

ICOMOS

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CONSEIL INTERNATIONAL DES MONUMENTS ET DES SITES
CONSEJO INTERNACIONAL DE MONUMENTOS Y SITIOS
МЕЖДУНАРОДНЫЙ СОВЕТ ПО ВОПРОСАМ ПАМЯТНИКОВ И ДОСТОПРИМЕЧАТЕЛЬНЫХ МЕСТ

Our Ref. GB/AS/1568_AddInf_1

Charenton-le-Pont, 28 September 2017

H. E. Mr Ahmad Jalali
Permanent Delegation of the Islamic
Republic of Iran to UNESCO
Maison de l'UNESCO
1, rue Miollis
75732 Paris CEDEX 15

World Heritage List 2018

Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region (Iran)

Dear Sir,

ICOMOS is currently assessing the nomination of "Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region" as a World Heritage site and an ICOMOS evaluation mission has visited the property to consider matters related to protection, management and conservation, as well as issues related to integrity and authenticity.

In order to help with our overall evaluation process, we would be grateful to receive further information to augment what has already been submitted in the nomination dossier.

Therefore, we would be pleased if the State Party could consider the following points and kindly provide additional information:

Serial approach

Could the State Party kindly provide information on the rationale, methodology and criteria (here not referring to the nomination criteria), which guided the selection of the component sites presented in this nomination?

Could the State Party kindly outline the contribution of each site component, to the overall Outstanding Universal Value in a substantial, scientific and discernible way, as outlined in paragraph 137b of the *Operational Guidelines*?

Risks and factors affecting the property

All site components are located within seismically active areas and have experienced previous earthquakes, at times with devastating impacts. The nomination dossier states on p. 281 that with recent conservation works the likeliness of earthquake damages has significantly decreased.

ICOMOS would be pleased if the State Party could provide further information about the way conservation techniques have been applied, which ones are specifically adapted to the seismic risks of the area as well as how property documentation and risk preparedness plans address the possible impact of a major earthquake.

Protection

ICOMOS would be pleased to receive updated information about the institution or authority that has formally adopted the development restriction for the buffer zones and landscape zones, which are indicated in the nomination dossier.

Management

The management structure is characterized by the twofold structure of SALF bases in Firuzabad/Savestan and Bisharpur as stated in the nomination dossier p.318.

ICOMOS would be pleased to receive further information about these structures in order to understand better how the cooperation between them and, in particular between the individuals listed responsible for the same tasks functions in practice.

Monitoring

The presentation of a "monitoring system" is briefly described in the nominations dossier.

ICOMOS would be pleased to receive further information on whether previous monitoring exercises have taken place.

ICOMOS is grateful for the assistance that the State Party will provide along the evaluation process.

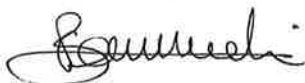
We look forward to your responses to these points, which will be of great help in our evaluation process.

We would be grateful if you could provide ICOMOS and the UNESCO World Heritage Centre with the above information **by Friday 3 November 2017 at the latest.**

Please note that the State Party shall submit two copies of the additional information to the UNESCO World Heritage Centre so that it can be formally registered as part of the nomination.

We thank you in advance for your kind cooperation.

Yours faithfully,



Gwenaëlle Bourdin
Director
ICOMOS Evaluation Unit

Copy to Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHHTO)
 UNESCO World Heritage Centre

Islamic Republic of Iran
Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization
ICHHTO

“Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region”

for inscription on the World Heritage List

(Additional Information)



UNESCO
World Heritage Convention

2017

In the name of God



Evaluation of the nomination of the “*Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region*”

(Islamic Republic of Iran) for inscription on the World Heritage List

This report is submitted in response to the ICOMOS letter of GB/AS/1568-AddInf-1, dated 28 September 2017 on the additional information for the nomination of *Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region*. The Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization is grateful to ICOMOS for its devotion to conservation and preservation of historic monuments and sites. The objective of this detailed report is to clarify the issues raised by ICOMOS in the aforementioned letter.

Additional information for clarification on:

- *Serial approach*
- *Risks and Factors affecting the property*
- *Protection*
- *Management*
- *Monitoring*

1- Serial approach

Could the State Party kindly provide information on the rationale, methodology and criteria (here not referring to the nomination criteria), which guided the selection of the component sites presented in this nomination?

Could the State Party kindly outline the contribution of each site component, to the overall Outstanding Universal Value in the substantial, scientific and discernible way, as outlined in paragraph 137b of the Operational Guidelines?

For clarifying, the question will be explained in the parts of (1-a) and (1-b) in details:

1-a: Rationale, methodology and criteria which guided the selection of the component sites presented in this nomination:

The rationale which guided the selection of the component sites is based on a methodology which takes into account their historical characteristics and at the same time considers their association with the regional landscape. It intends to present the effort demonstrate how the Sassanid dynasty approached the establishment of towns in different environmental contexts , construction of monumental buildings with different functions over the centuries, stressing a diachronic perspective which from the early Sassanid period (Firuzabad) reaches into the late Sassanid and subsequent early Islamic period (Sarvestan).

The criteria upon which the components were selected are as follows:

The first criterion is geographical, that is to say that the three sites all belong to the ancient region of Fars, cradle of the Persian civilization, including both its eastern (Firuzabad),

central (Sarvestan) and western (Bishapur) areas.

The second is topographical, so that the sites selected covers the Sassanid towns and monuments within different topographical context in order to provide a comprehensive representation of the Sassanid landscape in various environmental conditions.

The third is architectural, and provides the elements for illustrating the Sassanid presence in the landscape of Fars through urbanism (Firuzabad, Bishapur), civil architecture (Firuzabad, Bishapur) and religious architecture (Firuzabad, Bishapur, and Sarvestan).

These three sites will show the evolution of Sassanid architecture. That is, the creation of architectural novel architectural elements such as dome, squinch, domed room with portico (*Ayvan*), the creation of huge cross-vaulted and also the evolution of traditional lime and gypsum construction materials in the beginning of Sassanid era (Qaleh Dokhtar, Ardashir palace), middle of this period (Bishapur) and at the end of Sassanid and the beginning of Islam (Sarvestan) are evident in these three sites. Ignoring any of these three sites will lead to an incomplete explanation of Sassanid urban and architectural concepts.

The fourth criterion is chronological, that is: the three selected sites correspond to the various stages of the Sassanid kingdom, from the very beginning (Firuzabad) to a more mature age (Bishapur), until the very late and post-Sassanid period (Sarvestan).

The fifth is cultural, Firuzabad illustrates a purely Sassanid culture, Bishapur shows the importance of the cultural contacts with the Roman Empire and Sarvestan illustrates the long-durée strength of Sassanid culture into the early Islamic age.

