

Modernization initiatives and architectural instrumentalization after Nasser al-Din Shah's travels to the West (1873-1896)

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Abstract

The 19th century Iran, like other non-Western geographies had a traditional cultural, urban, social and production style. The Turkic Qajar dynasty which subordinated other local authorities in Iran in the late 18th and early 19th centuries wanted to appear on the world's global stage as a political union. With this motivation, from the second half of the 19th century, the efforts to modernise Iran gained a new pace under the rule of Nasser al-Din Shah (1848-1896) who was the first Iranian ruler visited Western Europe. Nasser al-Din Shah desired to both join the country to the modern industrial world, and in this way, open new areas of legitimacy for his own political power. In this period modernization initiatives also gave serious outputs in the built environment in Iranian cities. Tehran, in particular, was the epicentre of this transformation where many initiatives took place, seized an important step towards the end of the century in order to achieve the appearance of modern European countries as much as possible.

Keywords

Architectural instrumentalization, Iran, Modernization, Nasser al-Din Shah, Tehran.

1. Introduction

From the second half of the 19th century, during the reign of Nasir al-Din Shah (1848-1896), political, economic and cultural changes and transformations in Iran entered a new phase, and the reforms continued in different fields at various levels. In the first half of the 19th century, the Qajar state signed treaties resulting from heavy defeats against the Russian Empire and the United Kingdom (UK). The 1813 Golestan and 1828 Torkmanchay Agreements signed with the Russians, as well as the 1842 Commercial Agreement engaged with the UK, did not bring the desired outcome but generated adverse impacts on the country's economy and led local tradesmen to bankruptcy. As a result of tax exemptions, Russian and UK goods filled Iranian markets (Tahvildar, 1963; Issawi, 1983).

In this period Iran saw the inflow of foreign capital and increasing dominance of non-Muslim groups such as Zoroastrians and Armenians who played vital roles in country's fragile economy (Haji Akbari, 2015; Naibian & Silab, 2011). All those problems also made the country somehow the backyard of imperial powers (Amanat, 2019). In the following years the foreign influence on economy gradually extended and began to dominate all aspects of social life. From the early 19th century the missionary schools established by the UK, France and Russia, for example, increased their impact on the cultural life of the society (Issawi, 2009; Hamraz, 2018; Alizadeh & Hashemipour, 2019).

The most significant modernization attempts in the Qajar era and close contacts with the West took place during the reign of Nasir al-Din Shah. The continuation of the modernization initiatives in this period caused serious changes in the field of Iran's development, and it was argued by the scholars like Banima-soud (2015) that Nasser al-Din Shah's three travels to the West played an important role in the realization of these processes. While it would be reasonable to claim that the Shah's visit to Europe impacted on his vision to the westernization program he undertook, a detailed reading of the exiting archival material also suggest that limiting his modernization attempts to those visits does not

represent the whole story. Nasir al-Din Shah undertook serious modernization attempts in the urban/architectural field before his travel to the West. The construction of Arg and Mashgh squares, the opening of Sabzemeydan Square in 1852, the widening and paving of the streets inside and around Erk Castle, the opening of Almasiyeh Street with the "farangi"¹ image, the demolition of Tehran fortifications in 1868 to the expansion of the city and the dominance of new functions such as the Tekiyeh Dowlat and Şemsül-Imare buildings on the city's silhouette were among the key initiatives of Nasser al-Din Shah dated before his travel to the West. However, it can be said that these initiatives within the scope of modernization continued more rapidly and broadly after his travels to Europe. The Shah, who wanted to carry out modernization in the field of development had previously met the "farangi" image recorded in the travel books of the students traveling to the West during the Abbas Mirza period.² Nasser al-Din Shah's travels took place in the critical economic and political atmosphere of the 1870s. He visited the 1873 International Vienna Exposition, 1878 and 1889 International Paris Expositions and shared his observations in his own travelogues.

In this paper, Nasser al-Din Shah's interpretations of architectural/urban affairs in his travelogues will be taken into consideration, and how these observations shaped Shah's initiatives to re-shape built environment in his own country will be analysed. Also, this study, based on the unearthed archival material and detailed reading of primary sources, aims to understand what kind of atmosphere these initiatives created in the period when the change took place and how those attempts were instrumentalized by the political power. Nasser al-Din Shah inaugurates many of his initiatives with great ceremonies. Those initiatives had a novelty nature as well as opening up an area of legitimacy for the government of him.

Another point that should be noted is while the existing literature offers a general overview of the architecture of the Qajar period,³ those works mostly provide stylistic analysis of the architectural developments, and often miss

the context where those initiatives took place and the relationship between the changes and the forces behind them. Considering this gap in the literature it would be reasonable to claim that a rigorous reading of the archival material and primary sources, such as travel books, newspapers and accounts,⁴ can portray a better understating of how the mid-19th century westernisation attempts impacted upon the morphological transformation of Tehran.

