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# Nationalism, Politics, and the Practice of Archaeology: The Case Study of Iran

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Thesis submitted for the degree of Ph.D

The Department of Archaeology

Durham University

2014

## Abstract

Since the first pillars of the discipline of archaeology were laid in the nineteenth century, archaeologists have been aware of the potential employment of their research for political purposes. Despite the recognition of the role of archaeology in politics, and specifically in the instigation and promotion of different brands of nationalism, there have been few studies that focused on Iran. To fill this lacuna, this thesis aims to examine the close relationship between the rise of nationalism and its impact on the birth and development of Iranian archaeology. It is argued that during different political periods, in particular during the Qajar, Pahlavi and post-Revolutionary Administrations, various aspects of Iranian history and identity were selected to assist the construction of new State-sponsored narratives. The utilisation of archaeological sites to support the competing brands of nationalism promoted by each of these Administrations is analysed in this thesis through the selection of three case studies that represent the Prehistoric (Sialk), pre-Islamic (Persepolis), and Islamic (Friday Mosque of Isfahan) archaeological periods. Following an interpretive analysis of the internalist and externalist dimensions that fostered the foundation and development of Iranian archaeology, it is concluded that the discipline was born out of nationalistic traditions, and remains exploited as a potential instrument of legitimisation. It is further argued that during certain periods of modern Iranian history, the employment of archaeology to authenticate particular aspects of Iranian identity resulted in the institutionalisation of the discipline. In contrast, during periods when authenticity was sought in ‘charismatic leadership’ or ‘populism’, archaeology was cast aside as a pseudoscience to legitimise the ‘tyranny’ of Iranian dynasties or, alternatively, employed for populist projects to assert a particular impression of Iran as the protectorate of Shi’a Muslims across the globe. This thesis aims to demonstrate that it is only through such analyses of the fluid nature of Iranian archaeology and the review of the history of attempts at its politicisation that Iranian archaeologists can begin to address the potential challenges to their discipline and raise caution against the instrumental application of archaeology as a political tool in service of different political administrations and their nationalistic policies and resume a focus on the outstanding research questions and preservation challenges.

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## Acknowledgements

I would like to thank my supervisor, Professor Robin Coningham, for his academic guidance and exciting discussions and encouragements during these past years. I would also like to express gratitude to my second supervisor, Professor Margarita Diaz-Andreu for her sustained interest and enthusiasm in this research. Without the unconditional support of my two supervisors the completion of this research would have not been possible.

I am grateful to the British Institute of Persian Studies (BIPS) for facilitating my initial trip to Iran that particularly assisted the formative phase of my research. I am also thankful to funding provided from the AREA (2009), Rosemary Cramp (2010), and Ustinov College Travel Award (2010) that helped to reduce the heavy burden of financing my research. I would also like to thank the *IsIAO* in Rome for allowing me to use their resources. Special thanks go to the late Professor Gnoli, Professor Callieri, Professor Fontana and Dr. Rugiadi for their insightful information about the activities of *IsMEO/IsIAO* in Iran from the Pahlavi period to the post-Revolutionary times. I am also in debt to Dr. Paul Luft for his continuous encouragements.

Finally a huge thanks goes to my family and friends whose support and love guided me through this period. To my parents, Professor Hassan Daroogheh and Dr Zohreh Behboodi, whose encouragement, love and understanding have supported me, I say thank you. I am grateful to my sister Katie, who provided laughter in the most unlikely moments, and to my friends Ardalan, Arash, Arghavan, Mario, Thomas, Ashka, Polina and Nooshin for always being there. Especial thanks goes to Alex Morreto, Armineh Marghussian, Aria Mohammadi, Jeronimo Montero, Zahra Afshar and Fouad Marei, for all the heated discussions, stimulations, and love and support. These years have been an interesting ride for me and I have grown mentally and intellectually and it is all due to the input and support of those who never ceased to withhold their unconditional encouragement in the hard times.

## Acronyms

<i>CPIR</i>	<i>Cultural Principles of the Islamic Republic</i>
<i>CRC</i>	<i>Cultural Revolutionary Committee</i>
<i>GOA</i>	<i>General Office of Archaeology</i>
<i>ICAR</i>	<i>Iranian Centre for Archaeological Research</i>
<i>ICHO</i>	<i>Iranian Cultural Heritage Organisation</i>
<i>ICHTO</i>	<i>Iranian Cultural Heritage Organisation and Tourism</i>
<i>ICHHTO</i>	<i>Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Organisation</i>
<i>ICOMOS</i>	<i>International Council on Monuments and Sites</i>
<i>IsMEO</i>	<i>Italian Institute of the Middle and Far East</i>
<i>IsIAO</i>	<i>Italian Institute of Africa and the Orient</i>
<i>NFO</i>	<i>National Front Organisation</i>
<i>NOCHMI</i>	<i>National Organisation for the Conservation of the Historical Monuments in Iran</i>
<i>SAVAK</i>	<i>Sazman-e Ettelat va Amniyyat-e Keshvar</i>
<i>SRP</i>	<i>Sialk Reconstruction Project</i>
<i>SNH</i>	<i>Society for National Heritage</i>
<i>UN</i>	<i>United Nation</i>
<i>UNESCO</i>	<i>United Nations, Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</i>

# Chapter 1

## Introduction

*“Twenty-five centuries after Cyrus the Great history is repeating itself through another great King, Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi, whose nation has given him the title of “Aryamehr” (Light of the Aryans) for his gallantry and far-sighted efforts to revive the splendour of Persia, and to uphold a tradition of humanitarianism established by the founder of the Persian Empire.”*

*(The Times 1971: V)*

### 1.1. Introduction

The Pahlavis’ declaration of power that manifested itself in the celebration of Achaemenid archaeological remains is engraved in the collective memory of Iranians as the exemplar of the State’s exploitation of the past. The enigmatic ruins of Persepolis and the tomb of Cyrus (r. 559-530 BC) had evoked the imaginative speculations of Iranians and foreigners alike for centuries. Nevertheless, it was during the Pahlavi period, with the construction of Iran as a modern nation-state in the mid twentieth century, that archaeology was brought to the forefront as a potential political instrument to realise the prevalent ideologies endorsed by the State. This politicisation of archaeology, which in various manifestations continued into the post-Revolutionary period, is not unique to the case of Iran and, as Kohl and Fawcett argued (1995a:4), is a universal phenomenon.

Since the first pillars of the discipline of archaeology were laid in the nineteenth century, archaeologists have been aware of the potential uses of their findings for political purposes. As a general process, the involvement of archaeology in politics commence once a country’s administrators aspire to create or re-construct a new identity for their nation. In Europe, the exploitation of archaeology and the physical remains of the past was simultaneous with the Industrial Revolution and after the hegemony of Napoleonic France with the pursuit to generate distinct modern nation-states, which differed significantly from their neighbouring countries (Trigger 2006:217). In the Middle East, the main event initiating the creation of nation-states was World War I (1914-1918 AD), leading to the fragmentation of the Ottoman Empire and the establishment of new borders for Iran (Owen 1992:3). Accompanying Western

expansionism, the modern definition of concepts such as nation-state, nationalism, and the discipline of archaeology were transmitted to these newly formed nations in the Middle East. One of the prominent resources available to these young nations was the wealth of historic and archaeological monuments upon which new national identities could be instigated. In these countries, governments employed the abundance of historical parables and narratives to re-construct and re-present already existing identities in ways that justified the formation of new states. The embracing of certain aspects of existing national identities in expense to others was often administered through the use of specific historical periods or archaeological sites to legitimise the particular political ambitions of the empowered authorities.

The potential dangers of the instrumental use of archaeology for political purposes became apparent with the calamities of two World Wars and the actions of Nazis and Fascists. Despite this realisation, the initial interest in the history of archaeology which began in the 1950s (Daniel 1950; Piggott 1985; Kendrick 1950) aimed to provide a historical record of existing data and archaeological trends (Trigger 1994:114). This early emphasis on the history of archaeology eventually grew into its current state where numerous publications focus on the interpretive features of archaeology as a discipline and developments in archaeological theories began to reflect developments in the humanities and social sciences more generally (Meskell 1998:7). Therefore, whilst initially the analysis of the history of archaeology was predominated by Internalist approaches that centred on the methodological development and transformation of theory and technique (Willey & Sabloff 1993), more recent studies adhered to the Externalist perspective and focused on the influence of socio-cultural context on the practice of archaeology (Trigger 1994:118). The prevalence of the Externalist approach became apparent in the beginning of the 1990s as literature in archaeology devoted considerable attention to the instrumental role of archaeology in validating particular forms of authority in different parts of the globe. This interest was built on the foundation of earlier work by authors such as Trigger (1984; 1985) and Hodder (1983; 1984; 1985; 2002), who demonstrated a universal link between archaeology and the socio-political context within which it developed. Trigger (1994) argued that these concerns were to challenge the ideologically-free Processual traditions of archeology that had emerged as a respond to the misuses of archaeology in legitimising Nazism and Fascism. This reactionary response combined with the philosophical movements derived from the ideals of Existentialism and Deconstructionism to emphasise the interpretive nature of archaeology as a discipline. The work of critical theorists such as Michel Foucault and his discourse analysis, interest in the history of knowledge, as well as the consideration of the role of the “author” in “proliferation of meaning” (Foucault et al. 2003:244, 252) were prevalent concepts prior to the consideration of archaeology as an interpretive science.



At the core of the new Externalist studies were the articulation of the complex relationship between nationalism and archaeology (Silberman 1989; Shanks & Tilley 1987, 1996; Meskell 1998; Diaz-Andreu 2007). In particular, the political use of archaeology as an instrument to strengthen a sense of unity, identity, and territory was investigated. In this regards, Anthony Smith (1995a:15-17) maintained that the task performed by nationalists is very much similar to that of the archaeologists in that they both engage in the “re-interpretation” of the past for the mobilisation of the present. He further argued that archaeology provides authenticity for the national project of nationalists by creating a sense of community, rediscovery of symbols, confirmation of national territories, and the provision of a “golden age” (Smith 2001). The future of the ethnic community especially relies on the “golden age” when men were “heroes” (Smith 1999:65). The myth within which these heroes flourished is considered by nations as the great age of liberation from the foreign yoke (ibid.). The ‘re-invention’ of myth of common descent was also considered by Max Weber (1968:395; Bendix 1998:297) as an apparatus to legitimate the system of domination or the ruling administration. Smith (1999:66) further contended that historians and archaeologists assisted the process of “reconstruction” of myth in the “golden ages” for their communities by recovering artefacts and sites that were assimilated to the mainstream vision of a particular nation. Therefore, it may be argued that the selection of particular mythical characters as the archetype of national “hero” during different periods of Iranian history is reflective of the “golden age” each political community aimed to promote. The embodiment of Iranian heroes were sought in the mythical characters of the *Shahnameh* (the Book of Kings, completed in 1010 C.E) during the reign of Reza Shah (r. 1925-1941 AD); Cyrus the Great during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah (r. 1941- 1979 AD); and Imam Ali and Mahdi following the Islamic Revolution (r. 1979 AD-the present).

This theoretical discussion of nationalism and archaeology initially emerged as a concern in Bruce Trigger’s examination of the various forms of archaeological traditions (Trigger 1984). In his publication, he initially identified three different types of archaeological traditions: Nationalist; Colonialist; and Imperialist (ibid.). While considering the prevalent tradition of archaeology in each nation as a reflection of the social context within which it is practiced, Trigger argued that the Nationalist tradition of archaeology is the most natural form of archaeological tradition (ibid.:356). Building on these notions, Diaz-Andreu and Champion (1996:3) contended that the appearance of nationalism stimulated the very creation of archaeology as a scientific discipline. They further argued that this was due to archaeology’s predisposed features that make it vulnerable to manipulations by nationalism. These features are articulated as the versatility of archaeological evidence, which allows alternative interpretations of the past; the age of the archaeological evidence, which supports the claims of cultural continuity; and the physicality of archaeological evidence, which offers various means of exploitation through museums,

indoor and outdoor, and adaptation of national symbols (ibid.:20). Thus archaeological resources that articulate a distant past can be utilised to legitimise a particular national identity and, as Smith (2004:3) argued, conflicts over the meaning of the past become more than conflicts over the interpretation of different values. They become embroiled in the legitimacy of political and cultural claims that contemporary governments make on the basis of what is considered as “authentic” past (ibid.). In Iran where this “authentic” past is disputed, the interpretation of the past frequently alternates between the pre-Islamic and Islamic Iranian identity as a suitable policy of legitimisation.

As the above arguments imply, although most archaeologies are Nationalist, there are considerable variations in the archaeological traditions of each nation or within different historical periods in a single nation, depending on the particular frameworks that are recognised as “authentic” national traditions. The recognition of these “regional traditions” (Trigger 1984:355) require the comprehensive investigation of the orientation of particular tendencies that lead to the rise of regional states, nationalist trends and archaeological traditions. It is argued here that although the history of archaeology, and its susceptibility to the socio-political mediums, has been a subject of interest in the past decades, there has been an inadequate amount of research centering on the contributing factors that shaped the formation and orientation of the discipline in Iran. This thesis intends to map out the Iranian archaeological tradition by presenting the prevalent trends in Iranian archaeology and analysing the impact of competing interpretations of nationalism on the foundation and development of archaeology. By providing three case studies that cover Iran’s Prehistoric (Sialk), pre-Islamic (Persepolis), and Islamic (Friday Mosque of Isfahan) periods in Chapters 4, 5 and 6, this thesis will present the influence of nationalism in re-constructing “authentic” pasts that assisted the adoption of contemporary political objectives of different Governments in Iran. In order to satisfy a complete understanding of the process of development of archaeology in Iran, the provision of a historical background and an analysis of the socio-political frameworks that shaped this discipline is first required. In Chapter 2, this aim is achieved through the interdisciplinary analysis of the various Internalist and Externalist dimensions that have contributed to the development of Iranian archaeology from its instigation during the Qajar period, to its nationalisation and institutionalisation during the Pahlavi period and, finally, the setbacks and restorations that contributed to shaping the discipline into its contemporary form in the post-Revolution period. It is only through these emphases on the fluid nature of archaeology that archaeologists may address the potential drawbacks of their discipline and raise cautious against the instrumental application of archaeology as a tool in the service of State political intentions and nationalism.

## 1.2. Background to a History of Political Archaeology

As noted above, the history of archaeology follows the socio-political transformations and intellectual trends that emerged at the end of eighteenth and the beginning of the nineteenth century. The most significant of these modifications involved the transformation of world empires into nation-states and the consequent rise of nationalism in Europe (Diaz-Andreu 2007:131). The involvement of archaeology in politics commences once the new nation-states aspired to legitimise their authority through creating a new identity for their young nation. These identities were often artificial narratives erected on the misconceptions or mistreatment of data gathered by archaeologists. Mythical symbols and lost glories became national banners that legitimised the existence of the new nations. Subsequent to these new conversions, the world witnessed a simultaneous eruption of interest in archaeology in quest for a comprehensible past (Kohl 1998:226). As Diaz-Andreu and Champion (1996:3) argued, it was during this period that archaeology emerged as an institutionalised discipline.

It is true that the obscured interaction of politics and archaeology is a recent discourse within the scientific debates, nevertheless, the affiliation of these two fields and the politicisation of ancient monuments go back to the fifteenth century and the emergence of the Renaissance. Indeed, it is possible to stress that the Renaissance was inspired by the rediscovery of sculptures, architectures, and literature work from ancient Greece and Rome (Corrain 2008:8). The Medici family as the patrons of the Renaissance art consolidated their power by fabricating an image of themselves through visual and literary art that connected the past with the present and enhanced their status as a prominent dynasty (Cheney 2002:107). According to Vasari, the great Michelangelo began his career as the forger of Ancient Roman sculpture at a time when interest in ancient artefacts provided a market for fake antiquity (Briefel 2004:27). Interest in the remains of past civilisations continued into the eighteenth century and was utilised by the Popes in an attempt to identify with Classical values and enhance the religious prestige of the clergies in Europe (Dyson 2006:12-15). These attempts were to counter the serious criticisms that were posed to the Church with the emergence of secular ideals of the Enlightenment. Thus, it became the cultural policy of Popes, such as Clement XIV (r. 1769-1774 AD) and Pius VI (r. 1775-1799 AD) to hire antiquarians to excavate Classical sites and enhance the treasures displayed in the Vatican (ibid.:12). This trend continued on to the period of the French Revolution (1789-1799 AD), when Napoleon aspired to legitimise the hegemony of France through establishing historical and cultural ties with the values of Classical civilisations. His attempt to present himself as Mars, the God of War, with the placement of his Augustus like statue between the Arch of Titus and that of Septimius Severus in Rome is one such example (Huet 1999:59). These attempts played a role in the formation of the French nation by creating

an image of progress that linked France to the ancient civilisations (Diaz-Andreu 2007:61). The French Revolution and its focus on Classical antiquity is recognised as the initial incentive for the institutionalisation of archaeology within a context where archaeology was under the direct influence of politics (ibid.:69). The politicisation of archaeology was perpetuated with the expansion of the world empires and colonialism that followed the Industrial Revolution. During this period, countries like Greece employed archaeology as a tool to expand their territories, while imperial powers such as France and Italy implemented an Evolutionary approach that entitled them to re-claim the ancient cities of Asia Minor, Middle East and North Africa that possessed Biblical and Classical monuments (Dyson 2006:182). As will be argued in Chapter 2, this provided the main incentive for the British and French interest in the archaeological remains in Iran.

The discipline of archaeology was further influenced by the explosion of urban industrialism that coerced the rising of new classes, ethnic migrations, and racist xenophobia against lower classes and foreigners, especially the Jews (Hobsbawm 1994:109-11). As this form of nationalism reached its apogee in the mid twentieth century with Fascism and Nazism, the foundations of the Culture-Historical approach were laid. The underlying assumption of this approach traced material culture of Prehistoric civilisations to known peoples on the basis of pottery and grave types (Trigger 2007:235). The emphasis of the Culture-Historical approach on the Prehistory of specific peoples provided a model for national archaeologies around the world where specific archaeological cultures were seen as ancestral to contemporary ethnic or national groups (Trigger 1996:26; Kohl 1998:231). This was an instrumental tool in bolstering the pride and morale of nations or ethnic groups, especially those that were threatened or deprived of their collective rights by more powerful nations (Trigger 1996:26). The period immediately following the aftermath of World War II was dominated by an intellectual climate that was optimistic about the potential of science and technology (Hodder 1991:152). From the 1960s onwards, the intellectual current of theoretical archaeology adopted the positivist “New Archaeology”, later known as Processual archaeology, with an attempt to liberate their discipline from the political connotations that had provided for verifying the promotion of German nationalism and Fascism during World War II (Kristiansen & Rowlands 1998:32). From the mid 1970s onwards, as social theories of Post-Modernism emerged and in reaction to the scientific methods of Processual archaeology, a series of alternative viewpoints known as Post-Processualism developed (Hodder 1991:134). Hodder described Post-Processualism as an approach that emphasised the opening up of theoretical debates to a wider range of socio-cultural issues, including Marxism and Post-Positivism (ibid.:16).

In the 1980s, interest was directed towards a discourse that focused on the evident interactions between archaeology and social, political and economical themes (Kohl & Fawcett 1995a:15). The resulting

research demonstrated the susceptibility of archaeological evidence to the interpretations made by archaeologists (Trigger 1989; Hodder 1999; Kane 2003). The indignations regarding the misuses of archaeology were so extensive that concerns were raised against the nature of archaeology as a “scientific” discipline (Trigger 1989; Kane 2003). While initially the associated relations concerning archaeology and politics focused on condemning the exploitation of archaeological data for the promotion of Nazi or Marxist ideologies (Arnold & Hassmann 1995; Chernykh 1995), by the mid 1990s scholars such as Trigger, Kohl, Fawcett, and those who followed their lead, aspired to convey the relationship between the elevated nationalistic sentiment in the Balkans and the anticipated problems arising from the newly built nation-states after the break-up of the Soviet Union (Kohl & Fawcett 1995b; Dolukhanov 1996; Mirsky 1997). This incident re-oriented an originally prevalent Eurocentric discourse on the relations between archaeology and politics to encompass the Near Eastern and Middle Eastern geographical regions that had been previously neglected. The central concern of this discourse was the intricate influence of nationalism on the interpretation of archaeological data (Diaz-Andreu & Champion 1995:11). As these themes were extended to include wider regional variations, emphasis on the implementation of the role of religion (Seely 2007) and imperialism (Diaz-Andreu 2007) on archaeology began to surface.

As Kohl (1998:226) argued, the emphasis on the political character of nation-formation is essential since it can be applied to the treatment of archaeology and its relations to nationalism. Therefore, in order to assert an articulate role to the influence of socio-political context in Middle East on the discipline of archaeology, it is essential to address the existing discrepancies between the ‘West’ and the ‘East’ with regards to vital phases of socio-political developments such as the formation of nation-state, rise of nationalism, and promotion of national identity and their interaction with the development of archaeology. As discussed previously, in Europe, with the existence of few exceptions, the exploitation of archaeology and the physical remains of the past co-occurred with the Industrial Revolution and the aspiration to generate unique nation-states (Trigger 2006:217). This was a nationalist movement generated by the intellectuals who searched for a social place in a world dominated by the institutes of Monarchy and Church (Diaz-Andreu & Champion 1996:4). Conversely, in the Middle East, the main event evoking the creation of nation-states was World War I as noted above (Owen 1992:3). The events of the War not only established new countries carved out of the old Empires, but also introduced the Western concepts of ‘nation-states’ and ‘nationalism’ to Middle East. The incipient processes and the circumstances, under which these concepts developed, however, conspicuously differed from Europe and culminated in the formation of nation-states unique to the Middle East (ibid.). The main differences in the formation of ‘nation-states’ in the latter were twofold, existing ideologies and Western imperialism.

In majority of the Middle Eastern countries, where a lack of finance, power, and state bureaucracy prevailed, central administrations often used ideology as a means to claim sovereignty and authority (ibid.: 4). While in the West the creation of nation-states accompanied the elimination of religious power and its substitution with the concept of nationalism (Diaz-Andreu & Champion 1996:4), in the Middle East the inclusion of religious ideologies in the formation of nation-states was a more conventional inclination. In addition, the political interference of external imperial powers and their exploitation of resources was one of the main incentives for the rise of indigenous nationalism and the quest for the construction of independent nation-states. In these countries, given the absence of modern notions of nationalism, religion was often brought to the forefront to resist Western expansionism. As it will be discussed in Chapter 2, Iran was never an official colony but rather what was termed by Lenin as a “semi-colony” (Lenin & Riddell 1984:258). In semi-colonies, although the external imperial powers did not officially control the administrative infrastructure, they extensively manipulated domestic affairs towards their own political ends. As Kamrava (1992:26-28) argued, the surrender of concessions to foreign power and the reception of large loans by the Qajars subjugated Iran to foreign hegemony and initiated the early sparks of nationalism and the desire for Independence. In Iran, similar to a number of other Middle Eastern countries, Islam, and in particular Shi’a identity, performed an emancipating role against the expansionist policies of the West during the Qajar and later the Pahlavi period (Keddie 2003:206). These socio-political dimensions against which Iranian archaeology was developed are discussed in more detail in Chapter 2.

The different processes of creating nation-states in the Middle East in comparison with Europe meant that they followed different approaches in employing archaeology. Although the coercive use of nationalistic archaeology was an instigating phase in both Europe and Middle East, due to the cultural history, social composition and the political agendas that prevailed in the Middle East this initial phase became indefinite and archaeology is still utilised as a potential apparatus to meet political aims. This is particularly due to the feeling of insecurity that threatens the sovereignty of these nations (see Trigger 1984:360). Despite acute differences in the official adaptation of archaeology in the Middle East, it is argued that the existing literature on the uses and abuses of archaeology in Europe can provide a remarkable platform against which the Middle Eastern experience can be evaluated. In this thesis, these objectives are achieved through the examination of Iran as a case study for the wider region as a whole.

### 1.3. Nationalism and Archaeology in Iran

The persistent focus of archaeologists on the interaction of archaeology and politics in Europe has thus far been justified by the fact that, as Diaz-Andreu and Champion (1995:12) argued, archaeology and the concepts of nationalism and nation-states were initially experienced in Europe before spreading to other regions. In recent years, however, as scholarly studies on Europe continue, there has been a shift of interest to include the often neglected countries in the Middle East and to examine the extent of adoption of archaeology as a political instrument by politicians. These include attempts to produce a historiography of the process of archaeological development in India (Chakarbarti 2003), Iraq (Bernhardsson 2005; 2007), Turkey (Shaw 2007), and other parts of the Middle East (Meskell 1998; Kohl et.al 2007). The only exception is Silberman's (1989) *Between Past and Present* which looked into the interactions between nationalism, ideology and archaeology in Middle East and particularly in Israel and Egypt as early as 1989. It is the intention of this thesis to complement this trend in the region by providing an analytic study of the development of archaeology in Iran.

In contrast with the frequent analysis of historical incidents in Iran and the provision of sophisticated insights into the different aspects of Iranian nationalism, modest attention has been given to politicisation of archaeology as an instrument to fulfill particular nationalistic aims. As will be discussed in Chapter 3, this lack of interest in interpretive archaeology can be traced back to the socio-political dimensions that influenced Iranian archaeology following the Islamic Revolution in 1979. In particular, the aversions against the discipline of archaeology as a political tool to legitimise the institution of monarchy raised awareness amongst Iranian archaeologists against the potential dangers of politicising archaeology. In their efforts to counter the austere resistance to their discipline, Iranian archaeologists became increasingly absorbed in the adoption of 'objectivist' approaches in archaeology. This indifference towards interpretive archaeology may also reflect the belief that archaeology should be shaped by scientific analysis rather than socio-political dimensions. Although there are no signs that Iranian archaeologists are beginning to accept the limitations of what Feyerabend terms the "tyranny of science" (see Krieger 2006:93), there are indications that they are becoming increasingly concerned with the Internalist and Externalist dimensions that continue to influence Iranian archaeology. Considering the interpretive study of archaeology in Iran is highly politicised, these studies are scarce and constrained by political limitations.

It should be noted that Iranian archaeologists became engaged in debates concerning the interpretive features of their discipline in response to social changes and political liberalisation that followed the Presidential period of Mohammad Khatami (1997-2005 AD). As Holliday (2007:14) argued, this period

was defined by intellectual debates regarding the very nature of the Islamic Republic of Iran. Given this critical socio-political context which provided for the spreading of the culture of social debates and the process of self-analysis (ibid.:14-15), Iranian archaeologists took initiatives towards understanding the influences of the socio-political dimensions of the Iranian society on their discipline. Of particular interest are Abdi's publications on the interaction of nationalism and Iranian archaeology. Abdi (2001; 2008) not only provided the single analysis on the influence of nationalism on Iranian archaeology, but also considered the international bearings of Iranian nationalism and the sensitivities of political threats against the perceived symbols of Iranian identity, such as the Persian Gulf. Although the issue of the interactions between nationalism and archaeology was not explicitly addressed in any further research, there are sporadic references to the influence of socio-political factors on the development of Iranian archaeology. For example, Niknami (2000), in his publication *Methodological Aspects of Iranian Archaeology: Past and Present* provided an introductory overview of archaeological research in Iran and criticised the antagonised state of Iranian archaeology which failed to keep up with contemporary global scientific advances. Further, Gholi Majd (2003) and Goode (2007), provided a political analysis of archaeological activities during the early Pahlavi period as the French Monopoly was annulled and American teams began their expeditions in Iran. Other isolated cases are limited to the French archaeological activities in Iran from 1897 to 1912 and focus on the site of Susa in particular (Chevalier 1997; Naseri-Moghaddam 2004), or the British archaeological activities at Susa and southern Iran in the 1800s (Sarkhosh-Curtis 2007:166-178; Simpson 2007:153-165). Naseri-Moghaddam's (2004) analysis is somewhat more in-depth as he investigates the socio-political impact of Franco-Persian relations during the Qajar period and its broader influence on granting the French the right to engage in archaeological activities in Iran.

It is important to note that most of these studies addressed certain aspects of the Externalist approach discussed above, such as the influence of nationalism and socio-political impacts on archaeology; although Niknami's (2000) analysis also provided a brief discussion of the methodological developments in Iranian archaeology. One confining common denominator to all these studies was their concentration on the Pahlavi period with few references to the Qajar or the post-Revolutionary period. This was due to the conviction that the Qajars had no interest in the archaeological value of the past and the prevalence of socio-political constraints that limit Iranian archaeologists in the analysis of such interpretive studies in more contemporary periods. Therefore, while during Khatami's Presidency certain progress were made in re-orienting Iranian archaeology towards a more self-critical interpretive direction, in more recent years, there has been a tendency to evaluate particular problems in the evolution of theoretical developments in Iran within the scope of the Internalist approach. An example, is Fazeli's (2010:1) reference to the



prevalence of what he called the “quasi-Culture-Historical approach” where certain aspects of Culture-Historical approach are applied without adhering to the overall conceptual framework of the model (Fazeli 2010:1). Despite efforts to adopt an Internalist outline, these studies often failed to consider the changing intellectual orientations in other fields, such as anthropology and philosophy, which contributed to methodological modifications within Iranian archaeology.

It should be considered that in most contemporary cases, the history of Iranian archaeology is discussed in a descriptive manner within the context of an introductory debut without the provision of theoretical paradigms (Malek Shahmirzadi 1996:1999; Ma’soomi 2004). As Fazeli (2010:1) pointed out, the lack of healthy theoretical debates can be held responsible for the deficiencies observed in Iranian Archaeology today. It is the aim of this thesis to address these issues and to marry Iranian archaeology to Internalist and Externalist dimensions of theoretical debates. In the following section, the general outline within which these concepts are discussed in this thesis is provided.

#### **1.4. Thesis Outline**

This thesis is divided into seven chapters with three case studies supplying the core of the arguments investigated within this research. Having provided an introduction to the history of research in the analysis of the problematic nature of nationalistic interpretation of archaeological records in this chapter, Chapter 2 is concerned with identifying the ideologies embedded within the Iranian society from the Qajar to the contemporary periods and to consider their influence on Iranian archaeology. It is argued that as a prevalent form of resistance, anti-imperialist ideologies that manifested in the form of authenticating pre-Islamic or Islamic Iranian identities influenced the birth and orientation of Iranian archaeology. From an Internalist approach some of these ideologies are presented as *Bazgasht* (return) movements that began as a literary pursuit during the Qajar period and re-appeared in various manifestations during the Pahlavi and the post-Revolution periods, albeit with different narratives about what is considered an ‘authentic’ past to return to during each historical period. In addition, to lay the foundation for an Externalist approach, the political underlying of each historical period is examined and the reforms made to provide an underpinning for Iranian archaeology are addressed.

It is the intention of Chapter 3 to outline the orientation of this thesis and to present the theoretical concepts relevant to this research. Given the core relevance of nationalism to this thesis, this concept is defined in terms of Smith’s Ethno-Symbolic approach (Smith 2009:27). This is followed by the provision

of various competing forms of Iranian nationalism, such as ethnic, dynastic and Islamic, which are defined in terms of Smith's concept of "ethnie" (ibid.). It is further argued that the discussion of the birth of Iranian archaeology and its development cannot be addressed without the consideration of Internalist and Externalist dimensions that influenced the course of the orientation of this discipline in Iran. These concepts and the meaning attached to them will be particularly discussed within Chapters 4, 5, and 6, where the development of Iranian archaeology during various historical periods is considered against a backdrop of the prevalent nationalistic aims within altering political policies.

Following the presentation of the socio-political dynamics that fostered competing forms of nationalism during different political periods and their influence on Iranian archaeology, the thesis will enter into the discussion of three case studies. Each case study has been selected to reflect the impact of socio-political context and nationalism on a particular archaeological period. Therefore, Chapter 4: "Nationalism and the Treatment of Prehistoric Archaeological Sites", aims to contextualise the orientation of advances made in Prehistoric archaeology through analysing the treatment of the Prehistoric site of Sialk during different political periods. In Chapter 5: "Nationalism and the Treatment of pre-Islamic Archaeological Sites", these same investigations are applied to the pre-Islamic site of Persepolis and finally, in Chapter 6: "Nationalism and the Treatment of Islamic Archaeological Sites", the Islamic site of Friday Mosque of Isfahan is selected to undergo similar analysis. Each of these case studies is examined under four sub-sections. Before proceeding to the analytical section of each chapter, a background is provided to introduce each archaeological site. This is followed by the division of each chapter into Qajar, Pahlavi and post-Revolutionary sub-sections where the application of different forms of Iranian nationalisms promoted by each Administration on each archaeological site is investigated. This arrangement will allow the drawing of parallels between different political periods and to depict the influence of their perceived 'authentic' identity and appropriated nationalism on the treatment of each archaeological period. In these chapters, the Externalist and Internalist dimensions of an interpretive approach are investigated with the provision of the socio-political dynamics that influenced the orientation of Iranian archaeology and the assessment of the evolution of theoretical perspectives from one method to another respectively.

The thesis will conclude by bringing together the main themes of the research and the representation of the complex relationship between different manifestations of nationalism, national identity and Iranian archaeology. Through the examination of three further incentives, namely, heavy reliance on historic periods in archaeology, failure to adopt scientific approaches due to the contextual differences in socio-political dimensions between Iran and other nations, and the marginalisation of Iranian archaeology through an Orientalist outlook, further support is provided for the concept that archaeology as a discipline

was born and institutionalised in response to socio-political dynamics and that the orientation of its development or demise reflects the nationalist image that each political entity aimed to promote.

## **1.5. Conclusion**

The central aim of this thesis is to explore the nationalistic tradition of Iranian archaeology by presenting instances that highlight the employment of different archaeological periods to the service of nationalist movements and the influence of different brands of nationalism on the birth and development of the discipline in Iran. The objectives of this interpretive analysis are met by investigating the treatment of three case studies of Sialk, Persepolis, and the Friday Mosque of Isfahan, that correspond with the Prehistoric, pre-Islamic, and Islamic periods, during various political Administrations. The application of social theories and highlighting the significance of social context in the formation of archaeological traditions is what sets this research apart from previous studies. It is argued that the lack of interest in analytic studies on the one hand, and the socio-political restrictions on the other, have hindered the maturation of Iranian archaeology into a scientific discipline and produced a tradition that has fallen short of global theoretical debates. In doing so, this thesis acknowledges the breadth of nationalism at play in Iran, rather than adopting a simple single definition of nationalism. This emphasis on diversity, as a central component of an interpretive approach, further sets the objectives of this thesis apart from previous studies on the interactions of Iranian archaeology and nationalism.

Having thus defined the aim, objectives and context of the thesis in this introductory chapter, the next chapter will focus on presenting a historical overview of the interactions between archaeology and socio-political components of the Iranian society. In doing so, the utilisation of archaeological past to provide support for different brands of Iranian nationalism and their accompanying ‘authentic’ identities are evaluated. The provision of this historical background is necessary as it will supply the foundation based on which Iranian archaeology was matured and present an opportunity for the application of Internalist and Externalist approaches which are essential to this research.

## Chapter 2

### Nationalism & Archaeology in Iran: An Overview

#### 2.1. Introduction

The Introduction presented the main aim and objectives of this thesis by demonstrating the intertwined relationship between politics and archaeology. This was done by establishing that, within a global context, archaeological remains are constantly utilised for the promotion of different political aims. It is now necessary to demonstrate the ways in which the Iranian past has been employed to endorse different political intentions during different historical periods. The ways in which nationalism and archaeology interact in Iran have to be explained in terms of domestic affairs with the rise of Iranian nationalism, the establishment of modern nation-state, and the emergence of modern Iranian identity; as well as in terms of international concerns that aimed to enhance Iran's prestige and affirm its independence by depicting it as a 'civilised nation' with pre-Islamic and Islamic roots. The consideration of these themes is necessary in order to outline the essential contributing factors that shaped the traditions of Iranian archaeology.

In Chapter 1, it was argued that the critical evaluation of the development of Iranian archaeology and its relation to various socio-political dimensions has been scarce. In fact, as Niknami (2000:39) has argued, the historical orientation of Iranian archaeology has led to the domination of a descriptive tradition that fails to analytically relate social phenomena to the discipline. This is of particular importance since it implies that Iranian archaeology has fallen behind other nations in the region, such as Egypt, Israel, Turkey, Iraq and India, in attempts to make a thorough study on the prevalent traditions of archaeology and the evaluation of the political context within which the discipline develops.

With respect to Iranian archaeology, Trigger (1984:359) briefly referred to its tradition and classified it as Nationalistic in his global categorisation of archaeological trends. In addition, he emphasised that the excessive attention to the historical periods in Iranian archaeology created ambiguity by concentrating on the pre-Islamic period to advocate nationalist movements at times of secular domination, while the Islamic periods are exploited to promote pan-Islamic (pan-Shi'a) pursuit during the administration of pro-Islamic Governments (ibid.). The theme of religion, as mentioned by Trigger, and its impact on archaeology is the focus of discussion in Kohl's (2007) book, *Selective Remembrance*. In it, he made a brief comment regarding the significant influence of an explicitly religious State on the practice of archaeology after the Islamic Revolution in Iran (ibid.:12). While the associations between pre-Islamic history and archaeology under the Pahlavis have been recognised, the influential role of theocracy on the

development of Iranian archaeology is less explored. Thus, the recently recognised link between religion and archaeology is especially noteworthy since it creates an opportunity to explore an unknown area of research. As will be illustrated, based on Trigger's (1984:355) argument that despite regional variations all archaeological traditions are Nationalistic, the primary focus of this chapter is to elaborate on the fluid nature of nationalism and political identity in different socio-political periods and their influence in shaping the practice of archaeology in Iran. In addition to providing a background to the socio-political dimension of Iranian society, this chapter also aims to articulate the reforms made under different governments. For the benefit of comparative analyses, this chapter is divided into three periods; Qajar period, Pahlavi period and post-Revolutionary period.

## **2.2. Nationalism & Archaeology during the Qajar Period**

In this section, it is argued that although the structure of the Qajar court rested on a tradition that seldom required the appropriation of the past for its legitimacy, the political applications of archaeological remains had already been recognised during this period. This is demonstrated by taking advantage of archaeological remains for their monetary value as well as for enhancing the image of Iran as a 'civilised' nation. These concepts are discussed in detail in Chapters 4, 5, and 6. In this section, the Qajars' attempt at unifying Iran as a nation, the prevalent forms of nationalism, and the state of archaeological activities during this period are discussed.

### **2.2.1. The Qajars & the Construction of a Nation: an Experiment**

Iranian political development and its advance towards modernity is considered as a reflection of the country's indigenous culture and geographical position in the Middle East. To evaluate the birth of Iran as a modern nation-state, the consideration of emerging powers in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries and their rivalry in the Middle East over economical and political affairs is of vital importance. While there had been contacts between Iran and the West from the time of Shah Abbas (r. 1571-1629 AD), the nature of these relationships remained commercial and, at times, military. The Qajar period marked the beginning of new types of relationships, which threatened the sovereignty of Iran as an independent nation. During this period, Iran's failure to develop into an independent and modern nation-state is a mirroring effect of the influence of Western powers, especially Britain and Russia, who sought to control Iran as a buffer zone between themselves and other rivaling powers. It is here argued that during the Qajar period although Iran was not a modern nation-state, it was considered a centralised nation in its own

unique terms. This section also aims to address the socio-political dynamics and the intellectual trends prevalent during this period.

Scholars uniformly agree that Iran was never colonised by expansionist powers but its autonomy was subjected to the intrusive demands of the West on a regular basis (Amanat 1997:1; Kamrava 1992:8). Wilber (1981:31) believed that this policy was achieved through restricting Iranian's effort to establish a constitutional government and to adopt beneficial Western concepts. Thus, the import of Western concepts such as a modern nation-state, nationalism, and certain sciences such as archaeology had to pass through a filter of Western approval prior to establishing any foundation in the Iranian society. This does not imply that Iran was not a unified nation during this period. Rather, despite the Weberian (1947:347) "Sultanistic" approach to governing, the Qajar period represented the emergence of the first initiations towards creating a modern nation-state in Iran (Kamrava 1992:2; Amanat 1997:3).

There were many differences between the Qajars centralised Government and those of European nations during this period. This difference rose from the origins of the legitimacy of the State. In Iran, this legitimacy did not originate in the constitutional laws but in the rise of "arbitrary rulers" (Katouzian 2006:3). These rulers established their hegemonies by monopolising State property and distributing them within the royal household. Therefore, contradictory to the Western experience of nationhood, Iran had "no state, social class, laws and politics as observed in European history" (ibid.). According to Amanat (1997:7-9), the political order under the Qajar was unique in that the legitimacy of the Qajar kings was founded on the dual institutes of monarchy and Shari'a (Islamic laws).

The most successful attempt at building a modern nation-state emerged during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah (r.1848-1896 AD) and the reforms that he implemented. As will be discussed in Section 2.2.3., these reforms were accompanied by more intense foreign involvement in Iran and had a negative impact on the development of Iran as an independent nation. These involvements were mostly in the form of concessions and large loans. The concession for building railroads and search for minerals went to the British Baron de Reuter, the concession for shipping in Karun River went to another British company- the Lynch Brothers, the Russian Company of Cie. De La Route started paving highways, and the French obtained the concession for archaeology activities in Iran (Abrahimian 1979:393). The nationalist movement which eventually led to the Constitutional Revolution (1905-1907 AD) was in part a response to the many concessions given by the Qajar kings to foreign companies and, in part, due to the Anglo-Russian Agreement of 1907 by the terms of which Iran was to be divide into two zones of influence (Abdi 2001:55). In this context, the Constitutional Revolution was the initial step towards establishing Iran as a modern nation-state.

The absence of a modern nation-state did not imply an absence of a national identity. Indeed, Keddi (2003:2) provided an argument largely based on the notion that an entity called Iran or *Iranshahr* had been in continuous existence since pre-Islamic times. This implies that Iranians throughout history have retained a somewhat unified national identity. Further, despite providing an incoherent view of the Qajar society, Wilber (1975:36) agreed that the Persians had developed elaborate systems of etiquette to overcome the existing friction in the society and presented a unified and coherent cultural homogeneity as a nation. Alamdari (2007:25-26) argued that, similar to other nations, a collective Iranian national identity was constructed through national myth and ballads. These ballads correspond with the epic stories of the *Shahnameh*, which provide historic continuity from the time of creation to the downfall of the Sassanid Empire, stressing the glories of Persia and preserving the names of national heroes (Wilber 1963: 35). The *Shahnameh* was also instrumental in shaping the intellectual trends during this period through the *Bazgasht* (return) movement. Luft (2001:43) argued that the revival of *Shahnameh* through this literary movement was essential in enhancing general interest towards pre-Islamic Iranian history and identity (see Chapters 4 & 5). Despite interest in the *Bazgasht* movement, the idea of the authenticity of Iranian nationalism or its import by the Iranian bourgeoisie is not complete without considering the Islamic foundation of Iranian socio-cultural traditions. According to Boroujerdi (1996:14), Iranian “authentic” identity is Islamic in nature. In the following section, the impact that these national identities had on the formation of Iranian nationalism is further articulated.

### **2.2.2. The Qajars & Nationalism**

Iranian nationalism is one of the major areas of interest studied by scholars even though some conceive that modern nationalism was introduced to Iran at the end of nineteenth century (Abrahamian 1979; Katouzian 1979, 2003; Vaziri 1993; Ansari 2001; Keddie 2003). Abrahamian (1979:403) argued that nationalism and national identity were not new concepts to the Iranian society, rather, unlike the West where they were associated with archaeological monuments and historical remains, in Iran they were linked to cultural values held in the epics of *Shahnameh* and the ethical codes of the society. Through the *Shahnameh*, indigenous Iranian nationalism was appropriated to incorporate different ethnic or religious groups into a collective Iranian identity. In addition, given the religious basis of the Iranian society, the concepts of nationalism that were imported from the West by the intellectual elite were appropriated to prevent contradictions with the interpretations of Islamic ideologies (Wilber 1975:29). Katouzian (1979:533) argued that a defining moment in the manifestation of Iranian nationalism was the period between 1921 and 1926 when due to the weakness of Iranian central administration, foreign powers

enhanced their interventions in Iranian internal affairs. This weakness was not only conceived in the numerous concessions granted to foreign powers but also in the Qajars' incompetence to defend Iran's frontiers and the loss of territories in the Treaties of *Golestan* (1813 AD) and *Turkmanchai* (1828 AD). Therefore, nationalism emerged as a narrative capable of emancipating Iran from the expansionist policies of Russia and Great Britain and to form a democratic government (Katouzian 1979:534; Ahmadi 2007:57). It was immediately after the arrival of protestors who returned from Tehran after the establishment of the Constitution that the phrase "Long live the Nation of Iran" was heard for the first time (Abrahamian 1979:405). It is important to note that given the appropriation of nationalism as non-contradictory to Islam, the *Ulama* (religious clergy) were in the forefront of this nationalist movement (Keddie 2003:175).

In terms of intellectual trends, apart from the *Bazgash*t movement, the pro-Aryan doctrine of intellectuals such as Akhundzade (1812-1878 AD) and Kermani (1854-1896 AD) was also significant. This group of intellectuals advocated the 'superiority' of pre-Islamic Iranian identity, while blaming Islam for 'contaminating' the Iranian society. This trend was fed by the pro-Aryan intellectual movements of Western scholars such as Gobineau (1816-1882 AD), Cumont (1868-1947 AD), and Strzowski (1862-1941 AD) as discussed further in Chapter 4. In this thesis, it is argued that even though the foundation of these movements during the Qajar period instigated an interest in the past, their social and political repercussions appeared during the Pahlavi period.

### **2.2.3. The Qajars & Reforms**

The majority of the Qajar reform movements culminated during the reign of Naser al-Din Shah. His initial interest in reforms that targeted to modernise and institutionalise Iran paved the way for the embryonic development of the Constitutional movement. These reforms were implemented in two waves under two different Ministers. The initial reformist movement in Iran came under the Premiership of Amir Kabir (1807-1852 AD). The establishment of the first secular school, *Dar al-Fonoun*, is considered as one of the most significant reforms during this period. In 1860s *Dar al-Fonoun* became closely associated with a freemasonry society called *Faramooshkhaneh* (house of forgotten), whose members were often the instructors or students of *Dar al-Fonoun* (Ekhtiar 2001:156). The initial purpose advocated by the supporters of this society was to strengthen the Shah's power. However, *Faramooshkhaneh* grew independent from the Court and began campaigns for "governmental reforms, the rule of law, and the need for constitution" (ibid.:157). The anti-Court activities executed by the members of this society were soon condemned by the Shah and all its activities were band. *Dar al-Fonoun* also lost its initial appeal for



the Shah as it fed the anti-Government secret society (ibid.). It was partly due to the distrust of Naser al-Din Shah towards the graduates of *Dar al-Fonoun*, that the focus of the curricula taught in the school shifted from military and science to history, geography, foreign languages and art (ibid.:159). Further, the study of certain translated books such as those related to the French Revolution was prohibited (ibid.:158). Nevertheless, Iranian intellectuals became familiar with the works of Descartes (*Discourse de la method* translated to Persian in 1862), Auguste Comte, David Hume, John Lock, J.S. Mill, and J.J. Rousseau (Parsinejad 2003:27). Although the influence of the philosophers of the Age of Enlightenment inspired some of the Iranian elite, perhaps the most significant advance during this period was their acquaintance with the Western approach to Iranian history.

The second wave of reforms was carried out by Mirza Hossein Khan Sepahsalar (1827-1881 AD) who was educated in France (Nashat 1982:137). Hossein Khan became the Prime Minister in 1873 and began undertaking various political, military and cultural reforms (ibid.:138). As a part of his attempt to modernise Iran, he arranged several trips for the Shah to Europe between 1873 and 1878. The aim of these trips was to familiarise the Shah with the European culture. Although many consider Hossein Khan's modernisation attempts, such as the auctioning of concessions like Reuter to foreigners and the organisation of expensive European trips for the Shah, as steps towards abolishing Iran's independence, Hossein Khan can be identified as one of the first Iranian nationalists who advocated the 'restoration of Iran's glorious past' (Nashat 1982:149). In fact, while in office, he used his authority over publications to introduce terms such as "patriotism" and "fatherland", as well as writing extensively on topics of "welfare of the state and nation" and "Iran's greatness" (ibid.:152). The introduction of such themes had a tremendous influence on the attitude of some court officials as well as the newly emerging middle class, setting the stage for further reforms.

From the above section, it can be argued that some Iranian intellectuals perceived the expansion of Western powers in Iran as a route to modernisation (Kamrava 1992:8). These intellectuals believed that modernisation equalled the adoption of Western social values and more intensive relations with Europeans. In fact, Hossein Khan deeply believed that the word "civilisation" merely applied to the European countries and if Iran wished to become "civilised", the emulation of the West was inevitable (Nashat 1982:137). As Diaz-Andreu (2007:67) has argued, this perception rose from the widespread belief during the period of the French Revolution that only the most civilised states could claim nationhood.

Although the escalated interactions between Iran and Europe in the nineteenth century did not lead to any considerable changes in the Iranian society, it enhanced knowledge of civilisations beyond the Iranian

borders, creating an opportunity to be acquainted with Western ideologies and ways of life. These cultural and ideological exchanges often came in the form of travel memoirs of Iranians who had either travelled or lived in Europe; or the translation of Western books into Persian (Bakhash 1978:2). One such traveller was Haj Sayyah who visited many European countries and wrote about their political and social states. During his stay in London, he wrote, “Why don’t we have progress like these people? When will we wake up from our negligence? I was very sorry...” (Sayyah 1998:155). He also visited libraries and museums around the world and became one of the first advocates for the protection of national heritage in Iran (Abdi 2001:53).

#### **2.2.4. An Age of Antiquarianism**

The previous section demonstrated that during the Qajar period, Iran failed to become a modern nation-state. It was further articulated that the interference of external powers and their exploitation of resources weakened Iran’s autonomy and caused severe financial distress. It is argued that the economic considerations of this period and the scarcity of the most immediate necessities of life made the practice of archaeology a “wasteful luxury” (Trigger 1984:357). Nevertheless, the socio-political dynamics that led to the initial manifestations of the rise of Iranian nationalism against foreign threat provided a platform for interest in the past. Trigger (1984:358) argued, under such historical circumstances, suppressed nations often turn to archaeology and history to glorify their national past in order to resist foreign influence. In the case of Iran, even though the foundations for such movements were instigated during the Qajar period, it is argued that the Qajar social context was far from ideal for the establishment and institutionalisation of archaeology. It is contended that although the Qajars had recognised the effectiveness of archaeology as a political instrument, in particular pre-Islamic monuments, most of the archaeological activities undertaken by Iranians during this period are more suitably classified as antiquarianism. In contrast, the pursuits of foreign archaeologists in Iran during this period may be articulated in terms of their interest in Biblical and Classical remains (see Chapter 5) or in their collection of Islamic antiques (see Chapter 6).

The intention of the first part of this section was to represent a comprehensive understanding of the Qajars’ outlook towards archaeology. The most important factor to consider while investigating the history of Iranian archaeology is to take into account the nature of the ruling administration, the monarchy, and the importance of religious authority, as the source of legitimacy for the Qajars (Amanat 1997:8-9). With respect to the former, the succession of each dynasty from the previous one was essential, as this change often declared the prevalence of one Iranian tribe over another. Considering the

continuous rivalry among Iranian tribes and their role in the fragmentation of the Iranian society, it is suggested that the new dynasties were not liable to show sympathy or reverence towards anything constructed by previous dynasties. Although this may have been a general pattern, there were also instances of the Qajars looking into past dynasties for inspiration. In Chapter 5, the Qajar fascination with the archaeological site of Persepolis and the imitation of the mannerism of Ancient Persian dynasties are discussed in more detail. There were also isolated cases of Qajar kings or influential individuals who funded the refurbishment of historic monuments (see Chapter 6).

With respect to the second issue, namely the essentiality of Shi'a Islam as a pillar of Qajar legitimacy, one has to consider the negative outlook towards the "ignorant" past, often promoted by Islamic ideology (see Seely 2007:16). The unfavourable attitude of the religious leaders towards a period in history of Iran that preceded the enlightened age of Islam discouraged any interest towards the pre-Islamic past. Therefore, the refurbishments of past monuments during this period were restricted to functional public spaces such as, mosques, squares, bridges, bazaars and caravanserais. This restriction was also associated with the Islamic system of *vaqf* which is discussed in Chapter 6.

It is also important to note the influence of Europeans in raising Iranian's interest in their own antiquities. This new interest drove Iranian officials who had become impressed by the amount of gold and silver recovered by the French excavations, to launch their own treasure-hunting expeditions and collection of artefacts (Naseri-Moghaddam 2004:49, 253-2660). An account by Etemad al-Saltaneh, who was a Trustee of Naser al-Din Shah, reveals his new hobby of collecting ancient coins (Abdi 2001:53). As will be discussed in Chapters 4, 5, and 6, such privately-funded treasure-hunting expeditions by Iranian elite were common across the country and encapsulated all archaeological periods.

A more active era in the history of reconstruction and protection of Iranian cultural heritage came under the reign of Naser al-Din Shah. Due to his intentions to modernise the country and given his travels to Europe, which often included visits to museums, Naser al-Din Shah had grown interest in the Western practice of valuing the past. Naseri-Moghaddam (2004:254) points out that during these voyages the Shah was accompanied by Fuevrier, his medical specialist, who met the monarch's interest in antiquity through explaining the process of human evolution using bows and arrows displayed at the Museum of Natural History in Paris. Further, at the *Golestan Palace*, there exist several photography albums, collected by the Shah, that contain depictions of ancient sculptures and inscriptions (ibid). Naser al-Din Shah's interest in the past made him the first Qajar monarch to launch official excavations, hire photographers to depict Iran's monuments, and establish a museum. The establishment of the first Museum, the *Homayooni Museum*, is particularly noteworthy. The Museum was established in 1911 and was located in the

*Golestan Palace*, where a room was adorned by the Monarch's collection of antiques from Iran and other countries (Nafisi 2000:9). The collection of ancient antiquities and their preservation was, however, an old tradition in Iran and Chardin, in his travelogue to Persia in the seventeenth century discussed the existence of a collection of coins from the Median period, which were discovered in Marand in Azerbaijan, and kept in Shah Abbas' court (Negahban 2006:46). Nevertheless, the first collection of antiquities organised in a space called 'museum' appeared by the request of Naser al-Din Shah. Due to a robbery soon after its foundation, the jewelry, which was originally placed in glass displays cases in the *Homayooni Museum*, was moved to the basement, and later on to the *Jewelry Museum* in the Central Bank of Iran (Nafisi 2000:10). In terms of the discipline of archaeology around the time of the Constitutional Revolution, although no activities were reported (apart from lootings documented by Naseri-Moghaddam 2004:17), one of the achievements of the Revolution was the establishment of an official post for a Cultural Minister (Abdi 2001:54). This event marked the initial step in recognising the value of cultural heritage by Iranian authorities.

In terms of foreign archaeological activities, the British and French were active in Iran, although their interest in Iranian archaeology was delayed by Iran's lack of Biblical and Classical monuments. By the end of the nineteenth century, the focus in Middle Eastern archaeology was no longer restricted to Biblical or Classical remains and Prehistoric research prevailed within many projects in the region. This diverted attention was targeted towards tracing back the origins of Europeans to Mesopotamia, through placing particular reliance on stratigraphy and cross-dating cultural sequences (Trigger 2007:246). The supplement of a comprehensive cultural sequence required the acquisition of data from Prehistoric sites in various regions of the Middle East. Thus, subsequent to archaeological activities in Turkey, Iraq, Egypt, and Palestine, eventually Iran gained significance. In addition, with the implementation of antiquity laws, cultural property in countries like Turkey (1883), Greece (1932), and Italy (1939), were claimed by the State, limiting the export of antiquities and thus restricting international excavations. In Iraq, between 1921 and 1933 archaeology was primarily managed by the British, who wrote the antiquity law (1924), executed it, and held the final judiciary authority (Bernhardsson 2007:197). The French acquired the concession for Iranian archaeology in 1900 and although their concession allowed archaeological activities in any part of Iran, they mainly focused on the site of Susa. Similarities between Mesopotamia's cultural remains and those uncovered in Susa by the French Delegation intensified foreign interest to explore the Iranian antiquities and to trace cultural connections between the two civilisations. This international interest in Iranian antiquities conspired to exert diplomatic pressures on Iran to annul the French Monopoly and adopt an open-door policy.

## 2.3. Nationalism & Archaeology during the Pahlavi Period

In this section it is demonstrated that incorporation of certain Western concepts such as a modern nation-state and nationalism significantly influenced the institutionalisation of archaeology during the Pahlavi period. This was due to the fact that with the establishment of a modern nation-state and the fading of the traditional form of government, new sources of legitimacy were adopted to authenticate the Pahlavi dynasty. With the rise of Iranian nationalism, this legitimacy was sought in the ‘golden age’ of Ancient Persian Empires, and particularly in the legacies of the Achaemenid and Sassanid dynasties. These themes are further evaluated in Chapter 5 through the analysis of Persepolis as a case study. In this section, as it was completed in the Qajar section, the Pahlavis’ attempt at creating and maintaining a nation-state, the prevalent forms of nationalism, and the state of archaeological activities is discussed in detail.