1-b: Outline the contribution of each site component to the Overall Outstanding Universal value in a substantial, scientific and discernible way as outlined in paragraph 137b of Operational Guidelines:

Each site component of the nominated property contributes to the Outstanding Universal Value of the Sassanid Archaeological Landscape in Fars region as a whole in a substantial, scientific and discernible way.

The most important factor behind the contribution of each site to the overall Outstanding Universal Value of the nominated property is that: each demonstrates architectural and historical features and significance of a particular determine period of the Sassanid Empire, while when combined together the whole, as one entity, clearly manifest, the overall OUV of the site.

To this end, it is to be considered that OUV cannot be represented in just a single component because is distributed in proportion with the area of the Sassanid Empire in Fars and thus complements each other, and together can display the gradual evolution.

As regards the contributions of the geographical aspects, Firuzabad illustrates the serial property in eastern Fars, Sarvestan in central Fars and Bishapur in western Fars: in this way the geographical attribute of the serial property is easily comprehended and communicated.

The topographical aspect of the Sassanid Archaeological Landscape in Fars region is

covered by the contribution of the three component sites. Firuzabad and Bishapur, in their different geographical areas, both bring evidence of a topographical context including a new town founded by a king in a plain and several associated architectural and art monuments in the surrounding hills: at Firuzabad one of Ardashir I's palaces is built on a high rocky spur, the other in the plain near a small lake, and two rock reliefs are carved in the nearby valley facing a river; at Bishapur a palace is built on a hillock high on the plain and six rock reliefs are carved in the nearby valley facing a river; at Sarvestan, the existing main building looks isolated in a plain but the archaeological evidence shows the original presence of surrounding structures. Thus Firuzabad and Bishapur show the same topographical relationship between town and king's palace, which can therefore be considered as typical of the Sassanid culture at least in the early period. Also the interesting relationship between Sassanid rock reliefs and water, which illustrate the religious and ideological attitude of the Sassanid dynasty, is clearly to be witnessed at both sites, bringing an important element for the connection of Sassanid Archaeological Landscape in Fars region with environment, which appears as easily understood and communicated.

The architectural aspect of Sassanid Archaeological Landscape in Fars region is illustrated by the contribution of the three sites: Firuzabad contributes in urbanism (Ardashir Khureh), civil architecture (Qaleh Dokhtar and Ardashir I's palace) and religious architecture (Takht-e Neshin); Bishapur contributes in urbanism (town), civil architecture (Qaleh Dokhtar, Monument of Shapur I), religious architecture (in the so-called Shapur's palace); Sarvestan in religious architecture (function of Zoroastrian fire temple). Thus the architectural aspect of Sassanid Archaeological Landscape in Fars region is easily understood and communicated through the contribution of these sites.

As regards to the chronological and historical value of Sassanid Archaeological Landscape in Fars region, as a testimony of one of the most important empires of the ancient world, Firuzabad represent the evidence of the creation of the Empire under Ardashir I, until the beginning of the Islamic period; Bishapur illustrates the consolidation of the kingdom under Shapur I, who through his victories over the Roman Empire could acquire Roman specialized craftsmanship for his urban and artistic projects; Sarvestan finally throws light on the still important role of Zoroastrian religion during the final phases of the Sassanid kingdom and at the beginning of the Islamic period. Thus the chronological and historical aspects of Sassanid Archaeological Landscape in Fars region is easily comprehended and communicated though the contribution of these sites.

The cultural aspect of Sassanid Archaeological Landscape in Fars region is illustrated by the different characteristics of each of the components Firuzabad illustrates an original, purely Sassanid culture in eastern Fars stimulated by the multiple activities of the founder of the dynasty, Ardashir I, extending from town planning to architecture and art; Bishapur shows the importance of the cultural contacts with the Roman empire under the long and powerful kingdom of Shapur I, which consolidated the empire and saw a flourishing period of fertile cultural and economical exchanges with Rome, despite many wars; Sarvestan, finally, illustrates the long-durée strength of Sassanid culture into the early Islamic age.

2- Risks and factors affecting the property

All site components are located within seismically active areas and have experienced previous earthquakes, at times with devastating impacts. The nomination dossier states on p.281 that with recent conservation works the likeliness of earthquake damages has significantly decreased.

ICOMOS would be pleased if the State Party could provide further information about the way conservation techniques have been applied , which ones are specifically adapted to the seismic risks of the area as well as how property documentation and risk preparedness plans address the possible impact of a major earthquake.

According to the conditions and the forms of the property in each site, different scheduling and executive actions will be taken to decrease the effects of earthquake. In the case of Bishapur and Ardashir khureh (Shahre Gur), both considered as huge spaces, as the height of properties are not so much and regarding their location in the site, earthquake will not be so risky.

In Case of Qaleh dokhtar, engineering studies and strengthening structures have been done by a French – Swiss group and a project was suggested too. However, as there were some probable risks in implementing the new interventions in the project, it was not executed. As a switch plan, it was decided to continue the project by utilizing the traditional knowledge and skilled professionals. Consequently the parts of buttress were repaired and the bed/ground surrounding the building was stabilized.

Documentation of Castel/Qaleh has been done through laser scanning and photogrammetry in different periods. The monitoring of the site has been implemented systematically according to the different plans through past years and is being currently implemented.

Currently, a group of skilled engineers specialized in the field of historical monuments are studying in this site to find a solution to strengthen the building against earthquake. A short summery of their activities will be mentioned below. The technical committee of the site and the technical council of the Cultural Heritage Organization, which consists of experienced and skilled members and experts, constantly observe the results of the studies and consult with the group of experts. Reaching to the final conclusion, the plan will be presented to both the technical committee and technical council for ratification and then the process of implementation will be discussed. The similar procedure is being done for Sarvestan palace as well.

Programmes:

Phase 1: Assigning/designating the objectives and main plans and strategies of the project by project manager.

Phase 2: Site Topography and topography of the structure area in proper scale for analyzing the bed of the structure

Phase 3: Assigning/designating geological characteristics of the site and deeper layers of the earth to proper depth (Geo Technique and stone mechanic experiments), and Preparing programme of infield studies and laboratory experiments for recognizing the earth's behavior

Phase 4: preparing programme of material resistance experiments using applied materials in Qaleh Dokhtar structure (stone and mortar mechanic experiment),

Phase 5: studying and surveying faults of the region and vulnerability of the site against tremors.

Phase 6: Analysis of the ground and pathology.

Phase 7: studying the consolidation/reinforcement of the ground as well as the structure.

Phase 8: comprehensive three dimensional modeling of the structures in their current state along with the surrounding preserving belt and studying the function of the belt

Phase 9: Providing final plan regarding strengthening the structure against natural threats including earthquakes

3- Protection

ICOMOS would be pleased to receive update information about the institution or authority that has formally adapted the development restriction for the buffer zones and landscape zone, which are indicated in the nomination dossier.