2. Architectural instrumentalization in modern state

The role of architecture in general modernisation has always been attracted scholarly attention. Foucault, in his article called 'Governmentality' claims that the modern state wants to put most things under its jurisdiction in order to survive. He also states that the modern state is based on standards, and there has never been a situation like this in any period of history (Foucault, 2011). He further claims that after the 18th century, the main purpose of modern power structures was to manage societies and architecture like many institutionalized modern phenomena, served in this direction. According to him after the 18th century, in every political discussion that sees politics as the art of governing people, one or a few chapters are devoted to urbanism, public uses, health and private architecture (Rabinow, 1984). In this respect, it would be argued that there is a dual relationship between the desire to secure the existence of the state, which is the output of governmentality, and the artistic, architectural and urban products it instrumentalises.

The phenomenon of instrumentalization of art and therefore of architecture by the political power goes back to Plato's Republic in Classical Greek philosophy (Shockley, 2015). After many versions in different civilizations, this comprehension gained pace after the Industrial Revolution, and according to John Ruskin, great architecture makes people believe in things they would not believe otherwise (Ruskin, 1905).

Coaldrake states that the interaction between buildings and the people who live and operate in them has profound effects on how authority is perceived. He emphasizes that buildings do more than

supposedly serve power. *"They are an intrinsic part of authority itself. One can neither be conceived nor apprehended without the other. The container and the contained are an organic whole. War and architecture were the twin preoccupations of much traditional authority, and when states and their leaders were not engaging in the former, they were indulging in the latter. As shelter is essential to life, so architecture is essential to the projection of authority"* (Coaldrake, 2002).

In his article titled 'Reshaping cities: staging of political transformation' Wim Blockmans states that cities, throughout the history, were theatrical stages where political elites show their power, ideology and social practices (Blockmans, 2003).

Iran, under the reign of Nasser al-Din Shah, followed the same path, and architectural/urban products were instrumentalized by the political elite for gaining legitimacy, cultural construction and demonstration of political power. While the traditional powers in Iran used architectural/urban products for religious and political legitimacy, from the reign of Nasir al-Din Shah westernization initiatives in the architectural/urban field were added to the legitimacy factors.

In his three travels to Europe the Shah observed the developments in the West and opened a new chapter in the history of Iran. Similar to initiatives of Peter the Great in Russia or Sultan Abdülaziz in Ottoman Empire, the architecture and urban life in the cities he visited prompted the ambitious Shah to undertake similar redevelopment programme to modernise his country and transform its major cities in line with what he observed in Western Europe. In other words, the consequences of his first-hand observations did not only impact on the rapid development of various modern institutions in the country but also changed the morphology of major Iranian cities.⁵ The critical question here is whether Shah's proposals, as claimed in the works of many scholars, were merely the imitations of what he saw in European cities or the modernisation programme he drafted had some genuine characteristics? A detailed reading of the available material and primary sources would provide a compelling answer to this critical question.

3. Encountering the West: First travel (1873)

With the suggestion of grand vizier Mirza Hossein Khan Sepahsalar, Shah decided to travel to Western Europe to observe innovations closely (Kasravi, 1984). Starting from the Anzali Port, the Shah passed through the Khazar Sea to Russia, and then visited Prussia, Belgium, England, France, Sweden, Italy, Austria and the Ottoman Empire. On his first western travel Nasir al-Din Shah recorded observations on architectural and urban artifacts more than anything else. In all of Shah's travelogues, it is possible to see what his judgment of aesthetic taste was and how it was constructed. While he was in Russia, for example, the Shah observed the Hermitage Museum in Saint Petersburg with admiration and recorded interesting views about the building and the objects exhibited in the museum (Nasser al-Din Shah, 1983). The museum building, with its extravagant columns, stairs and ornaments in Baroque taste, left a great impact on the Shah as the preservation of ancient artifacts in museums was not a practice in his world. In Islam painting and sculpturing human body are forbidden, and the allocation of a building for its exhibition was an extremely alien phenomenon. The statues erected in the centre of the squares with fountains also surprised the Shah. He liked palaces, squares, tree-lined avenues on a grid plan and did not overlook the separateness of the carriages and pedestrian paths on the streets (Nasser al-Din Shah, 1983).

While passing to the Berlin Palace with the Prussian Emperor Wilhelm II and the state delegation the Shah was deeply impressed by the square in front of the palace, the gardens decorated with flowers, and the statues located in the various parts of the building. Gas lamps in Berlin, in particular, were a criterion of "aesthetics and development" for Nasir al-Din Shah. The church and palace around the Schloßplatz,⁶ as well as sculptures, museum and ammunition, were all new places which were not exist in his country. While Shah was visiting entertainment and recreational venues such as the zoo and aquarium in Potsdam, he was just getting acquainted with the places where worldly pleasure took place.

The most interesting point in Nasser al-Din Shah's first European travel was his visit to the 1873 Universal Vienna Exposition with the Austro-Hungarian Emperor Franz Joseph (Figure 1). Expressing his admiration for the architecture and technologies used in the Exposition, the Shah especially visited the Ottoman, Egyptian and Iranian pavilions. The Vienna Exposition attracted the Shah's attention not only with its products, but also with its modern architectural materials such as steel and



Figure 1. Nasser al-din Shah and Franz Joseph (wikigallery.n.d.).



Figure 2. The Pavilion of Iran at the Universal Exposition of 1873, Vienna, (tehranprojects.n.d.).

glass. The architectural style used in the Iranian Pavilion, can actually be described as an exemplary interpretation for the formation of the new extrovert street architecture of Iran (Figure 2).

