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Original Research Article

A Search for the Components and the Past Form of the Seyyed Shams al-Din Complex in Yazd

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ABSTRACT

The tomb of Seyyed Shams al-Din is located in the Chahar Menar neighborhood of Yazd. Built in the 8th century AH, this tomb was formerly part of an urban complex. Although historical texts contain multiple references to that complex, its components and original form are not now clear. This study attempts, using historical texts and surviving evidence, to re-identify its components and reconstruct a picture of the complex's former appearance. The method is historical. First, information about the Seyyed Shams al-Din complex in Yazd was extracted from historical sources. Then existing documents, records, and images of the complex were collected and supplemented by field investigation at the site. Finally, the obtained data were compared and analyzed. The article first establishes the complex's location and components based on historical texts and gives brief descriptions of each. It then examines the complex's current configuration and its transformations based on surviving evidence. Finally, by comparing and analyzing all evidence and indicators, it reveals the probable original form of this urban complex.

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Introduction

The Seyyed Shams al-Din complex is one of the most important urban complexes in Yazd in the 8th century AH. This building is also an early example of collective urban mausoleums. Historical texts contain numerous references to this complex. These references indicate that the Seyyed Shams al-Din complex once comprised various components and parts. Today, little physical evidence of those components remains in Yazd's Chahar Minar neighborhood. Some modern researchers, such as Donald Wilber and Arthur Pope, briefly addressed this building; however, the exact components and the original form of the complex remain unknown to us. In this paper we attempt, using historical texts, surviving images and documents, and by examining the current form of the complex, to identify its components and reconstruct an image of its former appearance. To that end, we first identify the complex's components by searching the texts. We then examine the tomb of Seyyed Shams al-Din, which is the complex's core and the only surviving structure today. Next, we review other existing evidence at the site and attempt, by matching our textual findings with what remains on-site, to reconstruct the complex's original form.

Research Background

So far, few studies have been conducted on the Seyyed Shams al-Din complex and tomb in Yazd. Western scholars such as Arthur Upham Pope and Donald Wilber have mentioned the tomb building in their writings. Pope describes and analyzes the tomb in his book A Survey of Persian Art but does not discuss the Seyyed Shams al-Din complex or its other components. Wilber, in The Architecture of Islamic Iran: The Ilkhanid Period, briefly recounts the history of the Shamsiyeh madrasa and also describes the building's condition in 1936; he likewise does not mention the Seyyed Shams al-Din complex. Iraj Afshar, in Yādgārhā-ye Yazd, presents the complex's history using historical texts. Afshar also describes the complex's condition at the time of his visit (probably the 1960s) and cites the inscriptions' texts. He refers readers to Pope's and Wilber's books for architectural details. The book Ganjnāmeh: Cyclopaedia of Iranian Islamic Architecture briefly mentions the building's history in its fifth volume and provides complete plans of the tomb. None of the above sources comments on the original layout of the Seyyed Shams al-Din complex.

Methodology

This article uses historical method. First, relevant material about the Seyyed Shams al-Din complex in Yazd was extracted from historical texts. Then existing documents, records, and images of the complex were collected, and field study at the site was carried out to record and complete the observable evidence. Finally, the collected data were compared and analyzed.

Who Was Seyyed Shams al-Din?