In Iran, Iranian cultural heritage, handicrafts and tourism organization (ICHHTO) as the representative of Islamic republic of Iran, is fully authorized for conservation of the monuments as well as preservation of Core zone and Buffer zone of the historical-cultural properties. This includes protection and preservation of these properties against any development. Also, there are some regulations and laws ratified by the Parliament in order to preserve the buffer zones of these properties. These laws and regulations as a guideline have been considered in Master, detailed and pilot plans and proclaimed to all relevant organizations to be implemented.

In the Iranian cultural heritage, handicrafts and truism organization (ICHHTO) Security guard has been established for physical monitoring and controlling the developments.

Also, regarding development of rural areas, housing foundation is collaborating with SALF base. These plans primarily should be approved by the ICHHTO and then they are allowed to be ratified by the housing foundation. In the case of any contrary, the veto right is reserved for ICHHTO.

For the urban areas, master and detailed plans are prepared by the ministry of road and urban development in collaboration with municipalities. These plans should be approved by the ICHHTO too. And without this approval, the high council of architecture and urban development which ICHHTO is an active member of it, would not ratify the acts.

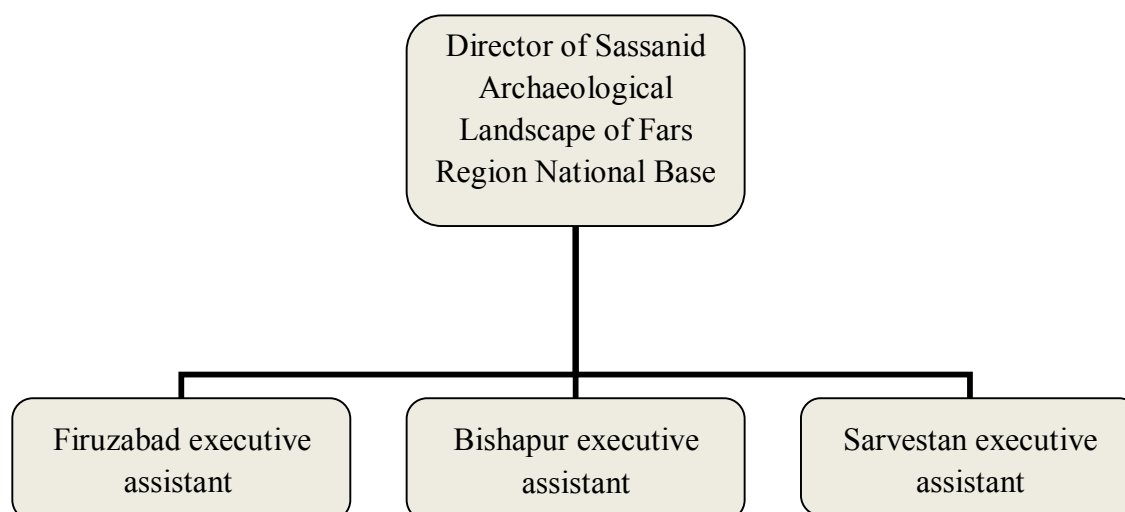
Regarding the urban plans which municipalities are in charge of them, the inquiries will be done from cultural heritage organization as well.

4- Management

The management structure is characterized by the twofold structure of SALF bases in Firuzabad/ Sarvestan and Bishapur as state in the nomination dossier p.318.

ICOMOS would be pleased to receive further information about these structures in order to understand better how the cooperation between them and, in particular between the individuals listed responsible for the same tasks functions in practice.

The important Historical- cultural properties (sites), inscribed on the national list, are managed as base, by a director, his/her executive assistant, and a team of experts in the form of research, executive, legal groups. As illustrated in the chart below, the Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars, is managed unitedly under supervision of Director of Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars region National Base. The base has a technical committee and a strategic committee; all the strategic and technical decisions are implemented after adoption in the mentioned committees. For better implementation of the programs, the director has assigned assistants in the three components of the base. Local experts are working in various fields in the 3 mentioned sites.



5- Monitoring

The presentation of a “monitoring system” is briefly described in the nominations dossier.

ICOMOS would be pleased to receive further information on whether previous monitoring exercises have taken place.

The monitoring system includes different parts as below:

1. Physical Monitoring:

Done through 2 ways, A) by Security Guards who are connected to Justice Ministry, police and site, equipped with required equipment. These guards are present in 3 sites of (Firuzabad, Bishapur and Sarvestan) day and night. (B) Electronic security: through electronic equipment including security cameras connected to the central system monitored and reported by responsible guard.

2. Structural Monitoring:

A) By Photography and Photogrammetry

B) By field research and visiting

C) Through testing instruments including Chalk indicators, testing temperature...

This part is implemented by the trained experts of the site in intervals according to the chart presented in pages 320-323 of the nomination dossier.

3. Social, Economic, Cultural and tourism Monitoring:

This part includes tourists, employees and inhabitants of the surrounding villages of the site, implemented in coordination of related organizations and experts of the site. The data including Population conditions, economic statistics, cultural, educational, hygienic issues as well as related infrastructures are collected from related organizations, analyzed and used for better management of the site. The qualitative and quantitative statistics of tourists are systematically recorded by the trained experts at the site.

4. Traffic Monitoring:

This monitoring is implemented by road and urban development ministry and the reports are receiving by the base periodically.

5- Climatic and geographical Monitoring:

This monitoring is implemented through various climatic measurement stations, including metrology and geographical stations like geology and seismography. The data are collected from the related stations, analyzed by the trained experts, and the results and conclusions are used for proper management of the site.

It is evident that in case of requiring other information, the monitoring team would prepare the needed data and information via related sections.

Islamic Republic of Iran
Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization
ICHHTO

“Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region”
for inscription on the World Heritage List
(Additional Information II)



UNESCO
World Heritage Convention
2018

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION PRESENTED TO THE ICOMOS PANEL FOR THE EVALUATION OF "Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars"

This report concerns the ICOMOS letter no. GB/AS/1568/ IR dated 22 December 2017 on ICOMOS interim report and additional information request for the nomination of the **Sassanid Archaeological Landscape of Fars Region**. Hereby the state party expresses its deep gratitude for the ICOMOS cooperation in the field of cultural heritage. The Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization is grateful to ICOMOS for its devotion to conservation and preservation of historic monuments and sites. The objective of this detailed report is to clarify the issues raised by ICOMOS in the aforementioned letter.