Although architectural elements such as the pointed arch, windows on the side wings without an iwan, columned portico at the entrance and pediment on the façades were previously seen in Qajar aristocratic architecture, the construction of the façade in a two-storey style consisting of row windows as in the bourgeois civil buildings in European industrial cities was a new practice. For westerners who came to the Exposition, it was fun, unfamiliar and mysterious to watch the architecture, culture and products of an eastern country like Iran. So much so that Persian carpets were priced at one third of their European counterparts (Rampley, 2011).

It is possible to see that Nasser al-Din Shah exposed the “farang” impression that he got after his first travel with new initiatives in the urban/architectural field. Before the Shah’s first trip, in 1872, the construction of the Almasiyeh Gate and the widening of Bab-e Homayoun or Almasiyeh Street was already started. Yet in order to give Tehran a new “farang” appearance, the authority to widen the street and new constructions was given to the state vizier Ala-od-dowleh (Etemadossaltaneh, 1877). Bab-e Homayoun, also known as Almasiye Street now had a new look.

The addition of a restaurant at the beginning of the street was particularly an important step in the formation of this new image. The decorative pool built in the middle of the pavement in front of the restaurant was similar to the image Nasser al-Din Shah saw in Europe (Shahri, 1992). The presence of realistic pictures on the door, wall and ceiling of the restaurant was an unprecedented sight in public spaces in Iranian cities until then.

Nasser-al-Din Shah actually wanted to liken Bab-e Homayoun to the streets contained shopping, entertainment, working and social organization places in European cities. However it would not be wrong to state that the construction of such a street in Tehran which had a traditional outlook was not an attempt out of necessity, but rather to

gave it a “farang” look. As a matter of fact, opening up to the global capitalist market also required an extrovert urban morphology. The pattern around Bab-e Homayoun Street consisted of Qourkhaneh⁷ Building, Nizam Madrasa, Majma-ol Sanaye School⁸ and Mahdaliya Mosque (Javaher Kalam, 1978). In other words, at this new setting military, educational, religious buildings and entertainment venues were gathered together. Military and educational buildings were facing the street was now turning the city away from its medieval identity. Turning modernization into a tool of legitimacy, the Shah wanted to show himself as a leader in technological changes, while he had led the development activities such as the inaugural of the enlargement project of Tehran in 1868. Shah opened an electrical factory built in the Majma-ol Sanaye School in 1878 and lights the first lamp with his own hand (Etemadossaltaneh, 1879). Bab-e Homayoun also opened a new area of legitimacy for the state with its image symbolizing modern education and industry. The Shah stood out not only as “God’s shadow on earth”, but also as a pioneering figure for the *ummah*, the Muslim community, to join the modern world.

4. Cultural inspiration: Second western travel (1878)

Nasser al-Din Shah’s second western journey took place five years later in 1878. Although the observations recorded in the second European travelogue of Shah are similar to the first one, during his second visit Shah further emphasised on cultural affairs and lifestyle in the West (Nasser al-Din Shah, 2000).

The entertainment venues reserved for the worldly pleasures of the people of Western Europe were unknown for a country like Iran, which had a traditional cultural structure. In particular, social gatherings where men and women participated in together was a novelty for the Shah. In Iran, people socialized only in mosques where religious rituals took place, in bazaars where economic activities were carried out, and in public squares where government demonstrations were held. The structure of the streets of the Tehran were not suitable for such entertainment activities.

The most remarkable part of Nasir al-Din Shah's second travel to the West is his observations during his visit to the 1878 Paris Universal Exposition. *"The entire building of the exposition is made of steel and glass... We went to the Pavilion of Iran. They built very well, the pavilions of Egypt, Tunisia, China and Japan are next to the Pavilion of Iran. (Pavilion of Iran) was really better than all... It looks like Eshrat abad Pavilion. However, on the first floor there is a tiled room with a fountain poop made of marble, and then a staircase leads to the second floor, the room with a muqarnas mirror. They built very well, the windows and doors are all from Iran, most of the people come to see this place"*.

The Pavilion of Iran was made in an extrovert style, similar to its predecessor in the 1873 Vienna International Exposition (Figure 3). The tiled space in the pavilion was adapted to the taste of western people by using the fountain. Because mirror had become a popular building material since its use in the Gallery of Mirrors in the Palace of Versailles in France, the use of the mirror with muqarnas as an interior decorative element on the second floor of the pavilion was consciously chosen by the architect Hossein Ali in order to get the admiration of the audience.

Nasir al-Din Shah perceived Paris with its ferries, railways, trains, and Exposition structures in which steel and glass were used. At that time, Violet-Le Duc was chanting for the use of steel and glass: "Every age has its own architecture, and ours is the age of iron, brick and factory" (Eyüce, 2001).

On the other hand, it is important to note that when Shah wanted to transform his country in line with European fashions, Iran was experiencing an economic disaster. As noted by Katouzian (1995), after the 1870s the socio-economic crisis caused by the depreciation of silver and therefore the currency in the country and other structural problems had a negative impact on the social structure. Nasser al-Din Shah's modernization initiatives based on foreign loans.