### 2.3.1. The Pahlavis & a Modern Nation-State

In this thesis, it is argued that the diminishing independence of Iran as a nation under the Qajars, accounted for the radical attempts by the Pahlavis to cultivate national pride through presenting a narrative of Iran as an ancient civilisation that surpassed the achievements of Classical Western civilisation. The determination to establish Iran as a sovereign nation-state and the objectives of modernisation were generated to combat the militant threats from foreign powers during the Qajar period and the two World Wars. In this section, the Pahlavis’ effort in constructing a modern nation-state and the impact of such socio-political dynamics on the development of Iranian archaeology is discussed in detail.

*“For too long my countrymen have relied on others. I want to teach them their own values, so that they may be independent in mind and action.”*

(Reza Shah cited in Menashri 1992:98)

The Pahlavi period is often recognised as the hallmark of state building and modernisation (see Lenczowski 1978). In this section, the legacy of the Pahlavis, in particular the efforts of Reza Shah’s Government in building a modern nation-state is discussed. It is argued that while under Reza Shah the process of unification relied on the notion of ‘Aryanism’ and the heroes of the *Shahnameh*, during Mohammad Reza Shah’s reign more emphasis was laid on the institution of monarchy and the Achaemenid kings. As will be articulated in the following sections, these same tenors are observed in the implementation of the brand of nationalisms promoted by each monarch.

At the end of World War I in 1918, Iran had become a disoriented country without the sovereignty of a central government. The Constitutional Revolution had failed to unite and modernise the Iranian nation (Abrahamian 2008:34) and the country was on the verge of fragmentation. In light of these events, a series of dramatic political episodes resulted in the rise of Reza Khan (1878-1944 AD) as the ultimate authority. Through a *coup d'état* in 1921, Reza Khan worked his way up to become the Prime Minister and in 1925, he crowned himself Shah of Persia (Asgharzadeh 2007:87). Despite the rise of nationalism, Iran in the nineteenth century had to confront many inadequacies in order to transform itself from a divided multi-ethnic society into a united nation-state. The solution of Reza Shah's Government was to adopt a rigorous regime of Westernisation to establish a modern state. Consequently, he arranged for the application of the one culture-one state- policy as a modernisation strategy. These policies and the top-down implementation of nationalism to homogenise the polyglot Iranian society correspond with Gellner's notion of a "young-nation-in-a-hurry" (Gellner 1997:46). According to this view, nations that transform into States without passing the necessary precursors and time lapses, can nonetheless achieve their objectives of constructing a homogenous culture and a state-unit, through the employment of vigorous procedures (ibid.).

The construction of a unified nation-state was achieved through the 'invention' and 'resurrection' of a common national identity. As Hobsbawm (1994:76-83) has argued, the "construction" of a national identity is based on two particular concepts, the "invention of traditions", and the "invention of a collective memory". Further, in correspondence with the German nation-state model, these concepts rested on two chief pillars of "superiority" and "continuity" (Heyd 1950:164). To attest the spirit of homogeneity, Reza Shah's Administration promoted the ideals of an 'imagined community' that glorified the pre-Islamic Iranian history. Particular emphasis was laid on the common ancestry of all Iranians and their lineage with the 'Aryan race'. This self-afflicted superiority and chauvinism had three intentions; firstly, to enhance national unity in the multi-ethnic Iranian society; secondly to reiterate Iran's sovereignty over previous protectorates and extend the country's political power beyond its current borders; and thirdly, to place Iranian's "racial" composition, as superior in comparison with the rest of Middle Eastern nations (Abrahamian 2008:87). In 1934, the Government announced that, henceforth Persia would be known as "Iran", the land of Aryans (Wilber 1975:162). This name change was justified through associating "Persia" with the Province of Pars (Fars), whereas "Iran" was perceived to invoke the glories and the birthplace of the ancient Aryans (Vaziri 1993:67). Some argued that this name change was suggested by the Iranian Legation in Berlin (Wilber 1975:163). The Government's attempt to make affiliations between Iran and Aryans was strengthened with the publication of Ernst Herzfeld, the German archaeologist who argued that the name Iran was derived from the geographical and political name

*Aryanama Khshathram* “the Empire of the Aryans” from which a new ethnicon *Erani* was derived (Herzfeld 1934:9). Ansari (2003:65) further maintained that the name change was justified through the anti-imperialist policies of Reza Shah’s Government which denounced the use of “Persia” considering its association with the “Persian Wars” and the defeat of Persia by the Greeks.

The sense of ‘superiority’ and ‘continuity’ of the Iranian identity was further asserted through the re-invention of a glorious imperial past for the Monarch (ibid.:36). It has been argued that prior to selecting the surname “Pahlavi”, Reza Khan consulted Ernst Herzfeld, about the origins of the word (Wilber 1975:229). Ansari argued that at the time the word Pahlavi was attributed to the best of people in the Sassanid period and was interpreted as “civilised” and “free” (Ansari 2003:36). He further contended that the connotation of the name Pahlavi with a Sassanid “tribe” allowed Reza Shah to construct a lineage with a pure Iranian royal tribe (ibid.), a custom practiced by many previous Iranian dynasties and their founding members (see Chapter 5). This was particularly important to Reza Shah given his background as an ordinary soldier with no connection with Qajar royalty.

Even though Iran was recognised as a Muslim country, Reza Shah’s Government promoted a narrative of Iran as an ancient nation with its own distinctive history and separate from the rest of the Arab and Islamic world. The ‘unique’ Iranian identity was further endorsed by emphasising pre-Islamic history and symbols. In order to implement modernisation, the Government aimed to secularise the Iranian society and diminish the power of *Ulama*. This task was especially difficult due to the influence of Islam, and in particular Shi’ism, with the Iranian identity in the absence of any other distinct national historiography (ibid.:7). The ‘continuity’ of Iran as a nation-state was thus emphasised through the prevalence of a long line of royalty extending from the Achaemenids to the Pahlavi dynasty (Wilber 1975:175). To further illuminate this continuity, in 1925, the Government replaced the Muslim lunar calendar with a solar one, which started on the 21 of March, the Ancient Persian New Year and then replaced the Muslim months with Zoroastrian ones (Abrahamian 2008:83).

The introduction of a ‘unique’ collective national identity prevailed under Reza Shah, through the selection and presentation of historical figures from different ethnic groups and their transformation into national heroes. The main incentive was to re-invent a ‘collective memory’ for Iranians that fed into the notion of Iran as a united country with a homogenous culture. Similar to the German concept of *Volk* (Ergang 1931:206), Almadari (2007:28), argued that during this period mythical narrations and ballads were re-enforced and appropriated to fit the social values that assisted the construction of a common national identity. In correspondence with the policy of adopting a collective memory, legends were told of the courageous Persian heroes, the great military advances of the Persian kings, and the glories of the

Persian Empire. Further, new editions of poetry books by *Ferdowsi*, *Sa'di*, *Hafez*, and *Omar Khayyam*, were printed and integrated into school curricula and new mausolea were built to convert these individuals into national icons (Menashri 1992:98).

The scheme of adopting a common national identity was also fostered through the promotion of the idea of 'us' against 'them' policies. Thus, those Iranians who had fought against the assault of conquering Arabs or Turks were made national heroes. For example, *Ferdowsi* and *Babak Khoramdin* were emphasised as figures who had contested the Arab domination and *Arash Kamangir* was hailed as a figure who fought against the *Turans* (Turks). There was an exceptional focus on *Ferdowsi* as the protector of the Persian language and national Iranian identity against the conquering Arabs (Perry 1985:245) and in 1934 the *Anjoman-e-Asar-e-Melli* (Society for National Heritage) (hereafter *SNH*) in collaboration with the Iranian Parliament constructed a mausoleum for *Ferdowsi* in *Tus*, which was unveiled by Reza Shah himself (Negahban 2006:45). Some 45 Orientalist scholars from 18 countries were invited as guests to participate in the inauguration of the mausoleum (Wilber 1975:161). The celebration was aimed to remind Iranians of the patriotism of *Ferdowsi* and his attempt to glorify the achievements of earlier Persians to inspire his modern descendants (ibid.). Abrahamian (2008:87) has also argued that the location of this mausoleum may have been chosen in order to create a rival pilgrimage to the nearby *Imam Reza Shrine*. The *SNH*, which was established in 1922 further engaged in the organisation of public lectures on Iranian pre-Islamic and Islamic history as well as the publication of eight booklets on related matters (Abdi 2001:57). Lambton (1957:23) has argued that these efforts resulted in the enhancement of the international position of Iran while it helped to increase 'Iranian national consciousness' and 'superiority' towards their neighbours and equality with Europeans. The construction of a unified national identity persisted with recognising "Persian" as the official language of Iran. Prior to these reforms, the absence of a unified language was a chief contributing factor to the fostering of factional strife already existing in the Iranian society (Abrahamian 1974:17). Abrahamian (2008:77) has recorded that two third of the military conscripts who were recruited from various regions, spent their first six months of service learning Persian.

During the reign of Reza Shah despite a strict regime to construct an independent modern nation-state, the influence of foreign powers in Iran continued. This influence was emphasised with the discovery of oil by William Knox-D'Arcy in 1908. Although this discovery transformed Iran into a strategic region for the exploitation of Britain and later the United States, it also provided Iran with an opportunity to finance its modernisation reforms (Ansari 2003:9). These reforms were particularly apparent after the nationalisation of oil by Mossadegh in 1951 (see Diba 1986). In 1941, despite Iran's proclamation of neutrality, the Allies invaded Iran, forcing Reza Shah to abdicate, and installed Mohammad Reza Shah as the new king



(Abrahamian 2008:97). In many ways Mohammad Reza Shah's reign was a continuation of his father's, with some minor variations. He achieved Reza Shah's dream of turning Iran into a massive State structure by creating the *OPEC* and generating income from the rise in oil revenue (ibid.:123).

In this section, the construction of Iran as a modern nation-state was discussed. In doing so, emphasis was laid on Reza Shah given that the project of nation construction was initiated and pursued by his Government. Mohammad Reza Shah continued these policies, albeit through more emphasis on the institution of monarchy and its unbroken continuation since its foundation by Cyrus the Great as the main component of Iran's nationhood. In 1949, he replaced the solar calendar with an imperial one which allocated 2500 years for the presumed length of the Iranian monarchy, plus another 35 years for Pahlavi reign (ibid.: 152). His Government further launched a wave of modernisation projects which are discussed further in later sections. It is also important to note that, in comparison to Reza Shah, Mohammad Reza Shah was less hostile towards religion (see Chapter 6). For the benefit of analysis, the following sections are divided into two subsections where the socio-political dynamics and archaeological developments are presented under Reza Shah (r. 1925-1941 AD) and Mohammad Reza Shah (r. 1941-1979 AD) separately.

### ***2.3.1.1. Reza Shah's Government & Nationalism***

The brand of nationalism practiced during Reza Shah's reign will be discussed in Chapter 3. In this section, the nationalistic trends during this period are briefly addressed. At the core of the nationalism endorsed by Reza Shah's Government was the promotion of a secular and ancient society. This secularisation, which was seen as a precursor to modernisation, was achieved through diminishing the power of the *Ulama* (Menashri 1992:90). In order to aid the substitution of Islam with secular nationalism, the Government reduced the status of clerical establishments and pursued a policy that emphasised the 'continuity' and 'superiority' of Iran by adopting a narrative that linked Iranians to the Aryan race. Therefore, although this brand of nationalism was secular, it relied significantly on the 'ethnic' elements of Iranian society. Considering that the Achaemenids were proclaimed as the descendants of the Aryans, emphasis was also laid on pre-Islamic Iran as the 'golden age' of Iranian history. The impact of nationalist thinkers such as Mirza Aqa Khan Kermani (1854-1896 AD), Aref Qazvini (1882-1934 AD), Mohammad Taqi Bahar (1884-1951 AD), Mirzadeh Eshqi (1893-1924 AD) were also significant. The tendencies of Kirmani's patriotism and his blaming of Islam and Arabs for the "contamination" of the "highly sophisticated" and "civilised" Persian culture, intensified during this period (Bayat-Philipp 1980:75). The support that the Iranian intelligentsia provided for Reza Shah is also apparent in the writings of the poet Aref Qazvini who claimed:

*“The winds of the Sardar Sepah [one of the titles of Reza Khan] will receive this country from the verge of destruction. As long as the mullahs and the Qajars remain who knows what dishonour will befall the country of Cyrus? ... If the crown and throne of Anushiravan and Jam had any honour, this beggar king [Ahmad Shah] has destroyed it ... Always the people were the arbiters of the nation’s destiny; it was the people who made Derydoun and Ghobad their kings.”*

(Aref cited in Ansari 2003:32)

In 1920 Eshqi composed a nationalist Opera titled *Resurrection* in which the great kings of the past and the prophet Zoroaster return, and Iran is restored to its glorious past (Shafaq 1952:427). Bahar further supported Reza Shah’s cause by assuming great responsibilities in the organisational faction of the *Democratic Party*, which favoured the centralisation of a unified Iran in order to maintain its autonomy as an independent nation (Ghods 1991:35). The intelligentsia continued to endorse Reza Shah’s nationalism through the employment of their Western scientific expertise to gain a place for Iran in history. Following these attempts, Iranian political elite members, such as Mohammad Ali Foruoghi (1877-1942 AD), Hassan Pirnia (1871-1935 AD), and Hassan Taqizadeh (1878-1970 AD), began a campaign to recast the history of Iran and especially, pre-Islamic period by deviating from the European impressions of Iran and providing their own accounts (Abdi 2001:57). During this period a Party called *Iran-e Naw* (New Iran) was formed by the Cabinet members. The main aims of this Party were described as promoting the independence of Iran under the banner of Pahlavi; assisting the progress of Iran through the power of Reza Shah to civilisation and modernity; resisting foreign influence; opposing all reactionary and subversive ideas; and promoting honesty and devotion in public administrations (Grigor 2004:22). As a part of their endeavors, they articulated the significance of Iran’s pre-Islamic history which further complemented the nationalistic propagandas that were prevalent under the reign of Reza Shah. The pre-Islamic Iranian identity was further aided by the archaeological findings, such as Ghirshman’s excavations at Sialk, that provided support for the Aryan heritage of Iranians (see Chapter 4). The emphasis on the myth of common decent and the Aryan race provided a platform for the Government’s adopted narrative of ethnic nationalism. This trend was also aided by the discoveries at Persepolis and the focus on pre-Islamic Iran (see Chapter 5). As will be discussed in the following sections, the necessity to supply the ethnic and dynastic nationalism of Reza Shah’s Government with a valid historical background provided the pretext for the institutionalisation and progress of enterprises like archaeology.

### **2.3.1.2 Reza Shah's Government & Reforms**

The major pillars of change that characterised the Pahlavi period were based on centralisation, modernisation, and the establishment of institutes (Banani 1961:147). To achieve these objectives, Reza Shah's Government instigated extensive social and educational reforms. Further military reforms were introduced to complement the Government's intentions of promoting national unity and loyalty to the State. The procedures to endeavor such modifications in the Iranian society were merged with the embracing of secularism and Westernisation, both of which were supported by the intelligentsia while contested by the *Ulama* (Atabaki 2004:6-7). These reforms led to growth in economy and the formation of a middle class who became the catalyst for change in the Iranian society (Sayeed 1999: xii). Due to these modifications, Iranian society became more familiar with Western concepts, making the time ripe for the progress of cultural and scientific enterprises. Therefore, disciplines such as history and archaeology that were thought as wasteful luxury during the Qajar period became the foundation for legitimising the Pahlavi dynasty. This trend was fostered by the growing acquaintance of Iranians with foreign languages, which began during the Qajars and continued into the reign of Reza Shah. Many documents regarding Ancient Persia were recovered and translated. Consequently, by the 1920s, a complete history of Iran that extended back to the time of Achaemenid, as opposed to the Sassanid as recorded by *Ferdowsi*, was re-discovered and re-introduced to the Iranian society (Pirnia 1928:144).

The core of the reforms made by Reza Shah's Government aimed to foster patterns of change that provided for the abrupt achievements of constructing a modern nation-state. The adoption of a collective national identity was enforced through the instigation of a uniform culture and a common language. Alterations made in the education system were especially important as they aimed at reinforcing the national sense of belonging to a civilised and ancient nation with a continuous cultural tradition that surpassed the age of Islam. In agreement with these themes, the Government also made Persian the official language of the State and the education system was obliged to put strict emphasis on the Persian language as the standard dialect used in schools (Menashri 1992:96). The ultimate intention was to employ education as an apparatus to make 'Iranian' citizens for a newly built nation-state. Therefore, the expansion and progress of the education system was one of the main targets of reforms during this period (Wilber 1975:260). In 1922, these reforms continued by establishing the *Shura-ye 'Ali-ye Amuzesh* (Supreme Council for Education) to outline education policies and by 1928 standard textbooks were issued (Menashri 1992:95). The growth of budget in the expenditures of Reza Shah's Administration depict that between the years of 1925-26 to 1940-41, the Education Ministry increased its expenses from 7 million *Rials* to 194 million *Rials* (Abrahamian 2008:69).

With the rapid pace of modernisation, alien technical and administrative words penetrated into the Persian language (Perry 1985:296). Although in 1933 the *Dar ol-mo Allemin-e Ali* (Teaching-Training College) formed a society to suggest new terms in arts and sciences (ibid.:299), the State additionally sponsored campaigns to target the ‘purging’ of Persian language from foreign words, especially Arabic. This task was undertaken by the *Farhangsara* (Cultural Academy), founded in 1935 (Wilber 1975:163). In addition the Department of Public Guidance, the *SNH*, the Geography Commission, the Journal *Iran-e Bastan* (Ancient Iran), as well as two main Government-subsidised papers, *Ettela’at* (Information) and *Journal de Tehran*, were created to promote national awareness in general public and advocate a pure Persian language (Abrahamian 2008:86).

In terms of social reforms that targeted the Westernisation of Iranian society, the establishment of the National Bank (1927), Tehran University (1935), the National Museum (1937), the National Library (1937), the Trans-Iranian Railway (1939), the Post and Telegraph Office (1946), two hospitals, modern factories, along with cinemas, roads, cafes, theaters, and other necessities to accommodate a middle-class style of life are noteworthy (Abrahamian 2008:90). In the following section, the institutionalisation of archaeology as an instrument of legitimising the Pahlavi dynasty and promoting national unity is discussed.

### ***2.3.1.3. An Introduction to Iranian Archaeology***

In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, it is argued that Iranian archaeology was born and institutionalised in response to the nationalistic trends prevalent during the Pahlavi period. Considering that the Nationalistic tradition of Iranian archaeology was formed during the reign of Reza Shah and under the dominance of ethnic and dynastic nationalism, the review of archaeological activities during this period is of vital importance. In this section, a brief overview of these activities is provided. For the purpose of clarity, this section is divided into two sections. The first section is dedicated to examining the role of Iranians in the development and institutionalisation of Iranian archaeology, while the following section focuses on the impact of foreign archaeological teams on the development of the discipline in Iran.

As demonstrated, the doctrine of Reza Shah’s Government centred on the construction of a modern nation-state and the adoption of a new national identity that aimed to unite the multi-ethnic Iranian society based on ‘true Iranian characteristics’ of the Aryan race, while blaming Islam for all the cultural inadequacies. Given that the source of legitimacy of Reza Shah’s Government was in ethnic and dynastic nationalism, the study and appropriation of the past through archaeology became an essential component of the State’s discourse. Therefore, similar to the experience of other nations in the making, the process of

constructing and consolidating a nation-state in Iran was achieved through the employment of archaeology as a tool that could recover the historic past and re-introduce it to the contemporary citizens as a part of their eternal identity and shared past.

Smith (1999:176-77) further illustrated the imperative role of archaeology in the formation of nations by arguing for the cultural platform that archaeology facilitates in promoting dignity and authority, as well as bolstering self-esteem. He contended that the subjectivity of the scientific study of the past facilitates the introduction of severe changes, as well as providing models of nobility and virtue to be emulated by the contemporary society (ibid.). During Reza Shah's period, the creation of a strong nation-state, abrupt socio-political reforms, and the elevation of nationalist sentiments, paved the way for the introduction of archaeology. Archaeology in return, was employed as an apparatus to foster the Government's account of national pride and to confirm the cultural 'continuity' and 'superiority' of Iranians. Archaeology's function in providing Iranians with a common historical and cultural past, not only united the multi-ethnic Iranian society, but also emphasised the projected grandiose of the Ancient Persian Empire which contributed to the bolstering of Iranian identity.

Given the Government's recognition of the instrumental role of archaeology in providing a sense of unity and superiority for the Iranian society, archaeological sites that were selected during this period as a portrayal of Iran's 'golden age' corresponded with the Achaemenid and Sassanid periods. The outcome of this movement, which presented contemporary Iranians as the true heirs of the Aryans, was a reflection of the "Pharaonicism" movement in the nineteenth-century Egypt (Meskell 1998:156). As "Pharaonicism" had become an instrument to assert a certain Egyptian identity, "Aryanism" became a strong ideological base for the construction of the Iranian identity in the twentieth century. This often chauvinist ideology claimed the existence of a unique Aryan national spirit, which had persisted over many centuries and passed on to the contemporary Iranians from the time of Cyrus the Great. This view implied that modern Iranians were descended from the pure-bred stock of Aryans and possessed their qualities. Through appropriating the archaeological heritage of the Aryans and their vast 'Empire', the Government was able to adopt its brand of nationalism and affirm Iran's sovereignty in the Middle East. The search for the true Aryan qualities was reflected in the activities of the *SNH* and their projects of building mausolea for national heroes. Through their efforts, skull measurements of these national icons were "proved" to fit the criterion of "true Aryans" (Abrahamian 2008:87). In Chapter 4, the impact of the Government's ethnic nationalism on Iranian archaeology is evaluated with reference to the study of the Prehistoric site of Sialk.

This escalated interest in the field of archaeology during Reza Shah's reign led to a number of progressive outcomes. These were the foundation of *SNH*, as discussed above, which held its first annual meeting on

30 June 1926 (Gholi Majd 2003:65); the eradication of the French Monopoly in 1927; the ratification of the Antiquity Law and the re-organisation of the Antiquity Office in 1930. Iranian archaeology was further institutionalised by establishing a Department of Archaeology at Tehran University in 1937; an inauguration of the National Museum in 1937; the publication of journals on Iranian archaeology such as (*Athar-e Iran*); and the excavation of archaeological sites that will be discussed throughout this thesis (Negahban 2006:57-68).

In terms of institutions, the earliest institute with interest in archaeology was the *Edarey-e Atiqat* or Antiquity Office, which was established in 1910 and was often synonymous with archaeological activities in Iran. However, it is here contended that the *SNH* provided the preliminary foundations for the development of archaeology. This position is assumed considering that every member of the *SNH*'s Board of Trustees was in Reza Shah's Administrative Cabinet and therefore capable of manipulating and implementing policies that served Iranian cultural heritage. Grigor (2004:22) argued that the members of this Society were intimately linked with the *Iran-e Naw Party* discussed above. The preliminary aims implemented by this Society including the building of a museum and a library in Tehran; documentation and registration of national remains; and registration of antiquities in possession of government and national organisations (Abdi 2001:56; Negahban 2006:43). The achievement of these objectives was imperative to the institutionalisation of Iranian archaeology. More importantly, this thesis argues that the *SNH* was instrumental in the formation of a homogeneous national identity that Reza Shah wished to promote. Thus, what is often dismissed as the penetration of politicians into the sphere of national heritage, in the absence of trained experts, was in part an institutionalised attempt to install a certain archetype of Iranian identity by creating common historical pasts through the employment of archaeological remains and historical figures. The *SNH* had a significant role in 'forging a nation' and implanting an Iranian identity by hiring Herzfeld in 1925 to investigate a number of sites as Iran's national heritage. At the end of August 1925, Herzfeld's efforts matured into the *SNH*'s first publication titled *A Brief Inventory of Historical Heritage and Edifices of Iran* (Grigor 2004:29). It is interesting to note that by 1932 this Inventory had expanded to include 247 buildings, about one third of which were pre-Islamic (ibid.:30). The society was also made responsible for the protection and restoration of heritage sites. However, in 1930 and upon the ratification of the Antiquity Law, this duty was granted to the *General Office of Archaeology*. In 1944, *SNH* was re-organised and launched the project of *One Thousand Year Anniversary of Avicenna* (<http://anjom.ir/pishineh.html>). *SNH* continued its interpretation of Iranian identity through the construction of over 30 mausolea and several memorial structures.

Another active institute in the formation of Iranian archaeology during Reza Shah's reign was the *Edarey-e Kolle Bastanshenasi* or *Archaeological Service of Iran*, also known as *General Office of Archaeology*

(hereafter *GOA*). In contrast to the *SNH*, the active promotion of ethnic nationalism was in steep contradiction to the objectives of the *GOA*. This Institute was established in 1910 and before 1936 it was known as *Edarey-e Atiqat* (Antiquity Office). The Institute was initially responsible for the management of antiquities and their export out of Iran (<http://www.icar.ir/documents/>). Following the ratification of the Antiquity Law, the *GOA* was placed under the direction of the French architect, André Godard, and assumed a substantial role in the enforcement of the Law (Negahban 2006:62). In 1936 after the completion of the *Iran-e Bastan* (National Museum), the *GOA*'s headquarters were relocated from *Masoudie Palace* to the new Museum building (Abdi 2001:59).

Integral to the preparations that assisted the transformation of Iranian archaeology from antiquarianism into an institutionalised discipline was the opening of Tehran University and the establishment of an academic base for the field of archaeology. Tehran University was inaugurated in 1935 with a symbolic act of placing a Gold Foundation Plate in the cornerstone of the University in the manner of the Achaemenids at Persepolis (Wilber 1975:163). The University was composed of six faculties, with archaeology assembled as one of the programmes within the *Faculty of Literature* (Negahban 2003:276). The first graduates of this programme obtained their Bachelor Degree in 1941 (*ibid.*). Among them was Fereydoun Tavalloli, whose dissertation focused on Timurid Art (Negahban 2006:84). In its early days, the Archaeology Programme at Tehran University was dominated by Iranian nationalists who formed a society called *Anjoman-e Iranvij* (Society for the Land of Iran). This Society was described by Abdi (2001:62) as a chauvinist organisation that aimed to promote Iranian nationalism. Among the founders of this Society were Mohammad-Sadeq Kia, Zabih Behrooz and Mohammad Moqaddam. Ebrahim Pourdavoud, another member of the Society and the first Professor of Ancient Iranian Cultures and Languages, is said to have been more moderate in his nationalist views (*ibid.*).

The onset of World War II had unprecedented consequences for Iranian archaeology. While foreign archaeological expeditions were abandoned and archaeologists left Iran, Iranians began to advance into positions previously reserved for foreign experts. During this period, the *SNH* and *GOA* went through further organisational modifications to enhance their efficiencies. Furthermore, the Iranian archaeologists who were trained in Tehran University began to emerge as professional archaeologists. This progress was partially a product of the improvements made to the archaeology programmes at Tehran University, including the establishment of the *Institute of Archaeology* by E.O. Negahban. In addition, in the absence of foreign expeditions, Iranians began to take over excavations. In Chapter 5, it is argued that the majority of these Iranian archaeologists began their careers by engaging in archaeological activities at the pre-Islamic site of Persepolis.

The second part of this section is dedicated to providing a descriptive analysis of the participation of foreign archaeologists and their contributions in forming the discipline of Iranian archaeology. In the earliest stages of foreign presence in Iran, Iranian archaeology can be divided into before and after the ratification of Antiquity Law by the Iranian Parliament in 1930. In the domain of archaeological excavations, the French were the first to initiate significant archaeological expeditions in Iran since 1884. In 1895, the French obtained a monopoly to explore archaeological sites in Iran in exchange for a sum of 500000 *Francs* (Chevalier 1997:77) and later in 1900 a concession was granted which offered them the exclusive right to excavate all over Iran (Tissot 1994). During the 33 years of French Monopoly, archaeological activities were largely restricted to antiquarian pursuit and occasionally the provision of stratigraphy for archaeological sites. Gholi Majd (2003:4) has argued that this monopoly was a safeguard against the exploitation of archaeological material and the ratification of the Antiquity Law, which was encouraged and pushed forward by foreigners, especially Germans and Americans, made Iranian archaeology susceptible to more intensive antiquarian activities. In confirmation of this suggestion, the annulment of the French Monopoly in 1929 and the adoption of an open-door policy in Iranian archaeology intensified international interest to expand the margins of their projects into Iranian territory.

It is further argued that European lack of interest in Ancient Persian remains was due to the scarce amount of Biblical and Classical remains, which they identified as their own historical past. The Classical remains of Iran were restricted to the monuments of the Achaemenid Empire, whom the Classical world portrayed as an Oriental despot and a stepping stone to the perceived glories of ancient Greece and Rome. However, by the end of the nineteenth century, the focus in Middle Eastern archaeology was no longer restricted to the remains of these periods and Prehistoric research prevailed over much of excavating projects in the region. By the time international interest grew deeper in Iranian archaeology, the global status of archaeology as a scientific discipline had gone through dramatic structural changes in theoretical framework and technical capabilities to conduct field-work. With respect to theoretical developments, archaeologists had abandoned the Evolutionary approach that prevailed in the nineteenth century and replaced it with the Culture-Historical approach, which placed an increasing reliance on diffusion and migration theories to explain culture change (Trigger 2007:218). The foundation of this new approach laid in the eventual emergence of economic deficiencies following the Industrial Revolution (Kristiansen 1978:21). These changes induced a shift in the European societies and their Darwinian belief in the “continous progress” as a natural aspect in the history of human evolution and instead propelled them towards the doctrine of nationalism (ibid.). Further, the political transformations during this period, which encouraged dogmatic nationalism and embraced the racial convictions that triggered the two World Wars no longer favoured the gradual evolutionary approach of Darwin, but embraced the migration and



invasion theories to justify diplomatic policies. The outcome of these assumptions directly influenced the practice of archaeology. As Trigger (2007:199, 217) argued, the failed states externalised economic and social conflicts by blaming them on their neighbours and instead promoted national unity through common biological heritage and race. This encouraged an interest in Prehistoric remains through the state-sponsorship of excavations that validated the common ancestry of citizens of each nation (ibid.). Gradually, the establishment of a chronological cultural distribution in Prehistoric Europe intensified interest in the cultural influences that could be traced back to the Middle East.

Several other factors contributed to the relocation of archaeological interest from Europe to the Middle East. To start with, the colonial adventure of the world powers in the Middle East and the sudden favouritism towards religion, which itself was a by-product of the failed European economy, justified the search for ancient material remains in the Old World (ibid.:229). These political interventions continued after the events of World War I, providing Britain and France with a ripe opportunity for the division of archaeological projects between the two countries (ibid.:255). Further, the prevalence of the diffusion approach was inflated with the interpretations of Gustaf Oscar Montelius (1843-1921 AD) and later Gordon Childe (1892-1957 AD), who claimed that in Prehistoric times cultural development had occurred in the Middle East and transmitted through a series of diffusion and migration waves to Europe (Daniel 1981:114; Trigger 2007:228). In the 1920s and 1930s, the publications of Gordon Childe placed Iran on the Prehistoric map within the global context (see Chapter 4). In terms of technological advances, this period was revolutionised by the innovative scientific developments such as aerial photography, pollen analysis and, above all, radiocarbon dating, which transformed archaeology into a more professional and scientific discipline (Bahn 1996:197-99).

In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, it will be demonstrated that the above advances in archaeological theory and methodological techniques did not have a substantial impact on Iranian archaeology, given the late development of archaeology into an institutionalised discipline. Nevertheless, the methods associated with the Culture-Historical approach were eventually adopted during Reza Shah's time, considering their potential to assist the confirmation of cultural and ethnic 'continuity' of Iranians as a 'unique nation' were recognised by the Government. In addition, the centrality of typological and chronological patterns in this approach, profited international expeditions with the provision of artefacts that supplied their museums and assisted comparative studies with Mesopotamia. These projects became especially prevalent following the annulment of the French Monopoly.

Despite the annulment of the French Monopoly, the administration of Iranian archaeology remained in the hands of the French. In 1929, André Godard, a French architect, archaeologist and historian from *École*

*des Beaux-Arts of Paris* became the first Director of the *Antiquity Service of Iran*, a position he held until 1953 and again from 1956 to 1960 (Gran-Aymerich & Marefat 2001). As Director, Godard played a fundamental role in maneuvering the involvement of non-French Organisations, as well as the division of finds. Apart from his role in composing the Iranian Antiquity Law, Godard's era in Iranian archaeology is marked by two accomplishments: the design and construction of the *Iran-e Bastan* Museum and the inauguration of the first Iranian Journal of Archaeology (*Athar-e Iran*) (Abdi 2001:59). Godard's background in architecture transformed him into one of the pioneers in the institutionalisation of architecture in Iran and provided him with the opportunity to engage in building governmental and cultural complexes for the Pahlavis. The *Iran-e Bastan Museum*, which was modeled after the Sassanid Palace of Ctesiphon, is considered as one of Godard's major contributions to the institutionalisation of Iranian archaeology and architecturally echoed the Government's attempt at the appropriation of past Iranian dynasties. In 1936 the collections were transformed from the old National Museum to the new building and the Museum was officially founded by Reza Shah in 1937 (Abdi 2001:59). In addition, the *Parse Museum* in Shiraz (1936) and *Persepolis Museum* (1937) were established as the first museum complexes outside Tehran. Godard's *Athar-e Iran* journal of archaeology was published in French twice annually, from 1936 to 1949 (Gran-Aymerich & Marefat 2001).

The major foreign archaeological activities during this period, mainly undertaken by American expeditions, will be discussed in further details in the following chapters. It is further argued that under the reign of Reza Shah, given the consideration of 'Aryan race' as the 'authentic' Iranian identity, all archaeological sites, including Islamic ones, were studied within the 'ethnic' Iranian context.

### **2.3.2.1. Mohammad Reza Shah's Government & Nationalism**

In this thesis, the brand of nationalism implemented by Reza Shah's Government is described as an instrument to foster the sense of superiority and pride within the Iranian society in order to address the crisis of inferiority experienced by Iranians during the Qajar period and during the occupation of Iran by the Allies. Therefore, Reza Shah's Government adopted a brand of nationalism that focused on the ethnic elements of Iranian identity and the myth of common descent, Aryans, to emphasise the unity of Iran as an independent nation-state, and its superiority in comparison with other nations. The reign of Mohammad Reza Shah can be considered as a continuation of Reza Shah's policies as the official objectives for modernisation and Westernisation of Iran continued, albeit with less emphasis on secularising the society (Pahlavi 1961:165). A point of departure that differentiated the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah from that of his father is the fact that he inherited a nation-state; therefore, his

brand of nationalism was targeted towards the maintenance of that State. This contention was increasingly addressed in the legitimisation of monarchy as the most appropriate form of government for Iran (Ansari 2003:33). Therefore, as Ansari argued, the brand of nationalism adopted by Mohammad Reza Shah's Government increasingly centred on the persona of the Shah and thus corresponded to a form of political nationalism which he labeled "dynastic nationalism" (Ansari 2003:33; 2008:327). The endorsement of dynastic nationalism required the re-creation of the dynastic past, which mainly focused on the mighty empires of the Achaemenid and Sassanid dynasties. The ultimate expression of Mohammad Reza Shah's dynastic nationalism was the celebration in 1971 for the Anniversary of 2500 years of Persian Monarchy, which took place at Persepolis and Pasargadae (see Chapters 5 & 7). The link with the Achaemenids was powerfully accentuated by Mohammad Reza Shah's eulogy at the tomb of Cyrus the Great (Holliday 2013:39).

The dynastic nationalism that Mohammad Reza Shah's Government advocated was accompanied by the adoption of a national identity that relied on the pre-Islamic Iranian history and the ideals of Western societies. The articulation of pre-Islamic Iran as the 'authentic' Iranian identity was resisted by a division of the intellectual movement that considered Islam and Shi'ism as the true Iranian identity (Ansari 2005:328-329). The ideals of this movement, which was best represented in the writings of Jalal Al-e Ahmad (1923-1969 AD) and Shari'ati (1933-1977 AD), condemned the brand of nationalism advocated by the Shah's Government as unauthentic, and considered a return to the Islamic political doctrine as the only remedy for the Iranian society (ibid.). Shari'ati, in particular, tried to make Islam compatible with the twentieth-century life (Kamrava 1990:67) and, therefore, an alternative Islamic Government was foreseen to replace the institution of monarchy. This group of intellectual elite were highly contradictory to their earlier counterparts- such as Ali Akbar Dehkhoda (1879-1956 AD); Ahmad Kasravi (1890-1946 AD); and Sadiq Hedayat (1903-1951 AD), who were fiercely anti-Islamic and raised questions regarding the validity of Islam as a credible religion (ibid.). The advocacy of a 'return' to Shi'a Islam as the true Iranian identity had implications that will be discussed in the section on post-Revolution.

### ***2.3.2.2. Mohammad Reza Shah's Government & Reforms***

In the previous section it was argued that the policies of Mohammad Reza Shah's Government were to modernise Iran through Westernisation, therefore, the reforms that were carried out, aimed to achieve these objectives. More importantly the resources for the wave of reforms and institutionalisation were provided following the nationalisation of oil and increase in oil revenues. In 1951 the Iranian Parliament passed the Nationalisation Bill, paving the way for the nationalisation of the oil industry (Afkhami

2009:124). Arjomand (1988:72) argued that following the nationalisation of oil, Dr. Mosaddeq (1882-1967 AD), aimed to restrict the power of the Shah into a constitutional monarch. In 1953, with the support of the U.S. Central Intelligence Agency a *coup d'état* was carried and Mosaddeq's Government and his *National Front Party* was overthrown (ibid.). Ansari contended that following the Shah's return to Iran after the coup, he began to see his Government in terms of "popular authoritarianism", whereby the king was mandated by a grateful people over the head of the "reactionary" establishment (Ansari 2012:156). Therefore, in the aftermath of the coup, Mohammad Reza Shah identified himself as a "democratic monarch" with reforms that reflected the modern and democratic nature of his monarchy (ibid.). In correspondence with these themes, in 1963 Mohammad Reza Shah launched the 'White Revolution' to further modernise the economy and social infrastructure of Iran. The White Revolution specifically targeted land reforms and women's rights (Afkhani 2009:228).

Following these reforms, education institutes grew threefold (Abrahamian 2008:134) and the literacy rate rose extensively from 20 percent to 42 percent (ibid.). The institutionalisation and advance of the education system was further structured to target the promotion of the objectives of the Pahlavi Government, which were the propagation of Westernisation, dynastic nationalism, and secularisation of Iran. To achieve these aims various foundations were organised and the Pahlavi court extended its influence into cultural forums. The *Anjoman-e Qalam* (the Pen Society), *Bonyad-e Farhang* (Iranian Culture Foundation), *Bonyad-e Pahlavi* (Pahlavi Foundation), and *Bonyad-e Farabi* (Farabi Foundation) are to name a few of these organisations (Boroujerdi 1996:45). The most significant of these, was the Pahlavi Foundation, founded as a court patronage for charitable social and cultural activities in 1958 (Abrahamian 2008:127). Apart from organising cultural events, a branch of the Foundation, *The Institute for the Translation and Publication of Books*, had published more than 500 sociology, religious, historic, and literary works of international culture by 1977 (Pahlavi & Waugh 1980:120). The Pahlavi Foundation had shares in 207 companies, some of which were in the tourism industry, including casinos, cabarets, and hotels (Abrahamian 2008:127). Further, in 1961, the *Vezarat-e Farhang va Honar* (Ministry of Culture and Art) was established, which worked in close correspondence with the Pahlavi royal family (Hojjat 1995:200); in fact, Mehrdad Pahlboud, the Minister, was the brother-in-law of Mohammad Reza Shah. As will be discussed in the following section, the institutionalisation of culture and the appearance of court organisations that mediated the brand of culture that the Pahlavi aimed to promote had an impact on the course of Iranian archaeology. This influence was particularly noticeable as the *Organisation of Attracting Tourism* was established in 1963 and archaeological sites became recast as tourist destinations.

### **2.3.2.3. The Birth of Iranian Archaeology**

As demonstrated in the preceding sections, the Pahlavi Administration is considered as the first Iranian Government to officially politicise archaeological remains. During this period, the Western practice of utilising archaeology for the promotion of national unity and enhancing pride, which dawned in Europe in the early nineteenth century (Diaz-Andreu 2007:318), was introduced and deployed by the Pahlavis. In addition to the ‘invention’ of an identity that celebrated the ‘golden ages’ of the pre-Islamic Iran, Mohammad Reza Shah’s Government, increasingly relied on presenting the monarchy as an inherent nature of Iranian culture which had prevailed for the past 2500 years (Ansari 2003:171). In correspondence with the Pahlavis’ policy to portray Iran’s pre-Islamic past as the ‘golden age’ and the enduring nature of Iranian monarchy, a devotion to the advance of the field of archaeology was required. The Iranian socio-political and anti-imperialist context provided a platform for the endorsement of the Pahlavi’s ‘Persianising’ policies. The political policies of the Pahlavi period suggest that a surge of archaeological activities, mostly concentrated on the pre-Islamic period of Iranian history, was launched to propagate the importance of the Iranian empire and monarchy for international and domestic audiences. The ultimate exploitation of archaeology for this purpose was the celebration of the Anniversary of 2500 years of Persian Monarchy at Persepolis, which will be discussed in Chapter 5. In this section, similar to the section on Reza Shah’s period, the archaeological activities during this period are evaluated first in terms of Iranian contributions and then in terms of the involvement of foreign archaeological expeditions.

A distinctive indication of the development of Iranian archaeology into a scientific discipline was the rise in the number of Iranian archaeologists and their engagement in key positions in official institutes. This did not influence the *SNH*, given its inherent nationalist nature and the participation of political elites in the Organisation since its formation during Reza Shah’s reign, however, the *SNH* began a more intensive involvement in various cultural projects. In 1968 the Society was equipped with a permanent office following the purchase of an old house belonging to Amir Bahadour (<http://anjom.ir/pishineh.html>). In the same year, a specialised library was founded with holdings that focused on the history, culture, archaeology, geography and literature of Iran (*ibid.*). In addition, the Society continued to lend its assistance to the formation and interpretation of Iranian identity through the construction of statues and mausolea for Iranian national heroes. These constructed monuments were soon denoted as the most visited tourist attractions and pilgrimages in Iran and played a vital role in shaping the Iranian identity. From the year 1925 to 1979 the Society published more than 150 books which were housed among other publications in the library founded by the Society in 1968 (*ibid.*). The advent of the Islamic Revolution in the year 1979 concluded the activities of the Society until its re-organisation in 1986 (*ibid.*).

The involvement of Iranians was particularly apparent in the *GOA*, given it had been dominated by the French since its establishment. In 1952, Mohammad Taqi Mostowfi became the first Iranian Director of the *GOA* (Negahban 2006:64). With the foundation of the Ministry of Art and Culture in 1961, the *GOA*, the National Museum and the National Library were placed under this Ministry. With the incorporation of the *GOA* into the Ministry, the institute was renamed as the *General Office of Archaeology and Folklore* (<http://www.icar.ir/documents/>). However, in 1973 the Institute was divided into two separate Institutions, the *Markaz-e Bastanshenasi* (Archaeology Service), also known as the Archaeology Centre of Iran, and the *Markaz-e Mardom Shenasi* (Anthropology Service) (ibid.). By this time, the Archaeology Service had expanded its missions to 51 in number and had assumed substantial modifications to manage the *Annual Symposiums of Archaeology* for international and Iranian scholars alike (ibid.; Mousavi 2002:248).

In the section on the archaeological activities during Reza Shah's rule, it was argued that the establishment of the Archaeology Programme at Tehran University was instrumental in the institutionalisation of archaeology. In this section, it is argued that the explosion of Iranian's participation in archaeology should be accredited to the progress made by this Institute. In the year 1964, the Archaeology Programme at the Faculty of Literature became the Department of Archaeology with Isa Behnam as the first Head of the Department (Negahban 2006:85). By this time, E.O. Negahban, one of the most instrumental figures in the history of Iranian archaeology, had been employed at Tehran University and embarked on his projects of professionalising archaeology in Iran. Malek Shahmirzadi (<http://archaeology.ut.ac.ir/moh-abad.htm>) summed up Negahban's contributions by stressing three substantial factors, being: the establishment of the *Institute of Archaeology* at Tehran University in 1959, directing the first joint excavation of the Institute and *GOA* at the Prehistoric site of Marlik in 1961, and the restoration of the Mohammad Abad Kharre Carvansarai and its establishment as a base camp to accommodate students during field seasons. Furthermore, Negahban (2003:277) contributed to the professionalisation of archaeology in Iran by establishing a Graduate School (Master's Degree), increasing the amount and variety of field work trainings, and initiating a tradition of Prehistoric research in Iranian archaeology. Following these efforts, Tehran University added two modules of "scientific excavation" and "mapping" to its curricula and made them compulsory for all Graduate students in 1965 (Negahban 2006:81). The Ghazvin plain was selected and preparations were made by Negahban to accommodate the University's requirements for completing field research (ibid.:86).

In 1959 Negahban, as the Director the *Institute of Archaeology*, invited Robert Braidwood, an American archaeologist from the Oriental Institute of Chicago, to begin a joint expedition in Prehistoric period with the Institute (<http://www.icar.ir/documents/>). In Chapter 4, the implications of this collaboration are discussed in greater detail. Even though an isolated number of archaeological excavations on Prehistoric

sites had been carried out during Reza Shah's reign, the realisation of Prehistoric archaeology as a scientific discipline intensified during Mohammad Reza Shah's period. Following these efforts, Iranians became engaged in excavation of Prehistoric sites in Marlik in 1961 and Hafte Teppeh in 1965.

A final development worth mentioning during this period was the foundation of several local museums outside Tehran: *Abadan Museum* (1948); *Chehelsotun Museum* in Isfahan (1958); *Naderi Garden Museum* in Meshad (1963); *Ghazvin Museum* (1965); and *Rasht Museum* (1970)

(<http://www.caroun.com/Museums/2MuseumsIranContents.htm>). More importantly the National Museum was detached from the *GOA* and became part of a new organisation called the *National Organisation for the Conservation of the Historical Monuments in Iran* (hereafter *NOCHMI*), which was established in 1956 (Tilia 1978:68; Hojjat 1995:198). As will be argued in Chapter 5 and 6, in 1964 *NOCHMI* launched several extensive projects with the collaboration of Italian teams to restore historical monuments in Iran. This partnership terminated in 1979 following the Islamic Revolution.

In the second part of this section, an overview of archaeological activities by foreign archaeological teams is presented. It has to be noted that in Chapter 4, 5 and 6, a detailed analysis of the major contribution of the foreign archaeological scholars in re-orienting the developmental course of Iranian archaeology is provided. Therefore, this section does not elaborate on this topic in detail. In terms of nationality, French and American teams remained prominent, albeit towards the end of the Pahlavi period many other international research teams were excavating in Iran. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, the Americans had a particularly significant role in acquainting Iranian archaeology with scientific approaches through the introduction of methods that were associated with 'New Archaeology'.

The Americans were also influential in the domains of pre-Islamic archaeological projects and a notable example is the work of Erich F. Schmidt (1897-1964 AD), a German archaeologist who was trained at Columbia University under the supervision of Anthropologist, Franz Boas (Grusan-Salman 2007:42). Schmidt who replaced Herzfeld as Director of Persepolis project, followed a model that emphasised the significance of stratigraphy (see Chapters 4 & 5). This was undoubtedly the influence of his teacher as Boas was one of the pioneers in advocating the stratigraphic revolution in the American field work (Daniel 1981:175). The Americans were also influential in the promotion of Islamic archaeology and its 'Persianisation' (see Chapter 6). Therefore in terms of excavations, it may be argued that Iranian archaeology during this period was dominated by the methods and theories of Americans, while Italians contributed substantially to the development of conservation techniques in Persepolis and Islamic complexes in Isfahan (see Chapters 4, 5 & 6). Other archaeological expeditions were undertaken by

scholars from Germany, Britain, Japan and Canada. For a more detail analysis of these activities refer to the main three chapters in this thesis.

## **2.4. Nationalism & Archaeology after the Revolution & the Emergence of an Islamic State**

In the previous section, the socio-political dynamics of the Pahlavi period and its contributions to the construction and maintenance of Iran as a modern nation-state were introduced. In addition, it was argued that the prevalent intellectual trends such as the nationalist orientation of societies like *Iranvij* and similar movements had a profound impact on the promotion of pre-Islamic Iran as the ‘authentic’ Iranian national identity, while the intellectual movement of those like Al-e Ahmad and Shari’ati advocated the search for ‘true’ Iranian identity in the teachings of Shi’a Islam. In this section, it is argued that the Islamic utopia promoted by the latter intellectual movements greatly influenced Ayatollah Ruhollah Khomeini (1902-1989 AD) who led the Islamic Revolution of 1979. It is generally held that during this period indigenous populist Shi’a ideology was adopted to defeat ‘Western imperialism’ by reclaiming true Iranian identity and culture, which was to be found in Shi’a Islam. However, the banner of anti-imperialism was not the sole motivation behind the Revolution. In fact, countless explanations have been offered for the proceedings of the Islamic Revolution. These included Khomeini’s condemnation of the institution of monarchy and his claims that its hereditary succession was wrong, invalid, and against Islamic values (Algar 1981:31); and the emergence of a wide social and economic gap between different levels of Iranian society. Dorraj (1990:176) argued that the Islamic Revolution was a ramification of the projection of ideals and dreams of people who felt oppressed by their own elites. These concepts were well represented in Khomeini’s speech on the New Year of 1980 when he declared that “the world today belongs to the oppressed, and sooner or later they will triumph” (Algar 1981:287). As will be argued in the following sections, this outlook towards Iran as an Islamic State, and the promotion of Islamic identity, eventually grew more accommodating to pre-Islamic Iranian identity, particularly following the Iran-Iraq War (1980-1988 AD).

### **2.4.1. Populism & Islamic Identity**

The aim of this section is to explore the means through which the Iranian nationalism and national identity was altered during the early years of the Islamic Revolution. It has to be noted that after the Revolution, these notions remained fluid and their patterns constantly changed in response to socio-



political dynamics. This section further refers to the social and political instruments utilised by the post-Revolutionary Regime to create an Islamic State that differed in structure from other nation-states. This is due to the fact that the Iranian Islamic State was founded on the pillars of anti-imperialism and disapproval of all Western concepts, including the notions of nation-state and nationalism. With Khomeini's disapproval of nationalism (Algar 1981:302) the main supportive pillar of the Pahlavi Government faded from the Iranian political scene, at least temporarily. Khomeini argued that the nationalism endorsed by the Pahlavi was void of any accuracy since the monarchy was the "agent" of Western imperialism in Iran (Amuzegar 1991:142). The new Islamic movement further argued that people did not associate with the nationalism promoted by the monarchy, which centred on the illusions of the glories of Persian Empire. These mythical accounts about the "Great Civilisation" were too abstract and remote for the people who associated more with their recent Islamic culture (ibid.). A combination of these concerns provided the pretext for the type of "nationalism" that Ansari termed "Shi'a nationalism" (Ansari 2003:222). As will be illustrated, at the core of this nationalism was the endorsement of 'populist' policies that appealed to the masses.

The fundamental question subsequent to the Islamic Revolution was the explanation for the survival of the Islamic State in the absence of familiar Western concepts such as nationalism. The debates that followed emphasised the replacement of nationalism by 'Islamic ideology'. Considering that this Islamic ideology was founded on condemning imperialism and promoting the unification of Muslims around the globe, the major unifying *de facto* that contributed to the preservation of Iran as an Islamic State was an emphasis on the Islamic identity and sympathy with those who had been oppressed by the expansionist powers. On this issue, Mashayekhi argued that the political cohesiveness that was achieved following the Islamic Revolution was through replacing the Western discourse of "nationalism" with a "populistic pact" that emphasised the unity of Muslims around the globe through condemning imperialism and dictatorship (Mashayekhi 1992:56-7). He defined "populist movements" as a multi-class movement, led by a charismatic leader, in which the participants are viewed in a homogenous fashion as "masses" or "common people" (ibid.). In such movements, the class tensions are overcome in a euphoria of heightened nationalism where hostility is directed towards the imperialist powers (ibid.). Khomeini's Government championed defending the right of the *mostazafin* (oppressed masses) through the discourse of Shi'a nationalism (Abrahamian 1993:47; Ansari 2003:222). It is important to note that these concepts are deeply embedded in the rhetoric of Shi'ism.

This situation changed with the commencement of the Iran-Iraq War in 1980. According to Chubin and Tripp, both Iran and Iraq "universalised" the War (Chubin & Tripp 1991:9). Iraq's attempt at universalising was by "Arabising" the War and Iran by "Islamising" it (ibid.). However, as Iran also

emphasised Iranian nationalism (ibid.), the War may be considered as an instrument of unification by appealing to both Iranian nationalist and Islamists who sought to defend the integrity of Iran's territories (Hunter 1992:93). There is also an argument about Shi'ism being a "Persianised" and hence nationalised form of Islam (Keddi 2003:21). Ansari (2005:329) further contended that through Shi'a nationalism, the Islamic Republic facilitated the process in which Islam was nationalised. These factors assisted the construction of Iran as an Islamic State in the years following the Islamic Revolution.

#### **2.4.1.1. Khomeini's Government & Reforms**

Immediately after the Islamic Revolution, a *Provisional Government* was formed with Mehdi Bazargan as the first Prime Minister (February 1979-November 1979). The significance of Bazargan's Government is attributed to its embracing nature towards a diverse group of politicians with various political agendas who had united in opposition to the Shah (Ansari 2003:219). This was immediately prior to the transformation of institutes which will be discussed below. Within Bazargan's temporary establishment, there were Cabinet members with affiliations to political entities, such as the *National Front Organisation*, that became decimated subsequent to the establishment of the Islamic Republic of Iran in March 1979. This fact is of special concern to this section considering the impact of such members on the Cultural Ministry and its pivotal role on Iranian cultural heritage. The majority of reforms, however, commenced subsequent to the replacement of the *Provisional Government* with an Islamic one.

One of the major components of Khomeini's doctrine in the composition of an Islamic State was the inseparability of "religion" from "state" in the Islamic tradition (Nafisi 1992:172). Therefore, a defining aspect of the Islamic Revolution was the transformation of the Iranian political culture and the internalisation of the Islamic traditions within the Iranian society. Thus, the Islamic State's reforms not only targeted the official organisations and institutions, but aimed to conform every aspect of the Iranian life-style to the 'authentic' Islamic identity. The 'Islamisation' of society began with the control of major institutions by the newly-formed State. Of particular interest was the 'Islamisation' of the education institutes and their transformation to platforms for the promotion of Islamic ideology and values.

In an analysis of the course of development in culture and education system following the Revolution, Nafisi (1992:162) demonstrated that the modification of the education structure was a key activity pursued by the State in order to implement the new Islamic ideologies and legitimise its authority. Khomeini himself repeatedly targeted the education organisations and accused them of being the "hub of

immortality and corrupt attitudes” that infused innocent Muslim youth with alien ideologies imported from the West (ibid.:163). Khomeini held the universities responsible for the prevalence of all the immoral values in Iranian society (Algar 1981:291). Thus, after the Revolution, the State’s priority was an institutional change that ‘purified’ the education system, with special emphasis on universities and Professors who had ideological links to East or West (ibid.).

These messages were directed to the management of universities when in April 1980 the Islamic Associations began issuing statements demanding the closure of universities and the preparation for the ‘Cultural Revolution’ and an Islamic *paksazi* (cleansing) (Behdad 1995:193). In June 1980, the Islamic Government called for the closure of all 200 universities and colleges throughout the country, an appeal that remained in effect for the next four years (ibid.:194). The authorities established an institute known as *Jihad-e daneshgahi* (The University Crusade) to “purify” all educational institutes from non-Islamic conformities (Hiro 1985:255). The Islamic rejuvenation specially targeted the review of the social sciences and humanities (Behdad 1995:194). Furthermore, all connections with foreign universities were terminated in order to “minimise any cultural contact with the outside world” (Hiro 1985:255). Many books were burnt and replaced by ones that conformed to the Islamic framework of the political system. By the spring of 1983, the *Cultural Revolutionary Committee (CRC)* had produced 3000 new textbooks, among which were also history books (ibid.). Nafisi (1992:168-9) argued that the higher education text books were re-fashioned to include Islamic attitudes, elaborate anti-authority themes, and promote sympathy with the poor and oppressed. As demonstrated, similar to the Pahlavi period, the legitimisation of the Islamic State was accomplished through the manipulation of historical events. However, a different period of the historical legacy was selected to legitimise the new establishment. In doing so, the Islamic State defended the retrieval of pristine Islam through the embracement of the inception of Islam in the Iranian history and the Shi’a culture as the pillars of Iranian identity (Shorish 1988:58). A crucial development during this period was the establishment of the Islamic Azad (Open) University in 1982 (<http://www.iau.ac.ir/index.php/2012-11-06-07-00-12/about-2/6-history.html>). This private University initiated campuses across the country, providing remote Provinces with access to higher education institutes.