Additional information for clarification on:

- *Commencement / early expansion of Sassanid Empire*
- *Archaeological Landscape representation*
- *State of Conservation and management of the site*

In regard to Commencement / early expansion of Sassanid Empire:

Following are the detailed explanations in this regard:

1 - Chronology of Firuzabad and Bishapur site components

Even though most of the two site components Firuzabad and Bishapur was founded respectively by the Early Sassanid kings Ardashir I and Shapur I, at both sites the evidence regarding the Middle and the Late Sassanid period is considerable. This fact has not been evidenced enough clearly in the State Party Report so that the ICOMOS panel was brought to a partially incomplete consideration. Also during the meeting of the 23rd November in Paris the State Party team had not understood the need to stress this point. We hope that with the present additional information the ICOMOS Panel will accept that the Outstanding Universal Value of the two sites regards the whole duration of the Sassanid period and not only the Early Sassanid Period.

1.A - FIRUZABAD

1.A.a - Mihr Narseh Bridge

The most relevant evidence for the Middle Sasanian period at Firuzabad is given by the *Mihr Narseh* bridge, which was built in front of the Ardashir Investiture Relief and is safely dated by a Middle Persian inscription engraved to the right of the former relief (see p. 36 of the Report).

In order to lay stress on this monument and on its inscription, it is proposed to change the name of the component from "Ardashir Investiture Relief" to "Ardashir Investiture Relief and Mihr Narseh Bridge"(fig.1).



Fig. 1 - Mihr Narseh Bridge

1.A.b - Architectural modifications to the Ardashir Palace (so-called Ateshkade)

In the Ardashir Palace there are several secondary architectural episodes which are different from the Later Periods' Structures mentioned on p. 54 of the Report and belong to the main life of the palace during the Sassanid period as seen from the masonry techniques. The main architectural episodes consist in the construction of the supporting piers at the centre of the arches giving access from the Main Ivan to the Side Ivans and the construction of benches in the Side Ivans (fig. 2 & fig.3): the small excavation sondages in the Main Ivan, never published, show that they are linked to the succession of floor levels evidenced in the stratigraphy still visible in the sondages sections and thus regards the long use of the monument after the initial construction (fig. 4).

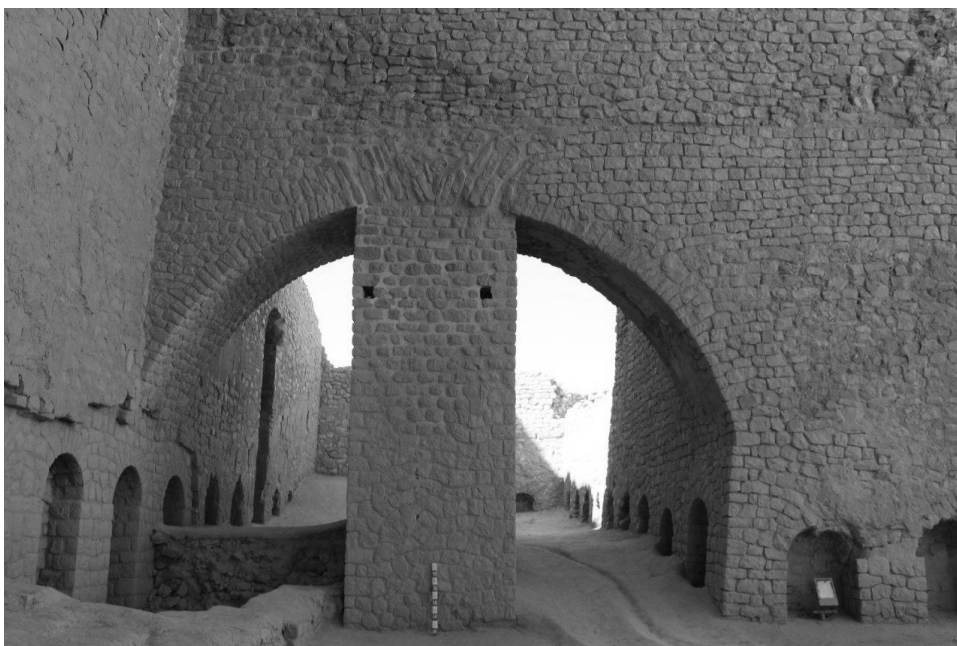


Fig. 2 - Photo of supporting piers at the centre of the arches giving access from the Main Ivan to the Side Ivans.



Fig. 3 - Construction of benches in the Side Ivans from Ardashir Palace



Fig. 4 - Succession of floor levels evidenced in the stratigraphy of the small excavation sondages in the Main Ivan.

1.A.c - Coins

Late Sassanid coins found in the archaeological work on the Qaleh Dokhtar component demonstrate its use as a fortress until this age, even though the main imperial palace was the so-called Ateshkade (Huff & Gignoux 1978, p. 140).

At the same time the numismatic study of Sassanid coinage shows that one of the mints for production of Sassanid coinage in Fars was in the city of Ardashir Khwarrah, present Gur city (Schindel 2004, p. 150). This mint, with the abbreviation ART, is documented since the very first appearance of mint abbreviations on the Sassanid coinage at the end of the 4th century AD and lasts until the Arab conquest, pointing to a continuity of occupation throughout the Sassanid period.



Fig. 5 - Late Sassanid coins found in the archaeological work on the Qaleh Dokhtar

1.A.d - Sealings

The study of the impressions of administrative seals of the Late Sassanid period gives evidence of the life on the city in this period (Gyselen 1989, p. 44). The ancient Sassanian name of Ardashir Khwarrah for example appears on some Late Sassanid clay sealings found at Qasr-e Abu Nasr by the Metropolitan Museum expedition in the 1930's (Frye 1973, Figs. D 199, 207, 212). This information is strengthened by written sources: the Nestorian diocese of Ardashir-kurrah is mentioned in Syriac sources in AD 554 (Gyselen 1989, p. 72). Other sources mention that with the name of Gur the city continued to be one of the capitals of Fars in the 9th-10th centuries AD (Frye 1973: 52; Figs. D 199, 207, 212). Also according to the Islamic inscription that was found in Jamaseb tomb in Fars, the use of this name continued until the 14th century (Hokammaei 2009).



Fig. 6 - Late Sassanid clay sealings found at Qasr-e Abu Nasr mentioning Ardashir Khwarrah (after Frye 1973).

1.B - BISHAPUR

1.B.a - Late Sassanid phases in the Fire Temple

The whole complex excavated in the north-west part of the Bishapur city, centred on the imposing Fire Temple (intepreted by Keall as an open court) shows considerable evidence of Late Sassanid age. They include architectural modifications as well as stucco decorations bearing stylistic characters decidedly different from the stuccoes found in the main hall of the Fire Temple, dated to the 3rd century AD along with the mosaics (fig.7).