Seyyed Shams al-Din, son of Seyyed Rukn al-Din and son-in-law of Khwaja Rashid al-Din Fadl Allah, was the founder of the Seyyed Shams al-Din complex in Yazd and left many endowments in this city and others. His father, Seyyed Rukn al-Din, was a respected sayyid of Yazd and the founder of the Rukniyeh madrasa and the astronomical time measuring device called "Rasad-e Vaght o Sa'at". (Afshar, 1969, 18). Seyyed Rukn al-Din fell into disgrace and was accused by Atabak Yusof Shah (the Shah of Yazd) and was imprisoned in Yazd (Jafari, 2005, 105–106; Kateb Yazdi, 2007, 115).[1] His son, Seyyed Shams al-Din, fled Yazd and reached Tabriz. There he met Amir Ghyath al-Din Muhammad, son of Khwaja Rashid al-Din Fadlallah; Amir Ghyath al-Din "delegated the deputy ministry of all the lands of Sultan Abu Sa'id to him and granted him the office of chief-judge and the endowments of the entire realm" (Jafari, 2005, 107). Seyyed Shams al-Din also obtained his father's release that same day. He married one of Khwaja Rashid al-Din Fadlallah's daughters (ibid., 111). When Seyyed Shams al-Din gained authority in Tabriz he commissioned the plan for the Shamsiyeh complex and sent it to Yazd (Kateb Yazdi, 2007, 118). This indicates that Iranian builders first drew building plans on paper and then proceeded to construction; it also suggests that Seyyed Shams al-Din may have had a hand in the architecture. Construction of the Shamsiyeh complex was completed in 727 AH (Jafari, 2005, 111; Kateb Yazdi, 2007, 119).

Seyyed Shams al-Din died in Tabriz one year after his father, in 733 AH. His body was transferred from Tabriz to Yazd and buried in his own madrasa in Chahar Minar. His wife, daughter of Khwaja Rashid al-Din Fadlallah, sent his ebony and sandalwood coffin and canopy and a marble mihrab to be installed in the madrasa's dome chamber (Mostowfi Bafqi, 2006, 559; Jafari, 2005, 111; Katib Yazdi, 2007: 119). He left many endowments and endowed properties and shrines caravanserais, baths (Hammams), mosques, and madrasas in Yazd, Abarqu, Qom, Kashan, Saveh, Ray, Soltaniyeh, and Tabriz. Notably, he did not see any of these buildings in

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his lifetime (Jafari, 2005, 111; Kateb Yazdi, 2007, 119). The details of his and his father's endowments are recorded in the Waqf-nāmeh (endowment letter) Jāmi' al-Khairāt.

Description of the Seyyed Shams al-Din complex from Historical Texts

The endowments of Seyyed Shams al-Din are recorded in the Waqf-nāmeh Jāmi' al-Khairāt. The purpose of composing this endowment letter was understood to be listing the places and shrines attributed to Seyyed Shams al-Din and his father (Vaziri, 1986, 7). The text of the endowment letter suggests it was written during Seyyed Shams al-Din's lifetime.[2] The endowment letter states that Seyyed Shams al-Din ordered the establishment of twenty-three endowed sites in total and endowed them on specific dates. Of these, three buildings belong to the Shamsiyeh complex in Yazd: the madrasa, the dar al-siyadah, and a khānaqāh (ibid., 9–11). However, a survey of the three principal histories of Yazd[3] shows that the complex apparently included other sections as well.

The book Tārīkh-e Yazd lists the complex's components as two madrasas, the dar al-siyadah, a khānaqāh, a bazaar, a bath, and a caravanserai (Jafari, 2005, 110–111). The book Tārīkh-e Jadid-e Yazd also mentions all these parts but refers to only one madrasa (Katib Yazdi, 2007, 119). The book Jāmi'-e Mofidi is similar but does not mention a khānaqāh (Mostowfi Bafqi, 2006, 558–559). All these texts also note the construction of ṣābāt (covered arcades) beside the madrasa; Tārīkh-e Jadid-e Yazd records four such ṣābāt. Below, drawing on the endowment letter and other texts, we examine the complex and its various parts.

• Location of the complex in the city

In the 8th century AH the Seyyed Shams al-Din complex was built on the outskirts of Yazd. The Jāmi' al-Khairāt states that the madrasa Shamsiyeh and its annexes "are all outside the city of Yazd in the place called Sarkucheh-ye Behrok" (Vaziri, 1986, 10). Jāmi' al-Khairāt also refers to this place as Sekkeh-ye Behrok: "The madrasa and khānaqāh and pharmacy and library which are all contiguous and are located in the suburbs of Yazd, in the place called Ras-e Sekkeh-ye Behrok and Ahrastān …" (ibid., 98). After the foundation of the Shams al-Din complex, and because the Shamsiyeh madrasa had four minarets, the area became known as the Chahār-Menar (Four Minarets) neighborhood. Jāmi'-e Mofidi likewise notes: "The Behrok Alley, which is now known as Chahār-Menar …" (Mostowfi Bafqi, 2006, 187).