In addition to the reforms that targeted the modification of Iranian society, there were also reforms to implement austerity measures in managing the Iranian economy. These reforms were particularly intensified given the financial pressures that followed eight years of war. These policies were predominantly based on the advocacy of Iran’s independence and ‘self-sufficiency’, the impact of which on Iranian archaeology will be discussed in the following chapters.

#### **2.4.1.2. The Eradication of Archaeology**

Whereas during the Pahlavi period, archaeology was politicised and utilised as an instrument that aided the construction of a united nation-state, after the Revolution, archaeology was dismissed as a Western science and condemned for its contributions to glorifying the monarchs. Thus, not only did archaeology not play a role in the formation of the new Shi'a State, but it was widely denounced by the new Administration. In this section, an introduction to the locus of archaeology during this period is provided by first reviewing the proceedings of the *Provisional Government* and then discussing the perceived conflicting nature of archaeology with the Islamic State.

As discussed in the previous section, immediately following the Revolution a *Provisional Government* was formed to intermediate the changes in the Iranian society towards an Islamic State. During this period, in the absence of legislative agencies such as cultural heritage organisations, and due to the termination of a number of archaeological institutes, such as the Department of Archaeology and *Institute of Archaeology* at Tehran University, and reduction in the activities of others, such as *NOCHMI*, the task of managing Iran's cultural heritage fell under the domain of the Cultural Ministry.

The political climate of the period and the tendency to dismiss Iran's cultural heritage on the premise that it was an instrument for the monarchy to legitimise its tyranny, directed a significant blow to many cultural aspects of Iranian society. Considering this antagonism towards Iran's past and with the closure of universities and the collapse of central authority, the *Provisional Government*, with its nationalistic tendencies and the election of individuals such as Varjavand, played a vital role in rescuing Iran's cultural heritage from destruction. Varjavand was instrumental in preventing the abolition of the Cultural Ministry during the early days of the Revolution. His contributions to Iranian archaeology during this period are discussed in the following chapters.

The *Provisional Government* was terminated with the Referendum of March 1979 that appointed the Islamic Republic as the official Government. The immediate consequences of this development were the complete closure of universities (1980-1983 AD); the launch of the Cultural Revolution (1980-1987 AD); the dissolving of the Ministry of Culture and the formation of the new Ministry of Culture and Higher Education; and the establishment of the *Iranian Cultural Heritage Organisation (ICHO)* in 1986. The combination of these outcomes, in addition to financial curbs, restricted foreign policies, the loss of civilians and the destruction of heritage sites that resulted from the impacts of the Iran-Iraq War, dominated a decline in the management of cultural heritage and treatment of archaeological institutes.

During this process, the closure of Tehran University and the Department of Archaeology along with it, was of most significance. The closure of the Archaeology Department was highly contested by Iranian archaeologists, and therefore, it was re-launched in 1982 (Abdi 2001:70). Although the Department survived the Cultural Revolution, the *Institute of Archaeology* established by Negahban in 1959 survived only nominally, and resumed its activities in 1990 ([http://archaeology.ut.ac.ir/about\\_us2.htm](http://archaeology.ut.ac.ir/about_us2.htm)). The relegation of the *Institute of Archaeology* restricted research and excavations, paralysing Iranian archaeology for more than a decade. These restrictions were further enhanced given constraints on collaborating with foreign archaeologists. In 1985 a decree was released by the Qazvin's Islamic Revolutionary Court to transform the Mohammad Abad Kharre Caravanserai, which was established as a base camp by Negahban to accommodate students from the Institute during field work, to a penitentiary (ibid.). Malek Shahrizadi (<http://archaeology.ut.ac.ir/moh-abad.htm>) argued that the project was terminated owing to the expedient response of Doctor Ali Sheykh al-Islami, the Head of School of Literature and Humanities at Tehran University, who quoted Imam Ali's statement about "transforming Iran to a school" and thus provided an Islamic justification for the preservation of the Caravanserai in its capacity as a "school". The antagonistic rhetoric against the discipline of archaeology also targeted the Iranian archaeologists who were employed at the Departments of Archaeology. The restrictions directed towards these archaeologists, particularly those educated at higher institutes in the United States, is discussed in the following chapters.

This period in the history of Iranian archaeology is often dominated by themes that demonstrate attempts to eradicate Iranian archaeology. However, in January 1986 the foundation of the *ICHO* greatly influenced the course of archaeology as a discipline (Appendix I, Doc 1). The establishment of *ICHO* following the Cultural Revolution was indicative of a new 'purified' discipline of archaeology amenable to the jurisdiction of the Islamic State. Certainly, in addition to the new drift in the re-organisation and re-launch of institutes during this period, the deficiencies imposed by the de-centralised nature of archaeology was recognised by certain authorities who proposed the integration of difference offices and organisations responsible for archaeology and cultural heritage (<http://www.icar.ir/documents/>). *ICHO* was initially affiliated to the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education and later in 1993 was assigned under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance (ibid.).

The archaeological activities during this period can mostly be summarised by partial restoration of archaeological sites. This is particularly significant given the ongoing War. Although both Iran and Iraq had signed the Hague Convention in Respecting Cultural Properties in 1954 ([http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military\\_Law/pdf/GC-message-from-pres-1999.pdf](http://www.loc.gov/rr/frd/Military_Law/pdf/GC-message-from-pres-1999.pdf)), the sudden nature of the War hindered any attempts to safeguard the territories immediately surrounding cultural properties

([http://www.iranicosmos.org/?page\\_id=42](http://www.iranicosmos.org/?page_id=42)). Thus, numerous sites were damaged as they were situated within the peripheries of hostilities during the course of the War. This area encompassed the western frontiers of Iran, including the sites of Qasr Shirin, Susa, Haft Teppeh, Chuga Zambil, Ivan Karkhe, and many more. The heritage site of Susa with its cultural significance as an Elamite settlement and the capital of the Achaemenid Empire was also considerably damaged (Rouhani 2011). Susa did not recover until 1991 when Mohandes Shirazi nominated the Susa citadel for the first archaeological congress in Iran after the Revolution, which was held in 1994. The direct impact of the War on the Prehistoric mounds and the Islamic site of the Friday Mosque of Isfahan are analysed in Chapters 4 and 6. With the end of the War, Iran and its archaeology entered a new phase often declared as the period of reconstruction.

#### **2.4.2. Period of Reconstruction**

In 1988 finally Iran accepted the UN-mediated ceasefire (Abrahamian 2008:181). With the termination of the War and the death of Khomeini in 1989, the Islamic Republic entered a new phase. The election of Ali Akbar Hashemi Rafsanjani as the President in 1988 had various implications for the recovering Iranian economy and the cultural aspects of the Revolution. The new Administration strove to espouse favourable policies towards construction projects and economic liberalisation. It also aimed to inject liberal themes into the socio-cultural sectors through embracing the ideas of the new Minister of Culture and Islamic Guidance, Mohammad Khatami who replaced Hashemi in the subsequent round of Presidential elections (r.1997-2005 AD) (Moslem 2002:143).

In terms of Iranian identity, Hunter (1992:93) argued that by the end of the War, the authorities had grown more moderate in advocating the Islamic identity, and elements of pre-Islamic Iranian identity were acknowledged. As will be discussed in the following sections, the adoption of these policies and the re-interpretation of Iranian identity during this period, had imperative outcomes for the institutes entrusted with managing cultural heritage in Iran. In fact the tenor of these reforms set the foundations for the re-birth of Iranian archaeology.

##### ***2.4.2.1. Rafsanjani's Administration & Reforms***

The period of Rafsanjani's Presidency (r.1989-1997 AD) is often considered as the phase of reconstruction following the war. Most of reforms undertaken by Rafsanjani's Administration targeted improvements in economic and cultural spheres. These reforms were made possible through restoring

international relations and promoting technocrats (Keddie 2003:264). Accordingly, the government expanded institutes, encouraged expatriates to return, liberalised cultural themes, as well as improved the economic state (ibid.). These reforms were made to assist the process of *khodkafai* (self-sufficiency).

One of the more significant cultural reforms was the substitution of *CRC* that launched the Cultural Revolution, with the more liberally associated *Cultural Principles of the Islamic Republic (CPIR)* in 1992 (Moslem 2002:167). Following its establishment, the *CPIR* declared that it aims to surrender socio-cultural issues to experts rather than to the clergy (ibid.:168). The launching of this amendment may be considered as a manifestation of a more liberal outlook towards socio-political issues. The accommodation of these liberal policies coupled with the open-door foreign policies to provide the initial basis for the return of the experts who had been marginalised by the cleansing committees of the Cultural Revolution. In what follows, the implications of these policies on Iranian archaeology are discussed.

#### ***2.4.2.2. Re-introduction of Archaeology***

The archaeological activities during the reconstruction period may be considered as a reflection of the more liberal socio-political dynamics of Iran and the return of the experts to official positions. These developments were further aided by the re-launch of institutes and the foundation of organisations discussed in the previous section. In 1999 the activities of the *Institute of Archaeology*, which was terminated during the Cultural Revolution resumed (Abdi 2001:70). Further the *ICHO* began to launch its activities following the ratification of the institute's constitution in 1988 (ibid.:71). According to this decree, most archaeological organisations were brought under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and Higher Education, while executive sectors remained under the management of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance. These policies continued until 1994 when all institutes and organisations affiliated with archaeology and management were consolidated under the auspices of the Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance in order to centralise the management of Iranian cultural heritage and avoid discrepancies.

With the consolidation of the *ICHO*, further developments were exerted to enhance the efficiency of the Institute. These included the establishment of *ICHO* offices in all Provinces, the resumption of problem-oriented excavations, the inauguration of new series of archaeological journals, and the hosting of annual symposiums in archaeology. Further, in 1995, the Abhar branch of Azad University initiated a programme in archaeology (Ganjavi 2004:62), a trend that was followed by other branches of Azad University. Although these programmes were limited to a Bachelor of Art Degree, the offering of the course by the Islamic Azad University popularised the discipline of archaeology by making it available in various institutes outside of Tehran.

The most significant development was the resumption of relations with foreign institutes, albeit with restrictions. This was in confirmation with the open-door policies and the encouragement of the expatriates to return, that was advocated by Rafsanjani's Administration. The first foreign archaeological project after the Revolution was granted to University of Chicago under the Direction of Abbas Alizadeh (Lawler 2003b). The reconstruction period can be considered as the initial phase in attempts to re-introduce Iranian archaeology and assist its institutionalisation. As will be discussed in the following sections, these foundations provided the means for a more active phase of Iranian archaeology during Khatami's Presidency.

### **2.4.3. Dialogue among Civilisations**

The reconstructing projects of Rafsanjani's Administration and the demeanor to return the bourgeoisie economy led to various social disapproval and subsequent reforms (Ansari 2012:248). In 1997 Mohammad Khatami became the elected President. Khatami's main asset was his liberal reputation, and his slogans nourished the themes of curing the sick economy, implementing a civil society and replacing the "Clash of Civilisations" with a "Dialogue of Civilisations" (Abrahamian 2008:186).

Central to these modifications were the resumption of durable international relations and the promotion of a holistic cultural identity that endorsed Iran's pre-Islamic and Islamic past. The latter issue is of particular interest to this thesis, given Khatami's contentions about the compatibility of religion and liberty. According to Ansari (2012:248), Khatami considered the achievements of Western Enlightenment not in the scientific Positivism, but in the Anglo-American marriage of religion and liberty. Therefore, he advocated the Islamic identity not as a contradiction to liberty or Iranian identity, but as a compatible part of it. Further, his Administration employed the policy of 'dialogue' as a means to re-connect with the Iranian diaspora and the West. Holliday argued that the Iranian diaspora became the mediators between Iran and "Western civilisations" (Holliday 2011:111). To foresee these socio-political changes, Khatami's Administration employed a number of reforms that will be discussed in the following section.

#### ***2.4.3.1. Khatami's Administration & Reforms***

The period of Khatami's Presidency, is often associated with reformist politics. At the core of these reforms were the aims to establish what he called "Islamic democracy" (Owen 1992:103). These reforms targeted both domestic policies and international relations. In terms of domestic Iranian politics, his Administration aimed to cultivate the idea of civil society by adopting a liberal discourse, while the



foreign policies aimed to narrow the gap of cultural understanding between Iran and the Muslim world from the West (Kamrava 2011:166). Of significant importance was the dramatic expansion of printed media. The Ministry of Culture and Islamic Guidance adopted more relaxed guidelines, allowing for the expression of various forms of art and academic interest (ibid.:166). As Ansari argued, these policies provided for the cultivation of the culture of debate and the frequent crossing of presumed “red lines” (Ansari 2012:250). Further, Khatami’s Administration stressed on the rule of law, respect for civil rights, greater openness in society, acceptance of political criticism, social justice, and reinforcement of institutions of civil society (Hiro 2001:225). An amalgam of these reforms provided a context for debate and self-criticism that became incorporated in all aspects of Iranian society, including cultural heritage and archaeology. In the following section, the impact of these reforms is evaluated in terms of modifications made to archaeology during this period.

#### ***2.4.3.2. Re-birth of Iranian Archaeology***

The undertaking of cultural reforms during the presidency of Khatami had overarching implications for Iranian archaeology. In particular, the improved foreign relations through the themes of ‘dialogue’ and the cultivation of a culture of debate were essential in providing the foundation for the recovery of Iranian archaeology. In terms of institutes, in 1997 the *ICHO* was transformed into a research institute, headed by the reformist Seyyed Mohammad Beheshti who supported the return of foreign experts and collaborations with international archaeological institutes (Lawler 2003b:976). As *ICHO* matured, new conservation labs were established, museums were renovated and opened to public, and the most significant archaeological sites in the country received independent research institutes (Lawler 2003a:971). In 2004 the *ICHO* was combined with the *Organisation of Iran Touring and Tourism* to create the *Iranian Cultural Heritage Organisation and Tourism* (hereafter *ICHTO*) (<http://www.ichto.ir/Default.aspx?tabid=207>). This Organisation was placed directly under the auspices of Iran’s President, signifying the importance of cultural heritage to the new Administration (ibid.). In addition, higher education institutes launched programmes that targeted increasing the number of Iranian archaeologists and the advancement in the quality of programmes offered.

In the academic year of 1999-2000, Tarbiat Modarres University in Tehran, offered the first Doctoral course in archaeology in Iran (Ajourloo 1999:58). The incentive for the creation of this programme was described by the *Council of Higher Planning* as the recognition of deficiencies in Iranian archaeology despite its long history in Iran (Appendix I, Doc 2). It was argued that foreign archaeologists had been working in Iran and “exporting its rich antiquities to museums abroad, while Iranians had fallen behind

other countries in the region to train their archaeologists” (Appendix I, Doc 3). According to this council, the training of Iranian archaeologists was the main objective for launching a Doctoral Programme. Within a year, Tehran University followed by offering a Doctoral degree. Therefore, for the first time in the history of Iranian archaeology, archaeologists who were interested in Prehistoric, historic, and Islamic archaeological periods could be trained in Iran and by Iranian archaeologists. These improvements were further re-enforced by the research activities carried by the *Iranian Center for Archaeological Research (ICAR)* which became under the direction of Masoud Azarnoush in 2000 (Mousavi 2010:3).

The concerns with cultural heritage during this period also provided for the beginning of co-operations with the *International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)* by establishing the *Cultural Institute of Iranian ICOMOS* in 2002 ([http://www.iranicomos.org/?page\\_id=42](http://www.iranicomos.org/?page_id=42)). Further, improved foreign relations and loosened visa restrictions provided for the return of many foreign archaeologists to Iran. The appeal to foreign institutes and encouragement for their return to Iranian archaeology is particularly apparent in the allocation of 300,000 U.S. *Dollars* to host an international conference with the participation of more than 40 foreign archaeologists, many of whom were returning to Iran for the first time since the Revolution (Lawler 2003a:971). Following this appeal, many foreign scholars from institutes in Germany, Australia, Japan, United Kingdom and even the United States, once again engaged in archaeological projects in Iran. Some of these international co-operations are discussed in the following chapters. It is further argued, that the nature of the reforms made in the discipline of archaeology during Khatami’s Presidency were shaped by nationalist rhetoric and the means to articulate the cultural significance of Iran and its contributions to world civilisations. It is contended that during this period, Iranian archaeology was once again instigated as a nationalist instrument to assist the domestic and international reforms of Government. Nevertheless, the culture of debate, provided for the initial re-evaluation of deficiencies experienced in the discipline. These themes are discussed in detail in the following chapters.

#### **2.4.4. Populism & Principalism**

In the election of 2005 Mahmoud Ahmadinejad, was elected as the new President. The period of his Presidency may be defined with the themes of populism, principalism, lack of well-crafted policies, and economic decline (Karimianpour 2011:168). Arjomand (2009:160) has argued that the domestic policies of Ahmadinejad’s Administration were founded on the rhetoric of populism with severe political and economic consequences. A key component of this populist approach was to fight corruption and Western cultural invasions that were created by the reformists (ibid.). This rhetoric was a reflection of another component of the political narrative adopted by Ahmadinejad’s Administration which is often associated

with principalism. Kamrava (2011:167) contended that the principalists (*Osulgarayan*) convicted the reformists to have deviated from the true principles of the Revolution and aimed to return the country to the earliest days of the Revolution. Therefore, the populist themes of the Revolution, such as national independence and serving the oppressed were rejuvenated.

This political discourse led to a sharp decline in foreign relations and contributed to Iran's alienation. A particular crisis during this period was the issue of Iran's quest for nuclear energy. Ansari (2006:230) argued that the state of tension between Iran and the West was presented in the context of the myth of Mosaddeq and the new President as a latter-day national hero, and the nuclear crisis as another Oil Nationalisation crisis. In fact, given the discourse of populism adopted by Ahmadinejad's Administration, Iranian nationalism, was too, employed as a populist political instrument to convey a different aspect of Government's policies. In Chapters 4, 5, 6 and 7, the utilisation of ethnic, dynastic and Islamic nationalism by Ahmadinejad's Administration are discussed. In this analysis the promotion of 'Aryanism', the glorification of pre-Islamic Iran, and the adoration of Imam Mahdi are themes that demonstrate the nature of his Administration's populist nationalism.

#### ***2.4.4.1. Ahmadinejad's Administration & Reforms***

In the previous section it was demonstrated that Ahmadinejad's Administration represented the culturally and politically conservative faction of the Islamic Republic. Therefore, the policies of his Administration were to implement radical shifts from the types of reforms that Khatami's Administration had perused in the social spheres and foreign affairs (Pesaran 2011:169). According to Keddie (2003:343), Ahmadinejad's Administration introduced a few economic reforms with popular appeals, but experts doubt their practicality and efficacy. These populist reforms were funded by the Oil Stabilisation Fund (Rieffer-Flanagan 2013:194) and implemented by officials who lacked previous experience and capability to run administrative offices and ministries (Pesaran 2011:168). In the following section, the outcome of this mismanagement is evaluated in terms of its impact on Iranian archaeology.

#### ***2.4.4.2. Populism & Archaeology***

The political discourse of Ahmadinejad's Presidential period was dominated by financial deficiencies, mismanagement, international isolation, and lack of freedom in formidable debates. These issues were also reflected in Iranian archaeology during this period. It is here argued that the improvements made to

Iranian archaeology during Khatami's Presidency permeated to Ahmadinejad's period, albeit degenerating soon after. In 2007 to support the handicraft industry, the *ICHTO* was re-organised to become the Iranian *Cultural Heritage, Handicraft and Tourism Organisation* (hereafter *ICHHTO*). The most significant change in Iranian archaeology during this period was the decision to break down the structure of the *ICHHTO* and relocate certain structures to Shiraz and Isfahan. In 2010, despite the efforts of Iranian archaeologists to communicate their disapproval of infrastructural changes to *ICHHTO*, the *ICAR* was relocated to Shiraz (<http://www.tabnak.ir/fa/pages/?cid=109529>). Although in 2012 the *ICAR* was moved back to Tehran, the execution of abrupt decisions about the most significant research institute in archaeology demonstrates the extent of mismanagement in Iranian archaeology during this period.

The mismanagement in various sectors of Ahmadinejad's Administration disseminated on to developmental projects. These projects, in addition with insufficient legislative laws to protect cultural heritage, had devastating consequences for a number of archaeological sites (see Rouhani 2011). Some of these issues will be discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6. It is argued that despite the Government's lack of attention to archaeology as a discipline, archaeology continued to be implemented for nationalistic purposes. It is contended that the de-centralisation of archaeological institutes during this period deviated Iranian archaeology from professionalism and incorporated it within the populist discourse that was advocated by the State. In the following chapters, some of the Government's exploitive attitude towards archaeology as an instrument to implement a populist rhetoric is articulated.

## **2.5. Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter has been to historically contextualise the development of nationalism and archaeology in Iran from the time of the Qajar dynasty to the Islamic Revolution in 1979 and through to the present. The illustration of the roots of nationalism and its relation with archaeology is essential, as the two have been influencing each other through various means in the history of their development. It has further been the intention of this chapter to articulate the ways in which the intertwined relationship between nationalism and archaeology was influenced by intellectual trends and socio-political dynamics that accommodated the emergence of Iranian nationalism and the formation of Iran as a modern nation-state. Lastly, the position of Iranian archaeology during different historical periods has been analysed. Through these analyses it has been argued that the emergence of Iranian archaeology was simultaneous with the rise of Iranian nationalism, and the course of its development directly reflects the interpretations of Iranian nationalism during different political periods. Therefore, as Trigger (1984:359) argued, Iranian archaeology is Nationalistic in its tradition. Having provided a descriptive analysis of the Internalist and

Externalist approach to Iranian archaeology, the next chapter is dedicated to defining the concepts of this thesis.

## Chapter 3

### Approaches, Methodology and Data

*“No historical problem should be studied without studying ... the history of historical thought about it”  
(Collingwood 1939:132)*

#### 3.1. Epistemological Framework

The preceding two chapters have considered the association of nationalism with archaeology and the socio-political events that contributed to the rise of different aspects of Iranian nationalism during various historical periods. This chapter provides an outline for the theoretical framework and methodology applied in this research. It is argued that a nationalist approach to the study of Iranian archaeology is essential given that various aspects of Iranian nationalism induced the birth of Iranian archaeology and are embedded in the development of the discipline’s unique traditions.

From a general outlook, it is important to note that this research is also influenced by intellectual movements such as Post-Structuralism and Post-Modernism. Therefore, as Wetherall argued, in this thesis, it is recognised that “the process of analysis is always interpretive, always contingent, always a version or a reading from some theoretical, epistemological or ethical standpoint” (Wetherall 2001:384). The objective here is not merely to consider whether the existence of Nationalist archaeology in Iran is “true”, but how its traditions “might become formed” (Foucault 1980:237). To facilitate this perspective, this research is also influenced by the Post-Processual approach, which itself is arguably a Post-Modernist movement against the Positivist and anti-historical tendencies of the Modernist Processual archaeology (Trigger 1994:114). Although the recognition of the unavoidable influences of social context on the development of various approaches to the study of archaeology is not a new concept, with the rise of Post-Processualism in the early 1980s, there has been an unprecedented attention to the application of social theories to archaeological studies. As Trigger argued, this trend could be a manifestation of the Post-Modern emphasis on self-reflection, subjectivity, and relativity (ibid.). While the Post-Processual approach emphasised the significant role of social context on the formation of archaeological traditions, Processualists argued that archaeology is shaped by scientific analysis (ibid.:118). Such dispositions are embedded in the Positivist Processual approach with its emphasis on the strict separation between the object of research and the social context of the subjects conducting the research (Hodder & Hudson

2003:207). Therefore, the Processual framework provides little space for the consideration of socio-political issues that concerned the Post-Processualist. In a way, as Hodder (1995:77) argued, Post-Processual archaeology, with its emphasis on diversity, could be considered as a maturing phase for the discipline of archaeology where reflection, criticism and diversity are embraced. He further proposed that the positive and explanatory label of “interpretive archaeology” is more appropriate for approaches currently employed in what has been called Post-Processual; “these are archaeologies ... which work through interpretation” (Shanks & Hodder 1998:5). This could mean that there is “no one meaning to the past” and that the same object can have different or conflicting meaning along different dimensions and from different perspectives (Hodder & Hutson 2003:209). To demonstrate these different dimensions, this thesis analyses the influence of various brands of Iranian nationalism on the formation of Iranian archaeology during the Qajar, Pahlavi, and post-Revolutionary Regimes. In this regard, this thesis aims to provide a history of Iranian archaeology in a manner similar to analysts who have written the history of archaeology in various parts of the worlds, over the past decade (see Section 3.3).

It has to be considered that it was from two particular theoretical orientations within the Post-Processual approach that a generation of archaeologists emerged as dedicated writers of history of archaeology. These were either based on the Internalist or the Externalist approach (Trigger 1994:118). While the Internalists argued for the influence of intellectual climate, such as Rationalism, Romanticism, and Positivism, on formulating theoretical trends in archaeology (Moorey 1991; Willey & Sabloff 1993), the Externalists articulated archaeology’s predisposition to be shaped by ethnic and class interests of those who practice or sponsor archaeological activities, such as politics and religion (Trigger 1994:120). As it will be demonstrated in this thesis, references are made to address the concerns of Internalist and Externalist approach. This is due to the realisation that as Trigger (1994:118) argued, these two approaches are complementary, and while the understanding of the relationship between archaeology and the socio-political context within which it is practiced is indicative, such relations do not occur in an intellectual vacuum and are rather influenced by the ideals set and followed during each historical period.

The arguments presented in this thesis are built against an Externalist backdrop where the influence of politics is measured in its contribution to the development of Iranian archaeology. The Externalist patterns are further addressed in the discussions of what was, or which period was, considered as a suitable topic of archaeological research by the different Iranian Governments. Meanwhile, this thesis concerns itself with the Internalist approach in stressing the intellectual trends that influenced the development of Iranian archaeology. This approach is especially prominent in Chapter 4 as the influence of the Modernist outlook during the reign of the second Pahlavi monarch is discussed in relation to the receptiveness of Iranian archaeology to the positivist ‘New Archaeology’ of the Americans; and in

Chapter 5 and 6 as references are made to intellectual movements that manifested in the *Bazgasht*, Aryanism, and Westoxication rhetoric of the elite during different historical periods and their influence on the general outlook towards Iranian past.

### **3.2. Aims & Objectives**

The main aim of this thesis is to analyse the Nationalist tradition of Iranian archaeology. In particular, the central premise of this research is to evaluate how archaeology was employed in the service of nationalist movements and how nationalism as a political discourse influenced the birth and development of Iranian archaeology.

In order to achieve the general aim of this thesis, three objectives are proposed. The first concerns the treatment of Prehistoric sites based on their suitability for the purpose of instigating a past that assisted the validation of the political agendas of contemporary states, their brand of nationalism and projected national identity. The second evaluates these same concerns with respect to pre-Islamic sites, while the third investigates the suitability of Islamic sites for reaching the above aims. For the purpose of this analysis three archaeological sites, Sialk, Persepolis, and the Friday Mosque of Isfahan, that represent three different archaeological periods, Prehistoric, pre-Islamic, Islamic, have been selected as case studies to demonstrate the relationship between archaeology and nationalism in Iran during the Qajar, Pahlavi, and post-Revolutionary periods. Through investigating these objectives, this research demonstrates that similar to the experience of European nations (see Diaz-Andreu & Champion 1996:3), Iranian archaeology was politicised in various periods to serve nationalist purposes. This analysis will in turn facilitate an enhanced understanding of the Nationalist tradition of Iranian archaeology. These objectives are further discussed in Chapters 4, 5 and 6.

### **3.3. Justification for the Study**

As Trigger (1994:114) argued, the history of archaeology has been winning unprecedented recognition as a field of research that is essential for the successful practice of archaeology. Given that this analysis has increased since the early 1980s, there has been an upsurge of interest in the history of archaeology in the United States and Europe (Willey & Sabloff 1993; Trigger 1989; Diaz-Andreu & Champion 1996; Diaz-Andreu 2007; Shanks & Tilley 1987; Hodder 1991, 1995; Kohl & Fawcett 1995a; Kohl et al. 2007), Africa (Robertshaw 1990), Middle East (Silberman 1989; Meskell 1998; Ried 2002; Bernhardsson 2005;



Shaw 2007) and Asia (Chakrabarti 1988; Ratnagar 2007), and the Far East (Fawcett 1995; Nelson 1995). While some of these works developed out of general concerns over research methods and the theoretical biases in interpreting archaeological data, others emphasised the role of politics, and in particular the doctrine of nationalism, on the formation of archaeology as a scientific discipline. According to this predisposition, archaeology was developed as an essential instrument to legitimate the state through permitting the reconstruction of the national past, creating national identities, and justifying territorial peripheries (Smith 2009:27).

It is argued here that despite the long standing global recognition of the significance of history of archaeology and the contributing factors to the development of this discipline, there has seldom been an interest in the history of Iranian archaeology (see Section 1.3). This lack of interest is despite the wealth of historic experiences (both pre-Islamic and Islamic), variation of cultural material, and competing theories of nationalism, which provide Iran with a unique set of conditions for a case study. Given this academic vacuum, this thesis is a preliminary attempt at providing an analytical study of the history of the development of archaeology in Iran. In other words, this research is the first focused introspective study of Iranian archaeology that considers the development of the discipline across different historical periods.

In this thesis, the lack of interest in the analytical interpretation of history of Iranian archaeology has been explained in terms of Iran's failure to incorporate new theories and epistemological approaches. As will be discussed in Chapter 4, due to the recognition and condemnation of the substantial influences of socio-political factors on Iranian archaeology during the Pahlavi and early post-Revolutionary periods, in the 1990s and with the revival of Iranian archaeology, the approaches associated with 'New Archaeology' that were introduced by the Americans in the 1960s, became to represent a progressive epistemological framework for the study of archaeological data. This outlook was influenced by the predispositions held that the emphasis on objectivity and scientific methods embedded in this approach is impartial to the socio-political influences and therefore leads to a more scientific research outcome. While taking refuge in what has now become Processual approach to avoid the social constrains and career-threatening repercussions of interpreting the influences of socio-political influences on Iranian archaeology, archaeologists in Iran have failed to become acquainted with more interpretive approaches. With the exception of limited but significant academic works by Kamyar Abdi (2001) that attempted to analyse the impact of socio-political factors on Iranian archaeology, archaeologists have rarely demonstrated interest in theories associated with an analytical study of Iranian archaeology. Therefore, Iranian archaeology, and its relations to political ideologies, and in particular nationalism, have not been subjected to in-depth examination. As an additional constrain to Iranian archaeology, according to Niknami (2000) and Fazeli (2010), even the Processual outlook, while advocated by Iranian archaeologists, does not adhere to the

problem-oriented research procedures often associated with this approach and rather represent a “Culture-Historical tradition” that is a residue of the French archaeological legacy in Iran (Niknami 2000:42-44; Fazeli 2010:3).

Considering the above argument, the provision of a comprehensive analysis of the historical development of Iranian archaeology and the impact of socio-political factors, such as nationalism, on the formation of its traditions is vital for the future practice of Iranian archaeology. As will be demonstrated, the influence of Iranian nationalism in its various forms and their influences on the study of archaeology are at the heart of this thesis and all the data and information incorporated in this study will be seen through the prism of this concept. Given that Iranian archaeology lacks contextualisation, this thesis also aims to provide an efficient means for transmitting the basic concepts and traditions within Iranian archaeology to a broader non-Persian speaking audience.

### **3.4. Theoretical Concepts & Methodology**

#### **3.4.1. Nationalism**

For the purpose of clarity, this section aims to define the concept of nationalism and to situate it within the global historical and social context. To articulate the elements of nationalism the various theories proposed by Western scholars are discussed. Before proceeding, it is important to mention that although in this research certain approaches to the underlying concepts of nationalism are influenced by Western scholarship, such as Anthony Smith’s Ethno-Symbolic approach, greater emphasis is laid on the unique experience of nationalism in Iran and the work of Iranian scholars on the subject. This reflects the availability of a wealth of literature on various forms of nationalism that are particular to Iran, albeit with epistemological influences from Western scholarship. These forms of nationalism are discussed in the following section.

The concept of nation is rooted in the Enlightenment and based on the ideas of the French philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau who is credited as the founder of modern politics and the promoter of the significant role of citizenship and their collective participation in public festivals (Harris 2009:22). Once the roles of citizens were recognised, various means were employed to manipulate and control the “masses”. This has continued through various movements into the modern and post-modern world, where as Smith (1995b) argued, nationalism has become a means to provide the legitimisation of the state all over

the world and the most widespread popular ideology and movement. According to Smith nationalism may be defined as:

*“An ideological movement for attaining and maintaining autonomy, unity and identity for a population which some of its members deem to constitute an actual or potential ‘nation’.”*

(Smith 2010:9)

As the above extract implies and as Ernst Gellner (1983:1) argued, nationalism belongs to an era of nation-states, therefore, there can be no nationalism without the nation-state. Gellner identified a nation as a group “that shares some cultures or system of ideas, assumptions, behavior and communication” and whose members “recognise each other as belonging to the same nation” (ibid.:7). However, this definition is rooted in the Modernist paradigm of Gellner (1983) and others such as Eric Hobsbawm (1990), Tom Nairn (2003), and Benedict Anderson (1991). According to Smith (2009:6), all these scholars considered nations and nationalism as recent phenomena, arising from the French Revolution. From this Modernist perspective, the idea of nations existing through antiquity and Middle Ages is “retrospective nationalism” (ibid.). The Modernist approach developed against the romantic notions of the Primordialists who had an ethnocentric outlook to the concepts of nations and nationalism (Smith 1995a:146). Although all the Modernist scholars hold a Materialist perspective and regard nationalism as an aspect of Modernism, the existing literature is suggestive of the existence of various approaches to nationalism. For example, while Gellner (1983: xxxvi) and Anderson (1991:37-46) considered the standardisation of literary education and technology of “print-capitalism” as essential in the development of nations and nationalism, Nairn (2003:323) regarded nationalism as a product of a mass response to “uneven development” of Capitalism. According to Smith (1995b), Anderson and Hobsbawm also fall into the model of Deconstructionists by stressing the imagined community and invented traditions in the fabrication of nations. In Anderson’s approach, nation was “an imagined political community”, considering its “members will never know most of their fellow-members, meet them, or hear of them, yet in the minds of each lives the image of their communion” (Anderson 1991:6). In Hobsbawm’s model, the nation and its historical continuity was achieved through the “invention of traditions” and “invention of a collective memory” (Hobsbawm 2012:1-22; 1994:76-83). He further argued that such traditions were deliberately invented through the process of re-creating and repeating rituals and symbols and tailoring historical events (Hobsbawm 2012:4).

Having described the above debates on the different existing approaches to the concepts of nation and nationalism, it has to be mentioned that the orientation of this thesis is more in line with the proposal of Anthony Smith and the Ethno-Symbolic approach. This is considering that the birth of nationalism in Iran

was prior to any forms of industrial condition that embody the age of modernisation and mainly relied on “ethnic ties” and cultural sentiments (Smith 2009:27). For this approach, which was provided as a counter argument to the Modernist theories, the network of ethnic ties are the single most important factor in the rise and persistence of nations and nationalism. According to this approach, an ethnic community is defined as “a named and self-defined human community whose members possess a myth of common ancestry, shared memories, one or more elements of common culture, including a link with a territory, and a measure of solidarity, at least among upper strata” (ibid.:22). By this, Smith does not imply that nations emerged on the basis of ethnic ties, rather he argued, “it was on the basis of ethnic model and around the dominant ethnic core population that political actors and institutions helped to forge the nation” (ibid.:28).

Smith’s approach was influenced by the cultural definition of nationalism and the ethnocentrism that was pioneered by Johann Gottfried Herder and John Hutchinson. In Herder’s view, cultural nationalism is defined in terms of *Volk* (Spencer 2012), while for Hutchinson a nation is defined as a “distinctive civilisation, which is the product of its unique history, culture and geographical profile” (Hutchinson 1987:12-13). As Smith (1995a:178) argued, this approach was further introduced by Herder into Eastern Europe. In fact, Heyd (1950:164) articulated that Turkish nationalism during the Atatürk period (r. 1923-1938 AD) was inspired by the German Primordialist form of nationalism advocated by Herder. This is interesting, considering that although the form of nationalism propagated by the Pahlavi Administration was imported from the West, it did not correspond with the philosophy of Enlightenment that produced the nation-states of France and England, and was rather a repercussion of the Turkish nationalism itself inspired by a German Romanticist model. The ideology of this German nationalism was built upon Herder’s concept of *Volk*. The Nazi ideology added further meanings to this concept by idealising German racial superiority and theories of Aryanism (Katz 2004:97). The traces of German’s Primordialist model and its ethnocentric approach are visible everywhere in the Iranian nationalism during the early Pahlavi period where emphasis was laid on the ‘uniqueness’ and ‘superiority’ of the Iranian race, and the Shi’a differentiation from the rest of the Muslim world after the Islamic Revolution. Due to this ethnocentric outlook, it is importance to clarify the distinction between ethnic and civic nationalism.

There have been numerous scholarly works by political theorists and sociologists on the essential distinctions between ethnic and civic nationalism (Ignatieff 1994; Miller 1995; Breton 1998). In this thesis, Anthony Smith’s definitions are applied considering he differentiates between a Western model and a non-Western model for a nation. According to Smith, the Western model of nation is based on “civic” nationalism and it relies on “historic territory, legal-political community, legal-political equality of members, and common civic culture and ideology” (Smith 1991:11). This is in contrast with the non-

Western model that is based on the “ethnic” concept and the emphasis is on “a community of birth and native culture” (ibid.). Within this approach, presumed descent ties, popular mobilisation, vernacular languages, customs and traditions are considered as decisive elements that form a nation (ibid.). Therefore, there is a heavy emphasis on the re-discovery and re-interpretation of the living past by providing “folk” or other cultural material that could become the blueprint of the “nation-to-be” (ibid.:12). The creation of a widespread awareness of the myth, history and linguistic traditions of a community are allocated to historians and archaeologists who appropriate their discoveries to support the political objectives of the state (ibid.; Smith 1999:10). It is interesting to note that according to Smith (1986:81-82; 1991:55), Iran is an example of an ‘ethnic nation’ considering its pre-modern roots in the Achaemenid and Sassanid Empires. Having provided a general outline for the existing theories of nationalism, the next section considers various forms of Iranian nationalism.

### **3.4.2. Iranian Nationalism**

The study of Iranian nationalism has been the subject of several important work published in the recent years (Cottam 1964; Katouzian 1979; Arjomand 1984; Ghods 1989, 1991; Richard 1989; Yann 1989; Chehabi 1993; Kashani-Sabet 1999; Marashi 2008; Ansari 2008:2012). Despite the differences in their approach, they all agree on the fundamental point that Iranian nationalism was born as a form of resistance to Western imperialism, in particular to Russia and Britain (Ghods 1991:37). The purpose of this thesis is not to outline and discuss existing literature on Iranian nationalism, rather, the aim is to select nationalistic trends that served to define and develop Iranian archaeology. This section addresses these concepts of nationalisms and how they are to be defined in the context of this research. Therefore, first and foremost, it is contended that although Iranian nationalism is fluid, it is to be understood in terms of Smith’s ethnic nationalism (see Section 3.4.1). Further, according to the existing debates on the nature of Iranian nationalism, three distinct types of nationalism are to be recognised; dynastic, religious (Shi’a) and secular (Ansari 2008:323-327). It is important to note that such distinctions are also articulated in the work of Abdolkarim Soroush (2000:162), who divided “culture” in Iran into Iranian, Islamic, and Western types. Holliday (2007:20-21), further argued that these cultural divisions represent the competing “authentic” Iranian identities that co-exist in Iranian society. This competition between different Iranian identities is interpreted by Ansari (2003:15) as the lack of communication between different social classes of the society who hold different social identities. Also, as it shall be demonstrated, the type of nationalism promoted in each historical period in Iran, varies in accordance to what is perceived as ‘authentic’ identity by the ruling administration. Thus, during the Qajar and post-Revolutionary periods,

Islam was adopted as the ‘authentic’ Iranian identity, while the Pahlavis considered pre-Islamic Iranian identity as ‘authentic’. In this thesis, emphasis is laid on dynastic and religious (Shi’a) nationalisms, albeit with ethnic nationalism as an essential component. In the following, these different forms of Iranian nationalism are defined.

### ***3.4.2.1. Ethnic Nationalism***

As previously argued, in this thesis Iranian nationalism, despite its variations, is treated as rooted in the ethnic nationalism characterised by Smith. According to Smith (1988:22-31), “ethnie” is defined as a distinctive shared culture, an association with a specific territory and a sense of solidarity. He further argued that four conditions are necessary for ethnic consolidations: territory, struggle with enemies, religion, and sense of “chosenness” (ibid.:119-120). Smith’s first two emphases were manifested during the Pahlavi period as Iranian ethnic-dynastic nationalism increasingly relied on the borders of the Persian Empire and antagonising the Mongols and Arab invaders. This is while the religious aspects of ethnic consolidation were emphasised in the religious nationalism that followed the Islamic Revolution.

In this section, it is argued that apart from the above mentioned, ethnic nationalism is also employed in Primordial terms to characterise the proclaimed brand of nationalism used during the reign of Reza Shah. This concept needs further clarification considering that the term ‘ethnic-dynastic’ is often used in this thesis to refer to the model of nationalism applied by the Pahlavis. However, it is contended that during the reign of Reza Shah, nationalism was considerably skewed towards the ethnic elements. This is while Ansari (2008:325-26) recognises “dynastic nationalism” as the foremost appropriate designation of the type of nationalism practiced during the Pahlavi era. Although even Ansari contended that “dynastic nationalism did not gather pace until the overthrow of the National Front Government in 1953” during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah (ibid.:326).

The decision to refer to the brand of nationalism adopted by Reza Shah’s Government as ethnic nationalism is based on the existing literature on the pro-Aryan propaganda that dominated the intellectual and cultural sphere of the Iranian society. While Ansari (2000:323-24) referred to the development of the “Aryan myth” during this period as “secular nationalism”, in Chapter 4, the birth of Prehistoric archaeology and the archaeological activities at the Prehistoric site of Sialk are articulated to reflect the fascination with migration theories that made suggestions about the origins of the Aryan race within the Iranian peripheries during the reign of Reza Shah (Schmidt 1933, 1937; Arne 1935; Ghirshman 1938, 1978). It is argued that although this inclination was secular, in that it contested Islam as a feature of

Iranian identity, it was based on the ‘superiority’ and ‘continuity’ of Iranian racial composition, and therefore “ethnic” in nature. The change of the country’s name from Persia to Iran in 1934 in order to highlight the birth-place of the ancient Aryans (Wilber 1975:162; Vaziri 1993:67), was yet another manifestation of this dedication to the promotion of ethnic nationalism (see 2.3.1. on Herzfeld and “the empire of Aryans”). The intellectual movements during the late Qajar period further foreshadowed the appeal towards the Iranian ‘superior race’ in the writings of Mirza Fath-ali Akhundzadeh, Mirza Agha Khan Kermani, and the French diplomat J.A. de Gobineau who advocated the pure Aryan race and blamed Islam for the demise of Iran (see 2.2.2.).

It is further argued that ethnic nationalism was a more appropriate instrument of unification, in comparison with the monarchic-centred dynastic nationalism. This is considering that in the preliminary stages of building Iran as a nation-state and in consolidation of the polyglot Iranian society, the injection of a common racial, historical and cultural past was more essential. This is apparent in the speech that Prime Minister Mohammad Foroughi made on the eve of Reza Shah’s Coronation on 25 April 1926. He argued “the Iranian nation realises that today a Shah who is of the pure Iranian race has ascended to the throne” (Goode 2004:134). This emphasis on the “pure Iranian race” is a reflection of the political discourse that preferred the adoption of the imported notion of ‘Aryanism’ and the ‘superiority’ of Iranian race as an apparatus of legitimisation to the dynastic brand of nationalism that articulated the centrality of the institution of monarchy as an essential component of Iranian nation. In fact, Reza Shah himself was in favour of the idea of Republicanism in Iran, and only established a monarchy out of the fear of opposition by the *Ulama* (Ansari 2003:37). Therefore, the brand of nationalism his Government adopted could not solely rely on the institution of monarchy. Similarly, it is contended that the fascination with previous Iranian monarchies, such as the Achaemenid and Sassanid, that was manifested during the reign of Reza Shah, is a component of Iranian culture that has been displayed by different dynasties, during various historical periods. For example, as Meisami (1993:25) argued, the Parthian, Sassanid, Tehirid, Saffarid, Buyid, Samanid and the Qhaznavid sought legitimacy through tracing their roots back to the kings of the *Shahnameh*. In addition, as will be discussed in Chapter 5, Qajar monarchs had already begun to be fascinated by pre-Islamic (dynastic) archaeological monuments, such as Persepolis, and the traces of such fixation could be detected in the *Bazgasht* movement (Luft 2001:37) and the imitation of pre-Islamic motifs in residential palaces (Grigor 2007:567). Therefore, some of the main incentives that laid the foundation for the adoption of dynastic nationalism as the only form of nationalism practiced during Reza Shah’s reign are refuted. Despite these arguments, it is contended that there are certain overlaps between ‘ethnic’ and ‘dynastic’ nationalism during this period.

### **3.4.2.2. Dynastic Nationalism**

In the previous section, the brand of nationalism adopted by Reza Shah's Government was recognised as ethnic nationalism and although it was suggested that it contained certain 'dynastic' elements, this period is considered as an instrumental stage that allowed for the institutionalisation of dynastic nationalism as Mohammad Reza Shah took power. By this time, the main objective of the ruling Administration had altered from constructing a unified nation-state based on a common ethnic identity, into legitimising the institution of monarchy. The term "dynastic nationalism" was coined by Ansari (2000:326-27; 2003:33) who defined it as a model of nationalism that centred on the person of the Shah. He further contended that the narrative of dynastic nationalism adopted by Mohammad Reza Shah's Government was founded on the principle that "monarchy was the natural form of government for the Iranian nation, and that every system of government eventually and naturally returns to a monarchy" (Ansari 2012:171). This was best articulated in Mohammad Reza Shah's book, *Toward the Great Civilisation* where he stated:

*"In Iranian culture, the Iranian monarchy means the political and geographical unity of Iran in addition to the special national identity and all those unchangeable values which this national identity has brought forth. For this reason no fundamental change is possible in this country unless it is in tune with the fundamental principles of the monarchical system."*

(Pahlavi 1961:24)

This narrative of nationalism was composed to legitimise the compatibility of the institution of monarchy in comparison with other rising alternative forms of government. Evidently, the endorsement of dynastic nationalism required the restoration of the dynastic past, which mainly focused on the Achaemenid and Sassanid Empires. This was achieved through various celebrations, such as the Anniversary of 2500 years of Persian Monarchy in 1971 and the Shah's Coronation, as well as by changing the Iranian calendar to an imperial calendar which began with the ascent of Cyrus the Great to power and the establishment of the Achaemenid dynasty (Ansari 2012:183). In Chapter 5, the development of Iranian archaeology is further explored in relation to the dynastic nationalism and national policies adopted by Mohammad Reza Shah's Government.

### **3.4.2.3. Religious Nationalism**

In the earlier literature on the state of nationalism following the Islamic Revolution in 1979, it is often conceived that Khomeini condemned nationalism as an evil invention of the West to divide the Muslims



and prevent the spread of Islam (Algar 1981:302; Martin 2000:124). Ansari (2003:222), however, suggested that despite Khomeini's ambivalent manner in displaying his nationalistic disposition, following the Islamic Revolution, "dynastic nationalism" was simply replaced by "Shi'a nationalism". However, the association of Iranian identity with Shi'ism was not a newly introduced concept. In fact, when in the sixteenth century under the Safavids, Shi'ism became the official religion of Iran, Iranian identity had been very much associated with Shi'a Islam (ibid.). Ansari further argued that this association persisted due to the absence of a distinct "national" historiography, with the exception of the *Shahnameh* (ibid.:7). Therefore, while nationalist myth was underdeveloped in the Iranian culture, Islamic mythology enjoyed deep roots within society (ibid.). In addition, a division of Iranian intellectuals during both the Qajar and Pahlavi periods considered Shi'ism as a doctrine of resistance against imperialism and Westernization. This provided for *Ulama's* hostility against the Qajar kings and their insistence on Islam and the "Persian way of life"- Shi'a Islam- against Western imperialism (Bayat-Philipp 1991:4). Among the *Ulama* of this period, Jamal al-Din Asadabadi (al-Afghani) played a pivotal role as the leader of a pan-Islamic movement (ibid.:22). During the Pahlavi period, these narratives were best represented in Al-e Ahmad's portrayal of the West as a "plague" and Shi'ism as a vaccine that could cure *Gharbzadegi* (Westoxification) (Yann 2003:188-212,189). Similar rhetoric defined the work of Ali Shari'ati who upon complementing Al-e Ahmad's discourse on anti-imperialism, argued for Shi'ism as the 'authentic' Iranian identity and the necessities of returning to it. These same issues were central to Khomeini and the movement that resulted in the Islamic Revolution.

It is argued, that by considering Shi'ism a distinctively Iranian narrative of Islam, it can be categorised within Smith's ethnic definition. This consideration is supported by Keddie's (2003:21) argument that until the twentieth century the Shi'a components of Iranian identity were more important than the Iranian ones. Further, from 1501 until the current century, Iranianism and Shi'ism were for many people parts of a single blend (ibid.).

The significance of Shi'a nationalism becomes apparent, particularly following the Revolution and the reliance of the discourse of Shi'ism as the "authentic" culture and "true" national identity of Iranians. It is fundamental to note that this "Islamisation" of Iranian society was founded on "populist" concepts that portrayed Shi'ism and its leaders as hostile towards the oppressed (Abrahamian 1993:20). Abrahamian argued that "Khomeinism" resembled the "Latin American populism" with its emphasis on the mobilisation of the masses, eradication of imperialism and cosmopolitan ideas, as well as returning to the "native roots", which he claimed to be Islamic in nature (ibid.:38). Given that this populism was articulated as the basic component of Shi'ism, in this thesis, Shi'a nationalism is often discussed within the framework of populist ideologies of the post-Revolutionary Government. In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, it is

argued that due to the populist nature of the Revolution, the source of legitimacy was no longer sought in the ruins of the past and the discipline of archaeology was repudiated as an unnecessary ‘fake knowledge’.

### **3.5. Trigger & Nationalist Archaeology**

In recent years and with the renewed interest in the discourse of nationalism, as the stigma of the calamities of World War II subsided, various publications have analysed the interactive relationship between archaeology and politics. In this regard, Bruce Trigger’s (1984) publication of *Alternative Archaeologies: Nationalist, Colonialist, Imperialist*, became a pioneering reference upon which various work within the Externalist approach that argued for the predisposition of archaeology to political trends were built on. In this article, Trigger argued that archaeological tradition was strongly influenced by the position that the countries and regions in which it is practiced occupy within the modern world-system (ibid.:355). While recognising the limitations of this approach, Trigger divided these traditions into Nationalist, Colonialist and Imperialist (ibid.).

In this thesis, the Nationalist approach is applied to analyse the history of Iranian archaeology and, therefore, Section 3.4. has been dedicated to outlining the Nationalist framework. However, an understanding of the Colonialist and Imperialist approaches are also necessary in order to demonstrate how Iranian traditions of archaeology differ from these others. By Colonialist, Trigger (1994:360) referred to archaeological traditions that developed either in countries whose native population was wholly replaced or overwhelmed by European settlement or in ones where Europeans remained politically and economically dominant for a considerable period of time. Iran was never a colony of the West, but it was what Vladimir Lenin termed as a “Semi-colony” (Chehabi 1993:8). This term was based on Samuel Huntington’s idea of an intermediary category of nation-states between new states of the Third World and the old nations of the West. According to his definitions, these intermediary states continuously experienced threats to their sovereignty due to internal unrest, contact with European commerce, finance and politics, and by ignorance and administrative inefficiencies which restricted them to fit the modern world (ibid.). Given that Iran was never considered as a colony and instead shared the features of a semi-colony, it would be erroneous to attribute colonial traits to its archaeological traditions, albeit considering the French archaeological activities in Iran during the Qajar period were closely associated with such colonial trends.

On the other hand, Imperialist or world-oriented archaeology was associated with a small number of states such as United States, United Kingdom, that enjoyed or have exerted political dominance over large

areas of the world (Trigger 1994:363). It is contended that the Iranian archaeological traditions failed to correspond with this identified category either. Rather, it is argued that Iranian archaeology should be analysed within Trigger's Nationalist traditions. This is due to Trigger's consideration that while the development of scientific archaeology corresponds with a specific state of social development, "most archaeological traditions are probably nationalistic in orientation" (Trigger 1984:358). Trigger defined Nationalist archaeology as the following:

*"The primary function of nationalistic archaeology, like nationalistic history of which it is normally regarded as an extension, is to bolster the pride and morale of nations and ethnic groups. It is probably strongest amongst peoples who feel particularly threatened, insecure or deprived of their collective right by more powerful nations or in countries where appeals for national unity are being made to counteract serious divisions along class lines."* (Trigger 1984:360)

The proposal offered by Trigger was further extended by Diaz-Andreu and Champion (1996:3), who argued that the appearance of nationalism stimulated the very creation of archeology as a scientific discipline in Europe. Therefore, based on the European experience, it was concluded that, nationalism is deeply imbedded in the very concept of archaeology, its institutionalisation and development (ibid.). Given Trigger and Glover's (1981) proposal for the prominence of "regional traditions" in archaeology, the use of archaeology in the construction of the Iranian national identity and the building of the nation is selected as a case study, in order to outline the Iranian archaeological traditions. As with the case of Europe, this case study illustrates that the distinct features of archaeology make it predisposed to the political manipulations manifested in various forms of nationalism.

### **3.6. Selecting Case Studies**

Having discussed and defined the theoretical concepts used in this thesis, this section describes how the above correspond with the three archaeological sites selected as case studies for this research. It is further aimed to provide justifiable arguments for the selection of these particular sites. Through the analysis of these case studies, the thesis intends to illustrate the pivotal role of nationalism, irrespective of its form, as one of the major driving forces for archaeological studies. It is further intended to articulate the manipulation of national heritage by the nation-states to re-construct and appropriate a past that validates the contemporary political agendas of the State. This is done through deconstructing the multifaceted political and cultural treatments received by three different archaeological sites that belong to three distinctive periods extending from the Prehistoric site of Sialk, to the pre-Islamic site of Persepolis and

finally the Islamic site of Friday Mosque of Isfahan. This will be achieved, on the one hand, by illustrating the ideological notions of nationalism prevailing within the distinctive Administrations of the Qajar and Pahlavi dynasties and the post-Revolutionary period, and on the other hand, by highlighting the mode of treatment these sites received based on their affiliation to the type of nationalism and ‘authentic’ identity preferred by the State. The role of foreign archaeologists in directing attention towards or away from these sites is also investigated.

In Chapters 4, 5 and 6, each of these archaeological sites are introduced and their significance outlined. It is argued that the Prehistoric site of Sialk, as the representative of one of the oldest archaeological sites in Iran, provides a suitable case study considering it allows for the analysis of various traditions of archaeology that dominated the discipline of Prehistoric archaeology in Iran during various historical periods. In addition, considering the somewhat better quality of Ghirshman’s excavations at Sialk in comparison with other excavations in the 1930s (Young 1986), this Prehistoric sites became a reliable source of reference for the chronological sequence of the Iranian Central Plateau, and therefore a significant case study for further analysis. The pre-Islamic site of Persepolis is selected given its prominence as one of the early archaeological sites visited and studied by foreign travellers and archaeologists. Further, given its intimate association with the Pahlavi dynasty and the institution of monarchy, the site provides an effective means to illustrate the impact of politics, and various forms of nationalism on the treatment of archaeological sites. The Islamic site of Friday Mosque of Isfahan is selected given its significance as one of the oldest mosque structures within the Iranian peripheries and the first example of a *four-ivan* mosque which became the archetype of Iranian mosques thereafter. This site was selected following much contemplation, given that the Shi’a pilgrim site of *Imam Reza Shrine* in Mashhad would have been a more convenient candidate to illustrate the impact of Shi’a nationalism. The decision to select the Friday Mosque of Isfahan as a case study was based on the factor that it had been archaeologically excavated in the 1970s. Therefore, given that this thesis concerns itself with archaeology, the Friday Mosque was recognised as more appropriate.

### **3.7. Accessibility & Limitations**

With regards to the limitations of this study, a few factors have to be taken into considerations. These limitations are first concerned with the general constraints associated with the selected method of study, and second with the availability and accessibility of data. In Section 3.1., it was contended that the methodological orientation of this thesis is within the framework of an interpretive approach and, therefore, prone to the conventional criticisms of those who argue that such an approach is subjective.