We quote a passage from the article "Bīšāpūr" on the Encyclopaedia Iranica, written by E. Keall in 1989: "There has been a tendency to emphasize remains of the 3rd and 4th centuries and to ignore the subsequent history of the site, even though the archeological record contains significant remains from the later Sasanian and early Islamic periods (fig.8). For example, the new wall was clearly part of a later colonnaded court, reminiscent of features found at Taḳt-e Solaymān. It carried stucco decorations in a style comparable to those at 6th-century Ctesiphon (Ghirshman 1956, figs. 41-55). J. Kröger (p. 194) has dated them to the end of the 6th century or the beginning of the 7th. Coins of Ḳosrow II (r. 590-628) were found in debris of the associated stratum (Walker 1956, pp. 185-87)".



Fig. 7 - Late Sassanid stuccos from Bishapur Ivan of mosaics (after Ghirshman,1956)



Fig. 8 - Stuccos fragments of Late Sassanid age found in the Fire temple.

1.B.b - Tang-e Chogan

The use of this area for dynastic purposes reaches well into the 4th century AD, as shown by the sixth relief, attributed on valid grounds to Shapur II (AD 309-379) (see p. 71 of the Report and Keall 1989).

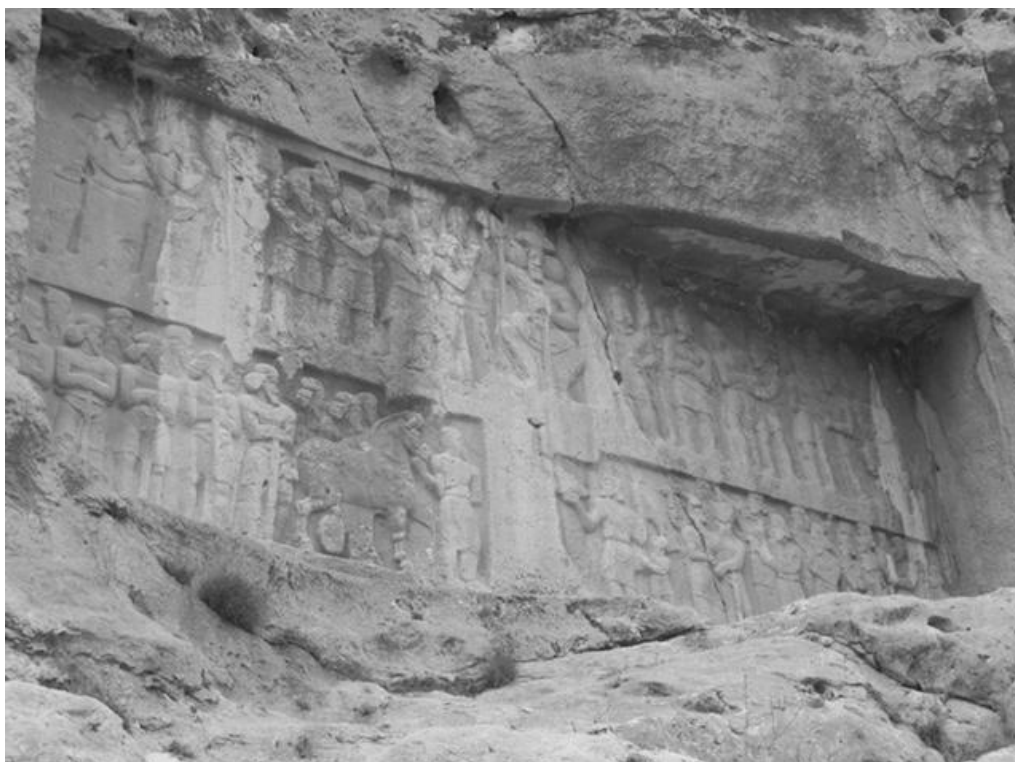


Fig. 9 - Photo of relief Bishapur VI, attributed on valid grounds to Shapur II (AD 309-379)

1.B.c - Coins

The the numismatic study of Sassanid coinage shows that one of the mints for production of sassanid coinage was in the city of Bishapur, with abbreviation BYŠ from the end of 4th century AD until the Arab conquest (Schindel 2004, p. 156), also more that 17 coins were discovered in recently archaeological excavation at Bishapur site that shown in Bishapur museum(fig.10).