Part of this area was also known as Hoz-e Molkatiyeh (commonly pronounced Moltakiyeh). The name Hoz-e Molkatiyeh apparently derives from the endowments of the Molkatiyeh shrine. The booklet on Yazd endowments states: "The endowments of the Molkatiyeh shrine, located in the Chahār-Menar quarter; the donor was Malakeh Khanum of the Mirzaii Abbasid line" (Tarāz, 1962, 42). Today no trace remains of that shrine or its endowments (Afshar, 1969, 590).

Because the complex lay outside the city, orchards and fields apparently surrounded it; Jāmi'-e Mofidi mentions wooded gardens around the site (Mostowfi Bafqi, 2006, vol. 3, 559). The presence of fields and gardens near the quarter is even visible in the 1956 aerial photograph. In those years the quarter stood at the city entrance. Clearly the foundation of the complex contributed to urban expansion, and after some time the complex became integrated into the city; today it lies in the middle of Yazd.

• Shamsiyeh madrasa

The madrasa can be considered the most important part of the Seyyed Shams al-Din complex, since part of it was originally intended as the founder's tomb. The Jāmi' al-Khairāt states that four reciters of the Qur'an should permanently read in the part of the madrasa designated as the founder's tomb (Vaziri, 1986, 121). According to the Yazd history books, after Seyyed Shams al-Din's death in 733 AH he was buried in his madrasa in Chahār-Menar. His wife sent his ebony and sandalwood coffin from Tabriz to Yazd to be installed in the madrasa's dome chamber; she also sent a marble mihrab which was installed in the southern side of the dome chamber (Jafari, 2005, 111; Kateb Yazdi, 2007, 119; Mostowfi Bafqi, 2006, 559).

According to Jāmi' al-Khairāt, besides the dome chamber the madrasa included two other sections called the library and the pharmacy (Vaziri, 1986, 10). The number of students at this madrasa is given as ten (ibid., 120). The texts do not mention the student cells, but one can assume rooms were provided for this number of students.

The madrasa had one teacher and there was also an imam who was permanently present in the tomb-chamber to lead daily prayers (Vaziri, 1986, 119–120). The Yazd histories agree that four minarets stood at the four corners of the madrasa, decorated with green tile (Jafari, 2005, 110; Katib Yazdi, 2007, 118; Mostowqi Bafqi, 2006, 559). Only Tārīkh-e Yazd mentions two

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madrasas which faced each other with four minarets around both madrasas (Jafari, 2005, 110).

• Khānaqāh

In Jāmi‘ al-Khairāt the khānaqāh is described after the madrasa. Except for Jāmi‘-e Mofidi, other Yazd histories also note a khānaqāh in the complex. The endowment letter implies the khānaqāh stood adjacent to and was connected with the madrasa: “The madrasa and khānaqāh and pharmacy and library, which are all connected …” (Vaziri, 1986, 98). A devout and pious sheikh in the khānaqāh was charged with guiding people, and a servant was responsible for caring for travelers and guests of the khānaqāh (ibid., 122). The khānaqāh had rooms and cells for lodging visitors, and travelers were permitted to stay up to three days. There was also a cook responsible for preparing regular meals for travelers (ibid., 123). This implies the khānaqāh included a space for cooking.

• Dar al-siyadah

According to Jāmi‘ al-Khairāt, the dar al-siyadah stood opposite the madrasa (Vaziri, 1986, 10). Yazd histories also mention it (Jafari, 2005, 110; Kateb Yazdi, 2007, 118; Mostowqi Bafqi, 2006, 558). The dar al-siyadah apparently hosted the Prophet’s birth celebration and Ashura ceremonies. It was a furnished space with an attendant (farāsh) to take care of the furnishings. The dar al-sayyada also had a servant and a doorkeeper (ibid., 128–129). Tārīkh-e Jadid-e Yazd and Jāmi‘-e Mofidi note that water from the Narsūbād qanat flowed through the dar al-siyadah (Kateb Yazdi, 2007, 118; Mostowfi Bafqi, 2006, 559).