Similar criticisms are often held against the Externalist and Internalist approaches employed in this research. It is argued that despite this shortcoming, it is the aim of this thesis to remain objective. Therefore, in the context of this research, the adherence to an interpretive study of Iranian archaeology does not imply the embracement of relativism and the rejection of scientific approaches. Rather by adopting this approach, this research has taken into account the consultation of literature on a variety of topics in archaeology, politics, and history in order to achieve a fuller understanding of the topic. Naturally, given that this thesis is focused on archaeology, despite addressing political and historical concepts, they will not be explored in detail. Further criticisms have been made by Murray (2012:143-145) who cautious on retrospectively denouncing the past archaeological practices while taking the contemporary views of archaeologist as “natural”. He suggests that such analysis should take into consideration that the current academic orthodoxies have histories too (ibid). Although this criticism is acknowledged in this thesis, it is argued that the lack of working knowledge on core concerns in Iranian archaeology requires the provision of a historical base that highlights milestones in the maturation of this discipline in Iran. This preliminary research, therefore, can provide a foundation for future research.

Second, this research was conducted in the United Kingdom and, therefore, restricted by the sources that were available to the researcher. This was partially due to travel restrictions placed by Durham University in 2010 which further limited the consultation of available sources inside Iran. In the year 2011 a research trip was made to Rome-Italy, in order to consult the data available on Persepolis and the Friday Mosque of Isfahan at *IsIAO*. Unfortunately, following the passage of a decree by the Italian Council of Ministers to shut-down *IsIAO* and the removal of the documents related to Iran to an inaccessible storage, this field-trip was restricted to consulting the published sources that were still available at the Institute in Rome. It has been the aim of this research to compensate for these shortcomings by selecting primary sources, such as major literature on particular subjects held in different institutes (*IsIAO* in Rome; Durham University; Iranian Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organisation), various articles, speech transcripts of Iranian officials, news archives and press releases (including The Times; Hamshahri; Peyvand; Press TV; BBC), published official documents (including Samedi Rendi 1993; Yazdani 2001), preliminary excavation reports, travelogues and museums archives (including the British Library, Staatliche Museen zu Berlin; Smithsonian Gallery Collection Archives; Herzfeld Collection Smithsonian; Freer Digital Gallery; The Metropolitan Museum of Art; ICOMOS; UNESCO). In addition, literature in various languages, such as English, Farsi, French, German and Italian were consulted to assist meeting the objective framework of this research. In some cases, this practice was restricted to the official news and institutional web-pages available online. Unfortunately, due to political concerns some of this information

has now been removed from online sources. The above outlines the limitations identified by the researcher.

### **3.8. Conclusion**

Having discussed the orientation and methodological framework of this thesis, the next three chapters are concerned with providing the history of Iranian archaeology in terms of its development in Prehistoric, pre-Islamic and Islamic subfields. By analysing the three case studies of Sialk, Persepolis, and the Friday Mosque of Isfahan it is intended to demonstrate the distinct features of Iranian archaeology which were influenced by different socio-political dimensions and various brands of nationalism. Through outlining factors that contributed to the formation of this tradition it is contended that Iranian archaeology adheres to Trigger's Nationalist category as the various division of the discipline were born and institutionalised once their suitability for supporting political intentions were realised.

## Chapter 4

### Nationalism & the Treatment of Prehistoric Archaeological Sites: Sialk

#### 4.1. Introduction

The study of the Prehistoric periods in Iran has been conducted in an irregular manner with some regional areas and chronological periods investigated in more detail than others. This imbalance is occasionally a reflection of political desires to accommodate Prehistory within the appropriate ideological frameworks of a particular administration. Kaeser (2002:171) argued that it was document-based historical enquiry rather than Prehistory that got incorporated into politics in that it modified the cultivation of ethnic identities and lifted national sentiments. Although as a general trend, this statement resonates with the nation-building strategies of Iranian Administrations, during the Pahlavi period with the epitomisation of the Achaemenid period and in the post-Revolutionary period with an emphasis on Shi'a history, it is contended that similar to other archaeological periods, the Prehistoric period too, was adopted by different Administrations to complement their preferred nationalistic rhetoric. Further, Prehistoric archaeological sites played a role in reinforcing the Iranian national identity by feeding into the pro-Aryan propaganda that dominated the intellectual spheres of Iranian society during the reign of the Qajars and Pahlavis and the fascination with affirming Iran's ancient past and its contributions to World Civilisation during Khatami's Presidency. In this chapter, the sporadic governmental support rendered to the development of Prehistoric archaeology is analysed against the formidable influence of foreign archaeologists in shaping the primarily outline of research in this discipline. In doing so, the dominating tendencies in theoretical frameworks of each political period and their contributions to Iranian archaeology will be investigated.

This chapter will begin with a brief introduction to the Prehistoric site of Sialk against the backdrop of political events during different historical periods. Following this, the chapter will turn to the Qajars' treatment of Prehistoric sites. Since it is argued that there was an absence of archaeological activities at Sialk during this period, this section will present a prelude to the launch of Prehistoric archaeological activities during the Pahlavi period. This section further aims to investigate the prevalent causes behind the Qajars' lack of investment in the study of Prehistory. By the time Reza Shah ascended to power in 1925, the Western practice of utilising the past as a coveted currency to support the legitimacy of the government and unify the nation-state was adopted into the Iranian context. In this section, it will be argued that despite the Pahlavis' ethnic-dynastic nationalism and their over-emphasis on the Achaemenid

period as the ‘golden age’ of Iranian civilisation, their pursuit of the past was influenced by the nationalist rhetoric of ‘Aryanism’ that paved the way for the study of the origin of Iranian civilisation in the Prehistoric period. With the birth of Prehistoric studies during this period, Sialk became one of the earliest Iranian sites to be ‘scientifically’ investigated. The provision of a broad theoretical context in this chapter is aimed at highlighting the prevalent debates that dominated the field of archaeology while Sialk was under excavation, and how such debates influenced Ghirshman’s outlook in his investigations. Finally, the chapter concludes with an analytical review of the recovery of Prehistoric archaeology during the post-Revolutionary period, and the initial attempts that suggest the use of Sialk for the purpose of restoring Iranian archeology and facilitating the foreign policies adopted by Khatami’s Administration. It is further argued that during Ahmadinejad’s Presidency, this interval of archaeological activity was once more terminated and Iranian archaeology fell into another phase of negligence and isolation. Within this context, references are made to violations and negligence that once again threatened the site of Sialk.

## 4.2. Historical Background

In his *Prehistory: The Making of the Human Mind*, Renfrew (2008:3) argued that two centuries ago in Europe, the notion of Prehistory did not exist and many scholars traced their origin to the narratives provided in the Bible. In Iran during the Qajar period, similar tendencies prevailed and Iranian history stretched only as far back as the mythical kings in the *Shahnameh*. Therefore, the Iranian encounter with archaeological sites was often framed through their affiliation with distant mythical chronicles. Of course these fabrications were amply achieved for archaeological sites with imposing structures that often belonged to the historic period, while Prehistoric sites were comparatively less frequent and solely appreciated for the occasional invaluable treasures they yielded.

This can be considered as the *de facto* cause for the fabrication of folk tales and legendary characters that were associated with the monumental South Mound at Sialk, by the local inhabitants. According to Ghirshman, the source of the name of Sialk was traceable to three different origins; these included derivation from the names *Solukous* as the Mound was associated with the Greek and Hellenic periods; *Si Arg* (30 Citadels) which referred to the 30 towns that enclosed the site; and finally, *Sckytharkes* which corresponded to the name of a Scythian king “King Saka” (Ghirshman 1938:21). Ghirshman further maintained that the third alternative was more indicative of the history of Sialk (ibid.:21). According to Abdol Rahim Kalantari Zarabi Kashani who offered the first reference to Sialk in 1867 in his book called *Maraat Alghasan*, Sialk was an old citadel by the name of *Si Arg*, which itself came from modifying the name *Sepid Arg*, imposed on the site given the relatively whiter colour of the earth covering the site in



comparison with the surrounding (Afshar 1999:116). In support of the latter, local inhabitants continue to refer to Sialk as *Sepid Arg* to present day.

The site of Sialk is a part of the ancient city of Kashan and comprises two ancient mounds, 600 metres apart (Fig. 4.1). The earliest archaeological remains have been recovered from the North Mound, which dates back to the middle of the sixth millennium B.C.E. According to Fazeli (et al. 2013), this Mound covers the Neolithic and Early Transitional Chalcolithic periods. It is contended that the inhabitants of the North Mound deserted the site sometimes in the middle of fifth millennium B.C.E, and settled on the South Mound (Malek Shahmirzadi 2002:2). Soon the South Mound was deserted too and the site remained uninhabited for almost 1000 years. According to recent investigations, the South Mound covers the main periods of Early, Middle and Late Chalcolithic, proto-Elamite and Iron Age (Fazeli et al. 2013). In the middle of the Second millennium B.C.E., a group of nomads are thought to have migrated into Iran from the north-east and settled in Sialk (Malek Shahmirzadi 2002:2). The remains of this community was uncovered in Cemetery A in the South Mound. During the first millennium B.C.E, a second migratory group settled in Sialk with a relocated Cemetery B, 150 metres to the west of the South Mound (ibid.).

It is reported that by the year 1930, valuable items of pottery from Sialk had reached the auctions in Paris and the French realised the archaeological value of this Prehistoric site. In 1931 Sialk was registered as number 38 on the list of the *Inventory of National Monuments*. According to Malek Shahmirzadi (2002:21), the circumstance under which the cultural value of Sialk was evaluated was not clear. The only remaining evidence that records the event of registration is the existence of two identity cards with French inscriptions (ibid.). Naraghi (2004:19) indicated that when Sialk was registered, it was presumed that the site belonged to the Seleucid period. It was only subsequent to the French archaeological excavations that the significance of Sialk as a Prehistoric site was recognised.

The man who introduced Sialk as one of the centres of ancient civilisation was the French archaeologist, Roman Ghirshman. He began his investigation at the site in 1933 and continued his research in 1934 and 1937. According to his personal writings, Sialk was selected following the dissemination of a number of unusual vessels, which surfaced in 1933 in the antiquity markets of Iran and France. In this context Ghirshman's interest in pottery, in comparison with the traditional French interest in collectable museum objects that corresponded with Mesopotamian civilisations or Luristan Bronze is noteworthy. Once Godard traced the origin of these items to Sialk, the Louvre Museum made the necessary enquiries to attain the right to excavate the site (Ghirshman 1938:16). This permission was received promptly and the French began their excavation at Sialk in the same year.

Ghirshman's investigations at Sialk are of eminent significance as they contributed to establishing the first chronological sequence for the Iranian Central Plateau. From Ghirshman's report in 1939, we may draw few indications reflective of Sialk's bad state of preservation during the early Pahlavi period. Apart from irreplaceable damage that was inflicted on the site by natural causes, Ghirshman (1939:3-4) stated that Sialk had been truncated in the north by cultivated fields, and to the east by the houses of the village of *Diz-Cheh*. He further contended that local farmers had been clearing material from the site for housing and agricultural purposes (*ibid.*:3).

Ghirshman's discoveries at Sialk were published in 1938 in two volumes under the title *Fouilles de Sialk*. As will be argued, due to the publication of this paramount work in French, despite acknowledgment of its significance, the content was often overlooked by non-French archaeologists. Based on his excavations, Ghirshman identified six successive cultural sequences at Sialk. Accordingly, Ghirshman divided the occupation layers on the North Mound (Trenches 1, 2, 3) into two phases: Sialk Period I (1-5) and Sialk Period II (1-3). Ghirshman concluded that these findings demonstrated the existence of the "oldest human settlement" in the plains (Ghirshman 1954:29). The South Mound (Trenches 1, 2, 3) contained the cultural sequence of Sialk III (1-6) and IV (1-2), which according to Malek Shahmirzadi (2006b:19) corresponded with the early urbanisation and initial signs of writing in the Central Plateau. Cemetery A, located 500 metres south of the South Mound, was identified as Sialk V and Cemetery B, located 150 metres west of South Mound was identified as Sialk VI. Based on the grey vessels and burial goods, both of these cemeteries were associated with the Iron Age (*ibid.*:19; Malek Shahmirzadi 2004:11). Ghirshman's (1938;1954;1977) excavations at Sialk were significant as they addressed the nationalist rhetoric of Aryanism by offering hypothesis that traced the migration of "Indo-Iranians" and their spread into the Iranian Plateau through this Prehistoric research and their identification in Sialk's cemeteries.

Following World War II, the direction of Prehistoric archaeology in Iran changed and become more concerned with accommodating the theoretical frameworks associated with 'New Archaeology' introduced by the Americans. Therefore, in the 1960s and 1970s scholarly research began to focus on the concepts of origin of agriculture and urbanism in western Iran. The domination of archaeological activities in this region marginalised more central sites such as Sialk. With the exception of scattered efforts in the late 1970s (Majidzadeh 1976; Amiet 2002) to evaluate the validity of the cultural chronology achieved by Ghirshman, the site was largely abandoned during the later Pahlavi period.

Following the Islamic Revolution, Sialk suffered from sporadic occasions of violation to its vicinity due to the self-sufficiency projects that fostered agricultural developments. In addition, the site of Sialk,

among other Prehistoric archaeological sites suffered from negligence and maltreatment resulting from the degradation of the discipline of archaeology and its irrelevance to the nationalist doctrine of the Islamic Regime. It was only during the Presidency of Khatami and in conformity with his Administration's discourse of 'Dialogue among Civilisations' that a proposal to re-investigate Sialk was ratified. The initial objective of the project, which became known as the *Sialk Reconstruction Project (SRP)*, was to operate a rescue mission to salvage the site from its desolate state of preservation (Malek Shahmirzadi 2002; 2003; 2004; 2006a and 2006b). On the third year of this five season operation, the *SRP* which was conducted under the Directorship of Dr. Malek Shahmirzadi, and managed by the *Research Institute of Archaeology*, became a multidisciplinary project with the co-operation of foreign archaeological institutes. It was within this research context that Malek Shahmirzadi hypothesised that the "La Grande Construction" identified by Ghirshman in the South Mound was one of the "earliest Ziggurats in Mesopotamia" (Malek Shahmirzadi 2002:15). The archaeological activities at Sialk continued into the early years of Ahmadinejad's Presidency when the most recent archaeological investigation under the joint co-operation of an Iranian-British team determined the validity of chronological sequence at the North Mound of Sialk using both absolute and relative dating methods (Fazeli et al. 2013). These activities came to an abrupt end after the 2009 Presidential elections.

### **4.3. Qajar Nationalism: The Case Study of Sialk**

The aim of this chapter is to demonstrate the determining role of social and political factors in directing the path of Prehistoric Iranian archaeology. Although the influential force of these factors may have manifested themselves more readily during the Pahlavi and post-Revolutionary periods, the application of these themes to Prehistoric studies during the Qajar period is difficult given the non-existent notion of Prehistory and the lack of an appropriate comprehension for its potential application. The Qajars' perceived little socio-political redemption in utilising the Prehistoric sites and instead gratified their monetary interest through occasional treasure hunts. In his memoir *Etemad Al-Satlaneh*, a Trustee of Naser al-Din Shah, attested to the Shah's interest in the practice of *Tala-shuyi*. In addition, in 1875 A. Houtum Schindler who was in Persia for the purpose of laying the Tehran-Mashhad telegraph line encountered a group of locals who were "working to find marvelous objects" at Tepe Hissar near Damghan (Nashat 1982:158; Abdi 2001:53). Similar affirmations of interest in the monetary value of Prehistoric sites was found across numerous sites during this period.

In this section, it has been suggested that the Qajars' disregard for Prehistoric sites was twofold; firstly, the absence of political motivations for the Qajar to employ Prehistory as an appropriate tool to legitimise

their authority and secondly, the non-existence of a concept of 'Prehistory' which led to substantial looting of these sites by Iranian and foreigners alike. More specifically, the Qajar model of kingship did not entail the necessity of historical verifications to legitimise its authority. Despite this disposition, in Chapters 5 and 6, it will be argued that the foundation of Qajar authority on the two pillars of monarchy and Shari'a (Amanat 1997:7-9) aroused interest in the pre-Islamic and Islamic past. This curiosity became the incentive for the realisation of the suitability of historical past as a viable tool for political action. However, this trend was chiefly concerned with pre-Islamic and Islamic monuments while 'Prehistory' remained an alien concept. Reflecting on this notion, in this section it is argued that the Prehistoric period occupied no eminence in the legitimisation of Qajar kings and therefore was subject to negligence.

It is further argued that the absence of the notion of 'Prehistory' provided an additional pretext for overlooking sites that belonged to this period. It is important to note that the Qajar lacked a comprehensive understanding of Iranian history. Rather, history was disguised by the mounting influence of Islamic past and the mythical fables of the *Shahnameh*. It was only with the re-discovery and translation of historical texts and foreign archaeological discoveries that Iranians grasped a better understanding of their past and began investing in archaeology for the verification of similar historic documents. Although the prelude to the appreciation of the past began during the Qajar period, it only became prominent and fully apprehended as a political instrument during the rule of the Pahlavis. The dominance of the above discourse became a catalyst for the surrender of Iran's Archaeological Monopoly to the French. With the supremacy of the French, their external commercial and scientific mandate managed the direction of Iranian archaeology. This mandate called for the exploration of sites with Biblical or Classical affiliations. According to these preconditions, Prehistoric sites such as Sialk with no cultural relations to the above were not initially included in the circle of the French scientific domain.

It has to be noted that the Qajars' attitude towards the concept of 'Prehistory' was echoed in the Iranian society at large. While as Keddie (1988:301-2) argued the *Ulama*, who had profound influence in the Qajar society, opposed the various concessions granted by the Qajar kings to foreign companies, no complaint was targeted towards the French Archaeological Concession. To the *Ulama*, any remains that constituted the period prior to the birth of Islam were considered to be from the age of *Jaheliat* (ignorance) and therefore unworthy of consideration. Notwithstanding these apathies for Iranian cultural heritage, the nationalists who drove the wheels of the Iranian Constitutional Revolution were the single group who demonstrated sporadic concerns over the exploitation of antiquities by the French. As Goode (2007:130) argued, one newspaper condemned the sale of a statue from Susa for the price of 5 million *Pounds* at a time when Mohammad Ali Shah (r. 1907-1909 AD) could not borrow 10000 *Tomans* from England or Russia. These initial tensions were not confined to the monetary value of antiquity, rather

inspired by the emergence of nationalist paradigms that envisaged a sovereign country founded on the infrastructure of an ancient civilisation. The peripheries of these inspirations were curbed by the ethnic nationalist theories introduced by the likes of J. A. de Gobineau. In his capacity as First Secretary of the French Mission, and later as the French Charge d'Affairs in Tehran (1855-1858 AD and 1861-1863 AD) (Afshar 2003:284), Gobineau fostered the notion of Persians as Aryans. In his book *The Inequality of Human Race*, Gobineau (1915:33) claimed that if the Persians had retained their “purity of blood, as real Aryans”, Persian domination would have never terminated. The writings of Gobineau were subsequently echoed in the intellectual works of authors such as Franz Cumont, who mapped the migration of Mithrasim and Manichaesim from Iranian to Roman territory, and Josef Strzgowski in his argument that the source of Western art was traceable to Iran (Grigor 2007:562).

As the pro-Aryan propaganda began to dominate the intellectual spheres of the Iranian society in the early 1900s, various Iranian authors began to cultivate public fascination with the Aryan and pre-Islamic Iranian heritage and initiated the promotion of ethnic nationalism (see Chapter 2). Although the pursuit of the past in the promotion of the Aryan race may have prepared the foundation for the birth of Iranian Prehistoric archaeology, it initially manifested itself with interest in the Achaemenid period, mainly in the absence of any evidence that pointed to a more distance past. By the time the archaeological investigations began to uncover pre-Achaemenid civilisations, the antiquity of the Achaemenid Empire as the heir to the Aryan race was sealed and its far-reaching implications for Iranian politics recognised. As shall be argued in the following section, it was only through additional efforts during the Pahlavi period that archaeologists were able to extend and consolidate the origins of Iranian civilisation back to Prehistoric periods.

It has been the intention of this section to argue that Prehistoric remains were dismissed by the Qajar kings and the Iranian elite due to the non-existence of a concept of Prehistory during this period. This trend was reflected in other strands of the Iranian society. Whereas the historic archaeological sites were partially protected by the prevalent belief in ‘*talisman*’ or the bad omen that befell those who removed objects from the fabled sites (Drijvers & Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1991:7), and the Islamic archaeological sites were refurbished and protected in their capacity as functional centres of society, Prehistoric sites were often subject to looting for their monetary values. These sites were frequently discovered through chance or by ploughing agricultural land. In the absence of monumental structures, no reservation was placed on the looting of lands that gave birth of ‘treasures’. In this process, while the luxury items were preserved for their monetary value, other Prehistoric material, for example pottery, were destroyed and in so doing the chronological sequence of numerous Prehistoric sites were disturbed. Sialk is an example of such destructions considering its close proximity to an agricultural village (Ghirshman 1939:3-4).

It was due to this indifference to the value of cultural heritage that in 1895 Marcel Auguste Dieulafoy obtained the concession to excavate the ancient relics of Susa, followed by the French Archaeological Monopoly in 1900 that gave the French exclusive right to excavate all over Iran (Amiet et al. 1993:16). The French's involvement in Iranian archaeology corresponded with a period when antiquarianism was gradually replaced by an outlook that favoured the acceptance of scientific investigations to unravel human antiquity. In effect, Prehistoric archaeology was already considered as a scientific discipline following its professionalisation in 1869 by the *Urgeschichte* (German Society for Anthropology, Ethnology and Prehistoric Archaeology) (Trigger 2007:235). Although these events preceded the launch of the French archaeological activities in Iran, nevertheless, the rivalry between different Western museums, such as the British Museum and the Louvre, that began in the age of colonialism continued to persist in the region and this transpired into focus on archaeological sites with exhibitable items. This pursuit was particularly apparent in the French desire to maintain their Monopoly in Iran considering the colonial structures they maintained in the Middle East in the 1800s were gradually shattered by anti-colonial movements and the emergence of new nation-states. Therefore, to secure Iran as a source of archaeological riches to facilitate the Louvre was critical.

It is appropriate to contextualise the colonial outlook of the French Delegation with regard to their applied theoretical approach. As Trigger (2007:254) argued, it was not until after World War I that the Evolutionary approach was replaced by Culture-Historical theories in Britain and France. The Evolutionary approach of the French Delegation towards their archaeological mandate in Iran demonstrates their prevalent belief in the unilinear development of cultural advances. As Trigger (1980:23) contended, this unilinear evolutionary pattern attested to the colonial attitude of imperial powers towards the less advanced countries according to which less technologically advanced people were viewed as being at lower stages of cultural development. This view was heavily entrenched in the political disposition of France in the nineteenth century and reflected in the rhetoric of politicians such as Jules-Francois-Camille Ferry who firmly believed in the racial superiority of the French and their right to rule and civilise the inferior races (Ferry cited in Colonna 1997:351).

Although Iran was never formally under the colonial domain of French imperialism during this period, the employment of methods associated with the Evolutionary approach with an embedded colonial attitude testified to the French archaeological mandate in Iran. As Meskell (2003:151) argued, central to this attitude was the position that Western scholars were the rightful inheritors of the past as their subject cultures were unable to manage and control their own resources. These attitudes were accentuated through interests in excavating at Susa. Despite its Achaemenid legacy, the French selected Susa to rival the British dominance over Mesopotamian archaeology and to participate in the race for the recovery of

the origins of human civilisation, which according to Jacques De Morgan, the Director of the French Archaeological Mission to Persia from 1900 to 1912, could be traced back to Susa (Amiet 1994). The Achaemenids were considered by the French as lacking in originality and thus unworthy of detailed study (ibid.). Nevertheless, Susa offered the French Delegation a wealth of material from both Elamite and Achaemenid periods.

The above argument denotes the French Colonial approach to Iranian archaeology, both in its attitude and in its mandate, and through the preference in selecting a site that aptly corresponded with their requirements of collecting museum objects and investigating a region that was culturally within the margins of Mesopotamian civilisations. Considering the above discourse, the French's lack of interest to invest in other archaeological sites even following their Monopoly to excavate all over Iran is comprehensible. In addition, according to Daniel, it was only after the report of Pumpelly at Anau in 1904 that all stratigraphic levels were identified as "cultures" (Daniel 1981:149). Prior to this study and at the pinnacle of Colonialist approaches, the study of Prehistory was considered as the investigation of barbarians, and viewed with apprehension (ibid.:148).

In this section it was argued that the irrelevance of Prehistory to the legitimacy of Qajar kings hindered the emergence of this subject as a viable scientific discipline. While this disposition was forced by the non-existent notion of Prehistory in Qajar society, the French Delegation's disregard for this period further delayed the study of Prehistory. To a certain degree, the debates in this section may seem irrelevant in that they do not provide a lucid outline for the treatment of Sialk during the Qajar period. However, considering that, Prehistoric sites such as Sialk may have only been identified by the locals as treasure hubs, it is only through facilitating this backdrop that one can provide a thorough investigation of the legacy of Prehistoric studies during the Pahlavi period.

#### **4.4. Pahlavi Nationalism: The Case Study of Sialk**

In this thesis the Pahlavi period is presented as a preface to the introduction of Western concepts, the most significant of which was the notion of a modern nation-state built on a *mélange* of ethnic nationalism, manifested in the Aryan propagandas, and the inherent dynastic nationalism with its emphasis on the institution of monarchy. Under the Pahlavis, the political dilemmas of nation-building were resolved through an 'invention of traditions' that relied on the Achaemenid period as the 'golden age' in Iranian history. Nevertheless, the 'invention' of this collective memory also relied on the Primordial principle of cultural 'continuity' and racial 'superiority'. Although these incentives were met by the Pahlavis' refuge in the historic periods, the infatuation with the origins of the Aryan race reflected in Nazi ideologies

instigated further impetus for the study of the Prehistoric past. Such rhetoric provided for the promotion of an image of Iranian identity as 'civilised'. The investigations of foreign archaeological teams in Iran provided a catalyst for the Pahlavis to recognise the potentials of a period that extended beyond the Achaemenid kings and into the Prehistoric past. It was against this backdrop that archaeological investigations slightly deviated towards the study of Prehistoric sites during the first Pahlavi period and Sialk became one of the prime excavation sites under this mandate.

The intention of this section is to establish two points. Firstly, it is argued that the discipline of Prehistoric archaeology during this period was mainly dictated by the theoretical trends and methods that were introduced to Iran by foreign archaeological teams. These approaches were often framed to further complement the prevalent mandates of the Iranian society during each political period. In this respect, the 1930s and 1960s are considered as the apex of foreign archaeological influence during the Pahlavi period. In general terms, the archaeological activities during the 1930s were dominated by French and Americans, while in the 1960s these influences skewed towards more American involvement in shaping the landscape of Iranian archaeology. This prelude provides a comprehensive path for the analysis of the approaches embraced by foreign archaeological teams during each period. Therefore, the prevalence of the migration theories associated with the Culture-Historical approach that supported the proposed 'superiority' of Iranian race in the 1930s and the introduction of 'New Archaeology' during the phase of 'progress' in the 1960s are analysed.

The second point is that as a result of the unique socio-political dynamics that prevailed during this period, the archaeological concepts introduced in the 1930s and 1960s facilitated the birth and professionalisation of Prehistoric archaeology in Iran. It is argued that although initially the Achaemenid period satisfied the nationalistic mandates of Reza Shah's Government, with the encouragement of foreign archaeologists, and the introduction and appropriation of migration theories, the Pahlavi authorities gradually became prepared to invest in the exploration of the more distant past. The suggestion that Iran was the homeland of Aryans, was perceived as a narrative that could supplement the recovering reputation of Iran as a sovereign nation with an ancient civilisation. This is followed by investigating the advance of Prehistory as a scientific discipline during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah when a discernible political shift from the concept of 'Aryanism' reduced the ethnic elements of Iranian nationalism, while perpetuating the role of monarchy as the focal component of the Pahlavi nationalist mandate. With this shift in the nationalistic rhetoric, emphasis was directed towards pre-Islamic sites (see Chapter 5), allowing Prehistoric archaeology to advance without political interference. It is further argued that the introduction of 'New Archaeology' by American scholars, aroused sympathies from the emerging generation of trained Iranian archaeologists who struggled to dissociate Iranian Prehistoric archaeology



from both Colonialist and Nationalist trends. These events provoked an impetus for a positive step towards creating a professional and scientific ethos in the discipline of Prehistoric archaeology before the Islamic Revolution.

Although Sialk was not the first Prehistoric site that was investigated in the socio-political backdrop discussed above, its treatment embodied many of the concerns that were prevalent during the Pahlavi period. The impact of these concerns are depicted in following sections, the first focuses on the treatment of Sialk during the reign Reza Shah and second investigates these same incentives during Mohammad Reza Shah's reign.

#### **4.4.1. Reza Shah's Government & Ethnic Nationalism: Prehistoric Archaeology**

*"Few Archaeologists in Europe can work without the shadow of the misuse of the past for nationalistic purposes during the Third Reich."*

(Hodder 1991: x)

In the previous section, it was argued that during the reign of Reza Shah the necessities of constructing a united nation-state based on a common ethnic identity required emphasis on the stages in Iranian history that were recorded through written documents. Therefore, the Achaemenid period was epitomised as the 'golden age' of Iranian history and Reza Shah's Government actively promoted archaeological activities that corresponded with this period of Iranian past. It was due to this tradition that the study of Prehistory, with its lack of explicit documentation, failed to arouse an immediate interest in the Iranian officials. In addition, as will be argued in Chapter 5, given the racial identification of Achaemenid kings as Aryans (Butcher 2003:52), this period satisfied the Pahlavis' model of ethnic-dynastic nationalism. Therefore, the Achaemenid period allowed for the promotion of 'continuity' and 'superiority' of Iranian race and added to the Government's ambivalence towards Prehistoric studies.

Although the study of Prehistory was not a vigorous component of the nation-building process undertaken by Reza Shah's Government, it is argued that the prevalence of certain theoretical frameworks introduced by foreign archaeologists during this period resonated with the Government's mandate to adopt a model of nationalism that embraced the 'ethnic' elements of Iranian identity. In a global context, the contemporary infatuation with the superiority of the Aryan race and the search for the discovery of their origins should be noted. Such tendencies provided for the Iranian's receptiveness of foreign archaeological theories that further supported the notion of Iranian 'superiority' and nominated Iran as the

possible homeland of Aryans. Given this pretext, despite the failure of Prehistoric studies to presume a central position within Iranian politics, the incentive for the foundation of Prehistoric archaeology was instigated. Within this context, the significance of Sialk and the implications of the prevalent theoretical frameworks on its analysis are discussed in further detail.

#### ***4.4.1.1. Foreign Expeditions and the Utilisation of Archaeological Theories towards an Ethnic Brand of Nationalism***

The previous section contextualised the state of Prehistoric archaeology during the Qajar period by illustrating the archaeological approach of the French who maintained a monopoly over archaeological activities in Iran until 1930. In doing so it was established that the French mandate and their adoption of methods associated with the Evolutionary approach facilitated their colonial attitude towards archaeology in Iran. With Reza Shah's ascension to power in 1924, the political climate of Iran changed and became increasingly anti-colonial and nationalistic. Under these circumstances, the French mandate and their Archaeological Monopoly was perceived by the Iranian nationalists as a colonial legacy that epitomised the Qajar period. Applying Kohl's terminology of "subaltern perspective", this period represented a phase in Iranian history where the ideas of liberation from an imperial power were imbued into archaeological research (Kohl et.al 2007:4). Indeed, as Goode (2007:131) contended, many prominent Iranians had become convinced that the past held a special significance for the "new" Iran that they hoped to create. To create the utopian Iran they yearned for, the French Monopoly had to be obliterated and a new set of cultural values had to be introduced into the Iranian society.

Apart from the Government's mandate to 'liberate' Iranian archaeology as a precursor to Iran's national independence, the French archaeological policies in Iran were detested for their inadequate approach in promoting Persian culture and their obsolete methods of excavations (Gholi Majd 2003:67). These claims were supported by American diplomats who maintained that the French through their "closed-door" policy had achieved little in the field of Iranian archaeology and Iran should adopt an "open-door" policy to allow other nations make "marvellous discoveries" (Goode 2007:135). In addition, the Iranian Government regularly complained about the loss of antiquities to France, with no benefit for Iran (ibid.:133). The primary step to make Iranian archaeology independent from French influence was conceived in the annulment of their lengthy Monopoly. This initiative was further supported by the Americans, who expressed a keen interest in becoming involved in Iranian archaeology. It is important to note that the Americans had gained prominence in the Pahlavi Administration as the 'saviours' of Iranian archaeology. This mindset was mainly achieved through the initiatives of Arthur Upham Pope, who had

become the source of aspiration for Iranian nationalists through nurturing the myth of saviour and envisaging a utopian Iran through reviving its 'glorious past' (see Chapter 5). This is while, as Goode indicated, the French archaeological activities at Susa were perceived as the residue of French colonialism and castigated by Reza Shah as "thievery" (Goode 2007:174). The hostility towards the legacy of French archaeologists in Iran had unprecedented impacts on the general outlook towards their forthcoming archaeological activities. In essence, the annulment of the French Monopoly in 1927 forced a serious blow to the authority of French archaeology in the region.

The above analysis was an attempt to articulate the incentives that compelled the French to abandon their previous policies and adopt strategies that assisted the maintenance of their dominance in the modified terrain of Iranian archaeology. It is argued that the restoration of the French archaeological authority in Iran was facilitated through a binary transformation which supplied the initial proceedings that led to the study of Sialk. These modifications were instigated by altering the administrative assembly, through hiring André Godard as the Director of the Archaeology Service of Iran (1930), and Roman Ghirshman as the new Head of the Archaeological Mission in Persia (*Delegations Archaeologiques Francaises*) (1931); and, by expanding the scope of French archaeological activities beyond Susa and into novel peripheries. This is not to overlook the excavations that were conducted outside Susa and in the Khuzistan region, such as Tepe Duvaisyah, Ja'far abad, Musian, or the surveys in Gurgan and Talesh region under De Morgan's direction before the 1930s. Nevertheless, as Young (1986) argued, despite De Morgan's professional inclinations towards scientific epistemology, his methods in Iran remained 'antiquarian' in nature with no effort to meet the excavation standards recognised in the neighbouring Near Eastern sites. It may be argued that Iranian archaeological independence from the French and the rise of Americans as a prominent rival, encouraged a new phase of French involvement in Iranian archaeology with less reliance on Colonialist approaches of antiquarianism and more favorable attitude towards the scientific study of Iranian past. In fact, one of the major French excavations during this period, Ghirshman's excavations at Sialk, marked a true break from their legacies prior to the 1930s.

Considering the scientific achievements at Sialk, the impending question of why this Prehistoric site was selected by the French needs to be addressed. The argument to validate this choice is twofold. Firstly, the prevalence of a new theoretical framework in the late nineteenth century, which focused on migration and diffusion of cultures, altered the orientation of French activities in Iran in order to compete with Americans. Secondly, the socio-political climate of Iran with its new emphasis on ethnic nationalism encouraged the French to venture out of their preferred region of Susa and investigate archaeological sites outside of the Mesopotamian cultural domain to assist the maintenance of their archaeological authority. As is evident, the incentives for the selection of Sialk ran parallel to the overarching context that defined

Prehistoric archaeology during the reign of Reza Shah. Therefore, the analysis of Sialk is pursued in the backdrop of theoretical trends introduced by foreign archaeologists that appealed to the ethnic nationalism of Reza Shah's Government.

#### **4.4.1.1.1. Migration & Diffusion Theories**

By the 1930s the coercive efforts of Iranian and Americans compelled the French to renounce their Archaeological Monopoly in exchange for the Directorship of Iranian Antiquities. As discussed above, one way to re-establishment French authority in Iranian archaeology was through introducing a new generation of archaeologists, who were accustomed to the contemporary advances in archaeological theories. These theoretical frameworks particularly focused on the Culture-Historical approach and challenged the cultural evolutionism, which had provided a catalyst for the colonial mandates of expansionist powers (Trigger 2009:211). The two main advocates of Culture-Historical approach were Gustaf Kossina (1858-1931 AD) and Gordon Childe (1892-1957 AD) whose research focused on the identification of the Indo-European homeland. While Kossina traced the origin of the Aryans to Germany and Scandinavian countries (Dhavalikar 2007:34), Childe (1926:193) proposed that the Aryans migrated from their original homeland in the Russian Steppes to the south-east (Mesopotamia & Iran), south-west (Troy & the "Balkans"), and north and north-west (Northern Europe). Similar hypothesis by scholar Max Muller (1875) had already encouraged archaeologists to pursue the discovery of material remains that confirmed such claims. While the Germans were excavating the remains of Ancient Hittites in Anatolia (1906-1912) and the British were tracing the route of Aryan migration into the Indus Valley and the site of Mohenjo-daro (1921-22) (Dhavalikar 2007:4), in 1903 Raphael Pumpelly was excavating at Anau in Soviet Turkamanestan (Greater Iran), to confer similar verifications. De Morgan's surveys in the Caspian region of Talysh and Gorgan in this same period may signify the dissemination of these hypotheses to Iran.

It is contended that the hypotheses instigated by Childe's publications *The Dawn of European Civilization* in 1925, *The Aryans: A Study of Indo-European Origins* in 1926 and *The Most Ancient East* in 1928 refocused attention to the Near East in the 1930s. The placing of Iranian Prehistory into a larger interpretive context and the ensuing migration theories directed focus to the Prehistory of a region which according to Young (1986) was largely dismissed due to the prevailing misconceptions with regards to its Prehistoric time depth. Given that Childe (1926:192) considered Pumpelly's discoveries at Anau as a Neolithic culture characterised by Aryan features, it was deduced that this was the route of Aryans diffusion into the Iranian Plateau. In 1931 the Americans began to excavate on the same route through

investigations at Tureng Tepe with Frederick R. Wulsin as the Director, and Tepe Hissar under Schmidt's direction (Moreau 2010:4). The work at Tepe Hissar was particularly interesting due to the discovery of 1637 burials and the measurement of full skulls recovered for racial identification (Gursan-Salzman 2007:36-7). In his first report from Hissar, Schmidt (1933:367; 1937:303) offered a working theory according to which the carriers of the cultures who settled in Tureng Tepe and Hissar were to be traced to southern Turkestan and the northern Steppe. Therefore, it may be argued that by the early 1930s, the Americans, who were considered a serious threat to the authority of French archaeology in Iran, were fully engaged in the employment of the migration theories prevalent during this period, especially in the northeast. Further, the Swedish Archaeological Expedition in 1932 was pursuing similar research under the direction of T.J. Arne at Shah Tepe, also in north-eastern Iran (Arne 1935). In 1934 the British archaeologists Sir Aurel Stein was surveying archaeological sites, particularly from the chalcolithic period, all over Iran to trace relations between "the Indus Valley and Indo-Iranian borderlands" on the eastern and "south-western Persia and Mesopotamia" on the western borders (Stein 1936:111). In their attempt to instigate a scientific enterprise on a par with the contemporary approaches, the French were encouraged to diversify their research by locating a Prehistoric site with the potential capacity to restore their authority in Iranian archaeology. This provided for their effort to secure a Prehistoric site outside their preferred region of Susa. The *Musees Nationaux* and the *Ecole du Louvre* had already sponsored two seasons of excavation at Tepe Giyan located in Luristan, Directed by Conenau and Ghirshman in 1931-32 (Negahban 2001). These excavations were however, conducted for the traditional motive of discovering museum objects, in this case finding the source of the Luristan Bronzes (Young 1986). Considering the scattered surveys in the Central Iranian Plateau, it is conceivable that the French countered the American Prehistoric projects in the north-east by selecting a site in this region. The site of Sialk, to the east of Tepe Giyan, was selected perhaps partly due to its geographical location. The site is positioned on the Kashan Plain enclosed by the Karkas Mountains to the west and the Great Salt Desert to the east (Coningham et al. 2006). If the Indo-Iranians had migrated to Iran through the north-east, Sialk may have performed as a gateway to the rest of the Iranian Plateau (see Ghirshman 1978). This thesis was already put forward by Ghirshman (1938:101-3) when he made attempts to trace the origins of the early inhabitants of Sialk, by comparing their pottery, metal, ornamentation and way of life, to those of the Anau culture in Turkmanestan. Later on, Ghirshman (1977) published *L'Iran et la Migration des Indo-Aryens et des Iraniens*, based on the study of archaeological evidence which further attested to his conclusions that the original homeland of Indo-Iranians was to be sought in the lower reaches of Volga in southern Russia.

In spite of these efforts, it is not intended here to relate all archaeological activities during this period to the study of Indo-Iranians and their origins. Rather, the aim is to articulate the dominance of the concept of migration in explaining cultural change. In fact, Ghirshman further displayed his commitment to this approach by explaining cultural change in Sialk IV2 in terms of expansion and migration of Elamite culture from the southern region of Susa. Ghirshman (1978:47) argued that the correspondence of material culture from Sialk IV2 to the proto-Elamite period demonstrated the invasion of the former by the later culture in order to establish a trading station in the heartland of the Plateau. Nevertheless, given the political setting of the early 1900s, it is justified to assert that the path of French archaeological activities, too, was shaped by debates concerning the origins of Iranians, also due to pressures from the rival Americans and the Government's inclinations towards ethnic nationalism.

The prevalence of the migration theories and the political climate under which Sialk was excavated exposed the site to various technical and methodological weaknesses. These were challenges that threatened all Prehistoric sites that were excavated within this paradigm. Trigger (2007:290) indicated that these constraints were especially evident in the considerable elaboration of stratigraphy, seriation, and classification. In particular the construction of chronological charts was considered as the fundamental aspect of creating archaeological knowledge (Willey & Sabloff 1980:110). Trigger (2007:288) further contended that by focusing on migration and diffusion as the main attributes of culture change, archaeologists failed to recognise the internal factors that led to cultural evolution. Additionally, as Johnson (2010:19) argued, such approaches produced descriptions of cultural phases and their changes rather than explaining why such changes occurred. This descriptive emphasis facilitated archaeologists with the tools to interpret past cultures with accordance to prevailing political criteria and therefore susceptible to political trends that sought to legitimise their existence by promoting ethnic nationalism.

In Sialk, the attention to theories associated with the Culture-Historical approach was evident by Ghirshman's grave reliance on the stylistic character of pottery to establish a cultural sequence for Iran. In his critique of Ghirshman, Amiet (2002:182) argued that due to the archaic methods of documentations employed, only painted and intact pottery was recorded, while broken and plain pottery was discarded. This approach resulted in a selective method in collection of data and as Malek Shahmirzadi maintained, hindered a comprehensive understanding of different pottery styles for the site (*ibid.*). Nevertheless, the defining of cultures on the basis of a small number of "diagnostic artefacts" was a practice that even Childe employed in his initial research (Trigger 2007:244). These diagnoses were inferred from artefacts that were intact and representative of particular cultures.

As is evident, Sialk was not excavated independent of archaeological traditions that dominated the field in the 1930s and consequently suffered from the weaknesses that were embedded in these approaches and the political mood that facilitated their advance. To assign such constraints to the inadequacy of techniques applied by Ghirshman devoid of contextual consideration would only undermine his unprecedented achievements at Sialk. These achievements, too, were deeply affiliated with the technical developments that followed the application of Culture-Historical approach. Particularly, it was the tighter control over chronological as well as cultural variations (see Trigger 2007:290) that allowed Ghirshman to follow the pioneering work of archaeologists such as Schliemann (Turkey) and Petrie (Palestine & Egypt), in constructing a detailed historical sequence for the site of Sialk.

Ghirshman's excavation at Sialk is recognised as one of the early scientifically-oriented studies in Iranian archaeology (Dyson 1965; Azarnoush 2002:7) and the relative chronology that he established in the 1930s went unchallenged until the late 1970s as a criterion for analysing other archaeological sites in Iran. Some argue that Ghirshman's significant contribution to establishing a cultural chronology for Sialk was due to his elaborate methods which contrary to the contemporary traditions 'did not rely on Culture-Historical approach'. For instance, Fazeli (2010:5) contended that Ghirshman attributed cultural changes observed between Sialk I and Sialk II, to internal factors and the natural pattern in technological advance over time. Ghirshman argued:

*"No war or violent upheaval seems to have troubled this Prehistoric village, which continued unaffected by any outside influence." (Ghirshman 1978:32)*

Furthermore, Fazeli (2010:5) commented on Ghirshman's argument that Sialk II was abandoned not in response to external factors, such as migration of newcomers, but due to an environmental catastrophe, possibly an earthquake. In support of these contentions, it is here acknowledged that although Ghirshman's approach essentially corresponded with methods associated with the Culture-Historical paradigm, he occasionally implemented theoretical elements that were characteristic of Soviet archaeology. It has to be noted that Ghirshman's position as a Russian-born French scholar enabled him to acquaint himself with the work of contemporary Russian archaeologists, such as Tolstov, Trever, Smirnov, Grigoriev and Bernchtam, which was not readily available to other archaeologists working in the region (Olivier-Utrad 1997:138). In fact, some of Ghirshman's research orientation may have been influenced by his Russian colleagues who aimed to interpret archaeological data through Marxist approaches (Dolukhanov 1995:324; Trigger 2007:328). The evaluation of Ghirshman's political disposition is difficult given the complexity of his ethnic background as a Jewish Russian who supported the Counter-Revolutionaries in the 1917 Russian Revolution while detesting the Vichy sympathisers

when working in Afghanistan in 1941 (Martinez-Steve 2001). What is evident is that Ghirshman was a product of his time and, therefore, influenced by political affinities which he held in the turbulent period of the early twentieth-century. Therefore, it is conceivable that despite his initial resistance to Marxism, by the mid 1920s and in response to the anti-Semitic racial rhetoric of Germany, his political affiliations skewed towards the dominant Russian doctrine of the time.

It has to be taken into consideration that while Ghirshman was excavating at Sialk, Soviet archaeology itself went through emblematic transformation. These modifications aimed at replacing the internationalist doctrine of Marr, which emphasised the uniform ancestry of all humankind (Shnirelman 1995:124), with the “ethnogenetic” research orientation which had a lot in common with the Culture-Historical approach. The termination of the internationalist paradigm in 1934 was in response to political threats from Germany and Stalin’s attempt to boost patriotism by destroying “the myth of the German cultural expansion”, while investing in the superiority of Slavic culture and its independent formation in Russia (ibid.:132-33). In this respect, Ghirshman’s investment in seeking the origin of Aryans in southern Russia to counter the German theory of Aryan origins in northern Germany articulates his political orientation following the events of World War II. Therefore, while Western archaeologists had to adhere to Culture-Historical approach and Soviet archaeologists were confined by the various forms of Marxist Archaeology, Ghirshman’s position as a Russian born French scholar working in the Middle East provided him with the opportunity to integrate various elements of different schools of thought to his archaeological approach in Sialk. Therefore he occasionally drifted in his analysis of Sialk from Marr’s doctrine on the interconnectedness of races and the attribution of cultural change to internal factors such as socio-economic variables, to migration theories imbedded in the Culture-Historical approach and Soviet archaeology post 1934. This argument is supported by Ghirshman’s consideration of Iran as a highway open to the invasion of diverse cultural groups who contributed to the enrichment of the natives by infusing new blood and creating “hybrid cultures” (Ghirshman 1977:11; 1978:49-50). This claim drew a parallel with the internationalist approach of Marr’s theory which rested on interbreeding of different groups as its principle factor to attest the concept of “culture” (Shnirelman 1995:121). Ghirshman’s familiarity with Marr’s approach is further articulated in the concept of autochthonous development of cultures and socio-economic shift as the primary impetus for cultural change. Along similar lines Ghirshman (1951:28) focused on the indigenous process of agricultural development and the evolutionary process of technology as observed in the ceramic industry, metallurgy, animal domestication and trade. Ghirshman argued:

*“... by this period [Sialk II], the basic elements of human economy were already in existence: hunting and fishing, the care of garden and field, had been followed by stock-breeding and the*



*exploitation of mineral resources. Man had emerged from the state in which he was constrained to hunt for his daily food; he had become a producer ...."*  
(Ghirshman 1978:31)

This extract is interesting because it articulates Ghirshman's consideration of the concepts of 'economy' and his attention to the 'evolutionary progress' of human cultures from simple hunters to complex society. These were the themes that defined Soviet archaeology in the socio-political climate of the 1930s (Dolukhanov 1995:324).

In sum, while Ghirshman incorporated the social evolutionary elements of Soviet archaeology, in his analysis of Sialk, his approach remained Culture-Historical in nature in that he aimed to reconstruct what Trigger referred to as the "visual impression of life in the past" (Trigger 2007:301). In addition, although Ghirshman ascribed certain cultural developments to internal factors, the more radical changes were explained in terms of migration of invading cultures. Furthermore, through his analysis, he remained committed to the discourse of identifying cultures with ethnic groups and races. Despite the above analysis, Ghirshman's studies at Sialk produced a comprehensive historiography of Iranian Prehistory and widely contributed to the analysis of other Prehistoric sites.

In this section the essential features of Culture-Historical approach and its application to the site of Sialk was discussed in detail. The aim of highlighting these features has been to identify the influence of such approaches on the study of Sialk and further to lay the ground for demonstrating the appeal of this approach to the ethnic model of nationalism adopted by Reza Shah's Government which will be discussed in the following section.

#### **4.4.1.1.2 Ethnic Nationalism & the Myth of Aryans**

*"European influence and in particular the development of the 'Aryan myth' determined that modern Iranian nationalism as an ideology of political action sought to emulate and imitate the logic of the west."*  
(Ansari 2005:323)

It has been argued that the defining feature of Culture-Historical approach was the theme of migration as the main contributing factor to cultural change. The emergence of these theories instigated a wave of research to locate the cradle of Indo-European civilisations in a region that included Iran. For Reza Shah's Government, whose political mandate centered on "reawakening an ancient civilisation" (Abrahamian 2008:34), the revival of Iran as a cultural and political power, as well as the unification of Iran as a nation

was firmly tied to the ethnic assertion of Iranians as Aryans. Given that the ethnic model of nationalism was carefully tailored by the Government to endorse the ‘superiority’ of Iranian race and its ‘continuous’ habitation in the region, the assumptions of migration and diffusion theories were seen as a suitable approach to be adopted into Iranian archaeology. In doing so, these theories provided archaeological evidence and validated the political mandates mentioned above. Such proceedings were deemed necessary in order to reclaim the nation’s competence as an imperative political power, following the setbacks it suffered during the Qajar period. Therefore, the suggestions of archaeologists who used the approach to trace the origins of the highly developed European nations to Iran and Iranian race were embraced by Reza Shah’s Administration. These attempts were clouded by the rhetoric of archaeologists who argued for the racial superiority of the Aryans and even Childe declared that the “Aryans must have been gifted with exceptional mental endowment” (Childe 1926:4). The Pahlavi Administration capitalised on such notions through national projects executed by the *SNH* (see Chapter 2) that exhumed the remains of selected Iranian icons and measured their skulls to “prove” that their physical characters corresponded with the criterion of “true Aryans” (Abrahamian 2008:87).

Apart from articulating the ‘superiority’ of Iranian race, the Aryan myth was also adopted to emphasise the ‘continual’ habitation of Iranian tribes on the Iranian Plateau. This latter concept was essential in the international discourse of Reza Shah’s Government and the aim to re-assert Iran as a political power entitled to national sovereignty. It is contended that although the Pahlavi Administration was invested in the discourse of Aryanism, their policies reflected discrepancies in adopting related dominant theories. Therefore, although the Government appreciated the archaeological research at Sialk and Hissar and their suggestions that traced the origins of Iranians to Aryans who emigrated from southern Russia, the socio-political links with the Germans and their shared Aryan heritage were embraced more vigorously. Perhaps this was reflective of Iran’s attempt to maintain its sovereignty by resisting the implications of the Soviet archaeology, which promoted Slavic nationalism and legitimised the expansionist ideals of the Soviet Union (Shnirelman 1995:134). Meanwhile, the Pahlavi authorities scorned the German model that traced the origins of Aryans to Germany and Scandinavia and instead accredit Iranians as the forbearers of the Aryan race. Such approaches reflected the ideological policies of Reza Shah’s Government and their political sympathies towards Germany. While it is not the aim of this section to investigate the alliance between Iran and Nazi Germany (see Ghani 2000 & Milani 2008), it is necessary to articulate that it was in the Nazi ideology that the Pahlavi Regime found the opportunity to assert Iran as an international power and claim national unity and racial ‘superiority’. Despite such discrepancies, the overarching intention of migration theories in tracing the origins of Aryans to Iran was highly valued. Although no record of the Government’s eminent attention to the Prehistoric excavations, such as that of Sialk exists,

the implication of such investigations were highly prized by the Pahlavi Administration and Prehistoric archaeology gained recognition by becoming acknowledged as a division of the discipline of archaeology.

From the above argument it may be contended that the introduction of migration theories and their application to Prehistoric archaeology by foreign scholars in the 1930s greatly supported the political ambitions of Reza Shah's Government, both domestically and internationally. The ethno-centric orientation of these theoretical frameworks not only helped consolidate the establishment of ethnic 'continuity' in Iranian history, but supported the Government's narrative that presented the ethnic origins of Iranians as a 'superior' race. Such affiliations were rewarding to Iran's political mandate while the foreign archaeological delegations too benefited from granted courtesies reserve for projects they submitted to support such favourable ideologies. Therefore, as previously noted, the second impetus that compelled the French to excavate at Sialk was dominated by the socio-political climate of Iran and the French attempt to consolidate their threatened authority in Iranian archaeology by becoming more engaged with the 'scientific' study of Iranian prehistory. To the Iranian authorities, the Sialk project would represent the first scientific endeavor of the French that did not target the recovery of treasures for museums abroad, as was done at Susa and Tepe Giyan, or intend to confirm the dominance of Mesopotamian civilisations on Iran and instead, focused on the question of Indo-Iranians and their likely origins. Although Sialk was not explicitly distinguished by the Pahlavi officials to booster the Aryan propaganda, the involvement of French archaeologists at this Prehistoric site, along with the Americans who excavated in Tureng Tepe, Tepe Hissar and later the site of Rey (1934-36) were highly reassuring for the ethnic nationalist discourse that dominated the reign of Reza Shah. In the following, the birth of Prehistoric archaeology in Iran is traced to the suitable incorporation of migration theories to support the discourse of ethnic nationalism adopted by Reza Shah's Government.

#### ***4.4.1.2. Birth of Iranian Prehistoric Archaeology***

From the above discussion, it may be concluded that contrary to what Trigger (2009:213-16) described as the European experience, the establishment of Prehistoric studies in Iran was not a direct reflection of the Pahlavis' sponsorship and exploitation of Prehistoric archaeology to implement its brand of nationalism and form a modern nation-state. Rather, while Reza Shah's Administration fully invested in the sponsorship of pre-Islamic archaeology, the introduction of migration theories by foreign archaeological teams, and the support it provided for the ethnic nationalism of the Iranian Government, assisted the establishment and consolidation of Prehistoric studies in a country that considered document based pre-Islamic period as its 'golden age'.

In this respect, the excavations at Sialk were essential. As previously argued, studies at Sialk marked a true break from the dominant archaeological traditions of this period by applying a theoretical framework that relied on constructing stratigraphies and tracing patterns of migration. Given this ‘scientific’ approach, it is contended that Sialk must be credited as one of the instrumental Prehistoric sites that contributed to the birth of Prehistoric archaeology in the 1930s. It was through these efforts that Prehistoric archaeologists were enabled to refocus the attention of Iranian officials from the grand palatial structure to hilly residues of Prehistoric settlements. Although such efforts encouraged the study of Prehistoric archaeology, they left a lasting imprint on the orientation of Prehistoric research in Iran, which to this day deviates towards various implications of ‘Culture-Historical approach’. In fact, both Niknami (2000:42-44) and Fazeli (2010:3) attributed the contemporary weaknesses of Iranian Prehistoric archaeology and the “dominance of Culture-Historical approach” as a residual legacy of the French archaeological mandate in Iran in the 1930s.

#### **4.4.2. Mohammad Reza Shah’s Government & Dynastic Nationalism: Prehistoric Archaeology**

It has thus been argued that during the early Pahlavi period, the Culture-Historical approach was adopted by foreign archaeologists, not only due to the prevalence of this doctrine in the field of archaeology in the early 1900s, but also given its implications to support the political mandate of ethnic nationalism endorsed by the Iranian Government. Given the lack of any further archaeological activities at Sialk during the second Pahlavi period, the content of this section is reduced to denoting the formative reasons that propelled the direction of Iranian Prehistoric archaeology away from studies at Sialk in this period. In doing so, the prevalent conceptual frameworks and models of interpretations that dominated the field of Iranian Prehistoric archaeology during this period are explored. This is followed by articulating the discernible impacts of Mohammad Reza Shah’s advocacy of dynastic nationalism in forming the path of archaeological activities and its ramifications for further studies at Sialk. Finally, the implications of ‘New Archaeology’ and its contributions to the advance of Prehistoric archaeology in Iran are investigated.