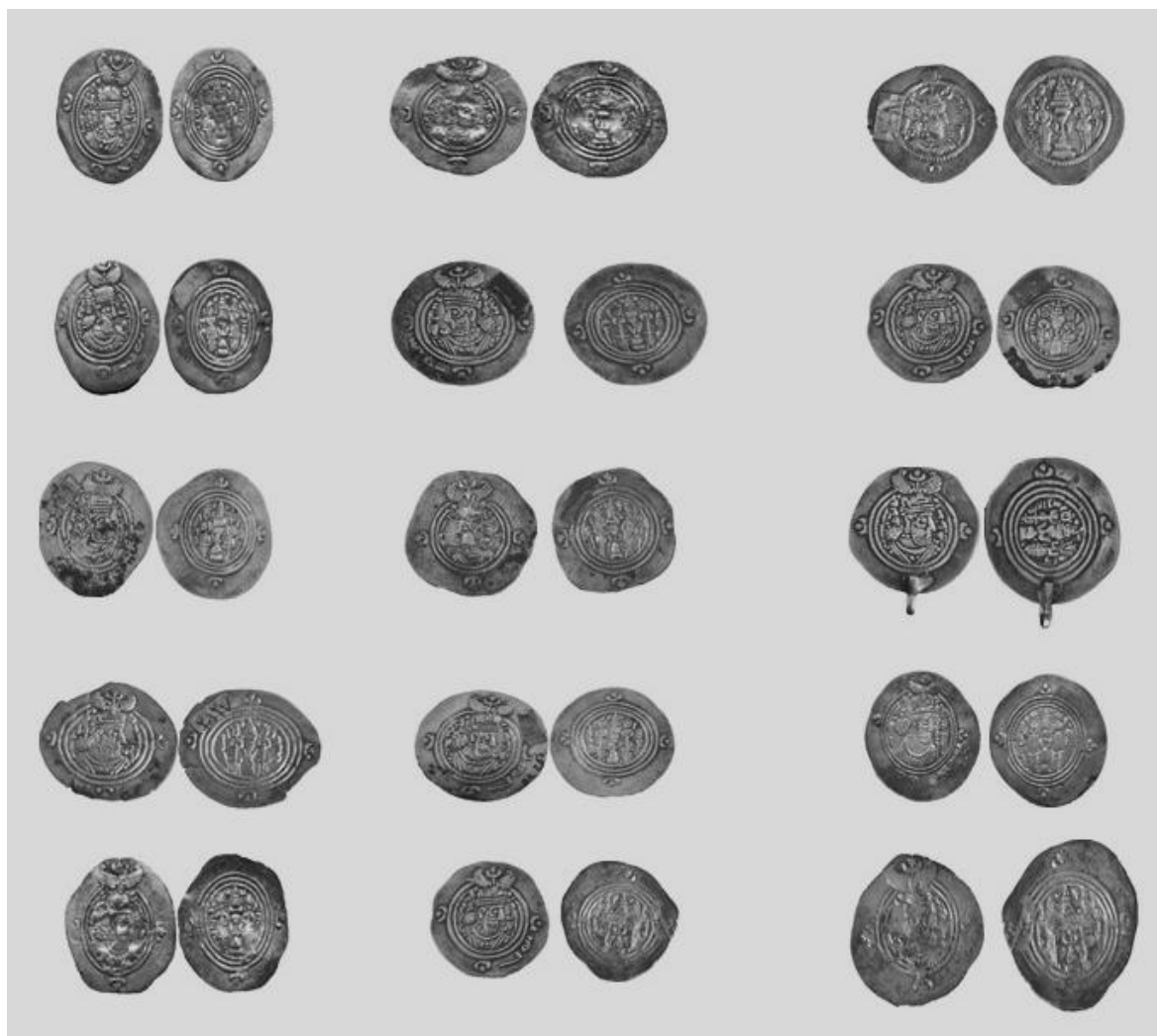


Fig. 10 – Middle and late Sassanid and Arab-Sassanid coins discovered in recent archaeological excavations at Bishapur.

1.B.d - Sealings

The study of the impressions of administrative seals of the Late Sassanid period gives evidence of the life on the city in this period (Gyselen 1989, p. 45). In the sealings recently discovered and kept in the Khoy Museum (Western Azerbaijan), Bishapur or Bishabuhr name is used for a jurisdiction district in the Late Sasanid time: the seal of the Sahrab of Bishabuhr, here attested as No. 120a – Bishabuhr, Sahrab (Akbarzadeh et al. 2009), is also already known from three impressions from Qasr-e Abu Nasr published by R. Frye (Frye 1973, nos. B97 and B196, Nos. 167 and 436; Frye 1968, p. 126 and pl. XXVIII, Fig. 25, B233);(fig.11). Frye's reading of B196 was the improved upon by Ph. Gignoux (1985, p. 183) and the same is true for B233 (Gignoux 1978, p. 26). The province of Bishapur is also known through a seal of a *Driyosan Jadaggow un Dadwar* and three

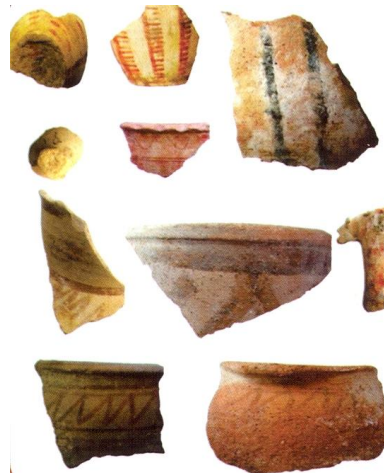
Maguh districts: Syag and Sartag and recently from Tol-e Qale seifabad(Akbarzadeh et. al 2009, p. 21);(Askari Chaverdi et.al 2013, p. 189).



Fig. 11 - Late Sassanid sealing from Qasr-e Abu Nasr mentioning Bishapur (after Frye 1973).

1.B.e - Unpublished finds from recent excavations

The still unpublished Iranian excavations have brought to light important archaeological finds which document the continuity of the occupation of the city through the Sassanid period (fig.12). Five archaeological seasons of excavation were carried out by an Iranian team from 2013 to 2017 to the south of the Ivan of Mosaics (Eivan-e mozaik) and in the Royal Fortress (Arg-e shahi) (Amiri 2018). Archaeological evidence, including relevant finds of plain and glazed pottery, stucco, metal and glass, was attributed to the Late Sassanid and Early Islamic period.



Figs 12- Finds of plain and glazed pottery, stucco, metal and glass from recent archaeological excavations, attributed to the late Sassanid period and early Islamic period.

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2 - Pertinence and importance of the Sarvestan Monument within the Serial nomination

The continuity of the Outstanding Universal Value through the Sassanid period at the Sites Components of Firuzabad and Bishapur strengthen the justification for the pertinence of the Site Component of Sarvestan within the Serial nomination.

In fact, the first archeological excavations in this monument and the surrounding areas were conducted in 2002, when a series of stratigraphic trenches were opened in order to identify the settlement history in different parts of the Sarvestan area including the Sarvestan monument itself. The primary goal of stratigraphic investigation in Sarvestan was to know the settlement sequence inside and around the monument. Comparing the results of regional and extra-site excavations with those undertaken on-site revealed a complex history of regional settlement and occupation of the Sarvestan monument itself. The ceramic fragments collected during the stratigraphic excavations inside the monuments of Sarvestān and in the areas around it showed that the area was already settled at the beginning of 7th century AD, i.e. still in the Late Sassanid period (Askari Chaverdi 2010; 2011, pp. 6-7).

As regards to the Sarvestan monument itself, it is so Sassanid in architectural character that the first western archaeologists and architects like Stein, Reuther, Herzfeld, Ghirshman, in their studies attributed it to the Sassanid era. This attribution was partly based on direct observation of its architectural elements, which were considered the most refined example of the Sassanian tradition, and partly on the early Islamic historical sources, which relate this building to the Sassanid period. However, Lionel Bier's research on Sarvestan monument led to a revision of the chronology and function of this monument which according to him is a Zoroastrian fire temple belonging to the early Islamic centuries and not a Sassanid palace (Bier 1986).

Three recently obtained radiocarbon ages of datable samples from the Sarvestan monument provided age-ranges dating to the Islamic period (Djamali et al. 2017). Sarv-1 and Sarv-2 samples date back to the middle 7th to middle/late 8th century AD (AD 655-724 and AD 664-773, respectively) and Sarv-3 is still later dating to the middle 8th to late 9th century AD (AD 762-887). The above dating results not only confirm one old radiocarbon age presented by Huff (AD 775-870: Huff 2014) but also confirm Bier's revision of older proposed chronologies for the monument. The first two ages mostly fall within the reign of the Umayyads (AD 661- 750) with Sarv-2 sample displaying a significant overlap with the beginning of the Abbasids. Sarv-3 mostly corresponds with the Abbasids.

Based on the above new radiocarbon datings for construction time of the Sasanian-style early Islamic monument of Sarvestan (mid-7th to late 9th centuries), we have now the robust scientific evidence that the date of Sarvestan monument (the "Palace" of Sarvestān), considered until the 1980's a masterwork of Sassanid architecture, can instead be traced back most probably to the beginning of the Islamic period, after the end of the last Sassanid King of kings, Yazdgerd III (AD 633-651).

This new dating in no case hinders it being included in the nomination. The fact that the Sarvestan monument has been built (or re-built?) just after the fall of the Sasanians at the mid-7th century AD shows that the Sassanid architectural tradition from the Early Sassanid period lived until the late Sassanid period and even after that, and that the Sarvestan Monuments can be considered as a late Sassanid architectural heritage despite its being built in the early Islamic period.