Such drastic conditions, however, did not interrupt the Shah's modernization program. One of the vivid examples of his ambition is the replacement of the

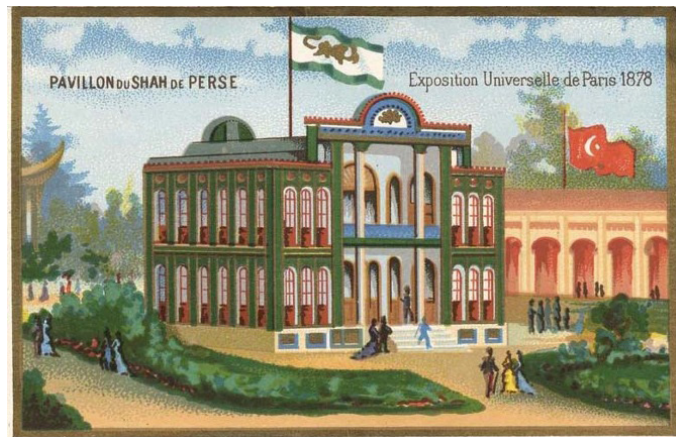


Figure 3. The Pavilion of Iran at the Universal Exposition of 1878, Paris (tehranprojects.com).

old Otagh-e Mouzeh⁹ by a Western style museum. Etemadossaltaneh shared information about the opening of the museum in September 1879: "... A very large and excellent museum was built in one corner of the Saltanat Pavilion... The building of this museum is similar to the museums of all European states" (Etemadossaltaneh, 1888). Sharaf Newspaper described the museum which was not a familiar phenomenon at that time by sharing a picture of the building in an issue (Etemadossaltaneh, 1883).

When Nasir al-Din Shah saw the preservation of antiquities in European countries during his western travels archeology was emerging as a modern discipline in Iran. Shah showed his interest not only with the opening of a museum, but also with the preservation and repair of historical artifacts such as shrines, mosques, monuments and tombs belonging to the Turkic origin rulers and dignitaries in his own country (Etemadossaltaneh, 1878).

The Shah conducted all his initiatives delicately to obtain the satisfaction of both the people and the power layers around him by protecting the religious and sacred buildings. The news of these repair attempts was reflected in Vaghaye-e Ettefaghiyeh (NLI, 1994c). Restoring the religious buildings and places were in fact performed by earlier rulers namely Safavid and Afsharid. Repairing non-religious architectural monuments was, however, unprecedented in Iran. The Shah wanted to consolidate his lineage legitimacy by repairing the tombs of Turkic origin emperors such as Tughril Beg and the Dome of Soltaniyeh. These initiatives was placed

in the newspapers with gravures. In an issue of Sharaf Newspaper in 1885 Etemadossaltaneh praised the attempt by sharing the gravure of Tughril Beg Tomb before and after repair (Figure 4) (Etemadossaltaneh, 1885a).

The most important “farangi” image that Nasser al-Din Shah brought to Tehran after his second travel was Toupkhaneh Square and the new functions around it (Figure 5). Some scholars state the construction date of the square as 1884 without citing a valid source (Javaher Kalam, 1978; Kariman 1976). However, Etemadossaltaneh recorded the construction date of the square as 1877 in the 318th issue of Iran Newspaper: “The wide rectangular square is all made of bricks and has two floors. Gunners reside on the lower floor and cannons are placed on the upper floor. A large pool was built in the middle of the square and the square was paved with

stones. It is illuminated by gas lamps every night. It has six gates...” (NLI, Fixture No: DSR۱۳۷۰-۸/الف, File No: 1014574). The famous 19th century traveller Ernest Orsolle (1997) defined Toupkhaneh Square as the center of the city while passing through Tehran on his voyage in 1882.

It is important to note that contrary to traditional urban spaces in Iran, Toupkhaneh Square was not dominated by minarets and domes. Qourkhaneh Building on the west side and a Imperial Bank of Perisa¹⁰ on the east side were the two major structures encircling the new public place (Figure 6).

With all new characteristics Toupkhaneh Square provided the most basic urban change for Tehran. Ala-od-dowleh, Lalezar, Chragh-e Gaz, Nassariyeh, Almasiye and Marizkhaneh streets, connected to the square by six major gates. All this new layout shifted the centre

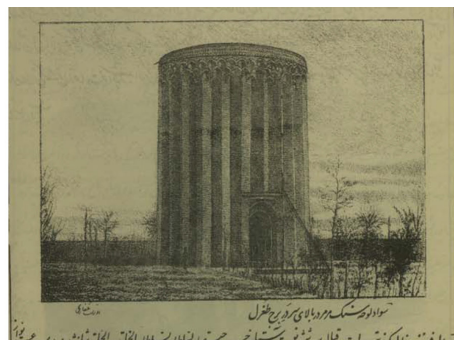
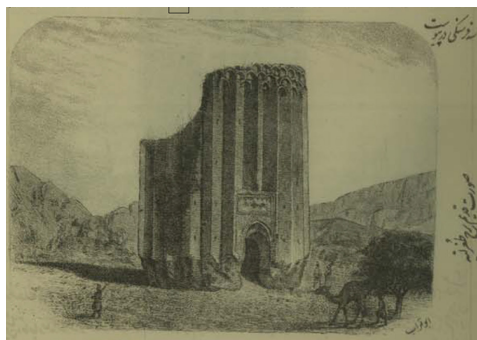


Figure 4. The gravure of Tughril Beg Tomb before and after repair that was pressed in the Sharaf Newspaper (Etemadossaltaneh, 1885b).