In the year 1941, Reza Shah was forced to abdicate and was replaced by his son Mohammad Reza Shah. These events coincided with World War II and the withdrawal of many foreign archaeological teams from Iran. Although in the analysis of other archaeological period it is argued that the discontinuation of foreign archaeological activities in Iran provided Iranians with the opportunity to replace positions previously reserved for foreign experts, with regards to Prehistoric archaeology no activities were undertaken by Iranians before 1947 (see Hakemi & Rad 1950). It is important to note that the focus of

these activities remained the identification of the “Indo-Aryan populations”, which were considered to be the ancestors of the Medes, Persians and modern Iranians (<http://www.penn.museum/sites/hasanlu/projecthistory.html>). When Ghirshman returned to Iran in 1946 as the new Director of the French Mission, he refocused his attention from the Prehistoric period in Sialk to the Elamite and Achaemenid periods; particularly at Chogha Zanbil and Susa (Gasche 1997:168-169). Meanwhile, the first single conceptual work aimed to establish an overall pattern in Iranian archaeology based on the data collected in the 1930s was undertaken by Donald McCown (1942a; 1942b) in his *Comperative Stratigraphy of Early Iran*. McCown divided the Prehistoric sequence of Iran into two main cultural areas based on the recovered ceramics (ibid.). The treatment of Iranian Prehistoric sequences on the base of a series of relative ceramic chronologies continued until the 1960s when a new generation of archaeologists with a new set of conceptual frameworks once again diverted the course of archaeological investigations to Iran. This period marked the introduction of conceptual approaches closely associated with ‘New Archaeology’ by foreign archaeological teams and the attempts to dissociate Iranian Prehistoric archaeology from the restrains of political mandates.

#### ***4.4.2.1. Foreign Expeditions & the Prevailing Theoretical Frameworks***

*“Every year produces a fresh crop of archaeological excavations, a new harvest of Prehistoric artifacts ... However, the nebulous doubt arises in our minds that a modern empirical discipline ought to be able to aim at more rewarding results than the maintenance of a relative status quo and a steady flow of counterfeit history books.”* (Clarke 1972:3)

As with many scientific disciplines in the post-World War II era, the intellectual current of theoretical archaeology was influenced by the prevalence of Positivism and a considerable reliance on Empiricism. In the 1960s, these contentions generated the new paradigm of New Archaeology, later developing into Processual archaeology, with attempts to transform archaeology into a scientific discipline free of political connotations. As Trigger (2009:314) argued, by the 1960s, the inadequacies of Culture-Historical approach became apparent in light of changing political trends that sought to reduce nationalist extremism. The strong de-emphasising movement that targeted the relationship between archaeology and nationalism was instigated by the catastrophes of World War II and the repugnance felt towards the role of archaeology in the promotion of Nazism and Fascism (Kristiansen & Rowlands 1998:32). These events led up to fundamental changes in the infrastructure of archaeological theoretical frameworks and the spread of New Archaeology with its embroidered message of making archaeology more “scientific” and

more “anthropological”. The father of this new paradigm, Lewis Binford (2008:14) polemically opposed the Culture-Historical approach and advocated a deductive testing method that relied on culture as a system.

Within this emerging context, the distinguished legacy of Childe facilitated a second wave of interest towards the Middle East. Childe’s (1952:25-7) innovative model, traced the Neolithic Revolution and the origins of agriculture to the Fertile Crescent in the Middle East. Given that this model- Oasis Theory- lacked support from archaeological evidence, the American archaeologist, Robert Braidwood, began to test Childe’s hypothesis in the 1930s on behalf of the Oriental Institute of Chicago (Young 1986). After World War II, Braidwood returned to the Middle East (1948-58) to carry on what was known as the *Jarmo Project* in the Iraqi Kurdistan. This was the first project that applied an interdisciplinary research, laying the foundation for all subsequent paleoethnobotanical investigations on agricultural origins in the Near East (Warnock 2003:31). Despite considerable progress, in 1958 work was terminated following the nationalist Revolution in Iraq and the Project and its personnel were moved across the border to Iran (Watson 2006:11). It is contended that as a result of this adjustment, Iranian Prehistoric archaeology entered a new explosive phase in the 1960s, this time led by American scholars and their imported theoretical frameworks. Braidwood’s project, which became known as the *Iranian Prehistoric Project*, triggered the survey and chronological classification of 250 Prehistoric sites in the valley of Shahabad, Mahidasht, and Kermanshah (Braidwood et al.1961:2008). Furthermore, the Project was co-directed by E.O. Negahban who involved other young Iranian archaeologists in the process. This was the first encounter of Iranians with the theoretical approaches associated with ‘New Archaeology’ and the objective to locate the origins of food production and urbanism. The *Iranian Prehistoric Project* also triggered Prehistoric studies in other adjacent regions, namely the Deh Luran Plain (see Hole et al. 1969) with the intention to investigating early agricultural societies in terms of human ecology (Watson 2006:12; Warnock 2003:31). While the origins of agriculture conjured up various theories; namely the “hilly flanks” hypothesis by Braidwood and Howe (1960:131), and “marginal zone” hypothesis by Flannery (1969; 1973), a second complementary theoretical framework emerged to discover the origins of States which appeared due to superior food production techniques (Wright & Johnson 1975). According to these investigations, certain fertile environmental units were detected on the Susiana Plain, Deh Luran Plain, Mehran Plain and a number of smaller plains at Ram Hormuz, Behbahan and Zureh for the study of successive agriculture and early State developments (ibid.:269).

The concentration of these investigations on the Prehistoric sites that were geographically located in south-western (later north-western) Iran were a direct result of the theoretical frameworks and the methodological approaches that dominated the field of Prehistoric archaeology during the 1960s and

1970s. The common denominator that brought all these new archaeological activities together was the concentration on Paleolithic and Neolithic periods. These themes disseminated from pioneers such as Braidwood, to the next generation of foreign archaeologists, such as Robert M. Adams who worked in Susiana Plain (Adams 1962; Adams & Hansen 1968), Frank Hole and Kent Flannery who excavated a number of sites in the Deh Lurah Plain (Hole et al. 1969), and Pierre Delougaz who launched the Chogha Mish Project (Delougaz et al. 1996). In the isolated cases of archaeological excavations in south-eastern Iran, in Bampur, Tal-e Iblis, Shahr-e Sukhteh and Tepe Yahya these same theoretical frameworks dominated the aim of research (see Cardi 1967, 1968; Caldwell 1967; Tosi 1968; Lamberg-Karlovsky 1970).

From the above analysis, it is concluded that due to the nature of research questions that dominated theoretical archaeology during this period, attention was diverted from Iron Age sites, such as Sialk, that were situated in the Central Plateau. This diversion hindered a comprehensive understanding of settlement patterns, agricultural and irrigation techniques, state formation and the nature of social hierarchy in the region. In fact, the steady influx of concentration on western Iran in the 1960s and 1970s led to the eventual abandonment of Prehistoric sites in other regions to the extent that their existence was threatened. In his publication, *The Heritage of Kashan and Natanz*, Naraghi (2004:19) indicated that the site of Sialk was withdrawn from the list of *Inventory of National Monuments* on 22 February 1949 and re-registered only on 25 September 1960. Furthermore, Negahban (2006:101-3) provided an account in which the elimination of Sialk from the Inventory was brought to his attention by Mr. Allahyar Saleh who represented the Province of Kashan at the Parliament in the early 1960s. In this report, Negahban explained the cause of this removal as the 'greed of locals' who wished to profit from the added value of land in the region, given the city of Kashan was expanding and taking over the peripheries of the site of Sialk (ibid.). Negahban further described the process of re-registering Sialk as site number 421 on the Inventory (ibid.). Although the withdrawal of Sialk may largely be attributed to the static conditions of Prehistoric archaeology in the 1940s and 1950s, as well as the lack of a proper body of Iranian trained personnel to manage archaeological institutes, it is clear that the shift of attention to the excavation of new Prehistoric sites in western Iran played a part in increasing insensitivities towards sites in other geographical locations.

An additional result of the direction of research during this period was to further hinder the development of Iranian Prehistoric archaeology independent of Mesopotamian influences. Considering the long history of Prehistoric archaeology in Turkey, Syria and Iraq, the investigations in Iran began with the primary objective of comparative studies. While the majority of foreign archaeological excavations were concerned with western Iran, in the late 1960s and early 1970s GOA began to engage in various projects

that included a diverse range of geographical regions in the north (Negahban 1962; 1963; 1964a; 1964b; 1965), centre (Malek Shahmirzadi 1977; Majidzadeh 1978; Negahban 1979), east (Negahban 2000), and south-west (Negahban 1956; 1968; 1969; 1977) of Iran. Of particular interest was the nine seasons of archaeological investigation (1970-78) in the Qazvin Plain that included excavations at Zaghe, Saqzabad, and Qabrestan (Dyson 1991). These investigations gradually initiated debates about the validity of the chronology established by Ghirshman (based on Sialk) for the Iranian Central Plateau. In this regard, Majidzadeh's (1978; 1981) proposal of an invading Plum-Ware culture that yielded to the abandonment of Sialk II (North Mound) and some of the neighbouring sites was of significance.

It must be noted, that although the new conceptual frameworks and models of interpretation introduced by foreign archaeologists in this period were diverse, in Iran they were all joined under the broad umbrella of 'New Archaeology'. The reliance of such approaches on conducting wide spread surveys to explain human patterns of adaptation to environmental and social circumstances, resulted in an unprecedented rise in the number of Prehistoric investigations due to the discontinuation of single site studies and their replacement by the analysis of whole regions. Therefore, it may be concluded that the introduction of these new conceptual frameworks presented a significant milestone in the development of Prehistoric studies in Iran, and therefore, to-date, Iranian archaeologists associate 'New Archaeology' with progressive techniques.

In the following section, the socio-political context that provided for the introduction of 'New Archaeology' during the late Pahlavi period is investigated. It is important to consider that despite the pervasive employment of new theoretical frameworks by foreign scholars, the debates dominating the circle of Iranian archaeology were still very much concerned with the notions of 'invasion', 'culture', and 'chronology'. These debates were halted with the Revolution, before the different concepts embedded in the introduced methods got a chance to diffuse into the traditional bastion of Iranian archaeology.

#### ***4.4.2.2. Dynastic Nationalism & 'New Archaeology'***

In Chapter 3, it was argued that the nationalism corresponding to the reign of the Pahlavis was founded on ethnic and dynastic rhetoric. However, although during the reign of Reza Shah the preferred brand of nationalism focused more vigorously on the ethnic elements of Iranian nationalism, following Mohammad Reza Shah's ascent to power the narrative altered to center on the person of the Shah and therefore became the ultimate expression of what Ansari termed as "dynastic nationalism" (Ansari 2005:326). In this section, the impact of dynastic nationalism and the socio-political dynamics of the



1960s in providing for the introduction of ‘New Archaeology’ are discussed in terms of two overarching principles. This will be done by firstly contending that due to the maturation of Iranian international relations, there was less political emphasis on ‘Aryan superiority’, while the supremacy of the monarch was stressed. This argument is followed by articulating an additional element of the nationalism adopted by Mohammad Reza Shah’s Government that aimed to portray the Shah as both a revolutionary and progressive monarch (ibid.), who welcomed innovation. Considering the radical position of ‘New Archaeology’ as an avant-garde concept in the context of 1960s theoretical archaeology, it is argued that its notions were readily accepted in Iran.

In the 1960s and 1970s, following the Arab-Israeli War (1967) and the departure of Britain from Bahrain (1971), Mohammad Reza Shah’s Government became increasingly eager to play the role of the regional power and an ally to the West (Daniel 2001:159). This involved a dynamic change in Iran’s outlook towards the State of Israel as a new ally (Parsi 2007:22). According to Stein (2010:43), Iran was the leading oil supplier to Israel during this period. It is argued that the foreign policies of this period obliged Iran to recognise certain international protocols to solidify her political position in the global context. Therefore, the ethnic elements of Iranian nationalism that emphasised the ‘superiority’ of Iranians as a race were confined to counter the fervour of pan-Arabism that was launched by Gamal Abdel Nasser (r. 1956-1970 AD), as opposed to more general Nazi rhetoric of anti-Semitism (Parsi 2007:22). This is not to argue that elements of ethnic nationalism failed to disseminate into the narrative of dynastic nationalism. In fact, the adoption of the title *Shahanshah Aryamehr* (King of Kings, Light of the Aryans) illustrates the lingering persistent reliance of the monarchy on the myth of Aryans. Similarly, as Abrahamian (2008:115) argued, there were nationalist groups, mostly composed of university intellectuals, who continued to advocate the glories of pre-Islamic Iran and the Aryan origins. Nevertheless, these expressions were a political propaganda and while they occasionally targeted historic sites, such as Persepolis and Pasargadae, their association with Prehistoric archaeology remained loose. Therefore, it is contended that a large portion of financial resources during this period were allocated to appropriating pre-Islamic sites as the symbol of Iranian civilisation, while there was less pressure on Prehistorians to restrain their research towards accommodating the prevailing political order. This provided for skewing the direction of Prehistoric investigations towards the theoretical preferences of foreign archaeologists who worked in Iran. To that end, the platform for the introduction of ‘New Archaeology’ was provided. As discussed previously, it was due to the dedication of this generation of archaeologists and their pervasive objectives to seek archeological evidence for the ‘Neolithic Revolution’ and the world’s earliest villages that more central Prehistoric sites such as Sialk were largely ignored.

An additional incentive for the Iranian's favourable attitude towards 'New Archaeology' was the socio-political climate that prevailed in Iran. As already indicated, the core of Mohammad Reza Shah's legitimacy rested on the notion of dynastic nationalism and the symbiotic, and mystic relationship, between the monarch and the nation (Ansari 2005:326). However, in the early 1960s in response to various social unrests, the Shah's Government embarked on a quest to modernise Iran through an extensive reform movement that targeted the economy, education, land ownership, and the military (Abrahamian 2008:126). These reforms, referred to as the 'White Revolution', aimed to bring Iran into the twentieth century and in the process portray the Shah as a progressive and revolutionary monarch (Ansari 2003:152). The infatuation of Iranian society in the 1960s to receive all forms of technical advances and scientific innovations became the impetus for the incorporation of 'New Archaeology' into Iranian Prehistoric archaeology promptly following its introduction. In fact, the dominant socio-political climate of Iran during this period was parallel to that which provided for the reception of New Archaeology in the United States. As Lamberg-Karlovsky (1995:23) argued, it was in the two decades of American economic and political self-confidence following World War II that New Archaeology gained support among American archaeologists. Similarly, in Iran, the increasing oil revenues lifted Iranian economy in the 1960s and 1970s providing a certain degree of self-confidence and security (Milani 2008:25). Subsequently, the wide reception of 'New Archaeology' is attributed to the progressive mind-set of the archaeological community which like other strands of Iranian society strived to bring their discipline in par with 'modern' standards. This resulted in the collective preference to overlook Prehistoric sites in the Central Iranian Plateau in favour of those in the western region.

The economic prosperities of this period had an additional consequence for reinforcing archaeological project in western Iran as construction projects began to expand into the region. As Negahban (1991:3) argued, *GOA* began promoting surveys and excavations in the Khuzistan region following the proposal to build a great dam- *Dez Dam*- to improve the development of agriculture. Given that these projects threatened to demolish many archaeological sites, salvage work was required in order to recover the content of the sites that were to be destroyed forever (ibid.). No doubt, this provided for an additional impetus to concentrate archaeological activities in the region. Despite the fact that the introduction of new theoretical frameworks had an adverse impact on the study of more centrally located sites such as Sialk, it is here contended that the impact of such approaches and their contributions to strengthening the foundation of Prehistoric archaeology in Iran should not be overlooked. It is argued that these advances were provided considering the irrelevance of Prehistoric archaeology to the brand of nationalism adopted by Mohammad Reza Shah's Government which allowed for the development of Prehistoric archaeology independent of nationalistic rhetoric during this period. These themes are further evaluated in Chapter 7.

It is important to note that although by the 1970s Prehistoric archaeology in Iran was in par with cutting edge theoretical frameworks and methodologies introduced by the Americans, the late arrival of archaeology as a scientific enterprise had unprecedented impact on archaeological sites that were already excavated and published. Considering the wealth of archaeological remains in Iran, the scientific expeditions of this period preferred to target sites hitherto unexplored in order to offer innovative theories rather than re-analysing already explored sites such as Sialk. By the late 1970s, as the explosive phase of archaeological activities in Iran was gradually receding, archaeologists became engaged in re-assessing some of these regions. These efforts were aimed at constructing a comprehensible chronology for Iran given the tremendous amount of data that was collected in the 1960s and 1970s. Considering the involvement of different institutes and the application of different theoretical and methodological designs, in 1979 a Conference was held in Susa to move beyond these discrepancies and construct a general chronology for Iran. However, what could have become a phase of theoretical debate in the history of Iranian Prehistoric archaeology was abruptly terminated following the Revolution in 1979.

The consideration of the above noted is necessary as it highlights the pretext for the negligence of sites such as Sialk which were placed outside of the preferred area of research by the new wave of archaeologists. In the following section, the socio-political drawbacks that prevented the advance of Prehistoric archaeology into the phase of theoretical debate are investigated.

#### **4.5. Post-Revolution & Nationalism: The Case Study of Sialk**

Having demonstrated that the lack of State emphasis on Prehistoric archaeology during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah led to the introduction of scientific approaches into the discipline of Iranian Prehistoric archaeology, this section turns to the analysis of the impacts of the Islamic State on the discipline. However, the investigation of this topic during this period is more complicated considering the marginalisation of concepts such as ‘nationhood’ and ‘nationalism’ as Western propaganda (Menashri 2001:229), and the degradation of archaeology as a discipline. Although the theoretical frameworks offered by archaeologists in the 1960s and 1970s were partially successful in disentangling Iranian Prehistoric archaeology from nationalist connotations, the doctrine of post-Revolutionary ideology disapproved of the infrastructure of archaeology and considered the entire discipline as a pseudoscience to legitimate the rule of the Pahlavis. Therefore, the activities that concerned Prehistoric archeology were terminated alongside the eradication of archaeology as a discipline.

In this section, the analysis of the development of Iranian Prehistoric archaeology, in the context of the site of Sialk, continues by articulating the fluid nature of Iranian national identity after the Islamic Revolution. This section will begin by focusing on the populist appeal of Khomeini's Government and the denunciation of archaeology as an imperial science to legitimise the Pahlavi dynasty. This will continue by evaluating the impacts of the Iran-Iraq War and the subsequent reconstruction phase on the direction of Prehistoric studies. This is followed by articulating the reconciliation with the Iranian past and improvements in foreign relations which allowed for the resumption of archaeological collaborations with archaeologists abroad during the Presidency of Khatami. The section concludes by evaluating the attitude towards Prehistoric archaeology during the Presidency of Ahmadinejad and the impacts of his Administration's populist approach in driving Prehistoric archaeology into another phase of isolation.

#### **4.5.1. Populism & Return to Native Roots: Prehistoric Archaeology**

As Abrahamian argued, the Islamic Revolution was a "populist" uprising with emphasis on the mobilisation of oppressed masses, eradication of imperialism, as well as returning to the "native roots" which Khomeini claimed to be Islamic in nature (Abrahamian 1993:38). Given the populist nature of this Revolution, the source of legitimacy was no longer pursued in the ruins of the past but in the person of Khomeini and his doctrine of unity among Muslims through condemning imperialism and dictatorship (Farsoun & Mashayekhi 1992:56). Ansari contended that at the core of this movement was the endorsement of "Shi'a nationalism" (Ansari 2003:222). In the following Chapters, the impact of Shi'a nationalism on historic and Islamic archaeology will be discussed in detail. This section attempts to articulate that although Prehistoric archaeology was neutral in the debates that strived to Iranise or Islamise the Iranian identity, the association of the institution of archaeology with the dynastic nationalism of the Pahlavis provoked a general antagonism towards the discipline, its practitioners and their research activities.

It has to be noted that as one of the pillars of this populist approach, the Islamic Revolution professed a return to the 'golden age' of Islam by 'purifying' the country from "foreign imperialism" and "corrupt western concepts" (Algar 1981:287). Considering the discipline of archaeology was both Western as it was imported by Western scholars, and corrupt as it was employed to legitimise the Pahlavi dynasty, it is conceivable that it fell particularly out of favour with the post-Revolutionary officials. In addition, in conformity with the Government's 'populism' and 'Shi'a nationalism', great emphasis was placed on the poor workers or the "oppressed masses" (Abrahamian 1993:47). This identification with the 'oppressed' significantly hampered the allocation of national budget to pseudosciences, such as archaeology and

history, which were no longer necessary for the legitimisation of the State and condemn as alien to the nature of Iranian Islamic identity.

In Chapter 2, it was demonstrated that Khomeini's Government continued its crusade against foreign influences and Western concepts with the formation of *CRC* and the re-organisation of the education institutes. The closure of universities, among them the Department of Archaeology at Tehran University, and the 'cleansing' of universities of all non-Islamic conformities (Behdad 1995:193), was a turning point in the history of Iranian archaeology that also cast its influence on Prehistoric research. Although the Department was re-opened in 1982, the discipline was degraded from its former status as it fell under the category of 'fake knowledge' and suffered financial shortages to engage in any further research. In addition, a review of the list of Iranian Prehistorians who were employed at the Department of Archaeology at Tehran University reveals that they were mostly graduates from higher education institutes in the United States. Considering the Government's denouncement of the Americans expansionist ambitions in Iran and following the hostage crisis at the American Embassy (1980-81) (Harmon 2005:62), foreign relations with the United States were critically severed. This enhanced antagonism towards American educated intellectuals and their dismissal from university positions. Among them, E.O. Negahban, a graduate of University of Chicago, who was the driving force behind the 1970s Prehistoric projects left Iran in 1980 and Majidzadeh, another graduate of University of Chicago, retired in 1989. Others simply confined their research activities to publishing the results of previous excavations or authoring books, away from educational institutes. The 'purging' of Prehistorians from the Archaeology Department was a serious setback to the further development of this discipline in Iran. While Prehistorians in other parts of the worlds were engaging in heated debates about the applications of New Archaeology, and academics such as Ian Hodder, were introducing Post-Processual approaches, Iranian archaeology entered into a phase of isolation. These inadequate circumstances were further inflated by the restricted foreign policies that banned foreign archaeologists from working in Iran and forbade intellectual interaction between Iranian archaeologist and their foreign colleagues (Abdi 2001:70).

From the above arguments, it may be concluded that the period following the Islamic Revolution can be associated with efforts to degrade the discipline of archaeology and to distance it from all its scientific accomplishments due to its association with the ethnic-dynastic nationalism of the Pahlavis. In the following section, the resurrection of Prehistoric archaeology in response to the State's appeal to modify the nature of Iranian identity is further investigated.

#### 4.5.2. War Years & the Reconstruction Period: Prehistoric Archaeology

The section now turns to the Iran-Iraq War and its influence on modifying the nature of Iranian identity and State promoted nationalism. This transformation is essential in the context of arguments that articulate the restoration of archaeology as a discipline during this period. As Hunter (1992:93) argued, the War provided the necessary foundation for the return of Iranian nationalistic rhetoric. This change had an overarching impact on the resurrection of Iranian archaeology as it was no longer considered a threat to the 'authentic' Islamic identity which composed one of the main pillars of the Islamic Revolution. In this section, the revival of Iranian archaeology is also traced to the relaxed foreign policies and improved economic conditions that followed the 'reconstruction phase' embarked on by President Rafsanjani's Administration.

It is reported that in the Iran-Iraq War at least 300,000 Iranians were killed (Sciolino 2000:179). The War was mainly fought on the Iranian territory, especially in the south-western regions, where an abundance of Prehistoric sites prevailed. The indifferent attitude of the Iranian authorities towards archaeology further added to damage these sites. In terms of archaeological sites, the most severe disturbances were made to Haft Teppe and Chogha Zanbil which were caught in the middle of the conflict. Due to their elevated height in comparison with the surrounding plains, these mounds were used by Iranian forces as air defence posts. The instillation of military artillery on these mounds further accounted for their destruction by the Iraqi rockets. Apart from directly destroying archaeological sites, the War also influenced the fate of Iranian archaeology by crippling the Iranian economy. After the War, in 1989, Hashemi Rafsanjani declared that the total amount of War damages inflicted on Iran was as high as 900 Billion U.S. *Dollars* (Ganji 2002:241). Under these circumstances, engaging in archaeological activities was reduced to minimum. In addition, the exigencies to run a war economy led to the transformation of countryside districts into agricultural land as the slogans of self-sufficiency, was emphasised by the State (Ehteshami 1995:207). Seyf Allah Aminian (2009:10), the Director of *ICHO* in Kashan, reported that the site of Sialk was threatened by such encroachment during the War years. He argued that while the weakened cultural organisations struggled to raise awareness regarding the significance of this Prehistoric site, the emphasis on financial independency supplied the justification to dismantle the protective fences and transformed the site into agricultural land (ibid.:9).

As is evident, this period was defined by an amalgam of post-war, financial restriction, and antagonism towards the discipline of archaeology. It was due to these conditions that any prospects of progress in Iranian Prehistoric archaeology dissipated. Despite these setbacks, this period is significant in the history of Iranian Prehistoric archaeology as it provided the foundation for the Islamic State's reconciliation with

Iran's pre-Islamic past. The modified outlook towards Iranian past lifted official hostilities towards the discipline of archaeology and provided for its return following the War.

After the War, the economic situation in Iran began to improve as a result of increased oil revenue beginning in 1990 (IBP 2001:36). In addition, President Rafsanjani's Administration embarked on a project of 'reconstruction' in 1992 that targeted various economic and educational reforms (Hiro 2001:195-224). The 'reconstruction' phase had two valuable outcomes for Iranian archaeology. Firstly, in the economic sector, the Government's approach in moderating domestic and foreign policies to attract investors and technocrats were essential in driving Iran out of isolation and restoring Iran's economy (Vakil 2011:101-102). This meant more governmental budgets were available to be allocated to *ICHO*, which began its official duties in 1988 (see Chapter 2). Secondly, the improved international relations also provided for the return of a number of Iranian Prehistorians to Iran and the resumption of collaborative projects between Iranian and foreign archaeological institutes. One of these early collaborations was between *ICHO* and the Oriental Institute of Chicago, when in 1994, Abbas Alizadeh returned to Chogha Bonut for a re-evaluation of Kantor's report of the site in the 1970s (Alizadeh 2003).

The reconstruction phase and the development projects that followed posed new challenges for the management and preservation of archaeological sites. With respect to the site of Sialk, the intense housing projects and agricultural developments in the 1990s extended the peripheries of the residential areas of Kashan into the designated heritage district of Sialk. The encroachment of the vicinity of Sialk was reported in 2000 by Malek Shahmirzadi (2002:27) who documented the advance of the residential constructions into the eastern and south-eastern quarters of the South Mound. The locals were further advancing into the archaeological district as the Kashan Municipality supplied farmers with agricultural lands for the cultivation of wheat and cotton (Malek Shahmirzadi 2006b:33). Malek Shahmirzadi (2002:27; 2006b:18) further reported that the construction of *Amir Al Mo'menin* Boulevard, on Cemetery A of the South Mound and the transformation of Cemetery B to the west of the South Mound into a pomegranate grove were seriously threatening the site of Sialk. In addition, during the day the desolated areas on and around the two Mounds were used for motorbike rallies and at night became a refuge for offenders to carry out illicit drug-related activities (Malek Shahmirzadi 2006b:33). To combat these issues, the Kashan Municipality had flattened with bulldozers an area on the eastern and south-eastern side of the South Mound to create a football field (ibid.). These mistreatments continued as the locals began constructing villas between the two Prehistoric Mounds (ibid.). The maltreatment of Sialk provides a clear manifestation of the prevalent attitudes towards the cultural merit of Prehistoric sites, despite several initiations by the State to improve conditions.

The period of ‘reconstruction’ can be identified as a phase that generated the incentives for the revival in the infrastructure of Iranian cultural heritage and the discipline of archaeology after the Revolution, albeit with conformities to the legacies of Islam. Following these policies, the initial stage of restoring academic relations with foreign archaeological institutes was the dispatch of Iranian students to be trained abroad. It is significant to note that the majority of these graduate students, enrolled in Prehistoric programmes. The preference to acquire higher degrees in Prehistoric archaeology may be attributed to two incentives. Firstly, Prehistoric archaeology was considered to be independent of political connotations. This facilitated the redeeming of the discipline of archaeology from its affiliations with the ethnic-dynastic nationalism of the Pahlavis and avoiding close associations with periods patronised by them. Secondly, given the legacy of New Archaeology in Iran and its association with ‘science’, it is conceivable that the threatened stature of archaeology as ‘fake knowledge’ was consolidated through the resurrection of the heavily science-based discipline of Prehistory.

#### **4.5.3. Khatami’s Administration & Reconciliations with the Past: Prehistoric Archaeology**

It may be argued that Iranian archaeology was fully resurrected in the late 1990s following the social and political reforms that were introduced by President Khatami’s Administration. The doctrine of this Administration was constituted on the principles of curing the sick Iranian economy and improving foreign relations through the proposal of ‘Dialogue among Civilisations’ (Abrahamian 2008:186). Despite advocating a policy of international interactions to lead Iran out of isolation, Khatami continued to emphasise the central slogan of the Islamic Revolution which rested on the political independence of Iran by stating “we would like to announce that we are in favour of relations with all countries and nations which respect our independence, dignity and interest” (Pollack 2004:310). He further argued that this independence was achievable through “mutual respect between countries and in their efforts to understand different cultural identities and civilisations” (Khatami 2000). It was due to these international policies that the representation of the Iranian cultural identity became an integral component of Khatami’s Administration and, in response, archaeology re-emerged as a politicised discipline. Although the discourse of ‘Dialogue among Civilisations’ was mainly targeted towards narrowing cultural and political gaps between Iran and the West, the rhetoric of ‘dialogue’ was equally significant in domestic politics as it facilitated the reconciliation of Iranian and Islamic identities. According to this discourse, there were no contradictions between the pre-Islamic and Islamic Iranian identity; the two aspects of Iranian identity simply co-existed (Holliday 2011:103). The dissociation of pre-Islamic archaeology from the Pahlavi dynasty and its endorsement as an integral component of Iranian identity provided an additional platform



for the re-emergence of archaeology as a discipline. The overarching influence of this alliance between pre-Islamic and Islamic identities will be discussed in the following Chapters.

In Chapter 2, the affirmative impacts of improved economy and the resumption of foreign academic collaboration, on the *ICHO* were discussed in detail. In this chapter it is argued that although following the Revolution the chief objective of Iranian archaeologists was the dissociation of their discipline from the constraints of politics, during Khatami's Administration, Iranian archaeology was once more entangled in the propagandas of nationalism. At the core of these attempts was the representation of Iran by the Khatami's Government as an ancient nation that had made contributions to human civilisation and thus worthy of national independence and international political recognition. This was best demonstrated in the *ICHO*'s attempts to promote a number of Prehistoric sites as the heirs to oldest civilisations in the world. The site of Sialk performed an active role in the representation of the Government's discourse of Iranian identity. Additionally, it is argued that the emphasis on Prehistoric archaeology during this period was due to attempts of Iranian archaeologists to validate the prominent value of their discipline domestically and to revive Iranian archaeology internationally. As will be discussed, the elaborate campaigns to publicise great discoveries at Sialk conformed to these objectives.

The politicisation of Iranian archaeology, and particularly Prehistoric archaeology, began anew with Khatami's speech on 'Dialogue among Civilisations' at the United Nation in the Year 2000. In this speech, he presented a Prehistoric mud-brick from Tepe Ozbaki to Kofi Annan. In addressing the *UN* convention Khatami stated:

*"I take this opportunity as the representative of one of the most ancient human civilisations to present the Secretary-General of the United Nation, as a token of friendship, one of the most ancient artefacts found in the world."* (<http://www.un.org/>)

This extract is an articulation of the foreign policies Khatami's Administration to present the Iranian nation in terms of the antiquity of its civilisation in order to legitimise Iran's inherent competency to occupy a significant position in the international arena and among other civilised nations. As will be illustrated, the validity of this 'antiquity' was pursued in Prehistoric projects that became absorbed in an enterprise to discover the "most ancient" Iranian contributions to human civilisation.

It is here contended that Khatami's speech at the *UN* in the year 2000 is comparable to that which Arthur Pope made in 1925 to revive the 'glories of Iranian past' (for the latter see Chapter 5). This observation is based on the heavy reliance of both speakers on the "spirit" of Iranians and their "capacity to integrate"

various cultures to produce glorious civilisations (Khatami 2000). The essence of the Iranian character in both speeches was defined by the endorsement of the 'ethnic' elements of Iranian identity. This rhetoric further articulated the similarities between the brand of nationalism adopted by Reza Shah's Government and that which was central to the doctrine of Khatami's Administration. To support this thesis, Holliday provided an argument for the ethnic nature of nationalism adopted by Khatami's Administration, albeit with certain references to other aspects of his discourse which rested on civic nationalism (Holliday 2007:139). Given that according to Smith, ethnic nationalism relies on an "emphasis on community of birth and native cultures" (Smith 1991:11); it is justified to argue that Khatami's Administration sought to validate this nationalist rhetoric by presenting Prehistoric archaeology as an instrument to confirm Iran's 'civilised' past. Therefore, for the first time in the history of Iranian archaeology, the Prehistoric period was politicised and the State, began sponsoring projects with a primarily focus on this period.

Following the expansion of archaeological activities during this period, investigations on the Prehistoric sites of the Central Plateau were brought to the forefront of research in Iran. The site of Sialk with its considerable significance for Iranian Prehistory became one of the first major Prehistoric projects launched during this period (Fig. 4.2). It has to be noted that following the 'reconstruction phase', large sections of the site, particularly on the southern district, had been swallowed by the encroaching residential developments (Fig. 4.3).

As Aminian (2002:9) reported, in order to restrict further damage to Sialk the *ICHO* lent its support to establish official boundary for the site and to prohibit further constructions in the area. These efforts were followed by the nomination of Sialk in 1997 as the first Prehistoric site to be submitted onto Iran's *UNESCO's* tentative list of World Heritage Sites. It was only after this nomination that in 2007 two other Prehistoric sites of *Jiroft* and *Shahr-e Sukhteh* were added (<http://whc.unesco.org/en/statesparties/ir>). The above demonstrates that the initial incentives that directed attention to Sialk were to protect the site from the immediate threats of destruction. Once the significance of this site was officially re-introduced and recognised, efforts were made to further publicise the site and to re-instate its historical importance in the study of Iranian archaeology. Therefore, the *ICHO* of Kashan with the assistance of Asghar Karimi, pursued the translation of Ghirshman's excavations report on Sialk from French to Farsi (Aminian 2002:9). This was considered a significant development in Iranian Prehistoric archaeology, given the paramount position of Sialk as a criterion for analysing Iranian Prehistoric chronology. Prior to the translation of these reports, one of the main presumptions for restricted studies on Sialk was the language barrier. Given that all the Iranian Prehistorians who were graduates of foreign institutes prior to the Revolution had acquired their degrees from English-speaking American Universities, it is not surprising that this language barrier had a considerable impact on the negligence directed towards Sialk during this

period. With the exception of few studies, this trend continued to dominate the fate of Sialk following the Revolution until Ghirshman's report was finally translated in 2001.

In the previous section, it was demonstrated that towards the end of 1970s Iranian archaeologists began excavating Prehistoric sites and offering new chronological sequences for the Iranian Central Plateau. In particular, references were made to the work of Majidzadeh (1978) who contested the cultural sequence that was proposed by Ghirshman, based on his work at Sialk. These debates, which offered the existence of two additional cultural sequences at Sialk, continued with Majidzadeh's publications in 1981 and Amiet's proposal for the re-investigation of cultural sequences of Sialk IV and V (Malek Shahmirzadi 2002:22). Given the above debates, it was conceived that after more than 70 years of no archaeological activities on the site, a re-analysis was necessary to review the chronology proposed by Ghirshman. This became an incentive to launch a research project at Sialk.

In *The Ziggurat of Sialk*, Malek Shahmirzadi provided his account for the launch of the *SRP*. He stated that the Project began as a "rescue" operation in order to salvage the site from its obsolete state and prevent further damage by the encroaching residential developments (Malek Shahmirzadi 2002:11). In 2001 the proposal for the *SRP* was accepted and the Project was launched under the Direction of Dr. Malek Shahmirzadi and hosted by the *Research Institute of Archaeology* (ibid.:12, 19). As the importance of Sialk was increasingly recognised, the rescue operation was gradually transformed into a research project with the objective to update and re-evaluate the chronology of the cultural sequence proposed by Ghirshman (Malek Shahmirzadi 2006b:7). In this regard Azarnoush (2002:7), the Director of *Iranian Centre for Archaeology* at the *ICHO*, argued, considering that for the past few decades the chronological analysis of Sialk formed the backbone of Prehistoric cultures in Iran, the re-investigation of this site in light of updated scientific approaches and new discoveries was compulsory. The *SRP* was an all inclusive operation that lasted for five seasons and finally terminated in December 2005. The results of this Project were published in five volumes under, *The Ziggurat of Sialk*, *Silversmiths of Sialk*, *Potters of Sialk*, *Fishermen of Sialk*, and *Sialk the Oldest Fortified Village in Iran*. It has to be noted that prior to these publications the provision of such detail reports was unprecedented following the Islamic Revolution. In addition to these publications, the *ICHO*, established a Permanent Research Base at the *Sadr House* in Kashan to accommodate further research; implement better management for the vicinity of Sialk; and restore certain quarters of the site (Fahimi 2004:8). These publicity efforts were further pursued by building a permanent exhibition on the site of Sialk to perform as an educational centre for the public who visit the site (Malek Shahmirzadi 2004:15).

It is contended that the excessive attempts to publicise the site of Sialk were in close correspondence with the general trends that were presented in the beginning of this section. In other words, it is proposed that these publicities, which were directly implemented by the government body of *ICHO*, aimed to provide further support for the foreign policies of Khatami's Administration and its discourse of 'Dialogue among Civilisations'. It is further suggested that the launch of the large scale Project of Sialk offered Iranian Prehistorians the means to re-introduce their discipline both domestically and internationally. The prevalence of this socio-political background generated proposals that intended to amplify the significance of findings at Sialk. Of particular interest was the declaration of the discovery of the "oldest Ziggurat" and the "oldest fortified wall" in the world (Malek Shahmirzadi 2002:20).

In his excavations in the 1930s, Ghirshman reported that during the cultural sequence of Sialk VI a large structure, which he called "La Grande Construction", was erected at the southern quarter of the South Mound. According to Ghirshman (cited in Malek Shahmirzadi 2002:178), this was a mud-brick structure, which contained two terraces with designated areas for residential purposes on each terrace. The date of this structure was assessed by referring to the enclosing protective walls that resembled those of the Median and Urartian cities (*ibid.*:178-9). This theory was contested by Malek Shahmirzadi on two grounds. First, he argued that the "Grand Construction" was a Ziggurat (Fig. 4.4), and second, he proposed that the Ziggurat was constructed following the cultural sequence of Sialk III and prior to the migration of inhabitants who carried the cultural traits of Iron Age (Malek Shahmirzadi 2006b:55). The identification of the Ziggurat as corresponding with the Jamdat Nasr period, pushed back the date of the construction of the Mound, resulting in the highly publicised conclusion that it was the 'oldest Ziggurat' in the ancient world (Malek Shahmirzadi 2002:39).

The proposal that the South Mound of Sialk was a Ziggurat had grave implications given that this structural configuration is particular to Mesopotamia and no such constructions have been discovered in the Iranian Central Plateau. Not only the location of this Ziggurat in the Iranian Central Plateau is disputable, but the proposed date of its construction is highly contested. Nevertheless, the rhetoric reiterated in *SRP* was in agreement with the political discourse of the Khatami period and his Administration's emphasis on the "antiquity" of Iranian nation and the contribution of Iranians to human civilisation. Additionally, given the isolation of Iranian archaeology and its near demise following the Revolution, Iranian archaeologists were eager to use every opportunity to revive their discipline both domestically and internationally. In the domestic context, Iranian archaeologists struggled to benefit from favourable conditions that were provided for the revival of archaeology during Khatami's Presidency. Such endeavours required large scale project that further validated and publicised the significance of archaeology as a discipline. In addition, the Iranian authorities were under pressure to confirm their

credibility in conducting large scale archaeological excavations following more than two decades of inadequacies in this field. In this regard, Azarnoush (2004:5) argued, that the launch of *SRP* was an opportunity for the young Iranian archaeologists to demonstrate that given a “proper setting”, they are capable of substantial academic achievements in the field of archaeology. Given the above context, it is contended that the proposals made by the *SRP* were to comply with these demands.

Iranian archaeologists were also eager to restore the position of their discipline internationally. In Chapter 2 it was argued that as an integral part of the doctrine of ‘Dialogue among Civilisations’, deliberate campaigns were generated to improve relations with the West. As a part of this policy, Iranian archaeology was pulled out of isolation, and Iranian institutions resumed academic relations with foreign archaeologists. To further develop these relations, Iranian archaeologists aimed to resurrect their discipline within the global context through tantalizing, large scale projects that offered ground breaking theories. The assertion that the “oldest Ziggurat” in the ancient world was discovered in the Central Iranian Plateau may be accounted for the prevalence of such academic frameworks. This publicity continued with the proposal of other major discoveries. For example, Malek Shahmirzadi reported the discovery of the “oldest fortified wall” in Iran at Sialk (Fig. 4.5) (Malek Shahmirzadi 2006b:58). Further, in 2002 the discoveries at Jiroft led Majidzadeh to conclude that the Jiroft civilisation corresponded with the Arrata Kingdom which predates the Sumerian civilisation. He argued that the “fabulous royal treasures” excavated at Ur, “may ultimately be traced back to the workshops of Jiroft” (Majidzadeh 2007). The discovery of an inscription at Jiroft further led archeologists to conclude that this site offered the “oldest evidence of written language” in the ancient world (ibid.). As Majidzadeh (2010) indicated, the “discoveries at Jiroft could challenge the certainty of fundamental understandings about the cultures of Middle East”. It has to be noted, that these rhetoric were also emulating the “independence” policies of the Government’s discourse by emphasising the “independence” of Prehistoric Iran from the casting shadows of Mesopotamian archaeology.

To further add scholarly validity to these discoveries, and considering the resumption of academic collaborations between Iranian and foreign institutes, the expertise of foreign archaeologists were employed to enhance the significance of these excavations. At Sialk, in the third season of excavations, the project became a multidisciplinary effort that was supported by an international team (Malek Shahmirzadi 2004:16). In addition, from the third season on, a more detailed and comprehensive English section was added to the preliminary reports in order to appeal to a broader audience and publicise the site further.

From the above analysis, it is contended that the Khatami period may be considered as the pinnacle point of Iranian archaeology after the Revolution, when Prehistoric archaeology was utilised to support the discourse of ‘Dialogue among Civilisations’. The sudden resumption of academic correspondence following two decades of isolation had a tremendous impact on Prehistoric archaeology in terms of theoretical approaches and methodological applications. Previously it was argued that despite the wide appeal of ‘New Archaeology’, it had a minimal impact on Iranian archaeologists in practice. Therefore, as Niknami (2003:3) argued, the nature of Iranian archaeology remained traditional and entrenched in the rhetoric of “Culture-Historical approach”. It is argued that the encounter of this traditional legacy with the contemporary theoretical concepts introduced by a new generation of foreign archaeologist who began co-operations in Prehistoric projects created a state of disorder in comprehending theoretical frameworks in Iran. This has resulted in Fazeli’s (2010:2) remark that the theories applied to the analysis of the Iranian Central Plateau not only followed the traditional “Culture-Historical approach”, but even failed to comply with all the aspects of this theory. Such disorientations can be attributed to the lack of theoretical debates that dominated Iranian archaeology both during the Pahlavi period and following the Revolution.

#### **4.5.4. Ahmadinejad’s Administration & Populism: Prehistoric Archaeology**

The previous section established that the discourse of ‘dialogue’ adopted by Khatami’s Administration had grave impacts on the resurrection of Iranian Prehistoric archaeology. It was further argued that in conformity with the policies of promoting the “antiquity” of Iranian nation, the *ICHO* launched the *SRP* which as Malek Shahmirzadi argued became one of the “greatest projects of the cultural heritage” (Malek Shahmirzadi 2004:16). This section addresses the impact of the return of hard-liners to the Iranian political scene on the further development of Prehistoric archaeology in the post-Revolutionary period. It is argued that with the onset of Ahmadinejad’s Presidency in 2005, the political discourse was transformed to accommodate an amalgam of ‘principalism’ and ‘populism’. Within this political framework, the Government’s interpretation of nationalism relied on Khomeini’s principles of ‘anti-imperialism’ and ‘independence’.

It is argued that the populist nationalism adopted by Ahmadinejad’s Government was manifested in the emphasis on Iran’s nuclear ambitions and its justification as the absolute right of the Iranian nation (Zathureezky 2011:244). These populist rallies to promote Iran’s nuclear programme were accompanied by slogans, stamps, banknotes, and medals that centered on the significance of this issue (Fig. 4.6) (Chubin 2010:84). Further, given that the suitability of archaeology as an instrument to support political agendas was recognised during Khatami’s Presidency, Ahmadinejad’s Administration continued to utilise

archaeology to aid its populist discourse. In this context, the Government's emphasis was no longer on the "antiquity" of Iranian nation but on the "sovereignty" of Iran in both pre-Islamic and Islamic periods. Given the above contention, it can be concluded that the Government's populist approach in this period endorsed the adoption of ethnic-dynastic and Shi'a nationalisms. In the following Chapters, the impact of this doctrine on pre-Islamic and Islamic archaeology is discussed in detail. In this section, it is argued that, given the populist nature of the Government's nationalist discourse, despite the instrumental employment of archaeology, little attention was granted to research and preservation. Therefore, Prehistoric sites once more became the subject of neglect. These policies were amplified through Iran's political isolation which discontinued international collaborations; and the ensuing economic hardship which reduced national budget for archaeological activities.

With respect to archaeological activities, some of the collaborative projects that were initiated by Khatami's Administration permeated into this period. This included the excavation of Prehistoric sites and the launch of foreign exhibitions. Within the same framework, excavations at Sialk continued in 2008-9 through a collaborative project that involved a research group from Tehran University, under the Direction of Hassan Fazeli, and a team from Durham University in the United Kingdom, under the Direction of Robin Coningham. The excavation at Sialk was conceived within a larger project that began in 2005 with the aim to evaluate the origins of agricultural complexity in the Iranian Central Plateau, in the Plains of Qazvin (Fazeli & Abbasnejad 2005), Tehran (Coningham et al. 2004) and Kashan (Malek Shahmirzadi 2005; Fazeli et al. 2013). An integral part of this project was re-excavating Prehistoric sites in the region to achieve a reliable scientific-based chronology. With these aims, the North Mound of Sialk was excavated in 2008 and 2009 to achieve an absolute dating using the recovered charcoal samples that were transferred to Oxford University for C14 dating (ibid.). The absolute dating of Sialk was important, not only in the context of this specific Prehistoric site, but considering that it had been more than 30 years since any C14 method was employed to determine absolute dating in Iranian Prehistory. Considering the improvements made in enhancing dating accuracy, the use of absolute dating at Sialk was a significant leap forward in portraying a credible interpretation of Iranian Prehistoric period. The absolute dating at Sialk was accompanied by a re-analysis of relative chronology using ceramic finds and their stylistic and technological developments (ibid.). Based on these investigations, Ghirshman's general proposal on the relative chronology of the Neolithic period was confirmed. It was further suggested that there was a ca.600 to 400 years of gap between the end of occupation on Sialk North and the beginning of occupation on Sialk South (ibid.).

Given the above trends, it is argued that the lack of State's sponsorship of Prehistoric archaeology in the first round of Ahmadinejad's Presidency (r. 2005-2009 AD) provided the means to concentrate on the

scientific aspects of the discipline. This context was further provided given the revival of archaeology during the Khatami period and the resumption of international collaborations which had assisted in familiarising Iranian archaeologists with the contemporary theories and methodological concepts. In addition, the increased oil prices contributed to the continuation of archaeological excavations. Despite sporadic populist employment of Prehistoric archaeology (see Documentary *Jiroft: A lost Civilisation*), it is contended that Prehistoric studies during this period gradually advanced towards a problem-solving approach. This was evident in the archaeological projects in the Central Iranian Plateau that aimed to review the cultural sequence of the region through multidisciplinary projects and absolute dating methods.

The interval of great archaeological activities in the Prehistoric period gradually dissipated during the second round of Ahmadinejad's Presidency (r. 2009-2013 AD) as the Government began to exercise a doctrine of nationalism that fluidly alternated between ethnic-dynastic and Shi'a heritage. This approach was accompanied by a reduction in oil prices and the growth of budget deficit that threatened Government's populist appeal (Ehteshami et al. 2013:237). By 2009, following a statement issued by the *ICHHTO*, Iranian archaeologists were prohibited from giving interviews to news agencies. These efforts were accompanied by a wave of mismanagement that continues to threaten Iranian cultural heritage and Prehistoric sites to-date. In respect to Sialk, archaeological excavations in collaboration with foreign archaeological teams were terminated. In addition, following the economic setbacks and the ensuing mismanagements, the *ICHHTO* appealed to review the vicinity that was allocated to the heritage site of Sialk (<http://kashannews.net/1391/09/22>). Within the content of this new proposal, a budget of 2 million *Rials* was allocated to a project that aimed to build a museum and develop further facilities for tourism (ibid.). Despite the above proposal, Malek Shahmirzadi argued that this is an attempt to violate the vicinity of Sialk and will lead to serious disturbance to the site (ibid.). He argued that in the third season of *SRP* the vicinity of Sialk was defined and the documents were stored, but the relating documents have since been "misplaced" (ibid.). The proposal raised concerns in the archaeology community about attempts to violate the vicinity of Sialk by permitting illegal developmental projects in the area (ibid.). The violation and negligence of archaeological sites during this period was often attributed to mismanagement and the entrusting of official positions to non-experts. The pervasive continuation of this trend has led to concerns for the well-being of other major Prehistoric sites that were publicised during the Khatami period, for example the site of Jiroft.

From the above, it can be concluded that during the second round of Ahmadinejad's Presidency, Prehistoric archaeology once again fell into isolation and suffered neglect. The political isolation of Iran and the economic constrains that followed the Government's determination for nuclear energy, justified the destruction of Prehistoric sites for national developmental projects. These 'self-sufficiency' projects

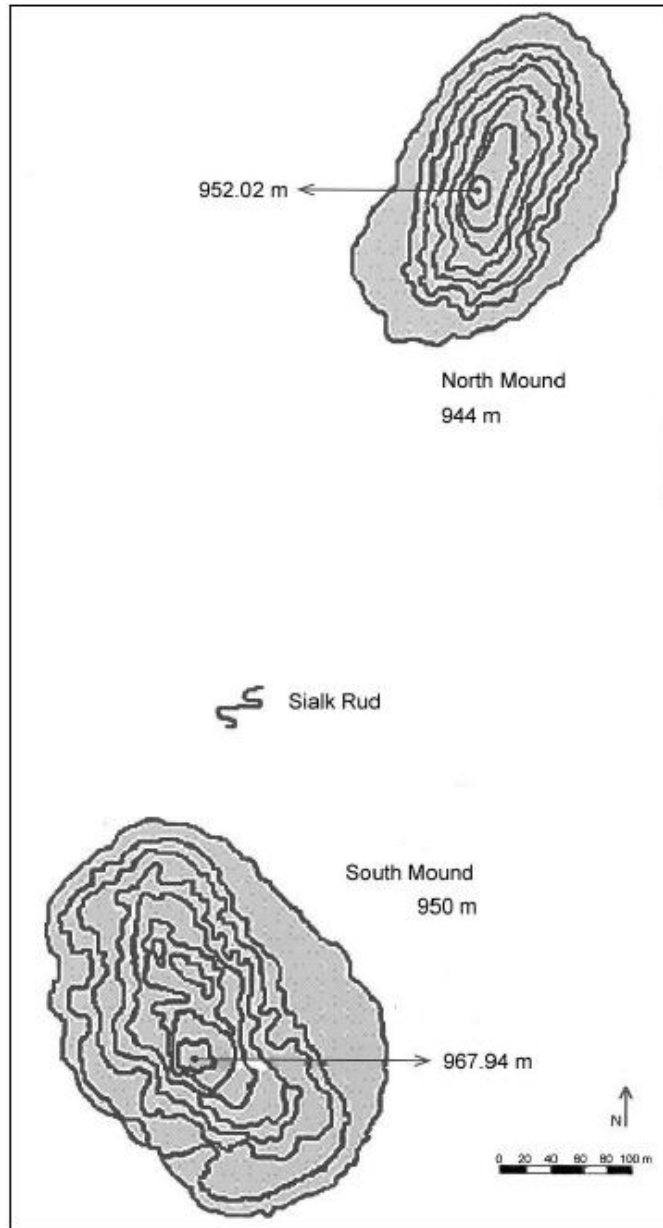


have once again marginalised the significance of archaeology as a scientific discipline. Further, the majority of international collaborations were halted and despite tremendous efforts, the development of archaeological theory and methodology was once again terminated without ever sufficiently taking root in the context of Iranian Prehistoric archaeology.

#### **4.6. Conclusion**

It has been the intention of this chapter to investigate the overarching influences of socio-political dynamics and different brands of nationalism on the birth and advance of Prehistoric archaeology with the site of Sialk providing for the demonstration of these trends. It has been argued that apart from spasms of sporadic appropriation of Iranian Prehistoric archaeology for political purposes, the discipline has advanced independent of nationalistic rhetoric, given it was seldom considered as the ‘golden age’ of Iranian history and largely failed to contribute to the verification of State’s nationalistic policies. These advances were particularly evident during the second Pahlavi period when the de-politicisation of Prehistoric archaeology and the introduction of a new set of theories under the banner of ‘New Archaeology’ contributed to directing Prehistoric studies toward a scientific orientation. Despite the above contention, considering the formative phases of Prehistoric archaeology in Iran were structured during the elevated stages of ethnic nationalism and the prevalence of theories concerned with the migration of Indo-Iranians, the residue of nationalistic traditions continues to dominate the discipline. Such traditions were demonstrated during Reza Shah’s reign when Prehistoric studies were utilised to support the rhetoric of ethnic nationalism and the link between Aryans and Iranians, and re-appeared during Khatami’s Presidency, when Prehistory became involved in providing a pretext for the Government’s discourse of ‘Dialogue among Civilisations’. It is argued that in both instances, the discipline was utilised to support Iran’s ‘authenticity’ and ‘national sovereignty’ through affirming her ancient past and contributions to world civilisation. This was achieved through presenting Sialk as a site on the route of Aryan migration during Reza Shah’s reign, while during Khatami’s Presidency the site emerged as one of the most ancient centres of civilisations with the proposal of the existence of the world’s “oldest Ziggurat” on the site. The nationalistic employment of Prehistoric archaeology also fed into the domestic policies of both Administrations by uniting the fragmented Iranian society into a coherent entity with a consolidated identity that was neither pre-Islamic nor Islamic, but ‘ancient’. The role of Iranian archaeologists in shaping Prehistoric studies was particularly stressed, given their involvement in assisting the resurrection of this discipline and supporting the nationalistic rhetoric of Khatami’s Government. It can therefore, be concluded that despite discrepancies, Prehistoric archaeology in Iran, similar to other nations, was born and developed for the nationalist purpose of pushing the

nation's origin back in time and to demonstrate the "antiquity" of its remote past in order to establish a powerful State (also see Diaz-Andreu 2007:395-397). In the following two chapters it is argued that apart from the Prehistoric period, Trigger's Nationalistic tradition disseminated into all aspects of Iranian archaeology, including pre-Islamic and Islamic periods.