• Bazaar

The endowment letter does not mention a bazaar, but Yazd histories do. Tārīkh-e Jadid-e Yazd records that “they built four high s̲ābāt on the sides of the madrasa and nearly thirty shops within them” (Kateb Yazdi, 2007, 118). It also notes that an inscribed tile panel was placed on the ‘s̲ābāt bazaar’ and the endowments were recorded on it. Jāmi‘-e Mofidi likewise reports that the endowments were recorded on a tile panel in a s̲ābāt over the madrasa’s door (Mostowfi Bafqi, 2006, 559). Tārīkh-e Yazd also mentions the installation of the tile panel in a s̲ābāt and at the madrasa’s threshold (Jafari, 2005, 111). These texts imply the bazaar lay within the s̲ābāt arcades around the madrasa and that the bazaar extended from the madrasa’s gate in other words, the madrasa opened onto the marketplace. Tārīkh-e Yazd refers to a two-faced market and records that the Taft water canal ran through the bazaar; Jāmi‘-e Mofidi notes that the Ahrastān watercourse ran through the bazaar.

• Bath (Hammam)

The endowment letter does not mention a bath, but Yazd histories name it. According to Tārīkh-e Jadid-e Yazd, the bath lay within the bazaar and was built for men’s use. The author also notes that at the time of writing the bath had been ruined by a flood (Kateb Yazdi, 2007, 118).[4]

• Caravanserai

All Yazd histories list a caravanserai as part of the complex, although the endowment letter is silent on it. The caravanserai lay within the bazaar such that on one side of the market stood the caravanserai and on the other the bath (Kateb Yazdi, 2007, 118). No further details about the caravanserai are available from the texts.

Current Condition of the Tomb of Seyyed Shams al-Din

The tomb building of Seyyed Shams al-Din now stands at the center of the Chahār-Menar neighborhood. The building has a forecourt of which part remains. A small neighborhood-scale square lies in front of the structure. The entrance is a tall portal with elongated proportions, though its upper façade and roof edge have largely been lost. The portal features kārbandi and ma‘qeli decoration. (Fig. 1)

Inside the present building there is a square courtyard and two tall iwāns on the southeast and northwest sides. The dome chamber and the vestibule lie behind these two iwāns. The portal, vestibule, and the iwāns are aligned on a single axis that is not coincident with the qibla direction.

The vestibule is square with a domed ceiling. The vestibule’s dome has kārbandi with ma‘qeli decoration, similar to the portal vault. Above the dome an added lantern provides lighting and is tiled on the exterior. This added mass is visible externally and can be seen from neighborhood streets.



Fig. 1. The portal and the forecourt of the tomb of Seyyed Shams al-Din (photo by the author)

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The courtyard occupies the center of the building. The iwāns encompass the southeast and northwest façades and are elongated in proportion. (Fig. 2–3) The other two sides of the courtyard are similar, consisting of blind arch arranged in two storeys. The great height of these façades makes the courtyard appear very small. It appears that the entire courtyard façade was once covered with mosaic tile, of which fragments remain.



Fig. 2. The dome chamber iwan (southeast). photo by the author.



Fig. 3. Northwest iwan (photo by the author)

The dome-iwan ceiling is adorned with painted decoration and a thuluth and kufic inscription band is painted there. A richly detailed raised stucco inscription band runs beneath the painted inscription within the iwan. This stucco band includes three lines of kufic script. Below it is another raised stucco inscription in large thuluth, placed intermittently within frames. Two small prayer rooms flank the iwan. (Fig. 4)

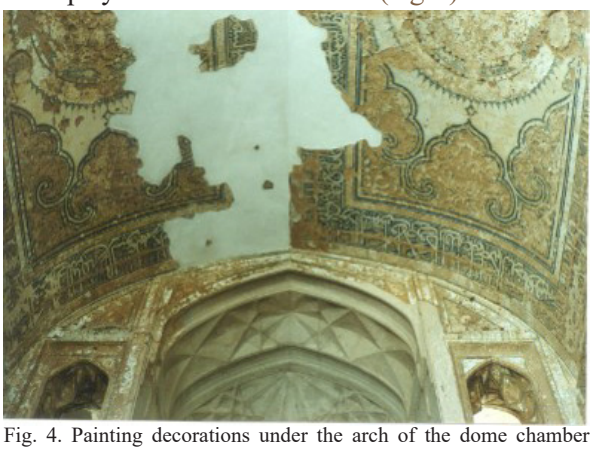


Fig. 4. Painting decorations under the arch of the dome chamber iwan. photo from the Cultural Heritage Department file.