Figure 5. Toupkhaneh Square and Lalezar Gate to the northeast in 1903 (Whigham, 1903).

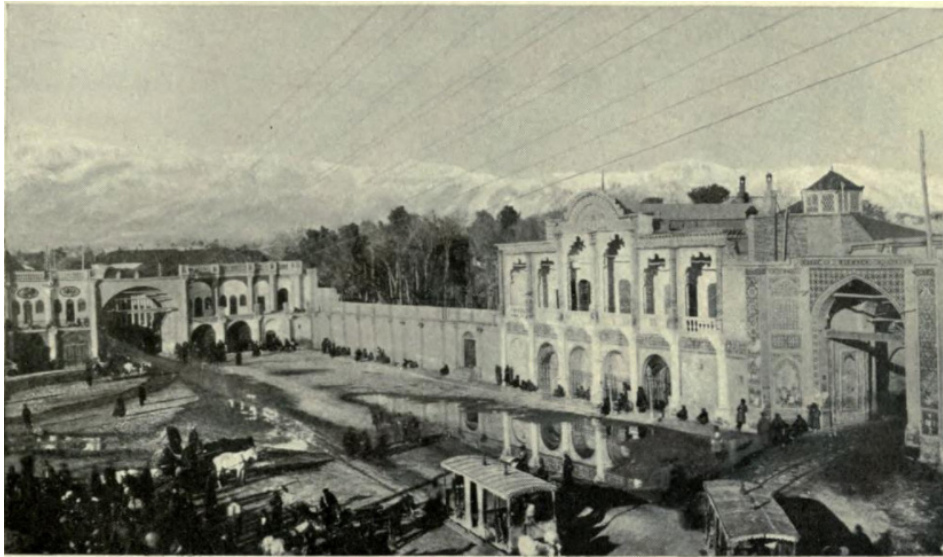


Figure 6. The Imperial Bank of Persia and Lalezar Gate (Fraser, 1910).

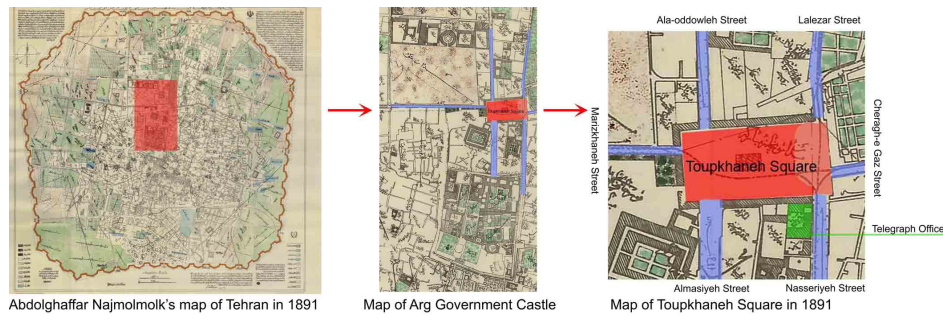


Figure 7. Abdolghaffar Najmolmol's map of Tehran in 1891 and Toupkhaneh Square (Shirazian, 2012) [Red parts added by A. Kahraman].

of the city away from Sabzemeydan Square and the bazaar, two significant traditional urban landmarks of Tehran. The square and the streets around it was giving a modern appearance by creating a grid pattern in the center of Tehran's traditional fabric. Next to the square (Figure 7), as Etemadossaltaneh says, was "...the magnificent and very beautiful Telegraph Office Building built in western style..." another modern function (Etemadossaltaneh, 1888).¹¹

In addition to changes occurred in macro scale in the urban grain of Tehran, by the 1880s, European baroque and rococo elements in the Qajar state/aristocracy architecture begun to be seen. The Masoudiyeh Pavilion-Garden (1878) in Baharestan Square, the buildings in Baghshah Square (1882) and the Saltanatabad Pavilion-Garden were the examples where the new architectural tastes can be vividly seen in the changing city.¹²

Mirroring this rapid transformation the most striking event of during the Nasser al-Din Shah period was the

erection of his equestrian statue in the middle of the Baghshah Square. The impressing sculpture which commissioned by the vizier Eghbalossaltaneh and made in the Qourkhaneh, the armory, in 1887, was greatly appreciated by the Shah (Figure 8).

It was recorded in the 50th issue of the Sharaf Newspaper that the Shah would reward the vizier of Korhane, the architect Mirza Aliakbar Khan who made the statue, and all the employees who contributed. Despite the fact that the construction of the statue was against the Islamic tradition, the Shah wanted to place the statue in the middle of Toupkhaneh Square like his western counterparts (Etemadossaltaneh, 1887b). However, since this action was not perceived well by the public, the Shah changed his decision and waited 18 months for the opening of the statue and changed its location to a less visible place in Baghshah Square. Etemadossaltaneh writes that inaugural of the statue of Shah with a ceremony would have negative con-



Figure 8. Nasser al-Din Shah at the Foot of his Bronze Statue in Qourkhaneh ([Photographs of Antoin Sevruguin from the Qajar period], ca 1885-1930).

sequences (Etemadossaltaneh, 1971). The inaugural on 16 October 1888, started with the speech of the Ottoman sefir-i kebir, the grand ambassador and with the participation of other foreign ambassadors. Shah took the stage and lifted the curtain on the statue with the Salam-e Shah music (Moayer, 1982). There was no doubt that the Shah was sure that the public, the ulama and mullahs would react against the opening of the statue. On the one hand, he wanted to use the statue to gain the image of his western counterparts, and on the other hand, he had to find a smoother way to reduce a negative reaction from the base of the society. For this reason, he wanted to achieve his goals by moving the statue from Toupkhaneh Square to Baghshah. The speech of the ceremony by the Ottoman ambassador who was the representative of the most powerful Muslim country of the period was a strategic choice. By inviting the ambassador, the Shah wanted to diminish the potential reaction by the traditional segments of the society.