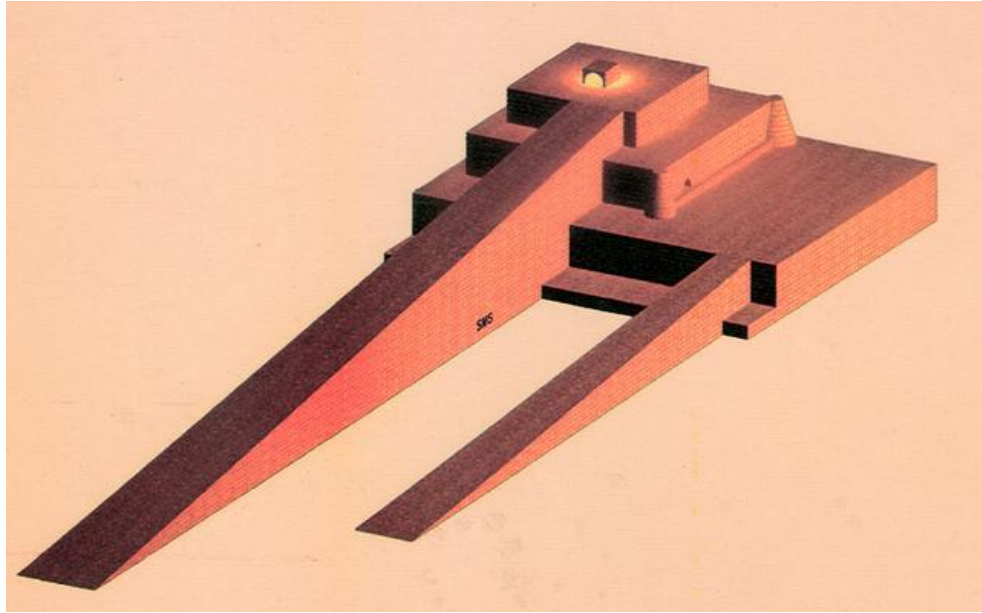
**Figure 4.1:** Topographic map of Sialk North and South. (After Malek Shahmirzadi 2006b:map2.)



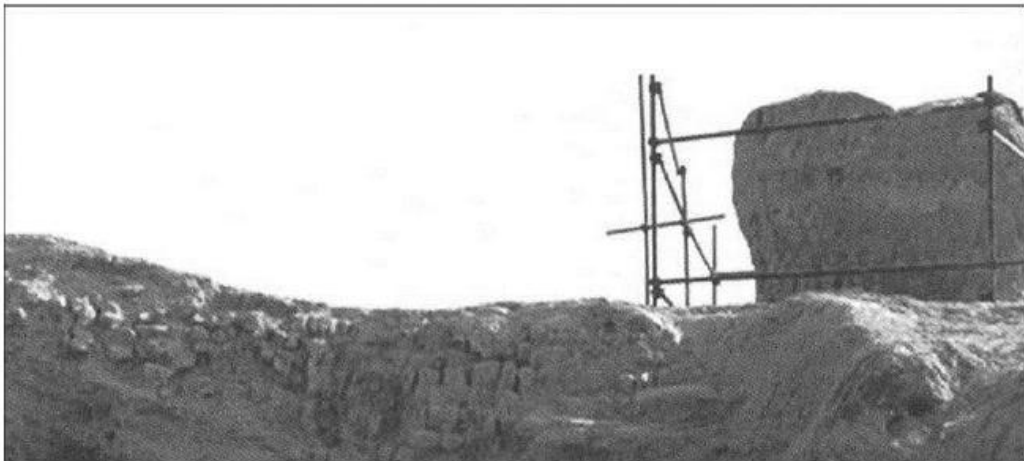
**Figure 4.2:** General view of the North Mound (left) and South Mound (right). (Photo by Coningham)



**Figure 4.3:** The close proximity of houses and the use of Sialk peripheries for grazing and agriculture purposes. Western fringes of Sialk. (Photo by Coningham)



**Figure 4.4:** Malek Shahmirzadi's reconstruction of Ziggurat of Sialk. (After Malek Shahmirzadi 2002:207)



**Figure 4.5:** General view of the mudbrick 'fortification' wall looking from west to east. (After Malek Shahmirzadi 2006b:fig.104.).



**Figure 4.6:** Iran Issued Banknote to promote nuclear energy in 2007.  
(<http://www.rferl.org/content/article/1075048.html>. Accessed 10/08/12)

## Chapter 5

### Nationalism and the Treatment of Pre-Islamic Archaeological Sites: Persepolis

#### 5.1. Introduction

In Chapter 4, it was proposed that the nature of Iranian Prehistoric archaeology adhered to the Nationalistic tradition as defined by Bruce Trigger (1984). Given that pre-Islamic Iranian identity has often been presented as the 'golden age' of Iranian history, in this chapter, it is argued that this archaeological period contributed more intensely to the implementation of various forms of Iranian nationalisms and the construction of Iranian national identity. To articulate these themes, the site of Persepolis has been selected as a case study given its distinction as one of the few symbolic national monuments that has been appropriated in various historical periods to support different Administrations or ideological concepts. These appropriations were initiated by the Qajars by associating the site with ancient mythical kings. During Reza Shah's rule, with the proliferation of ethnic nationalism to construct a modern nation-state, Persepolis emerged as the symbolic capital of the Ancient Persian Empire. The celebration of the site persisted into the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah and his Government's efforts to promote dynastic nationalism by presenting Persepolis as the birth-place of Persian dynasties that began with Cyrus and continued to the Pahlavi dynasty. Finally with the victory of the Islamic Revolution and the upsurge of Shi'a nationalism, Persepolis went through various treatments that fluctuated from association with the pillars of imperialism and corruption, to its resurrection as a national treasure that symbolised the pre-Islamic history of Iran and the architectural talent of Iranian master builders.

A thorough investigation of Iranian accounts and foreign travelogues corresponding with the site of Persepolis demonstrates the perpetual concept of propaganda that has dominated the history of this monument. Although scholars have disputed over the function of Persepolis for years, most agree that this Achaemenid Capital had a ceremonial purpose at the formative stages of its history (Sami 1955:89; Schmidt:1957; Sancisi-Weerdenburg:1991b:173-201; Wilber 1969; Tilia 1972:207). Therefore, the mysterious sense of grandeur that astonished many visitors for centuries was intended by the Achaemenid kings as they built their ceremonial centre to impress envoys travelling to Persia from the farthest parts of the Empire. The symbolic splendor of Persepolis as a site of propaganda remained to entertain the ambitions of those who carved their initials alongside the Achaemenid kings to register their triumph.

When Lord Curzon stopped by the site in 1889, he recorded the identity of many visitors who engraved their initials on the *Gate of All Nations*. These included both Iranian and foreigners who were intrigued upon seeing the site despite having different sources for eliciting their reverence for the monument (see Curzon 1892 II:156-7).

## 5.2. Historical Background

In recent years, various studies on the earliest foreign explorers who encountered Persian monuments has shed light on the significance of Persepolis as a prominent destination (Curtis 2005; Sarkhosh-Curtis 2007; Simpson 2007; Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1991a:2). According to these studies, the first Europeans who visited the ruins were unaware of its origins and referred to it by the local name of *Chehel Minar* (40 Column) (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1991a:3). It was only in the seventeenth century that the ruins were identified by the Spanish Ambassador Don Garcias da Silva e Figueroa and Roman Pietro della Valle, as Persepolis, the Capital of the Achaemenids (ibid.:5). Following this identification, Persepolis became an attractive travelling destination for Europeans given the incentives discussed below.

In Chapter 2, the fundamental causes for the delayed acquaintance of Europeans with Iranian monuments were discussed. For the purpose of this section it will suffice to identify two imperative features of Persepolis that appealed to European travellers; these were the Biblical and Classical references and the *Persepolitan cuneiform*. It is known that most of the early travellers who arrived at Persepolis were familiar with ancient history. Considering the inevitably speculative nature of early explorations and the lack of reliable guides, early travellers relied on local narratives. These narrations associated the site with various mythical characters such as *Djamshid* the grandfather of Alexander; King Solomon; Darius the king of Persians; Cyrus the Great; and Ardeshir who was known as Assuerus in the Bible (ibid.:8-9). These contradictory accounts drove European enquiry towards discovering the origin of the site, which according to all narratives was in one way or another affiliated with Biblical or Classical history. However, from the very beginning, there was pessimism towards the monuments of Persia. The supremacy granted to Mesopotamian and Classical remains was due to their affiliations with the foundations of the Western civilisation, while Persian monuments such as Persepolis were framed as representing the Oriental despotism of the East. The inferior treatment of Persian monuments was most apparent in the 1700s and with the growing interest in Greek history. During this period attempts were made to explain contemporary political events with references to the Classical past. The literary work of writers such as John Gillies, Pons-Augustin Alletz and many others demonstrated the prevalent antagonisms exhibited towards Persian history as a primitive and uncultured nation (Brosius 1990:82-3).



Therefore, for the foreign travellers who visited Persepolis towards the end of the 1800s and early 1900s the site represented the symbol of Western triumph over the Orient. These associations were a formative motive to bring foreign travellers to Persepolis where the Orient was defeated. In a way, Persepolis fed into the colonial ambitions of the West and authenticated the narrative of their perceived superiority over the ‘primitive Orient’ through historical records.

Persepolis was also significant to travellers who focused on cuneiform scripts that later became known as the “*Persepolitan inscriptions*” (*The Times* 1816:2). The importance of these scripts became more pronounced by the 1850s with the discoveries made by the British expeditions at the Biblical sites of Nineveh and Babylon. The discovery of slabs with *Persepolitan cuneiform* in these sites inspired Europeans to pursue the task of deciphering the script with more fervor. In 1837 *Persepolitan cuneiform* was finally deciphered due to the accumulated efforts of Georg Fredrich Grotefend; M. Bournouf; Professor Lassen; and Colonel Henry Rawlinson, unlocking the riddle to the ancient cultures of Mesopotamia (*The Times* 1853:7). In spite of these contributions, considering European favouritism towards the art and culture of Mesopotamia as far more superior to that of Persia, the discoveries at Persepolis were conceived as a stepping stone towards further understanding the Assyrian and Babylonian civilisations (ibid.). Nevertheless, in the process, the name of the kings who had built Persepolis were revealed and thus this period of Iranian history was liberated from the shadow of myth and fables that surrounded it for centuries.

In addition to the above, the lack of attention to Persepolis may be explained in terms of its location which was inadequate for the collection of museum objects. In his correspondence with *Times News* in 1879, Curzon reported that despite the prominent position of the site on the caravan route between Shiraz and Isfahan and hence its accessibility, the site is about 213 miles from the nearest Sea port in Bushire (Allen 1892:5). He argued, considering the primitive road conditions and the difficult terrain, the task of carving huge blocks of Persepolitan statues and transporting them to the port would defy any ordinary method of handling (ibid.). Although this restriction hampered the extent of wide spread looting at Persepolis, clandestine excavations, mutilation, and destruction by native and foreign visitors caused damage to the site. The first foreign ‘excavation’ at Persepolis was under the operation of James Morier, who came to Persia as part of Sir Gore Ouseley’s diplomatic mission in 1810 (Sarkhosh-Curtis 2007:166). In his two day effort to clear the site of Persepolis, he dismantled and shipped various works of art to England (Mousavi 2002:216). In 1825, Ephraim Gerrish Stannus uncovered a number of sculptures at Persepolis and in the following year Colonel MacDonald Kenneir visited the site and cleared part of the staircase at the Palace of Darius. His excavations lead to the discovery of the Persepolis Sphinx which was removed by Sir John McNeill in 1828 (Simpson 2007:159-160). These brief spurts of

activities at Persepolis continued with Robert Gordon, another member of Ouseley's mission, who hired villagers to dig at Persepolis and removed fragments of sculptures (Mousavi 2002:217; Curtis 1998:48). These early expeditions were far from scientific excavations and firmly belonged to the age of antiquarianism.

Scientific excavation at Persepolis was not pursued until the twentieth century when British, American, Iranian, and Italians began to work on the site. Nevertheless, during this period a number of visitors made discoveries that contributed substantially to the documentation and identification of the ruin. The first depiction of Persepolis to reach Europe was by Pietro Della Valle in 1672, who made copies of the *Persepolitan cuneiform* (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1991a:4). Considering the prominence of Dutch activities in Persia in the seventeenth and early eighteenth century, the majority of Persepolis documentations during this period were made by Dutch envoys. The most significant travellers were Philip Angle, an artist who visited Persepolis in 1651 (ibid.:8); Cornelis De Bruijn, another artist who made accurate drawings of the site and emphasised the faceless figures of the ruins (ibid.:18); Engelbert Kaempfer, who visited Persepolis between 1684-88 and during his three day stay at the site collected valuable information and made accurate drawings (ibid.:17); and finally Carsten Niebuhr, an scholar of German origin who travelled with the Danish Scientific Mission to Persia in 1765 and contributed immensely to the recognition and decipherment of *Persepolitan cuneiform* (Malek Shahmirzadi 1987:4-5). Among other travellers of this century were the French Jean Chardin who visited Persepolis during 1665-1677 and in addition to providing drawings and the first map of the site, speculated about the function of the site (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1991a:16).

The wealth of information provided by travellers and artists in the 1600s and 1700s, in addition to the subsequent discoveries in Egypt and Mesopotamia, enhanced European interest in the monuments of Persepolis and the desire to dismantle and collect artefacts from the site and take them to museums abroad. However, on the realisation of transportation restrictions, the main concern became the production of casts that could be made and sent to museums as a mere representation of architectural elements at Persepolis. In the nineteenth century the Dutch dominance in Persia was replaced by that of the British who became major players in contributing to the discoveries at Persepolis. As was discussed above, the majority of activities during this period can be categorised as antiquarianism, however, the discoveries made by the British should not be overlooked. In 1818 Sir Ker Porter, commissioned by A. Olinen, the President of the Russian Academy of Fine Arts, travelled to Persia to reproduce the Persian sculptures at Persepolis "as accurately as possible" (Barnett 1972:20). His 24 drawings of the monuments at Persepolis are among the most detailed depictions of the site before the introduction of photography (ibid.:23). In 1825, Stannus succeeded in making the first casts of Persepolis which were subsequently

presented to the British Museum (Simpson 2007:160). Following the first attempt, in response to Lord Curzon and Cecil Smith's plea to preserve a satisfactory record of the decaying site of Persepolis (Burton 1892:7; Allen 1892:5), Herbert Weld was sent to Persia in 1891 on behalf of the British Museum and with the private donation of Lord Savile, to make castings of the monument (Allen 1892:5). Apart from the innovative technique of casting employed by the skilled Italian moulder, Mr. Giuntini, Herbert's mission led to a small scale excavation through which he detected the use of colour in the Achaemenid palatial quarters. His excavation is recognised as the first 'problem-oriented' archaeological excavation at Persepolis by Simpson (2007:163). It is interesting to note the prevalence of the Evolutionary approach in archaeology during this period. In *The Times* correspondence, the British activities at Persepolis were justified by the statement that "a rich country like England is under an obligation to humanity to perform a service such as this [excavations and castings]" given that the "Persian government does not value them [Persepolis]" (Allen 1892:5).

Apart from British scholars, a number of French visitors made significant discoveries at Persepolis. In 1839, Charles Texier detected colours on the sculptures of Persepolis and even conducted chemical experiment to validate his speculations (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1991a:28-29; Mousavi 2002:217). Among other French contributors were Eugene Flandin and Pascal Coste who supplied the most accurate drawings of the site in the late 1840s (ibid.). This was followed by castings of M. Pieerre-Victorien Lottin in 1844 who made the second set of castings at Persepolis for the Louvre Museum (Simpson 2007:160).

Following the rise of the Pahlavi dynasty and the establishment of Iran as a modern nation-state, Persepolis was adopted into a narrative that represented the integrity of an ancient civilisation capable of administering an Empire. The Americans played a major role in dispersing this propaganda through their archaeological excavations, publications, international exhibitions, and congresses (see Chapter 6). The American activities began in Iranian archaeology by applying diplomatic pressure to annul the French Monopoly in 1927 and push through an Antiquity Law in 1930 (Gholi Majd 2003:16). The central motive behind the preceding two initiatives rested on the Americans ambitions to monopolise archaeological activities at Persepolis (Mousavi 2002:223; Gholi Majd 2003:17). Therefore, the Oriental Institute of Chicago, under the Direction of Ernst Herzfeld (1931-34 AD) and subsequently Erich Schmidt (1935-39 AD), took over the task of preservation and excavation of the site (Gursan-Salzman 2007:75). Following the ratification of the Antiquity Law, Persepolis was the 20<sup>th</sup> site to be registered on the *Inventory of National Monument* on September 1931

([http://persepolis.ir/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&id=29&Itemid=64](http://persepolis.ir/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=29&Itemid=64)). The halt of these activities following World War II, gave Iranians their first opportunity to take over the excavations at Persepolis. From 1939 to 1941 the task of excavation and restoration of Persepolis was delegated to a

number of Iranian archaeologists. From October 1939 to January 1940, Hossein Ravanboud was in charge of these restorations. The position was subsequently given to Dr. Issa Behnam who worked at the site from January to June 1940. Mahmoud Rad was next in line for the position from the end of 1940 to September 1941 (Mousavi 2002:235). In 1941 Ali Sami began his career at Persepolis and continued his studies at the site until his retirement in 1961 (ibid.:236). No other significant work was initiated at the site until 1964 when extensive restoration work was initiated by Italians under the Directorship of Ann Britt and Guisepe Tilia (Tilia 1972). These restorations were in collaboration with *NOCHMI* and continued until the Islamic Revolution. Meanwhile in 1968, Akbar Tajvidi (1973) proposed a new research programme for excavations at Persepolis but his research was interrupted in 1972 and never resumed.

The most profound moment in the modern history of Persepolis was the proliferation of the site as the manifestation of the Pahlavi's nationalist agenda in the celebration of the Anniversary of 2500 years of Persian Monarchy in 1971. The site that became the symbol of dynastic nationalism during the Pahlavis' reign was later condemned by the Islamic Regime after the Islamic Revolution as the embodiment of 'imperialism' and 'corrupt monarchies'. Thus, the treatment of Persepolis was significantly altered following the political changes that surfaced after the Revolution.

During the early days of the Revolution Persepolis escaped threats from the zealous Islamist who sought to demolish the site due to its strong affiliations with the Pahlavi dynasty and the Persian monarchies. Following the socio-political changes after the Iran-Iraq War, and in light of improved economy, the post-Revolutionary Government asserted a more favourable outlook towards the pre-Islamic Iranian identity and thus Persepolis once again became the symbol of Iranian sovereignty. The sequence of visits from Government officials eased the way for the launch of *Pars-e Pasargad Research Institute* in August 2001 ([http://persepolis.ir/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&id=29&Itemid=64](http://persepolis.ir/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=29&Itemid=64)). The new Iranian-Islamic identity promoted by the doctrine of President Khatami's Administration and the relaxing of foreign relations, re-introduced scholarly exchange with Western institutes. These policies influenced Persepolis with the resumption of archaeological activities through a collaboration project between French and Italian teams and the Iranian institutes. Some of these resumed projects were not chiefly concerned with the palatial buildings of Persepolis, but focused on the geographical district of *Pars-e Pasargad*. Persepolis became the focus of political attention when Ahmadinejad's Administration proposed to celebrate *Norouz* (Persian New Year) at the site. This populist tactic aroused the reaction of hard-liners who compared the policies of this Government to that of Pahlavi's adoption of pre-Islamic national identity. Further, in 2009 arrangements were made to revive the Iranian-Italian collaborations for the restoration of Persepolis. Like so many features of the post-Revolutionary politics, the treatment of

Persepolis remained inconsistent and confound to the nationalistic rhetoric of the Administration in power. In the following section, the treatment of Persepolis is analysed in consideration to the nationalist ideals of the Qajars, Pahlavis and in the post-Revolutionary Administrations.

### 5.3. Qajar Nationalism: The Case Study of Persepolis

*“The image of a mosque which you have reproduced in your paper as a symbol of the Iranian nation, seems to me inappropriate. This is because if by the word ‘nation’ you refer to its accepted meaning, that is the people of Iran, the mosque is not particular to them ... The symbols of the people of pre-Islamic Iran are Ancient Persian monuments, such as Persepolis, the fortress of Istakhr, and the like.”*

(Akhundzadeh cited in Parsinejad 2003:267)

It is predominantly conceived that in the absence of modern concepts such as nation-state, nationalism and national identity during the Qajar period, the political use of archaeological monuments such as Persepolis began with the Pahlavi dynasty. Although archaeology was a prominent component in the construction of national identity for the Pahlavis (Abdi 2001; Goode 2007; Mousavi 2002), there are indications that the Qajars had already begun to appreciate the potentials of archaeological monuments for portraying political aims. However, it may be argued, that due to the nature of the Qajar court and the socio-political dynamics of this period, these manipulations remained sporadic rather than taking the form of widespread official policies. The Qajar court was institutionalised on the dual authority of monarchy and Shari’a (Amanat 1997:8). The Qajar kings were perceived as the “shadow of God [*zillullah*] on earth” (ibid.:10) and thus did not need to seek legitimacy through the appropriation of history. While this general paradigm can be applied to the Qajars’ political comprehension of the issue of legitimacy, the intention of this section is to illustrate instances of Qajar acquaintance with the potential of the past as a legitimising instrument. In doing so, it is the intention of this section to emphasise the Qajars’ attention to the institution of monarchy as a rudimentary source of legitimacy. It is argued that this fascination is portrayed in the Qajars’ emulation of pre-Islamic symbols and their interest in the Persepolis monument. In addition, this section will investigate the intricate role of the Constitutional Revolution in the birth of Iranian nationalism and its ramifications for the pre-Islamic site of Persepolis. To illustrate this impact more clearly, this section will investigate the pre- and post-Constitutional Revolutionary period separately.

The reign of the Qajar dynasty persisted long enough to witness erratic changes in their outlook towards cultural heritage. This was in part due to the conspicuous inflation in interactions between Iranians and

foreigners, which allowed for the perpetual but restricted import of Western concepts (see 2.2). Prior to the Constitutional Revolution, the *Bazgasht* movement during the reign of Fath-ali Shah (r. 1797-1835 AD) coupled with the anti-Arab and nationalistic doctrine of intellectuals such as Akhundzadeh and Kermani, to elevate the curiosity of Qajar kings towards their pre-Islamic past. This new fascination with the past is perceived through the imitation of Sassanid motifs and mannerism (Sarkhosh-Curtis 2007:177). The spark of interest and emulation of the past even prompted Farhad Mirza, the Crown Prince, to carve an inscription on the walls of Persepolis in the manner of ancient kings, to register his 1872 crushing of rebellion in Fars (Mousavi 2002:219). This attempt indicates that the political potential of archaeological monuments was already recognised during the Qajar period. It further demonstrates the symbolic value of Persepolis and its connotation with the concepts of noble greatness and permanence. However, one would speculate over the rationale behind these affiliations in an era that history lagged behind conventional mythology to explain the past. To satisfy this debate the growing influence of the *Shahnameh* during this period is analysed.

Apart from rising interest in the pre-Islamic history of Iran, the *Bazgasht* movement was prominent as the force behind the revival of *Shahnameh* during the Qajar era. In fact, as Luft (2001:43) has argued, the *Bazgasht* was a literary movement in sympathy with the epical style depicted in the narratives of the *Shahnameh*. Therefore, in the absence of historical accounts to explain the ambiguous remains of the past, the *Shahnameh* became the chief source of reference to reveal insight about previous dynasties. Persepolis benefited from the *Shahnameh* and acquired an escalating mythical repute, as it contained references that glorified previous dynasties who ruled at *Takht-e Jamshid* (Persepolis).

Worthy of comment here is Meisami's (1993) argument for the dismissal of the *Shahnameh* as a fable immediately upon its completion. He argued that due to the literary adjustments of this period, which stressed reliability and truthfulness based on eye-witness accounts as oppose to the epic narratives of Ferdowsi, the *Shahnameh* was dismissed as a collection of fanciful tales with no use but to entertain (ibid.:264). The relegation of the *Shahnameh* to a chronicle not only removed Persepolis from the historical context and recast it as a mythical place, but also transformed the site to an eternal city of legendary kings who ruled over a vast empire. Persepolis retained this symbolic quality as many subsequent dynasties such as the Parthian, Sassanid, Tehirid, Saffarid, Buyid, Samanid and even the Qhaznavid, sought their ruling legitimacy in tracing their ancestry back to the kings of *Shahnameh* (ibid.:250; Sarkhosh-Curtis 2005:251-2). Therefore, Persepolis became a visual memoir to register the triumph of kings who sought potency and respect through linking themselves with the legendry kings of Ancient Persia. The Qajar too, sought legitimacy in this hereditary model. Nevertheless, given the potency of Shi'ism as the unifying factor employed to contain a nation, the Qajar did not actively promote

the historical verification of their legitimacy. Having noted that, it has to be considered that the Qajar were gradually discovering the potential of historic monuments as political instruments and supplied the preliminary foundation for their utilisation during the Pahlavis.

The prevalent consumption of the fables of *Shahnameh* diffused into all ranges of the Qajar society through the practice of *naghali* (recitation of epic stories). Therefore, the kings of *Shahnameh* with the seat of their throne at Persepolis were known to all strands of the Iranian society. Despite sporadic digging, vandalism, and the re-processing of fragments from Persepolis for building purposes, the mythical affiliations with the site saved it from complete neglect. This is articulated in the travel accounts of number of Europeans who were astonished to learn about *talisman* on their efforts to remove or uncover remains from the site. The German traveller Von Poser was, for example, told that the animals at the *Gate of All Nations* cause temporary blindness on curious visitors who attempt to get close to the monument (Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1991a:7). In addition to the legendary fables that surrounded the site of Persepolis, European travellers also detected a lack of respect, ignorance, and religious fanaticism towards the ruins. In his travelogue, Morier (1818:76) complained that his excavations at Persepolis were interrupted by a local ruler who was jealous that the money he had given to a peasant had not passed into his pocket. Further, De Bruin (cited in Sancisi-Weerdenburg 1991a:18) argued that Persepolis was subject to deliberate destruction by the Governor of Shiraz who was irritated by many European visitors to Persepolis that sought preferential treatment from him. Finally, Wilber (1969:51) argued that the many mutilated faces of icons at Persepolis were inflicted by Muslim visitors to whom the representation of living forms was anathema.

Following the enhanced interest of European visitors in enquiring about Persepolis in their travels, Iranians' outlook towards the site was eventually altered and replaced by curiosities about its monetary value. In other words, it was the European interest in Persepolis during this age of discovery that unleashed the Western phenomena of antiquarianism. However, this is not to undermine Iranian curiosity about the historical value of Persepolis, which according to a number of accounts resembled a form of 'patriotism'. In his travels to Persepolis, Morier referred to the encounters he had with the local shepherds and his astonishments at the "air of superiority" with which the locals described Persepolis (Morier 1818:86-89).

In the 1850s, dynamics altered once again as traces of attributing a cultural value to the site began to emerge with attempts to photograph it. In 1858 Naser al-Din Shah hired Jules Richard, his Royal Photographer, to record Persepolis (Mousavi 2002:217; Sarkhosh-Curtis 2007:177). Richard's project was terminated due to financial difficulties and instead the activity fell to Luigi Pesce, an Italian Infantry

Officer, who presented an album to the Shah and was rewarded by the Court for his endeavour (Fig. 5.1) (Mousavi 2002:217-18). The Court's interest in the ruins was further expanded when the Shah then ordered Aqa Reza to learn photography in the 1860s with the purpose of taking photographs of the site (ibid.:218). From the late 1870s the new Court Photographer, Antoin Suvruquin provided a range of photographs of monuments, including Persepolis.

The Qajar interest in Persepolis was further expressed through the first extensive excavation by Iranians. Mostowfi (1955:10) argued that in 1875-77 the Governor of Fars, Shahzadeh Mo'tamed Al-Dowle Farhad Mirza and his son Soltan Avis Mirza Ehtesham Al-Dowle, hired thousands of workers to clear Persepolis. According to Mousavi (2002:219) this excavation took place in 1877 and continued for over a month to uncover "*asbab-e atiq*" (antique tools). The remnants of these activities were evident in the Governor's attempt to engrave his name on the northern wall of *Tachar* in emulation of European travellers (Fig. 5.2). The extent of interest is also revealed in the work of Mirza Fursat Shirazi who travelled around Fars in 1896 and published *Asar-e Ajam* (remains of non-Arabs) with plans and drawings of the ruins at Persepolis (Sarkhosh-Curtis 2005:256; 2007:177).

As previously argued, prior to the Constitutional Revolution, the Qajars had comprehended the significance of Persepolis as an ancient monument but, lacked official policies to promote the site for political purposes. This was a period when the Qajars were consumed with both the monetary value of antiquities and an invoked sense of pride taken in the monuments of Persepolis. This is best illustrated by the refusal of Farhad Mirza to permit the German explorers Friedrich Carl Andreas and Friedrich Stolze to take possession of items recovered from excavations at Persepolis (Mousavi 2002:220). It is difficult to detect whether this reluctance was driven from patriotic sentiments or his discomfort with losing antiquities of high monetary value to foreigners. Similarly Morier's (2004:76) remark about the halt of his excavations by the local Governor at Marvdasht, who claimed excavations were illegal without the order of his Government, demonstrate a benign sense of concern towards Persepolis. Nonetheless, in light of the surrender of archaeological concession to the French in 1900, one is inclined to conclude that despite sporadic interest towards ancient heritage, the Qajars were on the whole drawn to the monetary value of antiquities.

The period that constitutes the era of pre-Constitutional Revolution can be distinguished as a phase of initial introduction to Persepolis. Even though the body of documents provided by Europeans was primarily descriptive, the enthusiasm expressed towards the site aroused an unprecedented interest that in the subsequent periods assisted the unfolding of Iranian history. Despite these advancements towards revealing the history of Persepolis, in the absence of a modern nation-state, the Qajars were not compelled



to rely on historical facts to legitimise their authority. Nevertheless, certain imitations of pre-Islamic motifs and practice were increasingly influencing the Qajar Court and references were made to appropriate a number of foreign imports. This was evident in the revival of Achaemenid and Sassanid style rock carvings during the reign of Fath-ali Shah (Fig. 5.3) (Lerner 1991). The expression of Qajars' appropriation of past dynasties was also apparent in Mohammad Shah's claim who in 1840s argued that the European style military dress was in fact an adaptation of Ancient Persians military uniform found on the sculptures of Persepolis (Floor 1999:135). The allusion of Persepolitan motifs could also be perceived in Iranian architecture as early as 1879 at the residences of the Qajars in Shiraz, including the *Narenjestan* and *Affif Abad* palaces (Grigor 2007:567). According to Abrahamian, the Qajars tapped into pre-Islamic Iranian sentiments by naming the Crown after the mythical "Kayan" dynasty, naming their sons after the heroes of the *Shahnameh*, discovering genealogical links between themselves and ancient Parthian, as well as celebrating ancient *Norouz* (Abrahamian 2008:19).

As Persia reached the twentieth century and with the socio-political reforms that led to the Constitutional Revolution, the necessity of having a past became inevitable. The numerous publications during this period such as *Asar-e Ajam* (1896), *Guide to the History of the Parthian House* (1892), *History of Sassanian Monarchy* (1897), and *History of Iran* (1901), were a testament to the growing awareness of Iranians towards their ancient past (Grigor 2007:567).

The intricate driving force behind the nationalist movement that led to the Constitutional Revolution was the notion of resistance to the expansionist policies of Western powers that gained ground subsequent to connotations that link Iran with the 'superiority' of Aryans. Therefore, despite the absence of a modern concept of nationhood, the nature of Iranian nationalist movement advocated by the Iranian intelligentsia leaned towards ethnic nationalism. The perceived form of nationalism had surfaced following the anti-Semitic movements that dominated Europe and it is contended that, had the Qajar court not relied on Shi'ism as the source of legitimacy, the active manipulation of Iranian archaeology may have been initiated during this period. While ancient monuments were spared from immediate political exploitation, with Iranian's appreciation of their past, an interest in pre-Islamic history emerged. The quest for the re-discovery of Iran's ancient past began through various publications on Iranian history. Without a doubt, the European discoveries of the 1700s and 1800s had a tremendous impact in shaping the pre-Islamic history of Iran. The site of Persepolis was instrumental in the gradual unfolding of the history of Ancient Persia and a medium through which the mythical fables of the *Shahnameh* were replaced by factual historical accounts. However, it was only in the subsequent period and with the rise of Reza Shah that this transitory period advanced further towards the realisation that to build a nation, archaeology needs to work intimately with history to promote nationalism.

The resistance to the expansionism of Western powers which was at the heart of Iranian nationalism had interesting implications for Persepolis. In 1914 a set of postage stamps were issued depicting these monuments (Fig. 5.4) (Sarkhosh-Curtis 2007:177). Considering the prevalent representation of the portrait of monarch or the symbol of lion and Sun, it is contended that the use of Persepolis on stamps had two indications. First, the Qajars had acknowledged Persepolis as an archeological site that could represent Persia, and second; the Qajars had comprehended and begun to appreciate the practice of adopting archaeological sites for political purposes. Both of these indications are driven from the theme of emancipation from imperialism that was advocated by the Iranian nationalists during this period. It is here argued that the depiction of Persepolis on stamps was less prominently for domestic consumptions and instead had international implications. These implications were concerned with presenting Iran as a ‘civilised’ nation with a deep past. This perception rose from the widespread belief in the era of the French Revolution that only the most civilised states could claim nationhood (Diaz-Andreu 2007:67). In addition, the stamps aimed to validate the historical continuity of Persia at a time when its sovereignty was undermined by the political interference of Britain and Russia. It conveyed the message that Persia was an ancient civilisation and therefore entitled to retain political sovereignty. The same significance can be attributed to the first Persian “warship” which according to *The Times* correspondence in 1910 was named “Persepolis” (*The Times* 1910:9).

This section has thus argued contrary to the conventional belief that nationalism began its interaction with archaeology during the Pahlavi period, that the onset of this alliance extends back to the Qajars. To illustrate this objective, Persepolis was selected as a case study to disclose the earliest example of the adoption of pre-Islamic monuments to achieve political aspirations. The incentive behind the political use of Persepolis was sought in the ethnic nature of Iranian nationalism that emerged during the Constitutional Revolution and aimed to propagate the message of Iranian political sovereignty in the global scale through verifying Iran as a ‘civilised’ nation. As the configuration of Iranian nationalism transformed during the Pahlavis, the manipulation of archaeological sites for political purposes took an abrupt turn. The following section is devoted to the study of the impact of the nationalist propagandas of the Pahlavi dynasty on the pre-Islamic site of Persepolis.

#### **5.4. Pahlavi Nationalism: The Case Study of Persepolis**

The elements of ethnic nationalism that gave rise to the Constitutional Revolution failed to fulfill its promises of unity and national sovereignty in the absence of an infrastructure of a modern nation-state (Abrahamian 2008:34). Further, the outbreak of World War I and the decline of Qajar authority enhanced

ethnic disintegration and the country's fragmentation. In Chapter 2, it was argued that the task of establishing and unifying Iran as a modern nation fell to Reza Shah who in adherence with contemporary political trends favoured an ethnic-dynastic form of nationalism, albeit with more emphasis on ethnic elements. As proposed by Anthony Smith, the ethnic form of nationalism constitutes a nation that functions on pre-modern ethnic ties, memories, and heritage (see Chapter 3). These concepts rely on the demanding effort of 'invention' or 'selection' of traditions that aim to rediscover a 'glorious', 'continues', and 'superior' past. In addition, dynastic nationalism is a term penned by Ansari who argued for the increasing reliance of the Pahlavi on the institution of monarchy as the saviour of the Iranian nation (see Chapter 3). During the Pahlavi period of rule, a combination of ethnic-dynastic nationalism was applied to legitimise the State, albeit to varying degrees during different periods. In conformity with this form of nationalism, the Achaemenid and Sassanid periods were selected as the 'golden age' of Iranian history. This was due to the perceived success of these dynasties in establishing a unified power with hegemony over other ethnicities and neighbouring countries. The Achaemenid were particularly paramount in the narrative of the ethnic-dynastic nationalism of the Pahlavis considering their distinction as the first Persian dynasty and the heir to the Aryan race.

This attention to the Achaemenid brought Persepolis to the forefront of the Pahlavis' attention. Apart from earlier acquaintances with the monument and its debut as a potential political instrument, Persepolis was also esteemed for its archaeological merit, given that in comparison with Susa, it had largely escaped the antiquarian activities of the French and thus could yield to new discoveries. Such dispositions granted Persepolis a distinguished position within the Pahlavi Administration. It is here argued that while the Qajars had recognised the political indications of Persepolis as the symbol of Persia, the Pahlavis founded a modern nation-state around its ruins. In this section, it is contended that given the nature of Pahlavis' nationalist rhetoric, the political exploitation of Persepolis reached its climax during this period. For the purpose of clarity, the adoption of Persepolis as a political instrument will be analysed under the Governments of Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah, separately.

#### **5.4.1. Reza Shah's Government & Ethnic Nationalism: Pre-Islamic Archaeology**

During the 1990s archaeologists began to argue for the unavoidable relationship between archaeology, nationalism, and the rise of modern nation-states (Trigger 1984; Kohl & Fawcett 1995b; Diaz-Andreu & Champion 1996; Meskell 1998). In particular, Trigger (1984:358) argued for the nationalistic orientation of most archaeological traditions. Similarly, the development of archaeology as a scientific enterprise in Iran emerged simultaneously with the appearance of nationalism and the establishment of a modern

nation-state by Reza Shah's Government. The brand of nationalism adopted in this period leaned towards ethnic elements and particularly the shared heritage of Iranians as Aryans. This inclination was targeted towards consolidating the multi-ethnic Iranian nation and to inject a sense of common racial, historic, and cultural past. These themes were endorsed to confirm the 'continuity' and 'superiority' of the Iranian identity and to bolster the international position of Iran as a modern nation-state. In this section, it is argued that the pre-Islamic site of Persepolis served to support the narrative of ethnic nationalism adopted by the Government given its recognition as the first capital of the first Iranian (Aryan) dynasty.

For the optimist nationalists of this period, Iran had just rid itself from the French Monopoly, which was viewed as one of the symbols of Western expansionism in Iran, and begun to establish itself as an independent and 'civilised' nation. To verify the claims adopted about the 'golden age' of Persian Empire, Reza Shah's Administration sought confirmation in the ruins of Persepolis. According to various accounts, given the colonial approach of the French towards Iranian archaeology, Reza Shah's Administration was reluctant to offer the excavation at Persepolis to foreign delegations (Mousavi 2002:224). Reza Shah himself had articulated that he did not want what happened to Susa repeated with Persepolis (ibid.:230). Even subsequent to granting Americans the permission to work at Persepolis, Iranian officials refused to give them credit for their discoveries and instead focused on presenting a narrative of the grandiose of the site itself. This is illustrated in complaints made by Breasted, Director of the Oriental Institute at Chicago, that while the site had become a 'national shrine' for the Iranians, they refused to credit the Institute for the discoveries made (Goode 2007:159). Wulsin of the University Museum of Pennsylvania further criticised the display of Persepolis Golden Foundation Tablets at the Leningrad exhibition (1935) as the achievement of the Iranian Archaeological Service (ibid.:172). The articulated approach taken by the Iranian Government displays the merit ascribed to Persepolis as a national symbol, the study of which was granted to a foreign expedition given the dearth of qualified Iranian experts to take over this national project. The restriction of finance provided an additional justification for permitting foreign institutes to study what was perceived to be the most important archaeological site in Iran. Through these efforts the Iranian officials were determined to pursue the application of ethnic nationalism in the absence of other domestic resources to do so.

According to Trigger, the discipline of archaeology plays a vital role in the construction of nations, given that it can "prove" the continual existence of the nation and re-iterate its glorious past (Trigger 1984:358). The political elites of the Pahlavi Administration had recognised this potential and sought to implement their brand of nationalism through the manipulation of archaeological sites. As Smith (1999:9-10) argued, the process of re-discovery and re-interpretation of the past was carried by the modern nationalist intelligentsia. Iran was no exception to this general trend. As discussed in Chapter 4, the most

instrumental organisation during this period was the *SNH*, whose approach of ‘inventing’ traditions through the selection and promotion of national symbols and mythology, tailored the history of Iran in accordance to the ‘golden ages’ of Ancient Persia. These elites propagated ethnic and dynastic nationalism, albeit with more inclinations towards ethnic elements, by seeking refuge in the concepts of “Aryanism” and the adoption of “myth of saviour” to legitimise Reza Shah’s dynasty (Ansari 2005:323). While “Aryanism” was paramount to this nationalist rhetoric, the adoption of “myth of saviour” was a political tactic to promote national unity and emancipation from Western influences. By assuming the role of “saviour”, Reza Shah was made an instrument to reach the above targets. As shall be argued, Persepolis was selected given its competence to confirm the adopted form of political rhetoric and nationalism during this period.

As discussed in Chapter 4, the Achaemenid kings were culturally identified as the heirs to the Aryan race. Therefore, the cultivation of the myth of Aryans was manifested in the promotion of the Achaemenid dynasty. The emphasis on the concept of ‘Aryanism’ rested on the two pillars of “superiority” and “continuity” (Heyd 1950:164). In harmony with this national Primordialist approach, Persepolis was at the pinnacle of Iranian ‘golden age’ and the expression of Iranian ‘superiority’ and cultural ‘continuity’. It provided Iranians with a common historical and cultural past, in addition to confirming the perceived view of Iran as a sovereign, ancient Empire. The symbolic merit of Persepolis as the first capital of this empire made it prone to intense manipulations by the members of *SNH*. These men of power determined the fate of the site through various means. They were directly involved in the annulment of the French Monopoly (1927), the approval of American archaeological concessions (1930s), and the division of finds and ‘donation’ of artefacts to Americans. They further fostered the promotion of Persepolis through publications and the incorporation of its history within the education system. The cultivation of public interest in Persepolis persisted with the manipulation of communal spaces, and the implantation of rhetorical symbols and metaphors in architectural projects that echoed the glorification of Persepolitan style. In addition, it was through these influential elites in the *SNH* that the Americans were able to advance their archaeological interest in Iran. Therefore, it is argued that the *SNH*, as a political body ran by the intelligentsia, performed as a medium to re-construct the ‘golden age’ of Iranian history through the adoption of Persepolis as a symbol to promote ethnic-dynastic nationalism.

Having illustrated the symbolic value of Persepolis as a propaganda apparatus during this period, it will now be argued that the work permit granted to American Delegations and the subsequent decision for the division of finds at the site was initially driven by motives to support the Government’s narrative of ethnic nationalism. To demonstrate the first argument, the foreign experts who were involved in the Antiquity Law in 1930 and further encouraged the excavations at Persepolis are subjected to evaluations.

The most notable foreign experts were Ernst Herzfeld (1880-1948 AD) who in addition to his involvement in drafting the Antiquity Law, had excavated at the site of Persepolis for four years; and Arthur Upham Pope (1881-1969 AD), the Curator of the *Mohammadan Art at the Art Institute of Chicago*, who was instrumental in the abolishment of the French Monopoly, the ratification of Antiquity Law, obtaining the Persepolis concession for American institutes, and promoting Iranian cultural heritage.

Herzfeld was a German scholar and familiar with the Primordail form of nationalism that emphasised the ‘continuity’ and ‘superiority’ of a nation-state. As was discussed in Chapter 3, this was the type of nationalism that Reza Shah’s Government emulated from the model of Turkish nationalism, which itself was inspired by the German model (Heyd 1950:164). Mousavi (2002:223) argued that Herzfeld acquired his privileged status in Iran by emphasising the importance of preserving national monuments and publicising the role they played in shaping the identity of a nation. In other words, Herzfeld may be recognised as the man who familiarised the Pahlavi court with the political potentials of monuments. As Ettinghausen argued, Herzfeld firmly believed in “the use of archaeological material for reconstruction of history” (Ettinghausen 1951:265). This position had an overarching influence on all aspects of his activities, and when in 1925 he was asked to design the logo for the *SNH*, he proposed a sketch that included the façades of *Persepolis* (left), *Taq-e Kasra* at Ctesiphon (right) and *Gunbad-e Qabus* (centre) (Fig. 5.5).

While lobbying for the Persepolis concession, Herzfeld condemned the infertile effort of the French in recovering what he perceived as the glories of Ancient Persia and further complained about the so-called scientists who removed pieces of sculpture “with their profane hands, to enshrine them in the museums of Europe” (Goode 2007:143). This attitude was in conformity with the new ethnic nationalism endorsed by the political elites. Herzfeld presented himself as an expert who displayed concern over decaying Iranian grandiose and wished to uncover and maintain it. In a lecture given by him on 13 August 1925 to the members of *SNH*, Herzfeld declared:

*“Since the Aryan tribes, or more precisely because of them, this country is called ‘Iranshahr’, that is about nine centuries before Christ, and the true ancient heritage of Iran dates from this period...The nation has reached the zenith of its culture at least on four occasions; first the Achaemenian period when Iran was the centre of the known world and lived in security for two hundred and fifty years, ....”*

(Herzfeld cited in Grigor 2004:27)

Herzfeld went on to identify the Sassanid, Seljuk, and Safavid periods as the other pillars of ‘cultural thrive’ in the Iranian civilisation and affirmed the ‘superiority’ of Iranians in comparison with young

European civilisations (ibid.). The highlighting of the Aryan tribe and their racial continuation into Achaemenid and subsequent Iranian dynasties, as well as the ‘superiority’ of Iranians in comparison with other civilisations, is well illustrated in Herzfeld’s initial efforts to gain a favourable attitude from Iranian officials, in particular the members of *SNH*. His success in attaining this trust granted him the position of Directing the Persepolis restorations. Iranian support for Herzfeld soon deteriorated as they felt betrayed following the dispute over division of finds at Persepolis.

Arthur Pope was another expert who gained Iranians’ respect through emphasising the concepts of ‘continuity’ and ‘superiority’ with various speeches that glorified the Iranian civilisation. His most influential speech was made on 22 April 1925 in the presence of members of Iranian Parliament, some of whom were affiliated with *SNH*, and Reza Shah, about “The Art of Iran in the Past and the Future” (Pope cited in Gluck & Silver 1938:93-110). Wilber (1975:98) argued that this speech made a deep and lasting impact on Reza Shah who envisaged the claims of Pope in perfect harmony with his revitalised image of Iran. Pope continued to advocate the revival of ancient glories and the restoration of Iran’s ancient civilisations by appealing to Iranian authorities and insisting on State support for undertaking the essential task of a new renaissance in Iran (Grigor 2004:32). His emphasis on the glories of ancient Iran gained him Iranian confidence and enabled him to prepare the ground for granting the Persepolis concession to Americans. In 1935 Pope was rewarded with a special decoration for this “cultural service to Persia” following the publication of *Survey of Persian Art* (Gholi Majd 2003:14). The above argument illustrates that the mediators between the Pahlavi Court and the American archaeological institutes had comprehended the ethnic-dynastic model of Iranian nationalism and through its adoption acquired the permission to excavate at Persepolis in 1930. In other words, it may be argued that the entrusting of Persepolis to an American institute stemmed directly from the elevated status that Herzfeld and Pope enjoyed within the *SNH*.

For Americans, the Persepolis excavations would constitute an opportunity to expand their activities in the Middle East and earn credibility for their academic institutions. Despite initial rivalry between American institutes, in 1931 Herzfeld was able to obtain a permit and secure financial supports from Ada Small Moore, a wealthy benefactress, under the auspice of the Oriental Institute of Chicago to launch work at Persepolis (Mousavi 2002:224). However, there were many disputes over the substance of the permit granted to the Institute. Recent research has demonstrated that the permission granted to the Americans was restricted to “restoration” and “preservation” of the monuments (ibid.; Gholi Majd 2003:19). This claim is verified in an official letter from Teymourtash, the Court Minister, to the Iranian Embassy in Paris, that “no excavation permit was given to foreign institutes” and the Oriental Institute was merely responsible for the “preservation of historic monuments at Persepolis” (Mousavi 2002:225).

In 1925, Herzfeld himself had acknowledged through a correspondence with Jayne, Director of University Museum of Pennsylvania, that “Persepolis is and always will be outside any possible law of antiquity” and therefore that there was no prospect for the division of finds (Goode 2007:157; Gholi Majd 2003:19-20). In another correspondence between Herzfeld and Teymourtach, the latter articulates that he would prefer for all Iranian antiquities to remain unexcavated than to see them taken away by foreigners (Mousavi 2005:461). Further details are available through the analysis of the collection of correspondence between *Vezerat-e Ma'aref* (Ministry of Education) and the Oriental Institute of Chicago. According to these documents, the American activities at Persepolis were restricted to “clearing the surface of Persepolis from debris and waste; provision of substance for the protection of monuments and the restoration of dispersed pieces; repair and restoration of *Darius Palace*; and the refurbishment of the irrigation canals” (Yazdani 2001:217-25). Subsequent to the intensification of dispute between the Iranian Government and the Oriental Institute, the challenge over the division of finds turned into a political conflict between Iran and the United States as the American Foreign Ministry became involved. Finally under pressure from the American Foreign Ministry, Breasted, Herzfeld, and Godard, the Iranian Government agreed to “donate” certain discovered items from Persepolis to the Institute as an act of gratitude (ibid.). These items were “donated” with the permission of the Shah himself, granted that their equivalent was offered to Iran and the items given to Americans were not of unique value (ibid.).

Considering the lack of bureaucratic verification for the division of finds at Persepolis in the official document, an obvious debate escalates over the Iranian consent in agreeing with the requests of the Oriental Institute as opposed to terminating the excavations. Gholi Majd (2003:20) argued that the Iranian response was induced by their fear of adverse publicity for Iran by Americans if they refuse to “donate” some of the finds to the sponsoring institutes. In this thesis, it is additionally argued that considering the economic constraints and the lack of Iranian expertise in uncovering the ‘glories of Ancient Persia’, the division of finds was justified as an reimbursement for the service that the Americans provided in the revival of Iranian past. Therefore, it is argued that the incentive for the “donations” made to Americans, was driven by nationalist convictions. Such approaches demonstrate the nature of Iranian nationalism as a double-edge blade that exchanged a portion of its past for the recovery of a reservoir of historical accounts to build a nation. As will be illustrated in the remaining of this section, following the reluctant division of finds, the Iranians directed their attention to constructive propagandas that portrayed the discoveries at Persepolis as a manifestation of Iran as a great civilisation.

Having argued that the motives behind permitting excavations at Persepolis during the first Pahlavi period were driven by nationalistic ideals, the manipulation of the discoveries at Persepolis for the purpose of implementing ethnic-dynastic nationalism is evaluated. In his analysis, Smith (1999:176) illustrated the



role of archaeology in the formation of nations by arguing for the cultural platform that archaeology facilitates in promoting dignity and authority as well as bolstering self-esteem. In the case of Iran, this dignity and authority was driven from the discoveries at Persepolis. In the following, attention is drawn to three discoveries, two of which prompted state visits by Reza Shah himself to the site.

In 1933 while clearing the courtyard between the *Hall of One Hundred Columns* and *Apadana*, Herzfeld discovered an archive of 30000 inscribed sealed clay tablets that documented the nature of life and economy in the Empire (Mousavi 2002:228). Later that year, Krefter, the engineer and architect of the expedition, uncovered the *Apadana Foundation Tablets* (ibid.:230). The last major discovery was made in March 1936 with Schmidt's recovery of the *Treasury of Persepolis* and the *Darius Audience Relief* (ibid.:232). The latter two events were followed by official publicities and State visits. With respect to the *Apadana Foundation Tablets*, it is argued that the four inscribed silver and gold tablets were highlighted to articulate the grandeur and territorial extent of the Persian Empire. These tablets became the symbol of the 'golden age' when Iran enjoyed a great cultural and military supremacy over its neighbours. On their discovery, Reza Shah expressed his satisfaction through a personal letter (Goode 2007:152). Later in October 1933, Reza Shah visited Persepolis where he expressed his gratitude to Herzfeld for "doing a work of civilisation" (Mousavi 2002:231). During the inauguration of Tehran University and in emulation of the Achaemenid costumes at Persepolis, Reza Shah placed a Golden Foundation Plate in a marble box and set in the cornerstone of the University (see Chapter 2). The fervor of archaeological discoveries at Persepolis continued with the excavations of Schmidt who replaced Herzfeld in 1935. His discoveries of the *Treasury of Persepolis* and the *Darius Audience Relief* were followed by a second symbolic visit from Reza Shah and Mohammad Reza Shah, shortly after the Iranian New Year. Schmidt, who had long waited for a permit to fly over Iran to collect aerial photographs, staged a parallelism between the depiction of Darius and his son Xerxes on the *Darius Audience Relief* and Reza Shah and his Crown Prince (Fig. 5.6) (Gursan-Salzman 2007:78). This flattery impressed the Shah and persuaded him to grant Schmidt the permission to launch his aerial survey of archaeological monuments using his plane *The Friend of Iran*, despite security cautions from the Ministry of War (ibid.).

In addition to the manipulation of the structural façade of Persepolis as an instrument for the implementation of ethnic-dynastic nationalism, the customs and beliefs of the kings of Persepolis were employed in producing the official's narrative of 'iranianness'. These were particularly concerned with *Zoroastrian* customs and the promotion of ancient festivals (Vaziri 1993:197). The use of the title *Shahanshah* (King of Kings) to relate to the Achaemenid kings of Persepolis also gained prominence during this period (Ansari 2003:61). The traces of Persepolis motifs can also be seen on stamps, banknotes and the architectural style of official buildings (Sarkhosh-Curtis 2005:256). In fact, the

majority of principal public buildings constructed during this period, such as the *Edarey-e Police* (Police Headquarters), *Vezeerat-e Omor Kharejeh* (Foreign Ministry), and *Bank-e Melli* (National Bank) were inspired by Achaemenid motifs (Fig. 5.7) (Ehlers & Floor 1993:258). The employment of neo-Classical Achaemenid elements of design were so extensive that Vartan Avanesian who himself had taken part in the construction of some of these building protested against the use of “lions and cows” that have turn Tehran into a Zoo (Marefat 1988:135). Even the *Ferdowsi* mausoleum, constructed in 1934 was heavily adorned with borrowed motifs from Persepolis (Grigor 2004:37).

A review of the archaeological activities at Persepolis is a manifestation of the potentials of this site to satisfy the pre-occupation of Reza Shah’s Government with enhancing national unity and international prestige. By the end of 1930s the co-operations between the Iranian Government and American institutes at Persepolis came to a halt. Various arguments have been proposed for the termination of these collaborations. Goode (2004:171-2) focused on the death of Breasted and the withdrawal of the Rockefeller Foundations which left the expedition without secured financial support to maintain work. Schmidt partially succeeded in resolving this crisis through merging the University Museum of Pennsylvania, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts, and the Thompson Foundation, in creating the *Joint Expedition to Persia* (Blacer 1991:155). Apart from financial difficulties, tension had grown following Schmidt’s effort to direct expeditions in Rey and Luristan, alongside his work at Persepolis. The significance of Persepolis as a national symbol was so excessive that the authorities demanded Schmidt’s undivided attention at the site. Therefore, as Mousavi (2002:234) argued, Schmidt’s tendencies to concentrate on scientific aspects of the excavation as opposed to the nationalistic significance of the site, led to further dissatisfaction of the Government. Indeed the main purpose of Schmidt’s excavations at Persepolis focused on developing a ceramic and cultural sequence (Blacer 1991:147). Thus it can be concluded that while the Americans were increasingly leaning towards scientific approaches to study Iranian archaeology, the Iranian authorities had seldom comprehended the scientific value of the discipline and insisted on employing its manipulative features for political purposes. By the end of 1930s, the American positions about the archaeological value of Persepolis changed and eventually the site lost its appeal. Correspondence from Horace Jayne, Director of the University Museum of Pennsylvania in 1936, unfolds the American pessimism for the discovery of anything of “real scientific value” at Persepolis (ibid.:155). The mounting challenges of conducting excavations with the outbreak of World War II further added to the Americans’ dilemma to continue their expeditions in Iran. It is therefore argued, that an amalgam of these complications combined with the institutionalisation of Iranian archaeology through the establishment of the Department of Archaeology in 1937 terminated American excavations at Persepolis in 1939.

This section has argued that in a period replete with tension, Persepolis became the medium to foster the ethnic-dynastic nationalism that Reza Shah's Government adopted in order to confirm the cultural 'continuity' and 'superiority' of Iranians. In other words, Persepolis provided Iranians with a common historical and cultural past, and facilitated not only the unification of the multi-ethnic Iranian society, but the confirmation of the political supremacy of the Persian Empire. With the outbreak of World War II the validity of this embraced 'supremacy' was once again challenged as the Allies occupied Iran and threatened its sovereignty. In the following section the treatment of Persepolis under Mohammad Reza Shah is the subject of investigation.

#### **5.4.2. Mohammad Reza Shah's Government & Dynastic Nationalism: Pre-Islamic Archaeology**

The fostering of ethnic-dynastic nationalism continued to be the dominant Pahlavi ideology as Mohammad Reza Shah ascended to power in 1941. Accordingly, the themes of Iranian cultural 'continuity' and 'superiority' that had laid the foundation for the Pahlavi dynasty continued to prevail. Crucial to this period, and as the result of socio-economical improvements that accompanied the nationalisation of oil and the reforms of the 'White Revolution', was the Government's intensified propagation of dynastic aspects of nationalism through the adoption of a cult that increasingly centred on the significance of monarchy and the persona of the Shah. As Ansari (2003:126) argued, this cult of personality grew from the stigma of illegitimacy that threatened the Shah's Government considering his initial installation by the Allies and given that his reforms failed to crystallise a constructive relationship with the society. To surmount these obstacles, the Shah aspired to build a bridge between himself and the great kings of the past (Hoveyda 1980:87). Therefore, he presented himself as an heir to Cyrus, resurrected to save and lead the nation towards a "Great Civilisation". The cult of Cyrus entailed additional manipulation on Persepolis as the first Capital of the Persian Empire. It was in compliance with these themes that in 1971 Persepolis became the platform for celebrating the Anniversary of 2500 years of Persian Monarchy and through it emerged as the epitome of archaeological manipulation in Iranian history.