The use continuity in the Sarvestan area shown by its archaeological exploration is not a unique feature of this site and is also well-known from other Sasanian cities and monuments in spite of political and religious transformations linked to the Arab conquest. Besides, the fact that the Sarvestan monument was most probably used as a Zoroastrian religious monument, suggests that during the early Islamic period, despite the fact that the Umayyad Arabs and the commanders of their army were in conflict with the local political groups and the powerful Zoroastrian clergymen and needed to legitimize their rule over Persis (Daryaei 2010), the Zoroastrian religion was let to be practiced in Fars. It is thus possible to assume that this monument was constructed as a result of the political and religious interactions in the post-Sasanian era, and that the Zoroastrian religious society of the 7th, 8th, and 9th centuries AD gained the opportunity to continue its activities in the post-apocalyptic period of Zoroastrianism by using an interconnected religious network in different parts of Fars until the Buyid Dynasty.

Thus Sarvestan also shares the justification for nomination under criteria (i), (ii), (iii), (iv) and (v).

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3 - Historical conclusions

The Sasanian monuments of Fars have been used in several periods since their construction time. For example, the Qal'a-ye Doxtar and the Palace of Ardashir at Firuzabad have been used not only throughout the Sasanian era (Huff 2014), but according to the archaeological findings, these monuments were also extensively used during the early Islamic centuries, especially under the Buyid period in the 9th-10th centuries AD. It was namely in this period that the name of the circular city Ardashir Khwarrah ("Glory of Ardashir") was changed to Gur and then to Firuzābād (Firuzabad) in the same century (Huff 1978, p. 140). In the same way, archaeological findings (Nowruzi 1382, p. 417) and historical documents (Mehryar 1379, p. 70-81) suggest that there has been settlement continuity and/or re-occupation at Bishapur in the early Islamic centuries until the shift to Kazerun. Thus, in the course of the 7th century AD, there has been settlement continuity or resettlement in Bishapur, Firuzābād, as well as at Qasr-e Abu Nasr near Shiraz (Withcomb 1985) and Bayza near Malyan. The new radiocarbon results also clearly show a similar settlement history for the Sarvestan monument in 7th century AD suggesting that the Palace of Sarvestān has been an emerging monument in the course of this century. It can thus be considered as a late Sasanian architectural heritage built in the early Islamic period.

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4 - Conclusive remarks

The choice of the three site components of Firuzabad, Bishapur and Sarvestan in order to express the Outstanding Universal Value of SALF seems to the State Party still worth being considered valid.

The additional information provided at Paragraph 1 shows how the two component sites of Firuzabad and Bishapur, even though founded during the Early Sassanid period, continued to live and develop until the Arab conquest and even beyond, with interesting architectural episodes which have been only hinted to in the Report but which the additional information has now sufficiently illustrated.

As a consequence of the life of Firuzabad and Bishapur through the whole Sassanid period, the third component site of Sarvestan (see Paragraph 2) doesn't result anymore isolated from the former two, but can be placed at the end of a development which, despite its Early Islamic date, shares all the traits of Sassanid cultural and architectural tradition, here brought to an unprecedented technical level.

The absence of other site components for the "SALF" registration is due to the fact that after the 4th century AD the region of Fars lost its primary importance which had been due to its being the cradle of the dynasty.

Indeed, during the dramatic crisis of the 5th century AD, when the Sassanid empire was subjugated by the Hephthalites, the main focus of Sassanid politics shifted to North-Eastern Iran, the area next to the endangered boundaries (see Bandian). After the upheavals provoked by the Mazdakite movements, in the 6th and 7th centuries AD Fars did not enjoy a special role in the revival politics of the two Khosrows, the great kings of the Late Sassanid period, which were directed towards other areas, which instead in the 3rd and 4th centuries AD had seen less importance as compared to Fars and Khuzestan: as for the 5th century, also now the main reason for this shift was probably linked to the proximity to the war areas against the Hephthalites and the Byzantines.

This is the case of Media (see Kangavar, Taq-e Bostan, Bisotun), Azerbaijan (see Takht-e Solayman, Derbent), Central-North Iran (see Damghan, Rayy), Gorgan (see the "Alexander Wall"), and particularly Mesopotamia, where the capital city of Ctesiphon was founded by Ardashir I but where the main architectural evidence of Taq Kisra as well as of the private complexes with noteworthy stucco decoration go back to the time of Khosrow I and Khosrow II.

In these centuries Fars saw a continuity of settlement, which benefited of the results of the social and economical reforms of Khosrow I, without however that primacy characterizing the 3rd and 4th centuries AD. It is not by chance that the last great architectural expression of the Sassanid tradition, the complex of Sarvestan, rose thanks to the resources of the still powerful Zoroastrian communities of Fars, the region where the National Fire of the Priests was settled.

The question of Archaeological Landscape representation:

In this regard it must be taken into consideration that the proposed property by the name of the Sassanid Archeological Landscape in Fars is a serial historic site belonging to various Sassanid monuments to represent the Archaeological Landscape of this major episode of Fars history.

The reason for separating the core zone of each building including Qaleh Dokhtar, Ardashir Palace and Gur city in Firuzabad Plain as well as Shahr-e Bishapur and Shapur cave in Kazerun Plain is that these components are parts of a serial site introducing the Sassanid archaeological landscape of Fars region within the framework of a management plan from three following aspects: 1-Its historical concept and meaning; 2-The executive and legal management of cultural heritage regulations on core zones and buffer zones of ancient monuments; and 3-Constructive interaction with local communities in their behavior and encounter with historical monuments as well as reaching an agreement with them about long-term cultural dynamism and conservation of the region.

1- Historical concept and meaning:

These monuments represent the Sassanid cultural context concerning the idea of urban-planning in which the king as a visage of Yazdan enjoys a special status within various monuments such as the coronation procession motif or the relief of Ardashir accepting the crown from Ahuramazda in Firuzabad tangab. As a matter of fact, the idea has been reflected in the Shah's position as a representative of the God stationed in a lofty place out of the public reach. Accordingly, construction of Qaleh-Dokhtar during the formation period of the government with a military function as well as construction and utilization of Ardashir Palace as a political and administrative entity with a capacity for royal residence in the countryside outside Gur city exemplify the trend. On the whole, throughout the history of Iran the royal residency has been either out of the city or on a high part of it. In order to understand the conceptual relation of these buildings within the framework of Sassanid ideology and its interpretation in the historical context of the time, core zones of Qaleh-Dokhtar, Ardashir Palace and Gur city have been segregated although they stay in a single buffer zone in order to preserve the concept of independent functions of each component regarding administration and management within a unitary buffer zone. Actually this leads to the preservation and vivid representation of archaeological facts in the same Sassanid cultural context. By specifying exclusive core zones for each of these monuments set within the Sassanid cultural context, the status of the Sassanid king relative to the Sassanid city and other monuments existing in the region can be clarified. At the same time, within a united buffer zone the general area of the monuments introduces a better conceptual relation.