The dome chamber walls have stucco and floral painted decoration, much of which is damaged. The soffit of the dome and the niche vaults are also painted. Seyyed Shams al-Din's tomb lies at the center of the dome chamber and its surface is covered with tiles. An iron railing now surrounds the grave. Beside Seyyed Shams al-Din's tomb is another marble grave for a person named Esḥāq, dated 969 (AH). Within the iwan of the dome chamber there is also a fallen gravestone bearing the date 858, the oldest gravestone in the complex (Fig. 5).

The building once housed the Yazd Cultural Heritage library and the house on the eastern side was the librarian's residence. The library occupied the eastern prayer room of the iwan and was connected to the adjacent house for the librarian's convenience. Currently the building functions solely as a shrine, and its doors are often closed; the small prayer rooms beside the iwan have been converted into storage (Fig. 6).

Developmental History of the Tomb Building

Limited old photographs and brief observations by some Western scholars indicate that many parts of the present structure are restorations or recent work. Below we attempt to identify these elements.

Donald Wilber visited the site in 1936. He gives a short description with three photographs; two show the dome-iwan decorations and one shows the iwan elevation. (Fig. 7) He notes that the dome of the burial chamber was ruined; his photograph of the iwan

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Fig. 5. Decorations on the ceiling of the dome chamber. photo from archnet.org.



Fig. 6. Plan of the tomb of Seyyed Shams al-Din (the librarian's house is visible to the north of the building). plan from the Ganjnameh.

elevation shows part of the dome collapsed. The internal details of the dome are not clear in the photo, but it suggests the present tomb dome is a new reconstruction and some decorations beneath the dome may not be original.

The next evidence is a 1956 aerial photograph. In that photo the tomb's dome is present likely restored by then but the hashtī appears roofless. (Fig. 8) A later photograph by Renta Holod from 1972 taken from the middle of the courtyard toward the entrance and vestibule (Fig. 9) allows several inferences:

1. The northern iwan is absent in that photo, so the northern iwan was rebuilt after that date and is entirely new.



Fig. 7. Iwan of the Dome chamber, photo by Donald Wilber. from The Architecture of Islamic Iran: The Ilkhanid Period.

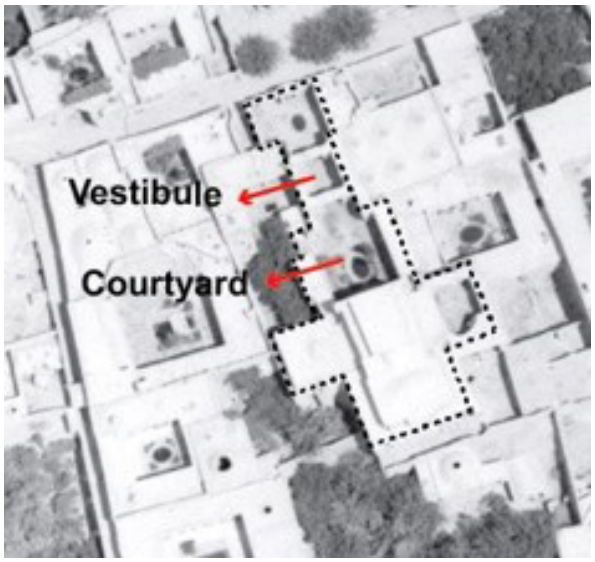


Fig. 8. Tomb of Seyyed Shams al-Din in an aerial photo from 1956



Fig. 9. View of the courtyard in 1972. Source: Renta Halud (from archnet.org).