While the motifs of Persepolis remained pre-eminent within the Pahlavi propaganda, the extensive exploitation of the monument was pending on two imperative issues; the ailing Iranian economy and the absence of Iranian expertise to manage archaeological projects. The active utilisation of Persepolis for political purposes was synonymous with the economic upsurge that followed the rise of oil revenue in the 1960s and the emergence of archaeology as a scientific discipline. In other words, the manipulation of Persepolis began once funding became more accessible and Iran was able to entrust work to Iranian

experts. Drawing on the contributions of economic surplus to this improvement, it can be argued that in confirmation with Gellner's (2008: xxxix) notion of nationalism, the tenets of nationalism during the second Pahlavi period increasingly relied on modernity and industrialisation, which were manifested in the Shah's slogan of the march "towards the Great Civilisation" (Pahlavi & Pahlavi 1994). As the progress made by institutionalisation became apparent and economic surplus began to grow, the Government began to validate the Shah's claims to authenticity and thus the preliminary stages for the adoption of archaeological sites as political instruments were implemented.

The dearth of Iranian expertise to excavate and manage major archaeological sites was an additional restriction that prevented the extensive use of Persepolis for political purposes. This trend was altered with the outbreak of World War II. The War had unprecedented repercussions for Iranian archaeology as foreign archaeological expeditions terminated their activities and left. Persepolis, too, was affected as the Americans left and the *GOA* took over the excavations with a limited budget that Godard secured from an Iranian living in France (Mousavi 2002:235). During the initial phases of Mohammad Reza Shah's reign, while the Government was struggling for political stability, various Iranian archaeologists who were previously overshadowed by foreign excavators emerged to contribute to the study and preservation of Persepolis (see 5.2). Nevertheless, considering the symbolic merits of Persepolis for the Iranian Government, all available resources, including young amateur archaeologists, were harnessed to preserve and study the site. With training opportunities at Persepolis, some of these individuals became successful archaeologists.

Despite interest in Persepolis, funding remained scarce. Apart from minor donations, a correspondence between the Ministry of Culture and Finance indicates that exceptions were made for Isa Behnam, the Director at Persepolis in 1940, to receive 50 *Rials* a day towards his living expenses, when the standard wage was set at 3 *Rials* (Yazdani 2001:215). In spite of insufficient funding, archaeological activities continued until 1960s when a lift in Iranian economy permitted improved funding opportunities. Prior to the economic surge, although the effort of major figures such as Ali Sami contributed to the understanding of Persepolis, the majority of protective measures that were assumed, including the application of protective wax and setting up huge metallic roofs, were outdated and later corrected by the Italian team who started conservation at Persepolis in 1964 (Tilia 1978:68; Mousavi 2002:238). Sami's acquired authority following years of experience at Persepolis made him a suitable candidate for the Directorship of the *Bongah-e Elmi-e Takht-e Jamshid* (Scientific Bureau at Persepolis), which was established towards the end of the 1950s (Mousavi 2002:236). Prior to the foundation of this Bureau, the allocation of an institute for the study of a single archaeological site was unprecedented in Iran.

By the end of 1960s Mohammad Reza Shah's Government had addressed the economic problems and employed Iranian archaeologists to manage what was perceived as the most paramount national archaeological site, Persepolis. Given this premise, the Shah then confronted his Government's lack of legitimacy by embarking on a project to improve the frail national sovereignty of Iran. Considering the symbolic connotations of Persepolis with concepts of 'continuity' and 'superiority', the site once again became an emblem of pride, this time for the political quests of Mohammad Reza Shah's Government.

#### ***5.4.2.1. Mohammad Reza Shah's Concerns over Legitimacy***

As discussed previously, similar to Reza Shah, the struggle for legitimising the Government continued with Mohammad Reza Shah as he strove to gain authority after the Allies occupation of Iran and the abduction and exile of his father. This crisis was approached through the Government's adoption of a narrative that supported the "myth of saviour" and cultivation of "dynastic nationalism" (Ansari 2005:326). In the following, each of these approaches and their influence on the treatment of the pre-Islamic site of Persepolis is discussed in detail.

The Allies forced the abdication of Reza Shah in 1941 and installed his Crown Prince, Mohammad Reza Shah but many then perceived the Pahlavis as an instrument of Western imperialism. The Government's legitimacy was further undermined with the rise of "secular nationalism" under the political mandates of Mohammad Mosaddeq (ibid.:325). The nationalisation of oil by Mosaddeq identified the latter as the new 'saviour' of the people, a role previously reserved for the Shah. As Ansari argued, it was only after the fall of Mosaddeq in 1953 that the Shah gradually consolidated his rule and implemented his version of nationalism (ibid.:326) through instigating new traditions. Mohammad Reza Shah's "myth of saviour" was in stark contrast with that of Reza Shah. Considering Hobsbawm's notion of "invented tradition" (Hobsbawm & Ranger:2012), the "myth of saviour" invented by Reza Shah's Government was assumed to promote national unity and emancipation from Western influences, while Mohammad Reza Shah's Government adopted a version that centred on the promotion of the institution of monarchy as the only legitimate form of government. This inclination intensified following the growth of political awareness in the mid 1900s and the possibility of alternative modes of government. Therefore, the 'invented traditions' that accommodated Mohammad Reza Shah's "myth of saviour" centred on the adoption of the institution of monarchy as the only legitimate government that could lead the nation towards prosperity (Ansari 2005:326). In doing so, he claimed direct lineage with the founders of the Ancient Persian Empire. To accommodate these policies the Government made numerous references to Persepolis to articulate the pre-existing traditions and symbols of ancient monarchies. Some of these references included the

incorporation of motifs from Persepolis on the banknote issued in 1958 to inaugurate the opening of *Mehrabad International Airport* (Fig. 5.8), and the motif of lotus flower from Persepolis displayed on stamps published in 1969 to commemorate the sixth anniversary of the White Revolution (Fig. 5.9). Both of these examples demonstrate the efforts of the Government to cultivate an image of a charitable king who was determined to save his country through providing public services and national reforms. Apart from the distinct associations with the notion of “myth of saviour”, an additional issue that dissociated the two Pahlavi periods centred on the different emphasis on ethnic-dynastic nationalism. Although the principle mandates of the Pahlavi Administration in general focused on the sponsorship of both brands of nationalism, a distinctive feature of the second Pahlavi era was a pronounced lenience towards dynastic elements of nationalism and the institution of monarchy in particular.

In Chapter 4, it was discussed that despite the adoption of dynastic nationalism, Mohammad Reza Shah’s Government continued the discourse of advocating ethnic elements of Iranian nationalism through the adoption of the title “Aryamehr” in 1965. Further, the very effort to identify Mohammad Reza Shah as a direct heir of Cyrus was indicative of the dissemination of ideologies, ‘continuity’ and ‘superiority’, which rested on ethnic nationalism. A prudent investigation, however, testifies that while reliance on ethnic nationalism continued in racial terms, there was a growing reliance on the dynastic elements of nationalism as an apparatus to institutionalise the monarchy during the second Pahlavi period. As Ansari (2005:326) contended, this shift in substance was justified by illustrating the absolute dependency of Iran, as a nation, on the continuation of the institution of monarchy. The advocacy of dynastic nationalism required the instigation of the dynastic past, which was promoted through various celebrations. These celebrations included the Shah’s Coronation in 1967, the Anniversary of 2500 years of Persian Monarchy in 1971, and the 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the Foundation of the Pahlavi Dynasty in 1976. Considering the focus of this chapter on Persepolis, this section will analyse the role of the Persepolis celebrations of 1971 in fostering the brand of nationalism adopted by Mohammad Reza Shah’s Government. Additional references are made to the adoption of the Cyrus Cylinder as a symbolic artefact that further harboured the Government’s rhetoric of dynastic nationalism.

It is important to state that the Government’s inclination towards dynastic nationalism in this period had a distinct implication for the treatment of Persepolis. While during the first Pahlavi period Persepolis was struggling to reclaim its place in history and used as an apparatus to recuperate Iran’s sovereignty, during the second Pahlavi period, the monument was presented as the symbol of Iranian monarchy and military power. The climactic event that showcased the centrality of Persepolis as an instrument of the Government’s dynastic nationalism was the celebration of the Anniversary of 2500 years of Persian

Monarchy. As Hoveyda (1989:87) argued, the Persepolis celebrations were aimed at exhibiting the ‘continuity’ of Iranian history and the uninterrupted line of Iranian monarchy on the global stage. He further suggested that the celebration signified the “re-awakening of national pride and Iran’s rich heritage”, while highlighting the confidence of “achievements” in the 1970s (Hoveyda 2003:26). Ansari further maintained that the Persepolis celebration was based on the two premises of “centrality of monarchy” and “military might” that persisted in Iran since the birth of the Persian Empire and continued with the reign of the Pahlavis (Ansari 2003:171). Having had illustrated the centrality of monarchy and its influence on transforming Persepolis to a platform for the Government’s dynastic nationalism, the next section will address Iran’s concerns over its lack of military power.

#### ***5.4.2.2. National Sovereignty & Military Might***

It has thus been argued that Mohammad Reza Shah’s Government adopted dynastic nationalism to instigate a “myth of saviour” that legitimised the institution of monarchy and thus consolidated the Shah’s role as a monarch. In addition to overcoming the issue of the Shah’s illegitimacy, the Government had to address the serious threats to Iran’s national sovereignty following the country’s invasion by the Allies (Shakibi 2007:88). During this period, Iran’s homogeneity was further undermined with the separatist movements of the Soviet Kurdistan and Azerbaijan in 1945 (Chehabi 1990:10). The Government addressed these problems by investing in a myth that advocated the military might of the Ancient Persian Empire and by further engineering the illusion of Iran’s march towards a “Great Civilisation”. As shall be illustrated, the military parade exhibited in the Persepolis celebrations was a direct reference to the Government’s projection of the power of the Persian Empire. In addition, as Milani (2008:26) has asserted, the growing oil income allowed the Shah to pursue his dream of becoming a dominant military power in the region. Drawing on pre-existing traditions and heritage of Iranian dynasties and their military might, Persepolis was selected as a prominent platform for broadcasting this grand design to the world.

The vision of Mohammad Reza Shah’s dynastic nationalism was fostered by a group of nationalists who sought refuge in re-evoking the glories of Ancient Persia to surpass the frailty of Iran’s sovereignty after its occupation by the Allies. Among them was Shojaeddin Shafa (1971:18) who in 1958 proposed the idea of holding a ceremony at Persepolis to highlight Iran’s imperial past (see Simpson 2013:75-76). The project was welcomed by the Shah since he had been entertaining the idea of re-introducing a new modern Iran, with an authentic heritage, to the world for a long time. Announcements were made that the celebration would be held in 1962 to coincide chronologically with the anniversary of the foundation of

Persian Empire by Cyrus (ibid.). The ceremony was further postponed to 1971 “due to more pressing matters” (ibid.).

#### **5.4.2.3. Persepolis Celebrations**

In the previous section it was argued that although the proposal to hold a ceremony at Persepolis was submitted in 1962, the event was postponed to 1971. This delay may be attributed to the inadequacy of financial resources to execute a large scale celebration. The dearth of sufficient funding was overcome towards the end of 1960s and early 1970s as the reforms of the White Revolution and the increasing oil revenues lifted the Iranian economy (Milani 2008:25). In addition, as Ansari (2003:172) argued, this intermediate period was effectively used by various committees to introduce and familiarise the general public with Cyrus and Achaemenid history. Indeed the Pahlavi propaganda machine worked overtime to present the Shah’s narrative of monarchy through the arrangement of cultural, social, educational and economic activities. The names of Cyrus and Darius were adopted to all aspects of socio-political life, for example, Darius the Great Dam constructed in 1965; the Farm Corporation of Darius the Great established as a part of land reforms in early 1970s; Shahbazi’s publication *Cyrus the Great* selected as the book of the year in 1970. Further, the *Organisation of Attracting Tourism* was established in 1963 to initiate campaigns that introduced Iranian historic sites to a worldwide audience. Persepolis was one of the major historic sites advertised by this campaign. Additional efforts to promote Iran’s competence as a tourist destination include the 1969 issue of *Vogue Magazine* when Henry Clarke went to Iran to photograph European models posing in mosques and palaces, showcasing various tourist destinations in Iran (<http://shahrefarang.com/en/vogue-iran>). This edition was accompanied with pictures from Persepolis (Fig. 5.10), an article about the Iranian Empress Farah Diba, and the convenience of flying to Iran by the newly established airline company of *Iran Air*. It may be argued that the establishment of the Iranian tourism infrastructure, an airline company, and the Persepolis celebrations, were part of a unified effort to cultivate an image that presented Iran as a modern country, with an emerging economy for investment opportunities, while offering a taste of a rich ancient heritage. This rhetoric was best summarised in the October issue of *National Geographic Magazine* where modern Iranian elements were combined with a relief from Persepolis to advertise flights to Iran by *Iran Air* (Fig. 5.11). In fact the logo of *Iran Air* was the figure of the head of the mythical griffin from Persepolis (Kermani 2013).

The appropriation of Persepolis as a symbol of Iranian civilisation and elegance through international propagandas, transformed the site into a popular tourist destination for travellers and politicians alike. In 1961, the Queen and the Duke of Edinburgh were driven from Shiraz to Persepolis accompanied by the



Shah himself (*The Time* 1961:9). In 1963, President De Gaulle arrived at Tehran for a meeting and subsequently paid a visit to Persepolis (*The Times* 1963:10). In 1964 King Baudouin and Queen Fabiola of Belgium toured the site (*The Times* 1964:10). In addition, starting in 1964 the *International Shiraz Art Festival* was held annually in the city with various performances at Persepolis. The celebrations were funded by the Pahlavi Foundation, a patronage organisation established by the court in 1958 (see Chapter 2), and showcased an array of national and international cultural activities in art, music, and theatre, that complemented the Government's adopted narratives of the traditional Persian culture (Fig. 5.12) (Gluck 2007:21). Among the more notable performances at Persepolis were the orchestral concert of Olivier Messiaen in 1969 (Hardly 1969:8), the French O.R.T.F Choir concert, Ravi Shankar's performance of *Vis and Ramin* in 1970, Iannis Xenakis play of *Polytope de Persepolis* at the *Darius Palace* in 1971, and the electronic music events by Stockhausen, John Cage, David Tudor and Gordon Mumma who along with Merce Cunningham Dance Company transformed Persepolis to a platform for avant-garde forms of expressions in 1972 (Fig. 5.13) (Gluck 2007:23). Through these cultural efforts the Pahlavi Administration aimed to assign a significant role to the city of Shiraz with its pre-Islamic symbols at Persepolis. In other words, the overarching tenor of these festivals was the cultivation and promotion of an Iranian identity that was intrinsically ancient and modern.

To prepare the site of Persepolis for these celebrations further restorations were required. In 1961 a restoration team from the *Italian Institute of the Middle and Far East (IsMEO)* was sent to Iran to repair various historic buildings (Fig. 5.14). In his book, *Mission for My Country*, Mohammad Reza Shah explained that the advance in Iranian-Italian cultural relations were the result of his visit to Italy in 1958 (Pahlavi 1961:113). These relations were maintained and reciprocated in forms of cultural missions, lectures, and publications until the Revolution. As a part of these collaborations, in 1973, Empress Farah Diba provided patronage for the restoration of a monument in Venice while inaugurating the exhibition of "The Republic of Venice and Persia" in the same year (*East & West* 1973:426). Additionally, in 1974 a set of stamps were issued in support of the *Save Venice Campaign* (Fig. 5.15).

With respect to Persepolis in 1964, *IsMEO* was granted the task of restoring and reconstructing the monuments in collaboration with *NOCHMI* and the Iranian Archaeology Department. The restoration began under the Direction of Cesare Carbone in 1964 and was entrusted to Guiseppe Tilia in 1965 only to be terminated with the Revolution (Tucci 1972: XII). The core of restoration activities were concerned with clearing the site from debris and reassemble blocks and fragments that were either scattered around the site, assembled in the wrong order by previous teams, or had been stored in the storehouse of the Museum (*East & West* 1968:446; 1970:511). In some cases, such as the northern doorway of the *Palace of Darius*, fragments were brought from *Qasr Abu Nasr* and the valley north of the Terrace to reassemble

architectural elements (*East & West* 1972:395). In cases where fragments could not be recovered, restorations continued by employing carved pieces from the same quarries near Persepolis that were used during the Achaemenids (Tucci 1978: XI). It is here argued that considering the central role of Persepolis as a symbol that represented an authentic but modern monarchy, *IsMEO*'s efforts in restoring palace complexes were vital in providing a physical platform to showcase the new image of Iran and the military power of the Persian Empire during the Persepolis celebrations.

It would be misleading to constrict the activities of *IsMEO* to the recreation of parts of Persepolis. In the process of these projects, which were in accordance with standards established in Athens and Venice (*ibid.*), the team gained valuable knowledge of Achaemenid building techniques and architecture (Tilia 1972:42-3). Other investigations addressed the issues of chronology; the raised platform on which the complex was constructed; the walls around the site; the secondary entrance on the southern terrace; as well as the original colours and designs that adorned various sections of the complex (Tilia 1978). In addition to the above, *IsMEO* removed the protective wax that the Iranian Archaeological Service had applied on the surface of the complex, following the departure of the Americans. They argued this substance was harmful to the stones, and in addition to giving the rock material a dull, brownish-black effect, it prevented spectators from seeing the original colours (*ibid.*:68). The involvement of *IsMEO* had unprecedented outcomes in training Iranian archaeologists and conservators who collaborated with the *NOCHMI* (see Chapters 2 & 6). The results of *IsMEO*'s activities were published in three volumes (Tilia 1969; 1972; 1978).

The restoration and study of Persepolis under the auspice of Italian Directors was in close collaboration with the excavation undertaken by Akbar Tajvidi. In 1969 the *GOA* approved Tajvidi's research project granted that it did not pose any obstacles for the preparation of the Persepolis celebrations (Mousavi 2002:240). As Mousavi (1992:204; 2002:243) contended, the overarching significance of Tajvidi's project was the study of the original purpose of the Persepolis complex, which he argued to be a military fortress transformed into a ceremonial city, and the articulation of the nature of urbanism at the site. In doing so, Tajvidi (1973; Mousavi 1992) directed the core of his research towards the study of fortifications on *Kuh-e Rahmat* (Rahmat Mountain) and the defensive system of Persepolis. The focus on military power of the Achaemenid and their defensive system is noteworthy considering the Government's rhetoric and its stress on the military power of Iran-ancient and modern. Considering the significance of Persepolis for the Government, Tajvidi's project benefited from the generous funds available for the preparation of Persepolis celebrations (Mousavi 2002:240). In an interview, Abdolreza Ansari estimated the entire budget for the celebrations around 22 million U.S. *Dollars* (Kadivar 2002:145) whilst others estimated the cost to be between 100 to 200 million U.S. *Dollars* (Diamond

2005:223; Nafisi 1993:22). The budget allocated to the Persepolis project is not clear, however, it was due to initiatives taken during this period that the outdated *Scientific Bureau of Persepolis* established by Sami in the 1950s was revitalised and began its function under the Direction of Alireza Shahpour Shahbazi as *Bonyad-e Hakhamaneshi Takht-e Jamshid* (Institute of Achaemenid Studies) in 1974 (Mousavi 2012:212).

Apart from restoration and excavations, Persepolis had to be prepared for the celebrations. Therefore, in 1960-1970 additional excavations were carried by the Italian team to accompany the installation of flood-lights and acoustics at Persepolis (Tilia 1972:64). The installations were exchanged in 1971 by the French company of Philips (ibid.). Perhaps this was a prelude to the French speech made on behalf of Darius during the *Son et lumière* at the night of the celebration.

On the eve of 14 October 1971, royalty and representatives of 64 nations arrived at a banquet set in a tented city prepared in 160 acres on the footsteps of Persepolis. Mohammad Reza Shah had insisted that his 600 foreign guests camp outside Persepolis as ancient Assyrians, Lydians, Armenians, Arabs, and Babylonians had done during the Achaemenid period (Grigor 2005:25). The celebration had three focal locations in Pasargadae, Persepolis, and Tehran, with the mutual purpose of re-introducing Iran as a modern monarchy with high ambitions and strong roots in the ancient past. In doing so the Shah presented himself as the heir and follower of Cyrus, the founder of the Persian Empire (Hoveyda 2003:39). The three day celebrations began with the Shah paying tribute to Cyrus at his tomb at Pasargadae. In the evening the guests were received at a grand banquet in Persepolis. The celebrations commenced with a brief speech from the Shah, welcoming the presence of many Heads of States in the “land of Cyrus, Darius and Xerxes”. The reference to ancient kings continued as the first day of festivities concluded with the *son et lumière* that narrated the story of Persepolis among its ruins. Ansari as one of the collaborators of the celebrations recalled:

*“From the tomb in the mountainside overlooking the ruined palaces where he ruled 500 years before Christ, the voice of Darius the Great spoke in the dark, but in French. Andre Castelot, France's eminent historian, recounted the glories of Xerxes and the last days of the Persian empire. The columns of Persepolis were bathed in white light then gradually they turned red and the sound of fire mixed with the drunken orgy of Greek soldiers. It was the sacking of Persepolis by Alexander all over again. The guests were thrilled and applauded.”* (Ansari cited in Kadivar 2002)

The celebrations continued on the second day as the core of the festivities remained in Persepolis. The morning tour at Persepolis by Heads of States accompanied by the Iranian Royal Family was followed by

a parade that held the site as its background (ibid.). The grand attempt in showcasing two and a half millennia of conquest, military power, and imperial glory of Iran, began with yet another instigation of tradition that made a reference to the ancient kings (Fig. 5.16). Prior to making his third speech at the festivities, the Shah received a box from two officers dressed in Achaemenid uniforms travelling from Tehran on a horseback to deliver a message to the Shah. The box contained a manuscript prepared according to ancient traditions, sent from the Senate and the Chamber of Deputies who congratulated the Shah on his achievements (ibid.). Before the parade, the Shah made his third speech:

*“2500 years ago, one of the sons of this nation, Cyrus the Achaemenian, who incidentally belongs not only to our own heritage but also to that of the world and humanity, brought about a fundamental change... He institutionalised new ways in governing based on respect for the rights and beliefs of individuals... Many after him, followed his footsteps, which has in essence resulted in an evolutionary process for humanity to get ever closer to the utopia of a perfect society ... In the course of 2500 years, every inch of this soil, had been coloured with the blood of her gallant sons and daughters so Iran may live proudly forever. This land of ours has suffered from quite a few incursion, many came to pillage and bring this nation to its knees, yet, they have all vanquished and Iran remains intact.”* (Ansari cited in Kadivar 2002).

Following the speech hundreds of drums accompanied 6000 soldiers into a colourful parade that represented all the Iranian dynasties and their imperial warriors in an evolutionary manner. The soldiers dressed in authentic uniforms were accompanied by horses, camels and three enormous warships while re-enacting various epochs of Iranian history, including the Arab invasion of the seventh-century (ibid.). The military might of the Persian dynasties and their unbroken continuity was the pinnacle of the parade. Hoveyda (2003:85) maintained that through this event, Persepolis had once again turned into the “centre of the universe”, an “international capital”, where Heads of State and Governments met to settle global issues. The event was televised to “tens of millions around the world” and continued with another set of celebrations in Tehran (ibid.). The narrative of drawing lineage between Cyrus and Mohammad Reza Shah continued by negotiating the loan of Cyrus Cylinder (Appendix II, Doc 1) from the British Museum and exhibiting it at the iconic *Shahyad Monument* (the Royal Memorial) (later *Azadi*), which was built in 1971 as a part of preparations of the Persepolis ceremonies. The housing of the Cyrus Cylinder, the adopted symbol of Iranian ancient heritage by the Government, at the *Shahyad Monument*, which was a symbol of Iran’s modern identity, was a significant part of the Shah’s social engineering towards a “Great Civilisation”. It is important to note that although the Cylinder was discovered in Babylon during

excavations in 1879 by Hormuzd Rassam on behalf of the British Museum (Walker 1972:158; Taylor 2013; Curtis 2013:31-36), by 1950 it had already acquired an Iranian identity when, Abul Kalam Azad, the Indian Minister of Culture, contended that the *Zolgharnein* mentioned in the *Holy Quran* was in fact Cyrus the Great. Azad's work was immediately translated by Bastani Parizi and his effort to incorporate Cyrus in the *Quran* was welcomed by many including Said Nafisi, who in 1951 wrote, "it is a great honour to know that *Quran* was a promoter of the great Iranian king ... and we owe this to Abdul Kalam Azad" (Nafisi cited in Bastani Parizi 2001:148). Azad's arguments fostered the incorporation of Cyrus into a more holistic view of Iranian identity, respected by secularists, monarchists, and Islamists.

The Government's preparations for the Persepolis celebrations was accompanied by the adoption of the Cyrus Cylinder as an instrument to further present its narrative of dynastic nationalism. Although the political utilisation of the Cylinder had already begun in the 1960s, the artefact was now being adopted in the context of the celebrations, not only to promote the institute of monarchy as the sole contender and most appropriate form of government for Iran, but also to foster the projected image of Iran as a model for the Third World economic development (Burke 1968) and authority in human rights (Bailey 2004). In both these cases, references were made to Cyrus, as the founder of the Persian Empire, who laid the ground for an 'enlightened' and 'liberal' system of monarchy revived by Mohammad Reza Shah. The manifestation of this rhetoric was best visible in the Shah's opening remarks at the 1968 *Tehran International Conference on Human Rights*, when he credited Cyrus as the founding father of human rights which has found fulfillment in the Pahlavi dynasty (<http://legal.un.org/avl/ha/fatchr/fatchr.html>). As Burke (1968:287) argued, this conference was to promote the modernisation programmes laid by the White Revolution, as a model for all Third World countries. In a way, Iran proclaimed itself as the champion of a distinctive Third World human rights ideology and an exemplar for other developing countries where human rights were equated with economic developments imposed by the traditionalist regimes (ibid.:285). These policies were further affirmed by the Shah's twin sister, Princess Ashraf Pahlavi, who was active in the *UN* as a Commissioner and an advocate of women's right (ibid.:296). On 14 October 1971, just days before the celebrations that commemorated the Anniversary of 2500 years of Persian Monarchy, Princess Ashraf offered a replica of the Cyrus Cylinder to the *United Nation Secretary General U-Thant* as a "historic gift" (UN Press release 1971). She presented Cyrus's heritage as "the heritage of human understanding, tolerance, courage, compassion and, above all, human liberty" (ibid.). The link made between past and present was aimed at generating the view that Iran with its historical appreciation of human freedom is a forerunner in the promotion of human rights. This was an acute attempt not only to present the Pahlavi Government as a model for all developing countries, but also to refute the accusations directed to Iran for its lack of human right policies. This is considering that the

discontent with the White Revolution had led to the onset of protest movements against the reforms by 1963 (Ansari 2000:35). To restore authority, the Government was confined to retaliate through the management of the country with an “iron fist” (Ansari 2003:137) and a dramatic expansion of the army, the creation of a state security service known as the SAVAK (Sazman-e Ettelaat va Amniyyat-e Keshvar), and the violation of human rights by the Iranian Administration, drew international attention to Iran (ibid.) In this context, the Cyrus Cylinder was adopted during the Persepolis celebrations to re-emphasise the centrality of monarchy within the Iranian political system and the identification of the Shah with Cyrus (ibid:171). In preparation for the festivities, the year 1971 was recognised as the year of Cyrus the Great and various programmes were scheduled to pay homage to the founder of the Empire (Shafa 1971:25). The Cyrus Cylinder was adopted as the symbol of the Persepolis celebrations and endorsed as the icon of Iran’s cultural identity (Fig. 5.17). This yield to the unprecedented manipulation of this archaeological artefact on postage stamps and banknotes as the symbol of Iranian national identity (Fig 5.18). Apart from appearing on Iranian stamps, the Cylinder was showcased as part of the promotion of Persepolis celebrations on stamps issued in Ethiopia, Romania, Ajman and Oman (Curtis 2013:90). From October 7 to 19 of 1971 the Cylinder was taken to Iran by R.D. Barnett, the Keeper of the Department of Western Asiatic Antiquities, as part of the festivities.

By the end of these celebrations, the Shah’s Government had been able to achieve two outcomes, first, Persepolis was represented as the manifestation of dynastic nationalism and the institution of monarchy as the only legitimate form of government in Iran and second, through making references to Persepolis and the Ancient Persian kings, the Government had demonstrated to the world, Iran’s inherent competence, economically and militarily, to march towards a utopian “Great Civilisation”. The Cyrus Cylinder further provided the officials with the means to address the Shah’s lack of legitimacy in the domestic and international fronts through claiming lineage with Cyrus and his humanitarian morals. The national revivalism and the power display of the Shah’s Government at Persepolis did not cultivate the intended results. The celebrations were mocked by a number of Western journals and the Iranians were appalled by the Hollywood-style production of the past that failed to include them (Harmon 2005:32). The repercussions of these failures contributed to the social rage that fed the Islamic Revolution.

## **5.5. Post- Revolution & Nationalism: The Case Study of Persepolis**

In the previous section, it was argued that during the Pahlavi period, pre-Islamic archaeological sites were utilised to implement the ethnic-dynastic nationalism of the Regime. In doing so, emphasis was laid on the instrumental use of Persepolis by Reza Shah’s Government to articulate the ethnic ‘superiority’ of

Iranians and that of Mohammad Reza Shah's Government to present the institution of monarchy as the only appropriate form of government for Iran. By the end of 1970s, the cultural policies of the Pahlavis which rested on modernisation, progress, and romanticism about pre-Islamic Iran, became increasingly incompatible with the wider section of the Iranian society (Farsoun & Mashayekhi 1992:8). The alienation of the Iranian society eventually led to the Islamic Revolution in 1979 which was founded on the pillars of return to native roots, opposition to foreign imperialism, and sympathy for the oppressed (Abrahamian 1993:38). According to this rhetoric, the native roots and the authentic cultural identity of Iranians was to be sought in the Islamic past and anything that was not Islamic was not considered a part of the Iranian identity (Holliday 2007:87). It was argued that the nationalism promoted by the Pahlavis and the illusions of the glories of Persian Empire were abstract and did not resonate with Iranian people who associated themselves with the more recent Islamic culture (Amuzegar 1991:142). Further, the institute of monarchy was denounced as an "agent" of Western imperialism and incompatible to rule the country. The rejection of monarchy was also justified by referring to its elitist and oppressive nature that opposed Islamic values. The hereditary succession of the monarchy was notably underscored as invalid and unjust (Algar 1981:31). In confirmation with Trigger's (1984:356) contention on the intrinsic relationship between society and archaeology, with redefining the narrative of social context in the Iranian society, the general outlook towards the purpose of archaeology was revised. Therefore, pre-Islamic archaeological sites, and in particular, Persepolis which was the expression of the Pahlavis' ethnic-dynastic nationalism and the embodiment of their elitist, oppressive dominance, became exceedingly unpopular following the Islamic Revolution. Nevertheless, as is argued in this thesis, given the fluid social construction of Iran and the change in patterns of Iranian identity, pre-Islamic sites were gradually annexed through this period and regained their political significance.

In this section, it is argued that the celebrations at Persepolis which affiliated the site with the institution of monarchy contributed to misunderstanding the value of the discipline of archaeology, degrading it to a pseudoscience in service of glorifying the kings. Although this trend eventually changed, the impact of initial hostilities towards pre-Islamic archaeology had unprecedented outcomes for the development of the discipline. To articulate these issues, this section will begin by focusing on the populist discourse of Khomeini's Government and the antagonism to the pre-Islamic past. This will be followed by evaluating the impact of the War and the subsequent reconstruction phase that required a compromise with the pre-Islamic past and the recognition of its significance as an integral part of Iranian identity. This is continued with the discourse of 'Dialogue among Civilisations' presented by Khatami's Administration that provided a pretext for the reconciliation of pre-Islamic and Islamic Iranian identities and the re-birth of Iranian archaeology. The section will conclude with demonstrating the impact of the return to 'populism'

and ‘principalism’ on the treatment of pre-Islamic sites, and in particular Persepolis, through analysing the adopted narrative of Ahmadinejad’s Administration. Further references are made to the Cyrus Cylinder in this context to demonstrate the adoption of pre-Islamic history for political purposes across different political periods.

### **5.5.1. Populism & Return to Native Roots: Pre-Islamic Archaeology**

Following the Revolution, the criteria for the definition of nation-state, nationalism, and national identity changed and became Islamised. The adoption of ‘true Islamic values’ was achieved through two incentives; the condemnation of the institute of monarchy and its oppressive authority, and the promotion of “Shi’a nationalism” (Ansari 2003:222). Considering the focus of this chapter on Persepolis, this section will put more emphasis on the impact of the former on the treatment of pre-Islamic sites, while the latter will be discussed in more detail in the following Chapter where Islamic sites are the subject of examination.

As discussed previously, one of the defining features of the populist rhetoric of Khomeini’s Government was the condemnation of the Pahlavis as the agent of Western imperialism. Through rejecting the Pahlavis’ oppressive role, Khomeini aligned his Government with the oppressed masses (Halliday 1986:102). His criticisms were not confined to the Pahlavis, but further targeted the hereditary institution of monarchy that had been an integral component of Iranian identity. He denounced the pre-Islamic Iranian past as an age of absolute autocracy and ignorance. He argued:

*“God only knows what disasters the Iranian monarchy has given rise [to] since its beginning and what crimes it has committed. The crimes of [the] kings of Iran have blackened the pages of history. It is the kings of Iran that have constantly ordered massacres of their own people and had pyramids built with their skulls... Tradition relates that the Prophet (upon whom be peace) said that the title of King of Kings, which is born by the monarchs of Iran, is the most hated of all titles in the sight of God. Islam is fundamentally opposed to the whole notion of monarchy. Anyone who studies the manner in which the Prophet established the government of Islam will realize that Islam came in order to destroy these palaces of tyranny. Monarchy is one of the most shameful and disgraceful reactionary manifestations.” (Khomeini cited in Algar 1981:202)*



To further validate his arguments, Khomeini made frequent references to the Shah's Persepolis celebrations. As early as 1971, Khomeini had condemned this "shameful festival" by calling it a waste of the country's wealth. Khomeini stated:

*"using the Muslim's money, the tyrannical regime proposes to celebrate a festival and light up our cities for the sake of kings who in every age crushed the people beneath the boots of their soldiers, who always opposed true religion, who were the bitter enemies of Islam, and who tore up the blessed letter of the Prophet."* (Khomeini cited in Algar 1981:198)

This extract demonstrates the Government's lucid representation of Persepolis as the symbol of moral decadence that defined the Pahlavis and the institute of monarchy. Such associations made all pre-Islamic archaeological sites, especially Persepolis, vulnerable to the zeal of the Revolutionaries who were determined to demolish all cultural banners and symbolic remains affiliated with the institute of monarchy. These threats were most pronounced in the first year of the Revolution given the absence of legislative institutes, such as *Cultural Heritage Organisation*, to monitor the welfare of cultural remains. During this period the *Provisional Government*, granted the task of managing Iran's cultural heritage to the Cultural Ministry. The first Head of this Ministry was Parviz Varjavand (1934-2007 AD), an archaeologist with political affiliations to Iran's *National Front Organization (NFO)*, a secular nationalist group association with Mossadegh. His background in archaeology made him a suitable candidate during this turbulent stage of political and social disorder. His most important contribution was the registration of three archaeological sites of *Chogha Zanbil* (Elamite), *Persepolis* (pre-Islamic) and *Naghsh-e Jahan Complex* (Islamic), as *UNESCO* world heritage sites in 1979 (Fig. 5.19).

The choice of Persepolis is especially noteworthy considering the resentment towards pre-Islamic Iranian past during this period. However, it is here argued that the socio-political dynamics of this period is represented by two contrasting ideological discourse, one expressed by the hard-liner Islamists who advocated the elimination of all residues of the institute of monarchy, the other, a faction of nationalist technocrats who occupied administrative position within Bazargan's Cabinet. Therefore, although the Government's rhetoric on the triumph of the oppressed over oppressors instigated various acts of vandalism against pre-Islamic cultural remains, the efforts of certain officials restricted the spread of such hostilities on Iranian cultural heritage. Despite this arrangement, the deliberate destruction of many sites that were intimately associated with the institute of monarchy continued. The lack of concrete documented evidence in many cases creates almost insurmountable hurdles when trying to compile list of

acts of vandalism, however, there are a number of explicit examples and interview accounts that reflect the cultural extremism which followed the Revolution. Some of these cases are illustrated in the following section.

In the process of re-defining itself, Iranian society destroyed a number of Pahlavi monuments such as the tomb of Reza Shah in *Shah Abdol Azim* near Rey and Pahlavi statues. Other symbols of monarchy, such as the crown-shaped Park in the valley of *Taj* (Crown) Village, near *Rustamabad* District in Northern Iran was destroyed by burning out and cutting down trees of a vast forest (today the trees are shaped to represent the Allah symbol of the Islamic Republic). Apart from symbols of the Pahlavi monarchs, the antagonising of pre-Islamic Iranian identity led to the destruction of tombs and raids of museums and private collections. There are accounts which record acts of vandalism at the tomb of Shah Ismail Safavi, the tomb of Nader Shah in Mashhad, and the tomb of Naser al-Din Shah in *Shah Abdol Azim* (Ansari 2003:223). In addition, Abdi (2001:70) asserted that the *Golestan Palace* was broken into and few items, including the sword of Nader Shah, were taken. Varjavand further reported the removal of three to four items of sizeable value from Persepolis (<http://www.chn.ir/news/?section=2&id=31388>). The alienation of pre-Islamic identity continued with the local authorities' ban on the use of pre-Islamic names such as Cyrus and Darius for new-born children (Molavi 2005:14).

The most serious threat to pre-Islamic Iranian identity was voiced by Ayatollah Khalkhali, a hard-liner clergy, who published a book in which Cyrus was dismissed as a tyrant, a liar, and a Jew (Sadeghi Givi 2001). He further called for the destruction of the Tomb of Cyrus and Persepolis, which to many Revolutionaries, encapsulated the despotism of Persian monarchs. His order to bulldoze Persepolis was aborted following the concerted reaction by a number of clergy and concerned officials in the *Provisional Government*. It is said that on hearing of Khalkhali's intentions, the Governor of Fars, Nosratollah Amini, who was also affiliated with the *NFO*, went on the radio and criticised such acts of vandalism and proclaimed that any who wished to afflict harm on Persepolis should do so over his dead body (Amini 2009). While Amini deployed guards to secure Shiraz from Khalkhali's mob, Varjavand received a decree from the city's Ayatollah Mahallati which condemned any damage or destruction to Persepolis.

It is important to note that the confiscation and destruction of symbols of monarchy were justified by the Islamic Revolution as the uprising of the oppressed. These acts of vandalism were a reflection of society's attempt to redistribute wealth and eliminate symbols of "unwarranted privileges" (Ansari 2003:216). Therefore, vengeful acts of vandalism continued despite the condemnation of the deliberate destruction of sites and confiscation of cultural remains by Ayatollah Taleghani and Imam Khomeini (ibid.:223; Abrahamian 2008:179). In addition, the prime intention during this period was the new regime's attempt

to accommodate the process of re-defining the cultural identity of Iran by eliminating all that was pre-Islamic and replacing it by Islamic values. This process was fully underway by 1980 as the *Provisional Government* resigned and the Cultural Revolution was launched to ‘purify’ institutes of all non-Islamic conformities. In this process all the residues of the institution of monarchy in form of iconic symbols or conventional instruments that helped to accommodate the cultural engineering of the Pahlavis were eradicated from statues, stamps, and banknotes. In the process, the discipline of Archaeology was degraded as a pseudoscience that nourished the dissemination of the Pahlavi doctrine and its department at Tehran University was shut down. Persepolis which had become the reflection of Pahlavis’ despotism and a pillar of imperialism, survived further vengeful threats, but largely, it was neglected until its recovery during later periods.

### ***5.5.2. War Years & the Reconstruction Period: Pre-Islamic Archaeology***

The aim of this section is to explore how the Iran-Iraq War and the ‘reconstruction phase’ altered the conduct of the new Regime in perceiving the Iranian identity and in the process becoming more tolerant towards disciplines such as archaeology. In doing so, emphasis is laid on the War as an incentive for the re-incorporation of pre-Islamic Iranian identity given the Government had to appeal not only to Islamic ideals, but also to Iranian nationalism to defend its national integrity (Hunter 1992:93; Chubin & Tripp 1991:9; Holliday 2011:72). The death of Imam Khomeini, the charismatic leader of the Revolution, also played into redefining the ideals of the Revolution. In addition, the launch of the ‘reconstruction phase’ in 1992 is considered as a remedy to facilitate the recovery of the Iranian economy and provide funding for scientific endeavours, such as that in the discipline of archaeology, that were considered unnecessary and wasteful given the financial restrictions and human cost during the War. It is argued that as the State revised its discourse of nationalism and the economy improved, the significance of pre-Islamic monuments such as Persepolis, were re-interpreted as an integral part of Iranian identity.

As discussed in Chapter 2, during the 1980s Iranian archaeologists had to fight battles on multiple fronts for the survival of their discipline. From 1980 to 1992 the *CRC* was responsible for setting Islamic guidelines for cultural, educational, and research activities. In the process, the discipline of archaeology was recognised as ‘fake knowledge’ and its department at Tehran University was closed until 1982. In addition, many ‘unfit’ instructors who had received their higher degrees from Western institutes, such as Dr. Shahbazi, were discharged or forced into retirement. The War inflicted damage to archaeological sites, was an additional concern of the archaeologists. In terms of pre-Islamic archaeological sites, the Sassanid sites of *Qasr-e Shirin* and *Ivan Karkhe*; and the Achaemenid sites of *Hegmataneh* and *Susa*,

were in the hinterland of the War and were subject to considerable damage. The *Susa Museum* which was constructed in 1966 and contained recovered artefacts from Elamite and Achaemenid periods was among the sites destroyed. However, it is reported that the officials transported a large portion of this collection to Tehran prior to its destruction by the Iraqi rockets (Rouhani 2010). The concerns for the fate of pre-Islamic cultural heritage were extended to museums and private collections. As the process of antagonising pre-Islamic Iranian identity continued, numerous artefacts were destroyed or misplaced. The most notable case was the disappearance of the Golden Foundation Tablet recovered from Persepolis by the Americans. In 1999 while the National Museum was being re-organised, this loss was recognised and the previous Director of the Museum, Nosrat Allah Mo'tamedi was investigated. Although the identity of the person responsible was not officially released, it is believed that he was tried and charged for the destruction of the Tablet (Ommat Ali 2007).

The position of archaeology as a discipline and the antagonisation of pre-Islamic Iranian identity were eventually re-evaluated as the Government became more tolerant towards Iranian nationalism during the War. In 1988 with Rafsanjani as President, a period of reconstruction began to facilitate the recovery of Iran's devastated economy (Abrahamian 2008:181). An important development was the ratification of *ICHO* constitution in 1988 and the resumption of activities at the Institute of Archaeology at Tehran University in 1990 (Abdi 2001:70-1). In Chapter 2 it was noted that the appearance of the more liberal Organisation of *CPIR* in 1992 was one of the more pragmatic changes as this organisation aimed to relegate socio-cultural issues to experts rather than the clergy (Moslem 2002:167-8). This allowed for the return of archaeologists in executive positions and in the same year, Rafsanjani took a private tour of the National Museum and reopened its doors to the public (Sciolino 1992). The Government officially approved the acceptance of Iranian pre-Islamic identity when the President visited Persepolis in April 1992. The impact of this public visit was profound, considering it was the first time since the Revolution, that any high officials from the new Islamic Regime had paid a visit to this site. Rather than condemning the site in the tradition of the post-Revolutionary rhetoric, Rafsanjani stated:

*"standing in the middle of these centuries-old ruins, I felt the nation's dignity was all-important and must be strengthened. Our people must know that they are not without a history."* (Sciolino 1992)

Following the Islamic State's declaration of reconciliation with the pre-Islamic past, the first Congress of Iranian Archaeology after the Revolution was held in 1994 in Susa. The site of Susa Citadel was nominated by Ayatollah Zadeh Shirazi, an architect and conservator, to host this Congress. On the decision, Mehdi Rahbar was sent to the site to repair the War damage and prepare the site for the

Congress. The selection of Susa, an Elamite and Achaemenid site, to host the first congress of archaeology held after the Revolution is noteworthy. However, as discussed in Chapter 4, the passage to the restoration of archaeology as a discipline was pursued through Prehistoric archaeology, which was considered as both scientific and apolitical. The revival of pre-Islamic archeology had to remain constrained until Khatami's Administration presented the discourse of 'Dialogue among Civilisations' which adopted a holistic Islamic-Iranian doctrine of national identity.

### **5.5.3. Khatami's Administration & Reconciliations with the Past: Pre-Islamic Archaeology**

In the previous chapters, it was argued that the doctrine of 'Dialogue among Civilisations' adopted by Khatami's Administration provided for the improvement in foreign policies by narrowing the cultural and political gaps between Iran and the West, and domestically by facilitating the reconciliation of pre-Islamic Iranian and Islamic identities. It was maintained that in response to this political rhetoric Iranian archaeology once again emerged as a politicised discipline, albeit with emphasis on Prehistoric period. In this section, the implications of these developments on the treatment of pre-Islamic sites, and specifically Persepolis are discussed. In doing so, it is argued that although the pre-Islamic nationalist rhetoric of President Khatami's Administration may have stressed the Sassanid period, as Holliday (2011:46-50) contended, the Achaemenid period received comparable considerations. This point is illustrated through emphasis laid on the emergence of institutes and the inauguration of museums that facilitated the promotion of the dual Iranian identity both domestically and internationally, with certain attention to the Achaemenid period.

In Chapter 2, it was discussed that in 1997 the *ICHO* made fundamental changes to its infrastructure to become more efficient. The return of foreign experts, the establishment of conservation labs, the opening of museums to public, and the establishment of research institutes for archaeological sites, were among the endeavors of *ICHO*. In addition, in 2002 the *Cultural Institute of Iranian ICOMOS* was inaugurated. In terms of pre-Islamic sites, the new overture of cultural heritage instigated collaboration between Iranian archaeological teams and international institutes in a rescue project at the site of *Tang-e Bolaghi*, with archaeological remains mostly associated with the Achaemenid period. The 129 archaeological sites in this location were excavated by international teams from Italy, Poland, Japan, France, Germany, and Australia in a salvage project that was funded by the Ministry of Energy (<http://www.payvand.com/news/05/jan/1014.html>). The construction of the *Sivand Dam* conjured up a serious debate between nationalists, archaeologists, and Government officials over possible threats to the pre-

Islamic site of Pasargadae, and even Persepolis (Abdi 2005). The *Sivand Dam* was inaugurated by President Ahmadinejad in 2007 following these debates.

The implications of the Government's reforms in foreign relations and domestic affairs were extended to advancing the activities of museums. In 1997 some of the Imperial Palaces were transformed to museums and opened to the public for the first time. As a part of this project the *Golestan Palace*, *Sahebgharaniye* and *Niavaran Palace*, including the *Jahan Nama Museum*, were opened to public. In addition, the *Palatial Complex of Sa'd Abad* and *Niavaran*, corresponding with the Qajar and Pahlavi periods, were registered as numbers 1957 and 2025 on the *Inventory of Iranian National Heritage*. Apart from expanding the museums within Iran, a number of international exhibitions were held or initiated. The exhibition of "Seven Thousand Years of Iranian Art" and the "Glory of Ancient Persia: Mining and Decoration in Ancient Persia" were showcased in a number of European countries between 2000 and 2005. In addition, negotiations were undertaken with the British Museum to prepare an exhibition under the title of *The Forgotten Empire: The World of Ancient Persia*. The exhibition at the British Museum aimed to offer a scarce opportunity to introduce Ancient Persians history and to readdress the negative Eurocentric views towards the ancient Persians (Curtis & Tallis 2005:9). This was the fruit of efforts by John Curtis, the Keeper of the Middle East Collection at the British Museum, and his negotiations with the Iranian authorities. Additional arrangements were made with the Louvre and the British Museum for the exchange of Achaemenid collections, including the Cyrus Cylinder. As a condition for the transfer of the Cyrus Cylinder to Iran, preparations were made by updating the National Museum, where pre-Islamic remains from Achaemenid and Sassanid periods predominated. One of the main undertakings of this project, which was conducted in collaboration with Italian architects, was to make the building resistant to earthquakes.

The expansion of collaborations with foreign institutes and museums included a resumption of relationships between *ICHO* and the Oriental Institute of Chicago where the *Persepolis Fortification Tablets* had been on loan for studies since 1936 (Stein 2007:3). Some of these tablets had been returned to Iran following their decipherment in 1948 and 1951, but the return of 300 tablets in 2004 marked the first of such occasions following the Islamic Revolution. The event included high officials from Iran- S.M. Beheshti, the Director of *ICHO*, and Gil. J Stein from the Oriental Institute, and received extensive international coverage (Fig. 5.20). Following this collaboration, a legal suit was issued where the surviving victims and families of those Americans who died in Jerusalem in a bombing by Hamas in 1997, claimed 400 million U.S. *Dollar* compensation from Iran, and attempted to satisfy this claim by selling the Persepolis Tablets that were on loan in the United States (ibid.:5). The Oriental Institute contested these claims on the ground that the tablets were not commercial assets and that law should

prevent the seizure of cultural heritage for such compensations (ibid.). In 2006, President Khatami visited the Oriental Institute and with regard to the Persepolis Tablets stated “the heritage of mankind is not tradable and replaceable” (<http://www.payvand.com/news/06/sep/1055.html>). He further argued “the artefacts do not belong to the governments. They belong to the whole Iranian nation and the entire world. We must stand up to the ongoing propaganda and safeguard the historical assets of Iran which are held in trust in this university and museum” (ibid.).

Similar to President Rafsanjani, Khatami had already voiced his fascination with Persepolis when he visited the site in January 2001. This official visit was followed by the inauguration of *Bonyad-e Pajoheshi-e Pars-e Pasargad* (Pars-e Pasargad Research Institute) in 2002. The Institute became the leading designated body in Iran for conducting Achaemenid research and the management and protection of archaeological sites from this period, including Persepolis ([http://persepolis.ir/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=category&id=29&Itemid=64](http://persepolis.ir/index.php?option=com_content&view=category&id=29&Itemid=64)). The conduct of this Institute included the planning and aerial photography of the complex, geophysics and the establishment of an archive (ibid.). In addition, the collaborations between *ICHO* and *IsMEO* were resumed to continue the restoration and preservation of Persepolis. In 2004, the site of Pasargadae was added to the list of *UNESCO* world heritage. Further, in 2005, to celebrate the World Expo 2005 exhibition in Aichi, Japan, the Cyrus Cylinder together with a view of Persepolis appeared for the first time after the Revolution on a set of stamps (Curtis 2013:38).

The above analysis demonstrates official attempts to politicise the of pre-Islamic Iranian heritage following the discourse of ‘Dialogue among Civilisations’ adopted by the Government . In doing so, emphasis was laid on the unprecedented attention to the Achaemenid period in comparison with previous post-Revolutionary Administrations. In 2004, Parliament implemented new legislation which agreed to merge the *ICHO* with the *Organisation of National and International Tourism*. The placement of this new organisation under the direct authority of the President demonstrates the extent of politicisation of Archaeology which persisted into the following Administrations. As is argued in the following sections, these same themes continued to play into Ahmadinejad’s Government and its populist rhetoric.

#### **5.5.4. Ahmadinejad’s Administration & Populism: Pre-Islamic Archaeology**

The reformist policies of Khatami’s Administration were opposed by Ahmadinejad, a ‘principalist’, who won the election in 2005. Ahmadinejad’s electoral campaign centred on the themes of rejecting the reformists who had deviated from the legacy of Imam Khomeini and returning to the true principles of the

Revolution (Kamrava 2011:167). Therefore, the political narrative of achieving national independence, serving the oppressed and exporting the Revolution were revived and advocated. Despite the commitment to the principles of the Revolution, Ahmadinejad's Administration itself deviated from Khomeini's discourse with populist rhetoric that conveyed an amalgam of ethnic-dynastic-Shi'a nationalism, depending on the occasion. These were articulated by the Government's attempt to cultivate a 'myth of saviour' through adopting pre-Islamic as well as Islamic discourses. In terms of pre-Islamic rhetoric, in the Presidential Campaign, Ahmadinejad was presented as the son of a blacksmith, a connotation that evoked the mythical stories of *Shahnameh* about *Kaveh the Blacksmith* who was a pre-Islamic national hero (Abrahamian 2009:194). The most significant point of departure that distinguished the populist approach of Ahmadinejad's Administration from its predecessors was the adoption of ethnic-dynastic nationalism. These included the President's statements on the special connection between Iran and Germany, with racial rhetoric that hinted on the myths of Aryanism (Ansari 2012:265); and the proposal to celebrate *Norouz* at Persepolis in a style that resembled Mohammad Reza Shah's 1971 festivities. These themes prevailed with the construction of a mock-up of Persepolis to provide a back-drop for the State visit of President Putin of Russia in 2007 and the enthusiastic welcome of the Cyrus Cylinder to the National Museum in 2011 (ibid.:260).

In this section, it is argued that despite the pursuit of Ahmadinejad's Administration to adopt ethnic-dynastic nationalism and utilise pre-Islamic archaeological sites such as Persepolis, this period was defined by lack of archaeological progress and deterioration of archaeology as a scientific discipline. The main incentive for this decline was the diminishing economic situation and aversive foreign policies that isolated Iran from the international community (Ehteshami 2007:76). Therefore, Iranian archaeology lapsed into another schism of financial deprivation and scholarly isolation. These were accompanied by the appointment of unqualified key figures to manage various dimensions of Iranian cultural heritage. As argued here, the greater part of constructive archaeological activities and exhibitions that provided Ahmadinejad's Government with an opportunity to advocate Iranian nationalism was a residue of cultural policies of Khatami's Administration that disseminated into the later period.

As discussed above, the improved foreign relations during the period of 'dialogue' led to the prevalence of an open-door policy in Iranian archaeology and the revival of collaborations with international institutes. One of these institutes was *IsMEO*, that became *IsIAO* in 1995, an organisation that had worked on the preservation and restoration of Persepolis during the Pahlavi period. Following the establishment of the *Pars-e Pasargad Institute* and the realisation of its research oriented intentions, *IsIAO* was once again invited to resume its activities at Persepolis. These collaborations, which also involved University of Bologna, led to the proposal of a five year project with the title *Az Kakh Ta Shahr* (From Palace to



Town) that aimed to excavate the nearby town of Parsa, to uncover the historic development of settlements in the Persepolis area

([http://persepolis.ir/index.php?option=com\\_content&view=article&id=78:archeology-group&catid=15:reports&Itemid=63](http://persepolis.ir/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=78:archeology-group&catid=15:reports&Itemid=63)). The shift in research interest from palatial complexes to the residential area of the “commoners” is noteworthy given the Government’s rhetoric of serving the underclass of society. Apart from excavation, this mission aimed to launch a conservation project on the terrace of Persepolis (ibid.). In particular, the decay of monumental stones and the flooding of the terrace in rainy seasons caused by the blocked water channels were subject to investigation. While new techniques of stone conservations have been tried on Persepolis terrace since 2010, the project of locating and clearing the water channels and creating artificial slopes to drain water from the surface of the terrace was launched in 2012 (ibid.). It is important to note that despite delays in the projects and the prevalence of financial difficulties, the maintenance of positive foreign relations with Italy was paramount in the continuation of archaeological collaborations at Persepolis.

Apart from archaeological excavations, a prominent number of international exhibitions with an overarching aim to highlight the pre-Islamic period, were held during this period. These include the exhibition of the “Forgotten Persian Empire” held at the British Museum and the Louvre in 2005; the “Glory of Persia” held in Japan in 2007; “The Sassanid Persians: Splendors of a Forgotten Empire” held in France in 2007, and the showcasing of the Cyrus Cylinder at the National Museum in Tehran in 2010.

It must be argued that despite the archaeological activities at Persepolis and the unprecedented launch of international exhibitions concerned with pre-Islamic Iranian heritage, the foundation of organisations and the arrangements made during the Khatami period were the underlying momentum to advance these projects. Nevertheless, as an essential component of its populist approach, Ahmadinejad’s Administration maintained selected number of collaborations with various organisations to execute the projects foreseen by the previous Government. Such arrangements fell under the overarching political discourse of Ahmadinejad’s Administration, which rallied on making instrumental use of pre-Islamic or Islamic monuments to advocate the Government’s narrative of ethnic-dynastic-Shi’a nationalism. During his visit to Persepolis in April 2007, Ahmadinejad stood in front of the *Gate of All Nations* (Fig. 5.21) and stated “Islam pirouz ast” (Victory is with Islam).