2-The executive and legal management of cultural heritage regulations on core zones and buffer zones of ancient monuments:

From a juridical point of view, according to cultural heritage regulations of the Islamic Republic of Iran, any intervention in the core zone of historical monuments is prohibited. As a result, the core zone of historical monuments is only allocated to research, conservation, restoration, archaeological excavation and introduction. Of course with the passage of time villages and settlements have been established in the

area in close contact with monuments but from a management point of view, these villages and settlements are not located in the core zone but in the buffer zone and can be adequately managed based on buffer zone regulations.

Generally, from an executive point of view it is more appropriate that the new or traditional settlements are not located within the core zones but in the buffer zones because the presence of contemporary local communities in buffer zones and their participation in conservation under the management of ICHHTO will be more beneficial and effective for the region. Therefore, there will be no limitations on daily activities of locals however usage of existing capacities for integrated conservation of the monument will be on the agenda. More importantly, in accordance with legal laws for the buffer zone and landscape buffer zone, all archaeological, natural, and biological landscapes, water resources, landscape topography and traditional architecture are preserved and managed according to clear legal principles.

3-Constructive interaction with local communities in their behavior and encounter with historical monuments as well as reaching an agreement with them about long-term cultural dynamism and conservation of the region:

Regarding executive and administrative aspects, the decision about defining the core zone and buffer zone of each monument, their characteristics and the conceptual integrity of the entire historical monuments within a single buffer zone has paved the way for a better comprehension of indigenous people of them. The agreement reached with the local community guarantees the dynamism and sustainability of historical resources for a better and clearer public cooperation as well as the enforcement of cultural heritage regulations. As a result, managerial principles and scopes of each part has become more understandable for people. Respecting the rights and obtaining the consent of local people on this issue leads to a better coordination and mutual understanding with local communities and makes them more willing to participate and cooperate with local managers for enforcing cultural heritage regulations that secure long-term conservation of historical monuments.

The State of Conservation and management of the site:

As mentioned in the fourth section of the nomination dossier, the state of conservation, the degree of risk-taking concerning natural disasters and integrated conservation of all historical monuments and buildings of the Sassanid era has been well specified within the management plan. As mentioned in the section on the management of nomination dossier, the Sassanid archeological landscape in Fars is managed under a single base by one director. But each site component in the dossier including Firuzabad, Bishapur and Sarvestan has a local base monitoring and controlling the buildings throughout the year. Each base has its own experts, master craftsmen and administrative bureau which perform all the activities related to monuments.

Drawing of various maps including topographical ones, designing the plan and façade of a large number of buildings has been done in previous years according to a contract with the University of

Switzerland and German Archaeological Institute. In recent years, a letter of understanding has been signed with the National Research Center of Italy (CNR) resulting in the full laser scan documentation and photogrammetry of all buildings and reliefs of the Sassanid era. Buildings are under restoration and with the cooperation of the Italian Restoration Institute (MBACT-ISCR), the restoration plan for Sassanid reliefs gets underway soon (documentations are annexed).

As mentioned on page 6 of the first report on "Additional Information about Risks and Factors Affecting the Property, different scheduling and executive actions will be taken to decrease the effects of natural disasters such as earthquake according to the conditions and the forms of the property in each site.

In the case of Bishapur and Ardashir khureh (Shahre Gur), both considered as huge spaces, as the height of properties are not so much and regarding their location in the site, earthquake will not be so risky. In Case of Qaleh dokhtar, engineering studies and strengthening structures have been done by a French – Swiss group and a project was suggested too. However, as there were some probable risks in implementing the new interventions in the project, it was not executed. As a switch plan, it was decided to continue the project by utilizing the traditional knowledge and skilled professionals. Consequently the parts of buttress were repaired and the bed/ground surrounding the building was stabilized. Documentation of Castel/Qaleh has been done through laser scanning and photogrammetry in different periods. The monitoring of the site has been implemented systematically according to the different plans through past years and is being currently implemented. Currently, a group of skilled engineers specialized in the field of historical monuments are studying in this site to find a solution to strengthen the building against earthquake. A short summery of their activities will be mentioned below. The technical committee of the site and the technical council of the Cultural Heritage Organization, which consists of experienced and skilled members and experts, constantly observe the results of the studies and consult with the group of experts. Reaching to the final conclusion, the plan will be presented to both the technical committee and technical council for ratification and then the process of implementation will be discussed. The similar procedure is being done for Sarvestan palace as well.

Also it was mentioned that programs are to be implemented in 9 executive phases:

Phase 1: Assigning/designating the objectives and main plans and strategies of the project by project manager.

Phase 2: Site Topography and topography of the structure area in proper scale for analyzing the bed of the structure.

Phase 3: Assigning/designating geological characteristics of the site and deeper layers of the earth to proper depth (Geo Technique and stone mechanic experiments), and Preparing programme of infield studies and laboratory experiments for recognizing the earth's behavior.

Phase 4: preparing programme of material resistance experiments using applied materials in Qaleh Dokhtar structure (stone and mortar mechanic experiment).

Phase 5: studying and surveying faults of the region and vulnerability of the site against tremors.

Phase 6: Analysis of the ground and pathology.

Phase 7: studying the consolidation/reinforcement of the ground as well as the structure.

Phase 8: comprehensive three dimensional modeling of the structures in their current state along with the surrounding preserving belt and studying the function of the belt.

Phase 9: Providing final plan regarding strengthening the structure against natural threats including earthquakes.

Concerning the issues about agriculture in Gur city:

It must be pointed out that Shahr-e Gur with a diameter of two kilometers has an area of about 314 hectares constituting of various parts with different functions. Parts of the city which are currently under cultivation have had an agricultural function since the Sassanid period which continues until present time. But in order to prevent the expansion of farmlands to areas potentially having historical monuments, all around the central area of the city has been fenced and taken possession by ICHHTO. Archaeological excavations are performed at the site and the Gur city tower has been restored. According to the archaeological researches plan and the agreement reached with Bologna and Shiraz universities, it has been decided to conduct geophysical studies and documentation of other parts. Later based on scientific priorities and archaeological documents, ICHHTO will also gradually take possession of other parts of Gur city. As mentioned earlier, the Sassanid archaeological landscape complex of Fars at each site component of Firuzabad, Bishapur and Sarvestan is under constant monitoring and conservation via field control methods, CCTVs and electronic monitoring systems. The special unit for conservation of ancient monuments has been stationed at the site controlling and monitoring the area including all of its towers and fortifications round the clock. Additionally, the monitoring and restoration group visit the area based on a monitoring plan and submit regular reports.