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2. The courtyard façades in the photo are single-storey and lack ornamentation (e.g., muqarnas), implying the second storey is a recent addition; however, one of the western blind arches attached to the southern iwan appears to retain original ornamentation and may have served as a model for later reconstructions of other arches.
3. The courtyard façades were plastered and lacked tile decoration in the photo; it seems portions of the mosaic tile façade were concealed beneath plaster and later uncovered and restored.
4. The vestibule has a dome in this photo, so the dome was built by that time; however, it differs from the current form and lacks the upper lantern thus the dome was further restored later.

The portal is also altered: as noted, parts of the portal such as the entablature and roof edge are lost. The existing portal vault is modern and, per an inscription on it, was restored in 1982 by Master Ali Akbar Khorrami. Because the tiles under the vestibule dome closely resemble the portal vault tiles, these may also date to that restoration (Fig. 10). The lantern above the vestibule dome with exterior tilework likely belongs to the same period. Heritage Office records include photographs of courtyard restoration works showing that much of the courtyard's mosaic tile decoration is recent and the result of recent conservation.

Wilber and Pope did not publish interior photos of the dome chamber, but both mention a marble gravestone engraved with the date 767 AH and state it is the stone sent from Tabriz (Pope, 1938/2008; Wilber, 1938/1955). However, based on Yazd histories the object sent from Tabriz was a marble mihrab, not a gravestone; thus it is unclear which marble stone Wilber and Pope referred to, and they may have erred. Moreover, the gravestone date they cite 767 AH conflicts with the recorded death of Seyyed Shams al-Din in 733 AH.

Regarding the mihrab: presently, in the back recess opposite the dome-chamber entrance there is a strip of marble about half a meter wide inscribed in thuluth with verses 17–20 of Sūra Āl-'Imrān. (Fig. 11) Iraj Afshar refers to this as the mihrab band in Yādgārhā-ye Yazd, and the cultural heritage registration file likewise calls it a mihrab. Visually this marble strip resembles a decorative border rather than a mihrab, and importantly it is not oriented toward the qibla but perpendicular to it (southeast). The object lies on the building's main axis opposite the entrance, but as noted the main axis is not the qibla. Two points are noteworthy: Afshar records inscriptions on the marble band whose oldest date is 818 AH, suggesting the marble's antiquity approaches the building's original construction; and the other two sides of the dome chamber (southwest and northwest) have similar decoration, while the southeast side where this marble border is installed differs. Definitive conclusions are difficult because the lower decoration of the qibla side has been lost and a mihrab might once have been placed there.

In sum, the building has undergone repeated repairs and restorations, complicating reconstruction of its original appearance. From the above discussion the dome chamber and its iwan appear to be among the most authentic parts. The main dome and the vestibule dome have been rebuilt and likely differ from their original forms; consequently some of the decorations beneath these domes are not original. The courtyard façade has been restored but seems to approximate its original appearance.

Beyond the described spaces, the madrasa probably



Fig. 10. Decorations under the Hashti dome. Photo by the author.



Fig. 11. Marble stone border referred to as the Mihrab. Photo by the author.

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included other rooms now lost. Examining the plan and comparing this building with other madrasas suggests there were once spaces flanking the vestibule. Currently to the east of the vestibule there is a nave-like hall of two bays by two bays that is heavily damaged and filled with rubble. In the 1956 aerial photo this part appears to have measured three bays by two bays (six arches) and is now partially ruined. (Fig. 12) The age, function, and relation of this hall to the Shamsiyeh tomb are uncertain; however, from the vault types, proportions, and bricks it may be later than the Shamsiyeh tomb. On the other side of the vestibule a residential courtyard now stands. Evidence is scant, so firm conclusions cannot be drawn. Flooding can explain why little of the original tomb and the Shamsiyeh complex survive: Tārīkh-e Jadid-e Yazd records parts of the complex ruined by flood in 860 AH, and Afshar cites a paper plaque dated 1305 AH stating the building was repaired about four hundred years earlier, then ruined by flood and left derelict for some time; the plaque urged contributors toward repair (Afshar, 1969, 597-598). Thus the complex was likely repeatedly damaged and repaired, causing loss of its original form.