Those tactics, however, were efficient to some extent. The concessions given to foreign companies with agreements such as Reuter in the 1870s were at their peak in the 1880s. Such steps and the fundamental reforms carried out by the Shah towards westernization provoked the ulama who had an important place in various layers of society to raise their voice against the 'alien acts' of their ruler (Amanat, 2019). The un-

precedent reform attempts by the Shah forced the mullahs who could harmonise the relationship between the state and the society towards the opposition block (Averi, 1994). Alarmed by those objections, the Shah was trying to find strategic steps to lessen the impacts of public opposition and address the concerns of ulama (Amanat, 2019). The Shah's careful supervision of the construction of new religious buildings, as well as the preservation of the historical congeneric ones, were among the initiatives within this content.

Under this atmosphere, the Shah started the construction of Tehran's largest mosque in 1879 at the initiative of the Grand Vizier Sipehsalar in Baharistan Square. He frequently visited the construction of the mosque. Unlike the traditional pattern, the new mosque was not built next to the bazaar in the center, but to one side of the Baharistan Square where the civil structures in the north-east of the city were located. Mirza Mehdi Khanshaghakghi and a traditional architect were appointed as architects for the mosque which took six years to build. The construction of such a large mosque in the turbulent atmosphere of the 1880s was a somewhat satisfactory undertaking for both the ulama and the public. In order to gratify the ulema's expectations, the mosque was put in service before the construction completed (Figure 9) (Etemadossaltaneh, 1885b).¹³ Shah inaugurated the mosque after the crown prince arrived in Tehran at the grand ceremony held for the opening of the mosque. On Saturday, July 4, 1885, on the anniversary of the death of Hazrat Ali, the mosque opened its doors to the congregational prayer with a huge participation of more than forty thousand people (NLI.A, Fixture No: DSR۱۳۷۰-۸الف, issue 577).

5. Fascination of technology: Third western travel (1889)

What distinguishes Nasser al-Din Shah's third western travel from the previous two is his focus on technological issues rather than cultural atmosphere in Europe. The most remarkable part of the third travel was the visit to the 1889 Paris International Exposition. The 71th issue of the Sharaf Newspaper was pressed specifically for

information about the Eiffel Tower, the most influential work of the Exposition and its engineer Gustave Eiffel. (Etemadossaltaneh, 1889a).

Seeing such a large steel construction for the first time, Nasser al-Din Shah wondered with admiration the construction technique and architecture of the tower (Nasser al-Din Shah, 1992). While Shah was passing through the special railway for the Exposition, he expressed admiration that it was “a wonderful railway” and ordered the purchase of 10 similar wagons and the construction of a four-league railway in Tehran (Nasser al-Din Shah, 1992).

As noted in different parts of the travelogue, although the Shah carefully followed the developments in the West, he never abandoned his sensitive approach to conservative values. One of the most interesting examples of this approach is a Qur'an sold in the Indian pavilion in the exposition. The Shah was displeased that such a holy book was being sold at the exposition as a priced product, and ordered the Qur'an to be bought and removed from the shelves immediately.

Among the most remarkable products in the exposition were the pavilions representing the most popular approaches taken by various countries. The architectural style used in the Iranian pavilion was different from the pavilions in the previous expositions. The combination of arch, dome and plaster used in the pavilion refers to the façade elements found in the pre-Islamic architectural monuments of Iran (Figure 10).

In particular, the reconstruction drawings of Achaemenid and Sassanid monuments created by Aryanist orientalists such as Eugene Flandin, Marcel Dieulafoy and Charles Chipiez were used in the design of the pavilion. The combination of the arch and the dome of the pavilion featured the Sassanid work of the Sarvestan Palace, and the repetitive serrated elements in the entablature recall the stair railings in Persepolis.

