eventually destroys the neighborhoods and even Shahr Rey in an era of this city life. This structure has been changed following the developments in different eras and quarters have been appeared in the city and were divided without any physical boundaries on the basis of imposed contracts. Current districts have been formed under the influence of Modernism; although they have maintained their primary function and structure which is the residence, but a situation is provided where people with different ages have been gathered together.
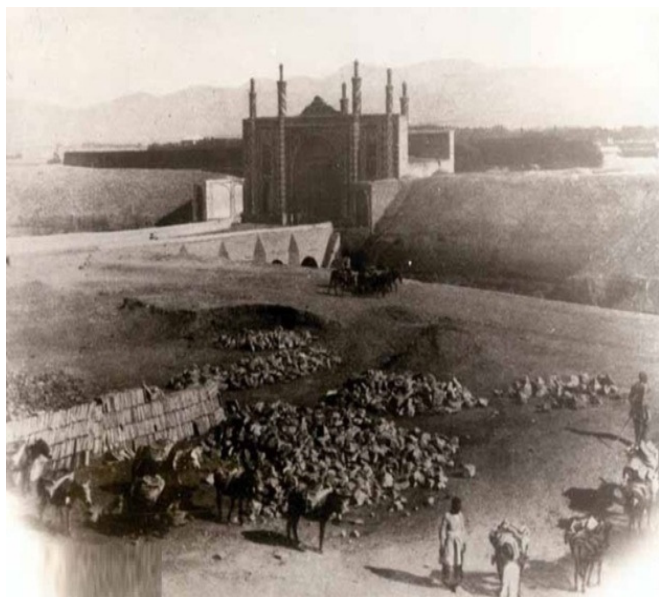
Figure-5
The gate of Rey Old City

Figure-6
The gate of the city of Bukhara

According to the studies, before the arrival of Modernism in Iran, the important spots of the city of Rey were the gates, Holy shrine of Hazrate Abdulazim and markets, and hierarchy of access and movement in this city was based on these three elements. The gates were entry of the city and newcomers were entering into the city through them, and after walking through a path that could be the direction of the market, they would reach to the center of the city that was the shrine of Hazrat Abdul'azim. Through this path, newcomers did not have access to the urban parts of the city and it was not easy to have access to those parts, so the privacy of the districts was preserved[14].

The gates of the cities of Samarkand and Bukhara

In the city of Bukhara you can see the best combination of Islamic cities in a form of maintaining the originality of real values and urban fabric, a city that has endured seventy years of Russian's domination and their fights for undermining the originality of Muslim and Parsi and eradicating the foundations of people's faith, but none of those fights have had a deep impact on the urban fabric and culture of people of Bukhara. The remaining old buildings such as the citadel, market and numerous old schools and walls, towers, forts and the traditional form of old houses are almost as the same as they were about five hundred years ago. Although Samarkand also contains such, or slightly more limited, originality, and the old parts are evoke the life and original Persian culture of the past, but compared to Bukhara, it has changed more[15].

The main elements of the city of Bukhara are: i. Jameh Mosque, ii. Market, iii. Religious schools around the Market, iv. the governing citadel, v.Governing construction, vi.Thick walls with the gates that surround the city[15].

The basis of the physical combination of the city is formed by relatively regular pathways that lead to the main core. The narrow alleys and dead ends also have been combined irregularly with the main pathways.

Both Bukhara and Samarghand have citadel that each one is located on the heights, overlooking the city and the citadel because of its particular position, is the symbol of formation of the Jameh Mosque, the market, the religious school and the districts of the city.

Special occupational divisions existed in the city of Bukhara that were following a special guild system, for example, the jobs that were more attractive were located and formed in adjacent to the Jameh Mosque. The residential areas that were around the downtown also had a special system. The districts were based on the followers of the different faiths who determined their place based on their influence and facilities. In some sources, the number of the districts of the Bukhara in 1898 is equal to 365 and in some other sources at the beginning of the twentieth century, it is equal to 220.

In the cities of Samarghand and Bukhara in the next period of Islam, citadel did not have a great influence so the core of the city was formed by market and Jameh masjed and other elements were formed based on these two. And also gate got meaning in relation to these two elements[15].

In the middle ages of Europe, shopping centers and the cathedral determined the main center and axis of the city. In a period of ancient history the walls surrounding the city also were chosen rounded (Hekmataneh ancient building has been on the same principle). In the different periods after the Islam we do not see such an example anymore and in many cases the

surrounded area of the city does not follow any particular system and does not contain a regular rule. The main axes that in many cases turned into markets and trade centers, almost formed from a central point to the surrounding based on the position of the external communication paths and formed several gates in the walls of the city. The increasing number of the gates of a city was the sign of its validity, as the city of Bukhara had eleven gates in the year of 228 (solar year) that some of them still remain as a half-ruined. The length of the city is an easterly and westerly direction and the direct distance between two gates is maximum 6.2 km and its width is about 6.1 km and has an approximate area of less than four square kilometers[16].

Table-1
Main Historical Role and Function of Urban Gates in Iran

City's Name	Current Geographical Location	Main Historical Role and Function of Urban Gates
Shiraz	Iran	Communicative
Shahre Rey	Iran	Religious, Economic and Political – Security.
Samarkand and Bukhara	Uzbekistan	Identity (Islamic)

Conclusion

It was attempted in this research to show that Islamic cities enjoy an independent and certain identity. Theories and interpretations of western thinkers, with an emphasis on experience of European cities, can't decode the experience of an Islamic city. One of the most important pillars of Islamic cities is their gates. Although gates were common in ancient Iran's urban development, this must not lead us to misunderstand, because the meaning and function of gates in Islamic Era undergo radical change. Considering that Islam emphasized equality and knew itself as the global religion, therefore the way of urban development changed significantly. One of the most important changes was regarding urban gates. At Sassanid civilization, by emphasizing separation of rulers from people on the one hand, and Zoroastrianism being a closed religion as a territorial and ethnic religion on the other hand, gates were more regarded as having a security and separating function and gates were a symbol of limiting and clamping down on others, while in Islam, which emphasized universality, urban gates could no longer preserve their former meaning. Thus, in the new situation, gates either no longer bloomed or got a commercial and aesthetic function.

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