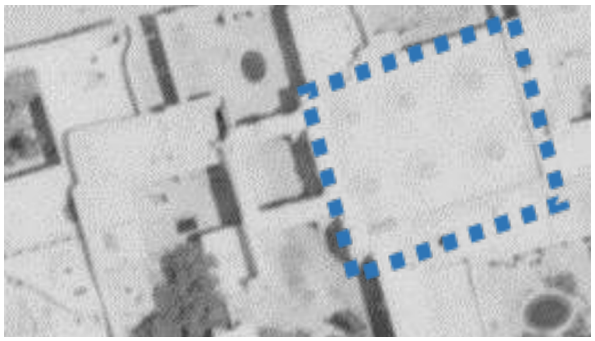


Fig. 12. The vestibule and its surrounding spaces in an aerial photograph from 1956 (the nave-like space with six arched openings is highlighted in the image)

Current Condition of the Complex

The Chahar Menar neighborhood now lies in the center of the city of Yazd. The complex is at a considerable distance from the Jameh Mosque and the old city center of Yazd. According to historical texts, the Shamsiyeh complex was founded outside the city of Yazd and after some time became attached to the city. The Chahar Menar quarter remained at the city entrance even until 1956. This is clearly visible in the 1956 aerial photograph (Fig. 13). Recent expansion of Yazd has placed this neighborhood in the middle of the city. To rediscover the original layout of the Shamsiyeh complex, we first list the prominent structures that still exist in this neighborhood.

The most important surviving building in this quarter is the Shamsiyeh madrasa, now known as the tomb



Fig. 13. The Chaharmanar neighborhood in an aerial photo from 1956 is located at the entrance to the city.

of Seyyed Shams al-Din. This building was discussed in detail in earlier chapters. Another notable building is the Chahar Menar hosseiniyeh. The hosseiniyeh stands north of the neighborhood's main thoroughfare and a short distance from the Shamsiyeh shrine. It had a lofty portal whose facade and arch have now collapsed, leaving portions of its jambs. Recently an arch was rebuilt at the mid-height of these remaining jambs (Fig. 14). The hosseiniyeh has an octagonal vestibule and its main courtyard is square; rooms (cells) surround it on two stories. The heritage-registration dossier states that the building's foundations date to the eighth century AH, and it regards that same portal as evidence. Iraj Afshar also considers the only remaining part of the complex, besides the Shamsiyeh madrasa, to be that portal; he believes the builders



Fig. 14. Portal of the Hosseiniyeh. photo by the author.

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used the remaining jambs of the portal, inserted a roof at mid-height of the tall portal, and attached it to the hosseiniyeh (Afshar, 1969, 593). From the presented discussions and the building's current condition, one can infer that the present hosseiniyeh was constructed on the site of one of the elements of the Shamsiyeh complex. Only a portion of the earlier portal remained, and the hosseiniyeh's builders used those remaining jambs to erect the new building; because the original portal was very tall and had elongated proportions, they constructed an arch at mid-height.

In addition to the mentioned structures, two small bazaars are present in this neighborhood, though they are now inactive. One bazaar stands opposite the aforementioned portal such that the extension of the bazaar's main axis passes directly through the middle of the portal (Fig. 15). The other bazaar lies west of the



15. Portal of the Hosseiniyeh and the bazaar opposite it. photo by the author.

Shamsiyeh tomb along the alley that runs in front of the tomb and the hosseiniyeh.

A water reservoir is located opposite the Shamsiyeh shrine; according to the heritage-registration dossier, it dates to the Qajar period. There is also a bath (hammam) in the neighborhood that apparently has no historic value. Residents report a caravanserai that collapsed years ago from water damage; this caravanserai apparently stood east of the eastern bazaar. The ruins of that building are visible in the 1956 aerial photograph. Today a playground occupies that site (Fig. 16).



Fig. 16. Location of the notable buildings in the Chahar Menar neighborhood.