The image of the pavilion's architecture was a good opportunity to exhibit and promote the “image of ancient Iran, strong and civilized” passionately fostered by Western Orientalists in the fields of history and archaeology. Today, it is possible to observe that the pavilion not only exhibits commodities from

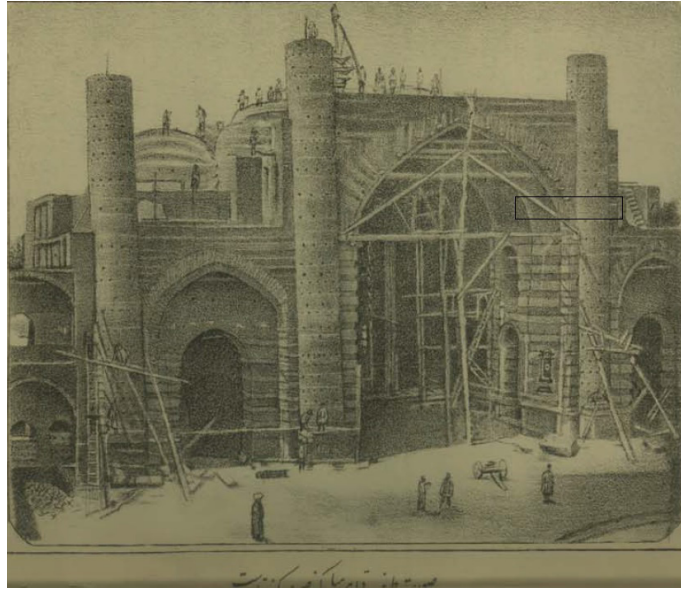


Figure 9. While the Nasseriyeh Mosque was being built, it was the headline of the Sharaf Newspaper. (Today's name is Sepahsalar Mosque) (Etemadossaltaneh, 1885c).

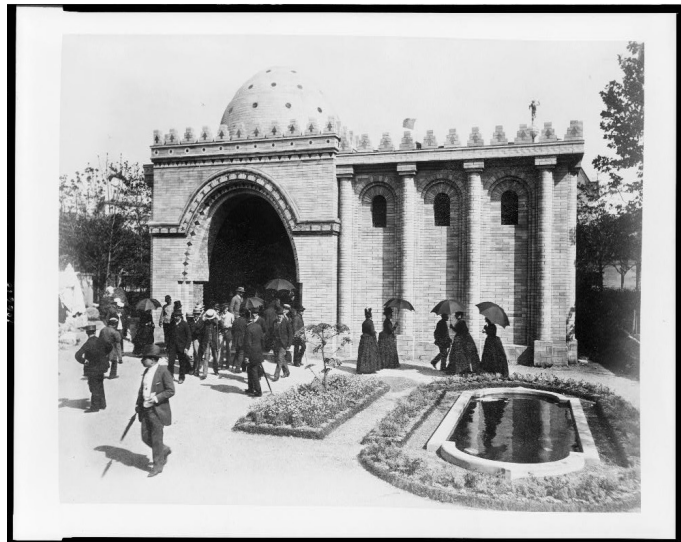


Figure 10. The Pavilion of Iran at the Universal Exposition of 1889, Paris (Library of Congress, 2021).

Iran, but also acts as a kind of a harbinger of the Iran's new path in the pursuit of nation-state and identity. It should also be noted that the façade revivalism of the Achaemenid-Sassanid architecture used in the Iranian pavilion was not the first example representing this attitude. In the 1880s, Achaemenid-Sassanid architectural revitalization was tried in the residences of the Kavam family who was an aristocrat of Jewish origin in Shiraz (Grigor, 2016). However, the implementation of the Achaemenid-Sassanid revivalist style in a building that represents the state and the country on an international platform such as an exposition was an important act in this sense.

Unlike the 1873 and 1878 pavilions, the Iranian pavilion of 1889 does not reflect the Qajar architectural culture of the 1880s and fed by the norms drawn by the Orientalists as noted above.

In the 1880s the pavilions built by Nasser al-Din Shah in Arg Government Castle and some other locations in Iran consisted a dual identity representing both the European neo-classical revivalism and local architectural elements. Andarouni¹⁴ pavilions such as Emarat-e Khabgah¹⁵ in Farah Abad is a good example in this context. The pavilion which was built on April 3, 1887 inspired by the Dolmabahçe Palace's plan in Istanbul (Moayyer, 1982; Etemadossaltaneh: 1888; Etemadossaltaneh, 1889b). It is possible to mention the Obeyz, Melijak and Yaghout pavilions among other structures built in a similar style of the period.

As a result of all those cultural interaction with the West and other local dynamics by the 1890s, the last six years of Nasir al-Din Shah's reign, the urban pattern and silhouette of Tehran changed dramatically. The modernization of the image of the city and the construction of modern functional buildings in accordance with the needs of the capitalist economy in order to establish good relations with the European states were the areas where great changes took place towards the end of the century.

It is possible to see the changes that the Shah made in Tehran during his reign on the Tehran Map prepared in 1891 together with Abdolghaffar Najmolmol and Dar ul-Fonun students (Figure 7). The flat and wide streets connecting to Arg Government Castle and Toupkhaneh Square and the formation of new districts such as the Dowlat in the north greatly change the concept of neighbourhood in the city.

As can be seen from the map, the plan of the city has an octagonal shape formed by the walls around it. The connection of the city to the outside is realized through 12 entrance gates. Through these gates, the main core of the city could be reached directly. The transportation from the developed neighborhoods in the north of the city to the old center was through large squares and streets leading to these squares. In the north, the Nasseriye Mosque, Shams

ol-emareh, the Tekyeh Dowlat and other public buildings gave a new look to the new silhouette of the city. The application of extroverted architecture around the new streets in line with the style of Western European cities also created a new look against the old fabric.

The rapid growth of the city, its population reaching up to one hundred thousand, and the increase in the streets for vehicular circulation required public transportation. The Shah took an important step for public transportation by giving the authority to establish the Horse Carriage and Bus Company to a state official named Mirza Javad Khan. With the purchase of 30 cars from Russia, on November 5, 1890, stations began to be established next to Toupkhaneh Square, Sebzemeydan and the British consulate building (Issawi, 2009).

With all his attempts, Nasir al-Din Shah was closely related to the status of the advanced industrial countries of his age. While following the developments in Western Europe with admiration, he failed in many reforms as a result of both his own conservatism and the pressure of the ulama. As a result of large loans and the economic crisis, an agreement made with the Talbot Company in 1890 was to monopolize the production and sale of tobacco in Iran for 50 years. This situation led to serious revolts against the government led by the ulama throughout the country. Meanwhile, the Shah invited the cleric Jamal al-Din al-Afghani who had gained great fame in the Islamic world at that time to the country in order to preserve the legitimacy of the state. However, when the Shah found Afghani against him, he ordered the deportation of Afghani and cancelled the agreement with the Talbot Company with the fatwa of Mirza Hasan Shirazi, one of the foremost ulema of the time.

It is possible to say that this issue caused the ulama to gain serious power against the Qajar state, and it also created significant obstacles against the Shah's reformist initiatives such as Dar ul-Funun. Nasser al-Din Shah died on April 30, 1896 as a result of an armed assassination by Mirza Reza Kermani, one of the followers of Afghani (Teimouri, 1979; Amanat, 2019).

6. Conclusion

The outputs of the initiatives in the urban/architectural fields in the second half of the 19th century significantly transformed parts of Tehran into the appearance of industrial cities in Western Europe. These changes occurred during the period of Nasser al-Din Shah, especially starting from the 1870s.

Although the Shah had some information about the image of Europe before his western travels, he undertook new initiatives based on his observations during those visits. These include having his own equestrian statue built even though he could not erect it in the centre of the city, the dominance of new functions such as a bank, Telegraph Building, Oil Lamp Factory and Qourkhaneh Building around newly constructed urban squares and streets. In addition, initiatives to protect historical artifacts as a modern practice are among the activities within this context.

The participation of the Shah in the largest expositions of the century in order to promote his country in the international arena and to obtain the appearance of modern Western civilization was again realized by the instrumentalization of architectural products.

While the Shah realized his desire to include the country in the contemporary global trade economy, he used these initiatives to ensure the legitimacy of his own power. In order to achieve his goals the Shah conducted a successful public campaign and used newspapers to promote his ambitious acts. In line with the modernization attempts, and considering the expectations of different social groups in the society, the Shah also took symbolic actions such as the construction of the Nasseriyyeh Mosque, to show his respect to the traditional values.

Neither the bitter economic burdens demanded heavy foreign loans nor the objections from the conservative circles prevented the Shah to undertake his ambitious reforming program. The best proof of this was the process that took Tehran to gain a contemporary appearance which is emphasized in this study. Towards the end of the 19th century, Tehran took a contemporary look with grid planned wide streets, modern buildings, squares, green spaces, extrovert buildings and paved roads with horse-drawn carriages. And all those

works paved way for more comprehensive change that would be occurred in the first half of the century in Iran conducted by Pahlavi rulers under a different political setting.

Endnotes

¹ 19th century Persian term used occasionally to describe Western Europe.

² For detailed information about Abbas Mirza period travelogues, see (Aboutaleb, 1973); (Elchi, 1985); (Shirazi, 1968); (Afshar, 1970).

³ For detailed information, see (Banimasoud, 2015); (Ghobadian, 2015); (Habibi, 2007); (Nazari & Nikzad, 2007); (Hamidi & Sabri, 1997b).

⁴ The Entebaat Vizier was the one who was responsible for the printing and publishing works of the state.

⁵ For detailed information, see (Banimasoud, 2015); (Ghobadian, 2015); (Habibi, 2007).

⁶ Central historic square of Berlin

⁷ Qourkhaneh (من‌الخروج) a word of Turkish origin means the place where military equipment is produced.

⁸ Majma-ol-Sanaye School was an education center opened for teaching science and art branches within the framework of modern education discipline. It is important in terms of being the second education center where modern disciplines were trained after Dar ul-Funun School. For detailed information, see (Yousefifar, 2011); Etemadossaltaneh stated the professions taught in Mecme-ül Sanayi School (Etemadossaltaneh, 1888).

⁹ Room of Museum

¹⁰ Imperial Bank of Persia was opened in 1889 after the third travel of Nasir al-Din Shah (Zoka, 1970). The bank building, which started to work as the first modern banking center in Iran, was later demolished under the Pahlavi regime. For detailed information about Toupkhaneh Square in the Qajar period, see (Curzon, 2017); (Orsolle, 1997); (Jackson, 1976).

¹¹ The mentioned Quorkhaneh and Telegraph Office Building in Toupkhaneh Square were deliberately demolished under Pahlavi regime.

¹² Information about these three urban monuments is only limited in historical documents, as they were deliberately demolished under the Pahlavi regime.

¹³ It was stated in the Sharaf Newspaper that the construction of the minarets and the dome, which are the two essential elements of the mosque, was not finished.

¹⁴ Andarouni mansions were the places where Nasser al-Din Shah led a private life with his harem.

¹⁵ The pavilion was deliberately demolished under the Pahlavi regime.

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