Searching for the Original Form of the Complex

As discussed above, what remains today of the Shamsiyeh complex includes parts of the Shamsiyeh madrasa and a partially ruined portal. First, we establish that the building now known as the tomb of Seyyed Shams al-Din is the same as the Shamsiyeh madrasa. Because both the endowment letter and Yazd history books state that Seyyed Shams al-Din was buried in his own madrasa, there is no doubt that the present building is the Shamsiyeh madrasa. Only one source mentioned that the complex contained two madrasas. The endowment letter likewise refers to a single madrasa, part of which was allocated to the tomb of Seyyed Shams al-Din. The question arises: if two madrasas did exist in the complex, why would Seyyed Shams al-Din dedicate one of them to his tomb, and would that reduce the status of the other madrasa? Therefore, the probability that two separate madrasas existed in the complex is very low.

The other remaining part is the portal. The portal was built directly opposite the bazaar entrance and along its axis. Thus one can conclude that the old bazaar likely stood in this same location. Another section of the bazaar remains on the west side of the madrasa. Historical texts indicate that the bazaar probably ran in front of the madrasa. Therefore, one may assume these two bazaars were connected and formed part of an old bazaar row. Today there are two small squares in front of the mentioned portal and the madrasa's portal; it can be assumed these two small squares functioned as minor squares or junctions within the bazaar and that other buildings may have surrounded these junctions. Another point: next to the hosseiniyeh is the entrance to a qanat that was sealed several years ago. Since texts mention a qanat running through the bazaar, this reinforces the probability that the old bazaar's location was here.

Historical texts state the caravanserai stood on one side of the bazaar and the bath on the other. If we assume the caravanserai of the Shamsiyeh complex was located where the caravanserai that collapsed years ago once stood and that the bath occupied the present bath's site, the texts agree with these assumptions—because the caravanserai would be on the bazaar's eastern side and the bath on its western side. Thus the general form that can be envisaged from texts and on-site evidence is a bazaar row containing two small squares within it, with buildings situated around those squares. The complex's main elements likely lay around these small market squares (Fig. 17).

Conclusion

At the start of this research, by compiling and reconciling historical texts, the components of the Seyyed Shams al-Din complex in Yazd were revealed.

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Fig. 17. Location of the remaining buildings and a hypothetical layout of the complex. The orange color indicates the bazaar axis and the yellow indicates the small plazas between bazaar alleys. drawing by the author.

According to the texts, the complex included the Shamsiyeh madrasa, a khanqah, a dar al- siyadah, a bazaar, a bath, and a caravanserai. Descriptions indicate bazaars flanked the madrasa; the bazaar passed in front of the madrasa and the madrasa's entrance opened into the bazaar. A caravanserai stood on one side and a bath on the other side of the bazaar. Of the Seyyed Shams al-Din complex's components, only the tomb of Seyyed Shams al-Din now remains in the Chahar Menar neighborhood of Yazd. Evidence shows this building is the Shamsiyeh madrasa. Parts of the building including the domed chamber, its iwan, and part of the courtyard façade retain historical authenticity. The madrasa now stands adjacent to the neighborhood's main thoroughfare. Other notable structures nearby, though not historically authentic, can help identify the original form of the complex. These include two bazaars (on either side of the madrasa), the hosseiniyeh, the water reservoir, the bath, and an open plot that formerly contained the caravanserai. By matching historical descriptions with the on-site evidence, one can propose a general layout for the complex: the two current bazaars were likely parts of a single bazaar row that passed in front of the madrasa; this bazaar had two junctions or small squares one opposite the madrasa's portal and one opposite the historic portal of the hosseiniyeh. The complex's main components probably lay around these small squares.

Endnotes

1. A full account of this event appears in the books Tarikh-e Yazd and Tarikh-e Jadid-e Yazd.
2. The author of the endowment letter repeatedly prayed for long life and the stability of Seyyed Shams al-Din's ministerial office.
3. The "three histories" refers to the books Tārīkh-e Yazd, Tārīkh-e Jadid-e Yazd, and Jame'-e Mofidi — all three edited and published by Iraj Afshar.
4. The Yazd flood occurred in 860 AH, which the author of the book witnessed.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that there was no conflict for them in conducting this research.

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