In 2010, one year after *Norouz* was registered on the *UNESCO List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of Humanity*, a thesis was put forth by Ahmadinejad’s Administration to celebrate the *Norouz* festival at Persepolis. In a proposal that echoed the Persepolis festivals held by the Shah’s Government at Persepolis, 20 Prime Ministers were invited to take part in the festivities (Azar 2011). The project caused

frictions between Ahmadinejad's Administration and the principalists who argued that the President was manipulating archaeological monuments to implement an "Iranian discourse" and in doing so diverting the Iranian society from Islam and the "Islamic discourse" (ibid.). Attention to pre-Islamic archaeology, and in particular the Achaemenid period, was further demonstrated in the collaboration of the Iranian officials with the British Museum which resulted in *The Forgotten Empire: The World of Ancient Persia* exhibition in London. The exhibition was launched in the British Museum on 9 September 2005 and continued until 8 January 2006, despite last minute concerns about the exhibition following the Iranian election and the victory of Ahmadinejad's Cabinet with its unsympathetic views towards the West. The exhibition showcased Achaemenid artefacts from collections around the world, including the National Museum of Tehran, as well as the unique set of plaster casts made by Weld-Blundell on his expedition to Persepolis in 1892 and was followed by the publication of a volume with the same title (Curtis & Tallis 2005) and a conference that embraced the various aspects of the Achaemenid civilisation. From the outset, the showcasing of the exhibition was entangled in political debates given the rhetoric of Ahmadinejad's Administration and the adoption of a populist discourse about Iran's right as a 'strong Islamic nation' to have access to nuclear energy programme. A combination of policies to elevate Iran's status internationally and comments about the factuality of Holocaust (Adib-Moghadam 2007:136-37) brought Iran into collision with the political and cultural policies of the West. This triggered a round of demonisation of Iran as a nation. The fragile circumstances were deteriorated in view of President Bush's assortment of Iran as one of the "Axis of Evil" in 2002 (Pollack 2004:352) and in 2007 George Melloan claimed in *Wall Street Journal* that Ahmadinejad "has cast himself as Adolf Hitler reincarnation" (Adib-Moghadam 2007:135). This setting led to the further demonisation of Iran and Iranian identity through its depiction as the epitome of historical maliciousness with movies such as "300" and articles such as "The Evil Empire" (see Chapter 7). Despite the overtaking of the exhibition by contemporary political affairs, the collaboration of the Iranian officials to represent a segment of the Iranian history that was largely overlooked following the Islamic Revolution is noteworthy.

Ahmadinejad's Administration employed the same rhetoric when the Cyrus Cylinder was welcomed in Tehran. On 12 September 2010, the Cyrus Cylinder was unveiled in Iran for the second time since its discovery in 1879. The relic was lent to Iran by the British Museum to display at Iran's National Museum for the period of three months, later extended to seven months, in response to Iran's cooperation in lending artefacts to the British Museum for the exhibitions of the "Forgotten Empire" and "Shah Abbas" in 2005 and 2009 ([http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search\\_the\\_collection\\_database](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/search_the_collection_database)).

It is here argued that the selection of Cyrus as a symbol of a 'just ruler' had great appeals to the orchestrated vision of Ahmadinejad's Administration. First the notion of a powerful king that expanded

the borders of Ancient Persia and became the ruler of the Persian Empire paralleled the Government's agenda for the export of *Shi'a messianism*, glorifying the reappearance of the 13<sup>th</sup> Shi'a Imam, *Imam Zaman*, and Iran's rise as a global power (Fig. 5.22). A palpable scheme to this approach was Iran's desire to extend its nuclear programme in order to become a regional power. Secondly, Ahmadinejad's Administration strove to gain legitimacy following the disputed elections of 2009 and the subsequent suppression of opposition. This was particularly needed after Amnesty International and other human right organisations documented human rights violations in relations to the post-election discontents (<http://www.amnesty.org>). Given the pretext, the arrival of the Cyrus Cylinder as the first charter of human rights would support the government in producing the legitimacy that the new Administration lacked. These two notions will be discussed further in the following paragraphs.

Since the Islamic Revolution, the authorities had sought to "export" their ideals beyond Iranian peripheries. They argued that the Revolution was not only for Shi'a Muslims but for all Muslims (Ansari 2003:229). The principalist make up of Ahmadinejad's Government, endorsed the following of this mandate. One month prior to his historic trip to Lebanon in October 2010, in a Television interview following the arrival of the Cyrus Cylinder to Iran, Ahmadinejad had declared that Iran aimed to liberate and "manage" the world. He argued to draw "historical parallels" between Cyrus's bloodless conquest of "Iraq" and the replacement of their "dictatorship" with a "just regime"; with the bloody 2001 War waged by the United States and Britain on Iraq and Afghanistan (<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/142906.html>). He concluded thus, that there were two ways to manage the world, the American way which was violent, or and the Iranian way which was founded on the legacy of Cyrus the Great (ibid.).

The Cyrus Cylinder was also adopted as an instrument to support the Government's legitimacy domestically and internationally (Fig. 5.23). Considering that Ahmadinejad had emerged as media-oriented and often received extensive media attention, the Cylinder associated with the first charter of human rights provided the opportunity to relieve his Cabinet from criticisms regarding the violation of human rights. Since the Islamic Revolution, Iran has criticised the *UN* by raising the objection that the laws are laid by the most powerful international rulers and are biased against countries with different cultural standards (Hunter 1990:169). Iran has further accused the "West" of misusing human right issues for reaching critical political agendas (<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/231364.html>). Therefore, the reception of a "national icon" that is considered as the first charter of human rights was a testament to the long tradition of an Iranian brand of human rights values. In an interview with Iranian Press six days after the arrival of the Cyrus Cylinder to Tehran, Ahmadinejad offered a connection between the Cylinder and human right issues. Following his praise for the "just king" he argued that Cyrus's legacy is the "symbol of our thought". He further maintained that this pre-Islamic legacy had been furnished with Islam to

supply a “better understanding of justice” (<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/142906.html>). Referring to the Cyrus Cylinder of human rights, Ahmadinejad declared “This is what we started with. Look how amazing it is” (ibid.). This rhetoric was echoed by members of Ahmadinejad’s Cabinet, such as Esfandiyar Rahim Mashai, Advisor to President, Hamid Baghai, the Vice President of Iran and Head of ICHHTO, and Azadeh Ardakani the Director of the National Museum (for a summary of their speeches see Curtis 2013:98-99, 102).

It may be concluded that the position of Ahmadinejad’s Administration towards cultural heritage, whether pre-Islamic or Islamic, was a fusion of populist approach that seldom convey a consistent policy. However, the general disregard towards cultural heritage and the destruction of many archaeological sites during this period indicated an interest in the instrumental use of archaeological monuments rather than concern about their cultural value.

## **5.6. Conclusion**

The aim of this chapter was to demonstrate that nationalism was a key instrument in the birth and advance of pre-Islamic Iranian archaeology with the site of Persepolis as a case study. This contention was fulfilled by investigating the adoption of Persepolis as the symbol of Iranian identity, during different historical periods and under different Administrations. In doing so, this chapter argued that the potential benefits of using Persepolis as a political instrument was already recognised by the Qajars and a variation of ethnic nationalism was implemented through references to the site to support Iran’s right to independence. During the Pahlavis, Persepolis was an instrument to advocate the ethnic nationalism adopted by Reza Shah’s Government, while later during the Mohammad Reza Shah’s reign it emerged as a symbol of dynastic nationalism. Following the Islamic Revolution and the reconstruction of Iranian identity towards an authentic Islamic past, Iranian nationalism was replaced with Shi’a nationalism. With the emergence of this new form of nationalism, Persepolis was condemned as the symbol of imperial decadence and subjected to various threats. Eventually, pre-Islamic and Islamic Iranian identities were reconciled and Iranian nationalism advanced towards a populist form where Persepolis was once again incorporated within the political schemes of nationalism.

Through this analysis it may be concluded that despite the process of deconstruction and reconstruction of Iranian identity during different political periods, the position of Persepolis as the epitome of national pride, varied in intensity but seldom disappeared. This argument can be supported even in the transitional period after the Revolution when officials prevented the destruction of the monument by zealous

Revolutionaries, and further consolidated its protection by registering it as a *UNESCO* World Heritage Site. The rhetoric of national pride in Persepolis was even evident in the statements of the Supreme Leader, Ali Khamenei, who makes references to the site annually given its popularity as a tourist destination during the *Norouz* holiday season (<http://www.mashregnews.ir/NSite/FullStory/News/?Id=6297>). While Khamaenei has repeatedly denounced the monument as the residue of imperial decadence in the tradition of the Revolutionary rhetoric, he has also admired the “architectural value” and the inherent “Iranian talent” that produced these monuments for the “tyrannical monarchs” (ibid.). A similar conclusion may be drawn from the reference made to the Cyrus Cylinder in this Chapter, which further complemented the hypothesis for the attention to pre-Islamic archaeology and its adoption across different political governments. The review of attempts by Ahmadinejad’s Administration to use the Cyrus Cylinder to gain political support corresponds with the adoption of the same artefact during the Pahlavi period.

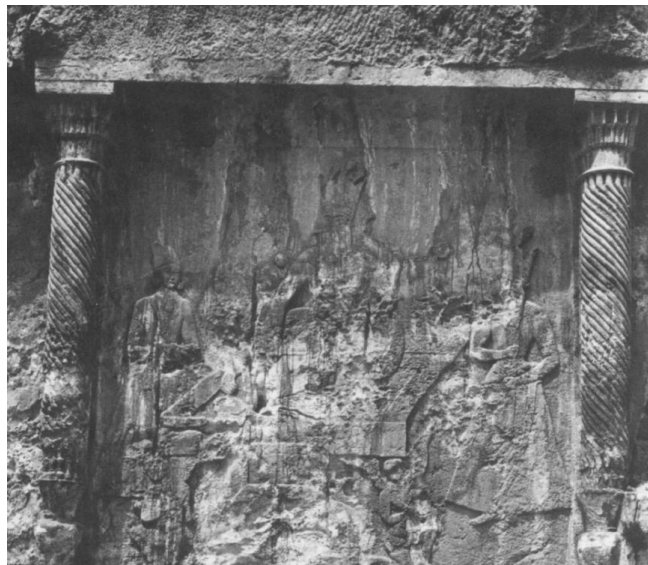
From the special attention given to Persepolis across different political periods, it can be concluded that similar to Prehistoric archaeology, pre-Islamic archaeology was of Trigger’s Nationalistic variety. It was contended that the interpretation of Persepolis as a pre-Islamic monument, assisted the historic construction of Iran as a nation and the formation of Iranian national identity. In fact, the involvement of the first Iranian archaeologists and the formation of the first archaeological institute at Persepolis, confirms the contention, that archaeology is institutionalised when it becomes politically useful (Diaz-Andreu & Champion 1996:12).



**Figure 5.1:** Persepolis: Gate of all Nations by Luigi Pesce 1858  
(After Metropolitan Museum of Art)



**Figure 5.2:** Farhad Mirza's inscription in the Palace of Darius (After Sarkhosh-Curtis 2005: fig.74.)



**Figure 5.3:** Fath-ali Shah's rock relief in Tang-e Allahu Akbar-Shiraz.  
(After Lerner 1991:fig.2.)



**Figure 5.4:** Stamp issued in 1914 depicting the relics of Persepolis  
(After Stamp Directory 2007:85)



**Figure 5.5:** Design of Vignette for National Heritage Society (1903)  
(After Ernst Herzfeld papers Freer Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Smithsonian Institution)



**Figure 5.6:** Reza Shah and Crown Prince's visit to Persepolis in 1935.  
A commemoration to Reza Shah's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday- stamp issued 1978  
(After Stamp Directory 2007:245)

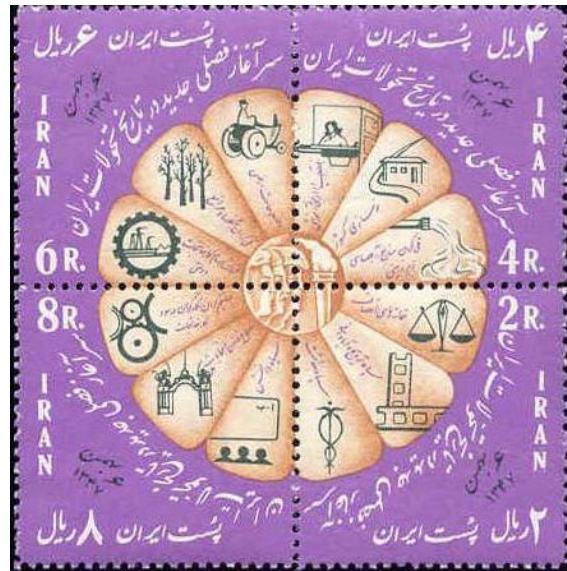




**Figure 5.7:** The Foreign Ministry (Left) and the National Bank of Iran (Right) inspired by Persepolitan Motifs  
(Photo by Author 2009)



**Figure 5.8:** Banknote issued in 1958 to inaugurate the opening of the International Mehrabad Airport depicting Persepolitan motifs. (After <http://www.banknotes.com/ir.htm> Accessed 02/09/11)



**Figure 5.9:** Stamp issued in 1969 to commemorate the 6<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the White Revolution and the Achaemenid 12 petalled symbol. (After Stamp Directory 2007:178)

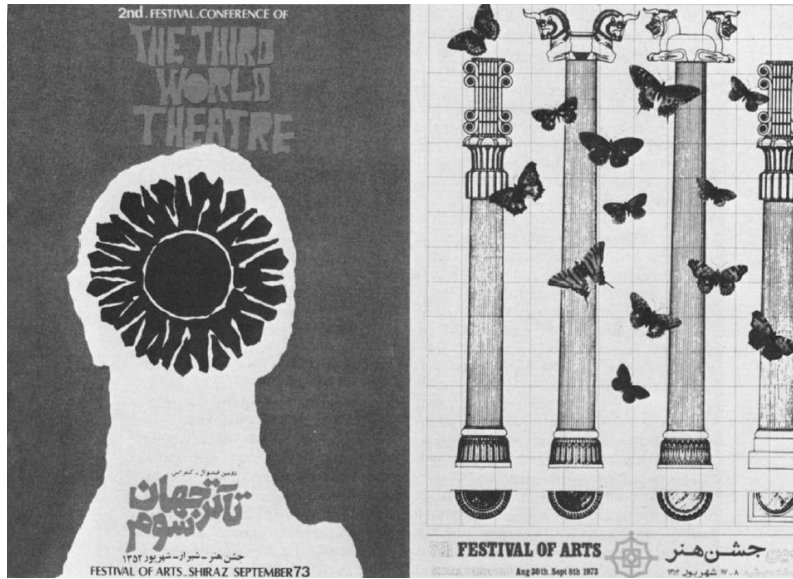




Figure 5.10: 1969 Issue of Vogue Magazine. Advertisement for Iran Air (Left) and fashion shot at Persepolis (Right) (<http://shahrefarang.com/en/vogue-iran/> Accessed 03/23/13)



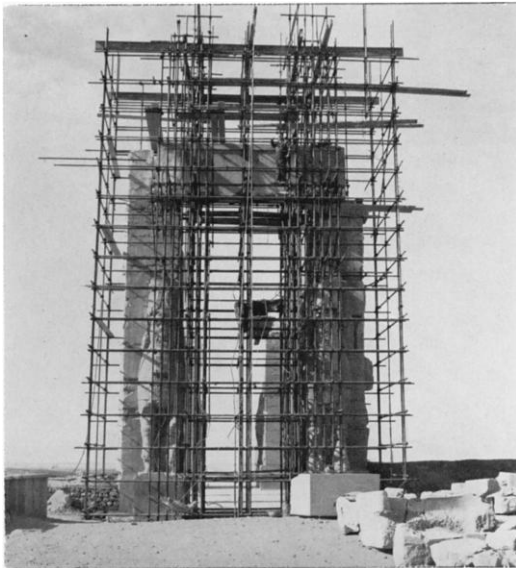
Figure 5.11: Iran Air advertisement & the emphasis on 2500 years of history. (After National Geographic Archives 1975)



5.12: The Theatre of the 3rd World, theme of Festival of Art held at Shiraz in 1973 with the opening ceremony at Persepolis. (After Ryan 1973)



Figure 5.13: Karlheinz Stockhausen performing at Shiraz Art Festival in 1972-Persepolis. (After Stockhausen Foundation for Music)



**Figure 5.14:** Gate of Xerxes-Persepolis. *IsMEO* replacing the architrave (After G.Tilia *IsMEO* Activities 1970:9)



**Figure 5.15:** Stamp issued in 1974- Save Venice Campaign (After Stamp Directory 2007:218)



**Figure 5.16:** March of the Achaemenid Royal Guards at Persepolis Celebration (After Center of Documents for the Islamic Revolution)





**Figure 5.17:** The Cylinder of Cyrus adopted as the emblem for the commemoration of 2500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Iranian Monarchy. (<http://www.angelfire.com/empire/imperia/iran/persepolis1.html> Accessed 19/04/11)



**Figure 5.18:** The Cyrus Cylinder depicted on postage stamps issue on October 12 1971. 2500<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Persian Empire (8<sup>th</sup> issue). (After Stamp Directory 2007:195)



**Figure 5.19:** Persepolis certified as a World Heritage Site in 1979 (After Pars-e Pasargad Research Institute)



**5.20:** Gil.J. Stein & Mohammad Beheshti. Iran receiving the *Persepolis Tablets* from Oriental Institute of Chicago in 2004. (After Persepolis Fortification Tablets Archives)



**Figure 5.21:** Ahmadinejad at the Gate of All Nations-Persepolis. ([http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2007-04/20/content\\_855319.htm](http://www.chinadaily.com.cn/world/2007-04/20/content_855319.htm) Accessed 03/12/12)



**Figure 5.22:** Iran sponsored the construction of a replica of Al-Aqsa Mosque in Jerusalem in the Southern Lebanese village of Maroun-al-Ras in honor of Ahmadinejad's visit to the region in 2010. (After Nagar Levit 2010)



**Figure 5.23:** President Ahmadinejad inaugurating the Cyrus Cylinder exhibition at the National Museum of Iran with Hamid Baqai the Head of *CHHTO* by his side (<http://edition.presstv.ir/detail/fa/142251.html> Accessed 18/10/12)

## Chapter 6

### Nationalism & the Treatment of Islamic Archaeological Sites: The Friday Mosque of Isfahan

#### 6.1. Introduction

It is the aim of this chapter to demonstrate that similar to Prehistoric and pre-Islamic archaeology, Islamic archaeology in Iran was born and dominated by a Nationalistic tradition in archaeology. This argument is supported by demonstrating that although during the Pahlavi period Islamic archaeology was ‘Persianised’ and during the post-Revolutionary period it became ‘Islamised’, the common denominator remained the adoption of a particular interpretation of the past to facilitate the nationalistic rhetoric of various administrations. It is argued, given that the post-Revolutionary Administration authenticated its legitimacy through ‘populism’, as an integral part of Shi’a nationalism, rather than in history, there was a general tendency to disregard archaeology, including Islamic archaeology. Nevertheless, Islamic archaeology has been implemented as a political discourse to export the Iranian brand of Islam, and therefore, remains Nationalistic. To address these issues, the case study of the Friday Mosque of Isfahan has been selected and will be analysed in detail.

As Hillenbrand argued, the story of art and architecture was in the past, and still is to some extent, dominated by European traditions at the expense of omitting the “non-Western” and “Islamic” artistic traditions (Hillenbrand 2003:2). The Islamic monuments in Iran had fallen into further obscurity owing to their inaccessibility to non-Muslim (infidel) visitors, while knowledge of Islamic art and architecture grew in the rest of the Muslim world in the nineteenth century. It was only in the early 1930s and in response to the secular rhetoric of Reza Shah’s Government that Iranian mosques were for the first time exposed to foreign scholars to unveil these newly discovered form of Islamic art and architecture. The Islamic monuments in Isfahan, in particular, suffered further negligence, as most scholarly attention was swayed by the colour and grandiosity of the Safavid architecture remains from the seventeenth century, while overlooking the older monuments. A glance at the Islamic monuments of Isfahan, however, brings to light one of the most important contributions to Islamic architecture in Iran, and perhaps the Islamic world, extending back to the tenth century and the early days of Islam in Iran. This monument, famously known as the Friday Mosque of Isfahan, is also identified as the *Jame’ (congregation) Mosque of Isfahan*, the *Jom’ e (Friday) Mosque of Isfahan* and the *Atiq (old) Mosque of Isfahan*.

As one of the first mosques constructed by the Abbasids in the city of Isfahan, the significance of the complex lies in its appeal as an assembly place for people. The dynamic function of the Friday Mosque as a place of congregation and a centre for education, along with its strategic location at the centre of the city has granted the monument with contributions from various sovereigns who sought to implement their authority. The politically strategic location of Isfahan and its abundant supply of water for agriculture further prepared the city to become an influential metropolis, the domination of which was vital to different ruling dynasties. They each introduced a particular form of art, the expression of which has been manifested at the Friday Mosque. This accumulation of art and architectural styles induced Pope in the 1930s to identify the Mosque as one of the most important structures in Iran and a manual for the post-Islamic art and architecture of the country (Pope 1976:52). The 20 distinctive structures of the Mosque that vary in date from the eleventh to eighteenth centuries have repeatedly been subjected to war, damage, destruction, and reconstruction (ibid.). Nevertheless, the Mosque remains as a testimony to the art and architecture of the past empires..

As one of the most significant and extensively studied Islamic monuments in Iran, the Friday Mosque of Isfahan was selected as a case study for an Islamic site to evaluate the impact of diverse ideological concepts on its treatment during various historical periods. This chapter will begin with locating the Friday Mosque in the heart of historic Isfahan and providing a context for the significance of the monument. As it was undertaken for the two previous case studies, the methodological approach is concerned with the three historical periods that begin with the Qajars, continue with the Pahlavis and end with the post-Revolutionary Administration. This chapter contends to argue that during the Qajar period, the Friday Mosque retained its functional purposes as one of Isfahan's many mosques. During the first Pahlavi period the imposition of secular ideologies and the selection of pre-Islamic period as the 'golden age' of Iranian identity did not lead to neglecting Islamic sites but rather generated a renaissance in the study of Islamic art and archaeology with special emphasis on the Friday Mosque. While the pre-Islamic identity of Iran continued to be stressed during the second Pahlavi period, extensive renovations and excavations were undertaken within the Mosque. Finally, following the Revolution the Mosque was returned to the community and thus began a new adventure in its history. The central challenge of this chapter is to exhibit the motives behind the unprecedented escalation of Islamic archaeology during the Pahlavi Administration, the core of which rested on ethnic-dynastic nationalism; and the negligence of Islamic monuments during the post-Revolutionary period when Shi'a nationalism became the central emphasis of the State.



## 6.2. Historical Background

The recorded accounts of Isfahan and its monuments come from various sources during different historical periods. These sources vary in nature depending on which episode of Isfahan's history they intend to encapsulate. In general, Isfahan twice served as the political and cultural centre of Iran; first during the Seljuk (r. 1037-1194 AD) and Safavid rule (r. 1502-1736 AD) (Meri & Bacharach 2006:399). Prior to the Safavid era, the monuments of Isfahan were often cited in the chronicles of Islamic geographers and travellers such as Abu No'aym, Al Mafarrukhi, Al Moqaddasi, Naser Khusrow, Yaqut and Ibn Battuta (Graber 1990:10; Babaie & Haug 2007). The chief focus of these accounts rested on the *Meidan-e Kohneh* (Old Square) and its Friday Mosque, which composed the core of the pre-Abbasid city. This trend was significantly altered when in 1598 Shah Abbas decided to promote Isfahan as the metropolis of his Empire. The flourishing trade and the high religious tolerance associated with this period attracted many European travellers (Canby 2009:24). The towering construction of buildings and the re-focusing of the urban core of town to *Naqsh-e Jahan* (Ornament of the World) during post-Safavid Isfahan, however, produced a different account of building and monuments given by Europeans, often at the expense of the old centre of town. It is worth mentioning that this attraction towards the colourful Safavid structures did not lead to a total disregard of the Friday Mosque. In fact, as it will be illustrated, some of the first analytical descriptions of the Mosque were offered by Europeans such as Chardin and Coste during the seventeenth century.

The history of the Friday Mosque extends back to the eighth and ninth centuries when the city came under the Abbasid Caliphs (Meri & Bacharach 2006:399). The Arab settlement in and around Isfahan in the early Islamic times had an influence on the architectural structures of Isfahan. During this early period, the Abbasids initiated the construction of congregational mosques in cities to commemorate the establishment of Islamic communities. According to the historian Abu Nu'aim al Isfahani, as early as 773 a new Friday Mosque, the third in the region of Isfahan, was built in the district of *Yahudiyya* (the Jewish city) on the location of the present Friday Mosque (Gaube 2008:164). Abu Nu'aim further stated that it was constructed on the site of a Church built in the Sassanid period (Golombek 1974:21-22). Prior to extensive studies that took place at the Mosque in 1970s, Golombek (1974) argued that this account suggested the existence of a Sassanid fortification under the Mosque with a Christian Church near the structure (ibid.). Other literary sources about this pre-Seljuk Mosque come from Al Muqaddasi, Al Mafarrukhi, and Naser Khosrow. Al Muqaddasi (985) provided one of the first accounts when he described the detail of the roof supported by round columns, and the minaret on the *qibla* side, entirely covered in plaster (Schroeder 1939:957). A more telling description of the Mosque came from Al Mafarrukhi, a historian from a respected Isfahani family, who wrote his *Kitab Mahasin Isfahan* between

1072 and 1092 (Mafrrukhi 2006). Mafarrukhi stated that the old and massive Friday Mosque was originally built by Tamimi Arabs from the Village of Tiran, and enlarged by Khasib-ibn Muslim (Mafrrukhi 2006:89; Schroeder 1939:957). He further described a basin for ablutions in the court and *Sheykhs* instructing on the foot of the existing piers. In Mafarrukhi's time, caravanserais and eating houses were added to the Mosque, and a library was established (Mafrrukhi 2006:89-90; Mafrrukhi cited in Paul 2000:130). The Abbasid revolt of 747 was followed by a period of control over the city by the Daylamite between 912-13 and then the Samanid between 916-17 (Bosworth 1996:171). This troubled period of Isfahan's history continued from 927 with disputes between Buyid and Ghaznavid (r. 977- 1086 AD). Despite political turmoil, Isfahan under the Buyid flourished and the Friday Mosque in *Yahudiyya* was said to be bigger than that of Hamadan (ibid.:172-72).

This pre-Seljuk period of Isfahan's history has been introduced by some as the impetus for the formation of Shi'a identity in Iran (Marcinkowski 2010:69) and the spark for the architectural renaissance of Persian art during the Seljuks (Ayatollahi 2003:213-14). Indeed, the Samanid, who despite their Islamic conversion claimed descendant from a noble Sassanid family; and Buyid, an Iranian Shi'a dynasty, emerged in the tenth century as national awareness began to appear against the subjugating Arabs who ruled Iran (Frye 1975:136). The greatest manifestation of this revival of Iranian identity is displayed by Ferdowsi's *Shahnameh*. In comparison with the Samanid who ruled from Greater Khurasan, the Buyid had a more immediate impact on the Friday Mosque considering one of the major seats of their Government was in Shiraz, close to Isfahan. In 1037-8 Ala al-Dowleh built a wall around the urban centre that had grown around the mosque and the market place (Le Strange 1930:204; Bosworth 1996:171; Meri & Bacharach 2006:399). The oldest city plan of Isfahan, reveals that the Friday Mosque and the *Old Meidan* (the large square southeast of the Mosque), were directly in the centre of the city (Gaubé 2008: 165). The contributions of the Buyid to the Friday Mosque were uncovered in the 1970s as the vestiges of an earlier Mosque beneath the current one emerged (Hutt 1978:253; Galdieri 1984:18). Therefore the subsequent Seljuk Mosque, which forms the nucleus of the Mosque as it stands today, was built on the plan of the original rectangular Buyid Mosque with colonnades on four sides (Hutt 1978:253).

In the mid-tenth century, after two attacks on Isfahan, the city fell to Tughril Beg the Seljuk. The thirteenth-century historian, Yaqut, writing nearly two centuries after the event, recorded that when Tughril entered the city after his successful siege in June 1051, the inhabitants had been obliged, by lack of wood, to demolish the Friday Mosque (Blunt & Swan 1966:23, 30). Yet, in 1052, Naser Khosrow in his *Safar-Nameh* (Book of Travel), described the Mosque as a "great and magnificent" building that stood in the centre of town (ibid.). Schroeder argued that since a "superb mosque" is hardly built in a year, this account forces us to conclude that the Isfahanis in tearing away the wood from the Mosque had not

substantially damaged it (Schroeder 1939:956). They may have demolished the roofs or doors, or such annexes as library, a treasury, or a bath associated with the Mosque, but the report was hardly credible in its literal sense (ibid.). Blunt and Sawn (1966:30) further contended that the report of the great Mosque observed by Naser Khosrow was either due to the fact that only minor buildings were destroyed, or that the destruction occurred after Naser Khosrow's visit.

In 1063 Isfahan became the capital of the Seljuk Empire under Alp Arsalan (Petersen 1996:255). Under Saljuk patronage, the fundamentals of Iranian mosque architecture was laid as an archetype that continued to influence monuments within Islamic Iran for centuries to come. The Friday Mosque in Isfahan, although not the first example, nonetheless provides a permanent model of Seljuk structural compositions (ibid.). The Seljuk planned their centre near the existing Friday Mosque and given that the Mosque and its square became the focal point of the city, the area is often considered as the core of "pre-Safavid" Isfahan and the epitome of Seljuk architecture (ibid.). The Seljuk played a significant role in forming the principle structure of the Mosque as it stands today. The reign of Malik Shah (r.1072-1092 AD) and his Persian *Vizier* Hasan Tusi Nizam al-Mulk (r.1018-1092 AD) is often considered as the 'golden age' of the Seljuk period. The most notable additions to the Mosque during this period were the two domes in the north-east (Fig. 6.1) and south-west (Fig. 6.2) axis of the courtyard. In 1087 Nizam al-Mulk constructed the principle dome chamber (Fig. 6.3 area 3) of the Mosque on the south-east flank and before the *mihrab* (Brend 1991:74). In 1088-89, Nizam al-Mulk's rival and successor, Taj al-Mulk, built a smaller more refined dome chamber (Fig. 6.3 area 8) on the north-east corner called *Taj al-Mulk Dome* or *Gunbad'I Khaki* (Earth dome). This dome is considered the supreme masterpiece of Saljuk architecture with its framing arches and brick inscriptions that circle the inside of the base of the dome (ibid.:75). Schroeder called this dome an "ideal dome" and considered the Persian dome builders of the Seljuk period the greatest masters of this architectural form in the world (Schroeder 1939:1008).

These two Seljuk domes also signified the first political dissent over Shi'a-Sunni dispute in medieval Persia. The Friday Mosque was considered the centre of Sunnism and therefore a subject of dispute in sectarian refutes. Lambton (1984:59) argued that Nizam al-Mulk's intolerance towards Shi'ism was justified as they represented the Buyid dynasty, whom the Seljuk had succeeded; however, the real threat to the State came from the Isma'ilis (Batinis). Alp-Arsalan was recorded to have said "Shi'ism is bad but Batinism is worse" (ibid.). The Isma'ilis, who also belonged to a branch of Shi'a sect, finally displayed their dissent by burning the main body of the Sunni Friday Mosque in 1129-21 (Brend 1991:75). Mafarrukhi stated that after the fire, there remained the two domes of Nizam al-Mulk and Taj al-Mulk (Honarfar 1965:80). Schroeder (1939:956), however, argued that the dispute was between the Shafi'ite and Hanifite sects (both Sunni), and after the destruction of the Mosque by the Shafi'ite, Nizam al-Mulk

replaced the old dome with the new one which bears his inscriptions. Therefore, he detected that the *Nizam al-Mulk Dome* was constructed after the sectarian feud that led to the fire.

The rebuilding of the Mosque after the fire had a substantial impact on the structural format of the building by transforming it from a *hypostyle* to a *four-ivan* Mosque, which became the characteristic of Iranian architecture for centuries to come (Graber 1968:631). The new structure had lofty brick piers supporting the vaults and the domes, and an *ivan* was placed at the centre of each courtyard façade (Brend 1991:75-6). The balance of the court was overshadowed by the wider *ivan* on the *qibla* side, which was followed by a dome rising above the rest of the structure, in this case the *Nizam al-Mulk Dome* (Graber 1968:629). The origins of the *four-ivan* plan is a matter of debate, but possibly traceable to palace architecture of pre-Islamic periods in Iran (Brend 1991:76). The Friday Mosque may not be the first *four-ivan* mosque, but it certainly provides a classic example for this form of architecture (ibid.). To restore the orthodoxy of Sunnism and counteract Shi'ism, Nizam al-Mulk added a *madrasa* to the plan of the Mosque in the late eleventh century (ibid.). Graber (1968:633) argued that the appearance of the *four-ivan* model during this period may have roots in the need to accommodate the construction of a *madrasa* in the Mosque. In 1092 Nizam al-Mulk was assassinated, bringing the 'golden age' of the Seljuk architecture to an end in Isfahan (Morgan 1988:32). Through the composition of his book of guidance, *Siyasat Nameh* (The Book of Government), Nizam al-Mulk is recognised in Iranian history as the Persian *Vizier* of a Sunni Seljuk ruler who demonstrated the coexistence and compatibility of pre-Islamic and Islamic Iranian values (Yavari 2012:238).

Many more elements were added over the centuries to the Seljuk structure of the Mosque. However, Graber (1990:57) argued that any subsequent alterations to the Mosque were simply to accommodate the functional needs and specific events rather than an ambition royal project. The next significant chapter in the history of the Mosque unfolded with the Mongols and the imprints of their stamp on the Mosque. Iran was brought under the Mongol sphere of influence in the early thirteenth century. Following the Mongol invasion, when Ibn Battuta visited Isfahan in the early fourteenth century, he was struck by the state of decay that had befallen the city (Dunn 1986:95). The initial destruction of Iran by the Mongols later developed into what has been considered a benign and culturally flourishing period in Persian art and architecture (Lane 2012:243). Prominent among the influential Mongol rulers, who called themselves Ilkhans, was Mohammad Uljaytu Khodabandeh (r.1282-1316 AD). Uljaytu was a proponent of theological debate and in 1310 under the influence of Shi'a scholars such as Taj al-Din Avaji and Jamal al-Din Mutahhir, he converted to Shi'ism (Bausani 1968:543). Thereafter, Uljaytu became a strong promoter of Shi'a ideology and engaged in the extensive patronage of Shi'a institutes. It was during this period that the principle canons of Shi'a doctrine were established under scholars such as Naser al-Din

Tusi (1274) and Allama Hilli (1326) (ibid.:544). The conversion of Uljaytu to Shi'ism and his promotion of this branch of Islam is treated as a significant phase of Iranian history in this thesis given its contribution to the maturation of a sect which subsequently developed into an essential component of Iranian identity. The contributions of Uljaytu are particularly important to the structure of the Friday Mosque as they represent the introduction of Shi'a expressions into a Sunni bastion (Brend1991:126). His addition was manifested in the construction of a prayer room with a superb stucco *mihrab* (Fig .6.3 area 14) which is dated to 1310 and is a commemorative gift to acknowledge the conversion of the Ilkhan ruler to Shi'ism (Fig. 6.4) (Renard 1998:45). The *mihrab* constitutes numerous professions of Shi'a faith through the *Kufi* inscriptions of *hadith* (text ascribed to Prophet Muhammad). The closing words of the inscription "Ali wali Allah" (Ali is the Friend of God), is a manifestation of the injection of the new Shi'a tradition into the Friday Mosque (Schimmel 1974:105).

One of the struggling successors of Ilkhanid who gained prominence in 1353 were the Muzaffarids, a dynasty of Arab origins whose power lasted until 1393 (Brend 1991:124). Although much of their rule was associated with family strife, they were patrons of art and theology (Bosworth 1996:265). The Muzaffarid added a *madrasa* (Madrese-ye Omar) (Fig 6.3 area 17) and a *Shabestan* to the south-eastern side of the Friday Mosque as a testimony to the artistic quality of craftsman in this period (Fig. 6.5) (Hutt 1978:253). The name of the *madrasa* (Omar) and the inscription of the names Abubakr, Omar, and Othman (the Caliphs of the Sunni tradition), display the Sunni inclinations of this complex (Honarfar 1965:139).

Tamerlane captured Isfahan in 1386, massacring its inhabitants but sparing its buildings (Blunt 1974:47). Blunt argued that under the Timurid many craftsmen, particularly tile-makers, left Isfahan to work for Tamerlane in Western towns and Samarqand (ibid.). The only surviving evidence of Timurid building at the Mosque is the *Beit al-Sheta* (winter hall) (Fig 6.3 area 15) and a portal on the north-western side incorporated into the Mosque at the order of Sultan Muhammad, the Governor of Isfahan (1446-1451 AD) (Honarfar 1965:72). The most significant contribution of the Timurid was the use of faience tile which later inspired the colourful Safavid architecture (Babaie & Haug 2007). It was during this period that the courtyard façade of the Mosque, which was mainly plain-brick in the Seljuk period, was sheathed by colourful mosaic-tiles (ibid.).

The main rival to the Timurid rule in Isfahan were the Aq Quyunlus' (the White Sheep) of Turkman origin. The imprint of Aq Quyunlus' Sultan Uzun Hasan emerged at the Friday Mosque in the form of an inscription dated to 1475-79 that mentions the deteriorating conditions of the Mosque and the restoration of the ceiling of an *ivan* (Graber 1990:30). It is argued that the tile-work of the sanctuary *ivan* in the

south-west (Fig 6.3 area 4) may be ascribed to a part of Uzun Hasan's restorations (Wilson 1986:758). Godard (1936:248) argued that in addition to the vault on the south-west *ivan*, the minarets could also be attributed to restorations done during this period.

In the fifteenth century with the ascendance of the Safavid dynasty to power, Isfahan once again became a city of royal patronage for architecture since the Seljuk period. The principle information about the Mosque during this period is retrieved from two sources; the inscriptions that decorated the walls and gates of the Mosque subsequent to any form of alteration to the structure, and the foreign travelogues. It was also during the Safavid period (r.1449-1736 AD) and during the reign of Shah Abbas I (r.1587-1629 AD) that the Friday Mosque of Isfahan began to deteriorate.

From the inscriptions at the Friday Mosque it can be conceived that the Safavid Shahs continued to treat the Mosque as a political centre with the inscription of various *farmans* (decrees), as well as attempts to *ta'mir* (restore) and *taz'in* (beautify) various components of the Mosque (Honarfar 1965:87-88). The majority of Safavid kings, including Shah Ismail I (r.1502-1524 AD), Shah Tahmasp I (r.1524-1576 AD), Shah Abbas I (r.1587-1629 AD) and Shah Abbas II (r.1642-1666 AD), Shah Sulaiman (r.1666-1694 AD) and Shah Sultan Hossein (r.1694-1722 AD) contributed to the restoration of the Mosque. In addition, Shah Ismail and Shah Tahmasp both made decrees reducing the taxes of the people of Isfahan (ibid.). In 1531-2, Shah Ismail placed an inscription in the Mosque that describes the Shah as "the leader of the army of the Mahdi, the Lord of the Age" (Newman 2009:32). This was a significant attempt as it elevated the status of the Shah to that of the hidden Imam (Mahdi), a tradition that more or less persisted to the reign of the Qajar kings who portrayed themselves as the "shadow of god". The tradition of placing inscriptions in the Friday Mosque continued with Shah Tahmasp who ordered the inscription of his triumph over the Uzbeks as well as details about his repairs (Honarfar 1965:150; Blake 1999:16).

The above attention to the Friday Mosque of Isfahan demonstrates that the Mosque continued to serve as the congregational space and a centre of religion and social life in Isfahan until the time of Shah Abbas. In 1590 Shah Abbas transferred his capital from Qazvin to Isfahan and in doing so began to embellish the city with architecture that transformed Isfahan to a metropolitan city (Blake 1999:104). Shah Abbas began his project with repairs and renovations around the *Old Meidan* (called Harun-e Vilayat). He even engaged in adding a *Chehel Sotun* (40 columns) (Fig 6.3 area 7) to the south-east of the Mosque (Honarfar 1965:71). As Blunt (1974:60) argued, Shah Abbas was initially content with enlarging the *Old Meidan* and retaining it as the centre of the city, but when a truculent landowner refused to sale his property for the intended developments, Shah Abbas moved the centre of the city's life elsewhere (ibid.). In 1611 as the *New Meidan* and the *Masjid-e Shah* (Shah Mosque) were constructed under the patronage

of Shah Abbas, the Friday Mosque slowly lost its preeminent position. Descriptions of Shah Mosque demonstrate that Shah Abbas meant the new mosque to replace the role of the old one, even taking the name *Masjid-e Jami' Jadid Abbasi* (The New Masjid Jame' of Abbasi) (Blake 1999:150). In his attempt to complete the Mosque quickly, Shah Abbas even tried to remove Yazd marbles from the Friday Mosque, an attempt that was prevented by the clergy (Blunt 1974:77-8)

The foreign explorers who navigated through Isfahan in the sixteenth and seventeenth century were overwhelmed by the attractiveness and predominance of the Safavid art and architecture. The construction of a rival congregational mosque, Shah Mosque (later Royal Mosque), that marked the beginning of the Shi'a domain of Islam, marginalised the older Mosque (Babaie & Haug 2007). The promotion of the Shah Mosque by the Safavids' and the plain features of the Friday Mosque, which lacked the colour and vibrancy of Safavid architecture, led to the extensive omission or trivial treatment of the latter Mosque in the writings of foreign travellers. While European trade was encouraged, various merchants, missionaries, adventurers and ambassadors, including the English organ maker, Thomas Dallam, the Huguenot jeweler Jean Chardin, the German physician Engelbert Kaempfer, and Capuchin father Raphael du Mans travelled to Persia (Blair & Bloom 2004:194). Some of these travellers have faintly described the state of the Friday Mosque during this period.

The seventeenth-century French traveller, Chardin argued that the centrality of the Friday Mosque and its *Old Maidan* was challenged by Shah Abbas I and his *New Meidan* complex which became the symbolic focal point of the Safavid Persia (Ferrier 1996:50). The crafts and trades were located around the old Mosque but the businesses had begun to deteriorate (Newman 2009:96). Although by the late 1660s the old Friday Mosque no longer functioned as the central congregational mosque, there are confirmations that it continued to maintain a degree of significance. First it should be noted that a great passage was constructed to link the *Old Meidan* and its Friday Mosque to the *New Meidan* (Fig. 6.6). This attempt illustrates that the *Old Meidan* and its Mosque were considered as a significant part of civil life in Isfahan subsequent to the Safavid attempt to relocate the centre of town to the *New Meidan* (Zandieh 2004:98). Graber (1990:60) argued that despite the relocation of the socio-political life of the city to the *New Meidan*, it was the old Mosque of the city, not that of the king, that retained the rules by which life carried on. Shirazi (1974:589) further maintained that the *Old Meidan* never lost its importance, but the nature of its activities changed as shops and markets replaced the former centre of politics. More recent studies about the urbanisation process of Isfahan indicated that the *Old Meidan*, the Friday Mosque, and the access to bazaar represented the traditional urban landscape of the Safavid period (Zandieh 2004:103). Considering the function of the mosque as a public space that served both religious and social activities of the neighbourhood, the clustering of Isfahani population around the Friday Mosque may indicate that

despite the increasing number of mosques in Isfahan, the Friday Mosque continued to occupy a significant role in the life of the residents. Graber (1990:60) argued that although the inscription of *farmans* indicate that the Friday Mosque occupied a significant place in the Safavid society, eventually the new Mosque became reserved for important functions. The occasions of coronation and religious festivals were repositioned to the new Mosque and the principle religious scholars of the day taught in the Shah Mosque during the seventeenth century (Blake 1999:151). However, the placement of an inscription during the reign of Shah Suleiman Safavi regarding the renovations that took place on the northern axis reveals that the Mosque continued to be significant and in operation (Honarfar 1965:124). Nevertheless, in 1704 and ten years after the reign of Shah Suleiman, the Dutch painter de Bruyn describes the *Old Meidan* as an stable, with only poorer guilds still carrying businesses in that area (Newman 2009:96).

Despite the above remark when Ashraf Afghan captured Isfahan in 1722, he reserved the Omar *madrasa*, which as described above was a Sunni addition to the Mosque during the Muzaffarid period, as the praying district for the Sunni Afghan soldiers and his own companions (Honarfar 1965:142). Further, in an attempt to avoid sectarian conflicts with the Shi'a, the corridor that joined the *madrasa* to the Mosque was closed with a wall and a new entrance from the bazaar was provided for the *madrasa* (ibid.). These historic episodes demonstrate that not only the Friday Mosque was fully functional as late as the mid eighteenth century, but it continued to be considered as a significant social bastion where the conquerors could advocate their authority to the citizens of Isfahan. It also displays that the multi-factional façade of the Mosque with its incorporation of Shi'a and Sunni wings allowed Muslims from different sects to respect this Mosque as the congregational Mosque of Isfahan. In the late 1730s when Nader Shah established the Afsharid dynasty (r.1736-1796 AD) he moved his capital from Isfahan to Mashhad and although the old capital remained under his patronage, his affiliation with the Sunni sect distanced him from the centre of Shi'a Islam in Isfahan (Curzon 1986:128). The following Zand (r.1750-1794 AD) and Qajar dynasties moved their capitals to Shiraz and Tehran respectively. Only Fath-ali Shah and Naser al-Din Shah felt content with Isfahan. It was during the reign of Fath-ali Shah that the gate of the Friday Mosque was repaired and Naser al-Din Shah made minor alterations to other mosques in Isfahan.

Travelogues from the Qajar period provide only brief descriptions of the Friday Mosque given it remained closed to non-Muslims. Nonetheless, some of the first depictions of the Friday Mosque were from this period by Pascal Coste (Fig. 6.7) and Madame Dieulafoy. It can be deduced that due to its functional purpose, the Friday Mosque was repaired by various donors who made it their duty as noble Muslims to safeguard the Mosque from falling into despair.



The first scientific study of the Friday Mosque was initiated during the reign of Reza Shah. Although the secular nature of the Pahlavi Administration made this period an unlikely moment in the history of Iran to ponder on the Islamic past of the country, the efforts of foreign scholars in the introduction of Iranian Islamic art and archaeology through various congresses, exhibitions, and publications permitted the development of this discipline. The initial studies of the Mosque during the reign of Reza Shah provided primary information about the historical chronology of the structure. Interest in the Mosque was maintained during the reign of Muhammad Reza Shah when as part of a larger project to restore various Islamic structures in Isfahan it became subjected to various repairs and excavations by *IsMEO*. After the Islamic Revolution and during the subsequent War with Iraq, Isfahan was hit by rockets in 1985 but the damaged southern flank was immediately restored.

As is evident in this historical context, it is clear that the Friday Mosque of Isfahan served continuously as one of the chief centres of life and ideology in Isfahan. The narrative of the Mosque is intertwined with the history of the development of Isfahan as one of the major cities in Iran. It is in this context that the rest of this chapter will attempt to detect the influence of various nationalistic ideologies on the treatment of the Mosque during the Qajar, Pahlavi, and the post-Revolutionary periods.

### **6.3. Qajar Nationalism: Case Study of the Friday Mosque of Isfahan**

As illustrated in the previous chapters, the politicisation of Iranian archaeology that emerged during the Pahlavi period had deep roots in the cultural and intellectual changes that dominated the course of events in the late nineteenth century. In effect, it is argued that the Qajar period served as a mediator between the traditional imperial form of governance, which sought legitimation in the institutes of monarchy and Shari'a, and the later concept of a political nation-state that gained its legitimacy from a set of pre-existing ethnic components to define the State. In this context it has been argued that while in the traditional Qajar paradigm of kingship legitimacy was granted to the person of the king as the 'centre of divine glory', the Qajar kings had begun to appreciate the potential of historic and pre-Islamic symbols as a political tool to modify domestic and international affairs. In addition, the Iranian intellectual movement towards the European-designed concept of a nation was discussed in respect to their agenda in authenticating Iranian civilisation by casting pre-Islamic history as the 'golden age' of Iranian history, while holding Islam responsible for the decadence that epitomised the Qajar period. While in the previous chapter the emphasis of Qajar on the institute of monarchy as one of the dual authorities of their legitimacy, monarchy and Shari'a, was examined (see Section 5.3.), this section will illustrate the Qajars' reliance on the institution of Shari'a. It is demonstrated that, despite the inclination of the Qajar dynasty

to support the religious aspects of Iranian society, their refuge in a traditional framework of mind prevented the appreciation of Islamic monuments as cultural heritage. Therefore monuments such as the Friday Mosque witnessed a period of neglect during this period.

As argued in previous chapters, while the Qajars' lack of motivation to utilise the past in authenticating their rule, restricted the pronounced manipulation of archaeological monuments, they had comprehended the political potentials of such applications. In order to understand the dynamics of this association with Islamic monuments, it is necessary to demonstrate incidents that articulate the Qajars' patronage of Shari'a as a source of legitimacy. Marashi (2008:19) argued that following Naser al-Din Shah's European tour, he began to foster a new style of governance which increasingly relied on what he termed "royalist Shi'sim". This new mandate was manifested in official celebrations, ceremonies, and commemorations, to break down the barriers separating the monarch from the masses (ibid.). The tenor of these events was inherently Islamic in nature. The most prominent illustration of this attempt was exhibited in the construction of a form of public theater called *Taky-e Dowlat* in Tehran in order to perform the state-sponsored event of *Ta'ziyeh*, the passion play performed annually during the month of *Moharram* to commemorate the martyrdom of Imam Hossein, the third Shi'a Imam (ibid.:39). From such activities it can be deduced that the Qajars had already initiated the application of a specific narrative of Islam in order to appeal to a pious Shi'a society. The influence of such legacies permeated to the refurbishment of Islamic monuments, especially those immediately associated with the Safavid, the pioneers of Shi'a Islam. Walcher (2001:117) argued that the most active constructive phase in Isfahan took place during the reigns of Fath-ali Shah and Naser al-Din Shah. The construction activities during Fath-ali Shah's reign were mostly concerned with the restoration of Isfahan's former magnificence and thus focused on Safavid remains (ibid.). Similarly as Mostowfi (1995:5-9) argued, the refurbishments that followed Naser al-Din Shah's visit to Isfahan in 1850 were directed towards monuments from the Safavid era. This stress on the Safavid monuments demonstrates the Qajars' inclination towards associating the Safavid period and its edifices as the 'golden age'. However, would these illustrations confirm that the Qajar had comprehended the value of Islamic monuments, such as mosques, as manipulative instruments to authenticate their legitimacy? To further articulate this issue, the implications of a mosque as a functional space and the role of *vaqf* (endowment) in Islamic Shari'a will be discussed.

The Islamic mosque was developed as a communal space where people came to congregate. It was not only a religious centre, but a political institute for religion, law, and government, where royal decrees, notices of tax, and tax exemptions were set up by the monarch to proclaim his authority (Pope 1939b:907). The functional and spiritual values associated with the mosque present it with occasions of renovation sponsored by wealthy donors. These donations are often in the form of what is termed as *vaqf*.

According to Islamic laws, there exists a custom of *vaqf*, which reserves dedication of income for pious purposes (Mcchesney 1991:6). In doing so the wealthy residences of a town offer *vaqf* to support and maintain mosques, madrasas, and Imamzadahs, in order to secure their welfare on the Day of Judgment (Blake 1999:144). Therefore, religious spaces such as mosques were constantly subjected to repair and good care. Honarfar (1965:121,103) has provided two inscriptions, which illustrate such donations were made for the maintenance of the Friday Mosque, the inscription of *Farkh al-Din Shushtari* and *Aqa Sultan*. However, in consideration of *vaqf* as a means to refurbish Islamic buildings, the economic decline and the centrality of Shi'ism has to be taken into account. The deprived financial state that distinguished much of Qajar period only allowed for the refurbishment of Islamic monuments immediately associated with the Shi'a aspects of Iranian identity, Safavid period. The two most prestigious mosques in Isfahan were considered to be the *Masjid-e Shah* and *Masjid-e Sheykh Lutfullah*, managed by Hujjat al-Islam Sheykh Muhammad Baqir and his sons (Walcher 2001:135). This was a powerful family of religious authority which through the control of large *vaqf* properties and livestock had emerged as the second landowners of Isfahan, after Zillul Sultan (ibid.). Their control and residence in *Masjid-e Shah* further elevated the prestige of the Mosque. Therefore, the Friday Mosque, which had remained the congregational mosque of the city since the Abbasid period, was driven out of favour and the available *vaqf* funds were directed towards the more Shi'a evocative monuments built by the Safavid and managed by the most powerful religious family in Isfahan. The significance of the mosque as a functional space in the pious Qajar society and the religious system of *vaqf* to elevate the donor's public status illustrated that the refurbishment of Islamic monuments had a social foundation in the Qajar society and restorations were carried out without a conscious awareness of the artistic and archaeological merit of the structures.

Additional contributing factors to the pattern of renovations in Isfahan were twofold: the favouritism towards specific monuments by the dominating rulers of the city; and the drastic decline of Isfahan's population following the invasion of the Afghans (Walcher 2000:336). With respect to the influential nobility, the case of Sheykh Muhammad Baqir's patronage of the Safavid mosques to re-assert his religious authority has already been discussed above. In addition, it was during the political life of Hajji Muhammad Hossein Khan (1795-1823 AD), that the revitalisation of Isfahan to its former state began under his patronage (Walcher 2001:117). While the cultural status of Isfahan was frequently associated with the Safavid monuments and their refurbishments, it was during this period that the Friday Mosque witnessed an isolated episode of renovation (ibid.:119). In contrast, the period of Zillul Sultan Mas'ud Mirza's governance in Isfahan (r.1874-1906 AD) is generally credited with the deliberate destruction of many Safavid complexes in the later years of his rule. Ansari (1943:54-56) argued that this intended negligence and demolition of Isfahan's monuments was aimed at diminishing the prestige of the city and

therefore reducing the political power of Zillul Sultan. These contradictory patterns of renovations distinguished by irregular periods of decline and growth demonstrate that not only the older Seljuk monuments such as the Friday Mosque were not associated with the centre of power and went through a period of neglect, but even the Safavid structures that were considered as the embodiment of the prestige and supremacy of Shi'a authority were periodically demolished and neglected under Qajar rule.

An additional factor that contributed to the neglect of the Friday Mosque was the city's extensive population decline during the Qajar period. An amalgam of war, political instability, disease, and hunger that followed the fall of Isfahan from its political importance meant an inherent decline of the city's population. As Isfahan's significance faded away and its population declined, the large mosques of the city became impractical. Therefore, *Masjid-e Shah* with its central location became the place of congregation, and in addition, various small mosques were constructed to fulfill the requirement of various neighbourhoods. In fact, as Walcher (2001:130) argued, the construction of smaller mosques became a common practice for the private sponsors and prominent *Ulama* to convey their political authority and social prestige in Isfahan. Thus, the Friday Mosque of Isfahan which is identified as one of the largest mosques in Iran remained mostly underused during this period.

The above demonstrates that while the social implications of Islamic monuments as instruments of authentication was comprehended by the Qajars, there were extensive irregularities in their political manipulations, depending on the economic circumstances, and the constructive mood of the nobility in Isfahan. However, because the Safavid complexes were merited as the symbols of the 'golden age' of Shi'a Persia, and fed into the Shari'a institute on which the Qajar monarchy was founded, the majority of Islamic structures from other periods fell into decay. Therefore, with the exception of minor renovations at the Friday Mosque discussed above, this Islamic site seldom received extensive attention during this period.

In addition to the Qajars' conduct towards Islamic monuments, the consideration of the secular elites and their discernible ideological shift towards blaming Islam for Iran's backwardness should be discussed. The intelligentsia rose against the backdrop of religious milieu that dominated the Qajar society and conceived to disaffect the society from its religious inclinations and direct it towards modernization (Nashat 1982:137). Aside from denouncing Islam, they sought to make progress in the society through the endorsement of ethnic nationalism based on the notion of Aryanism and pre-Islamic history (see Chapters 4 & 5). In comparison with the rest of the Iranian society, these elites were more concerned with endorsing the cultural values of historical past and the significance of art and archaeology given their exposures to Western ideologies. In Chapter 5, it was demonstrated that the investment of these elites in

the pre-Islamic past had a relative impact on the Qajar monarchs and their comprehension of historic resources as political tools to authenticate their rule domestically and internationally. However, in the context of Islamic monuments, the elites' condemnation of Islam for Iran's backwardness and the association of *Ulama* with radical movements that opposed the secular constitution, further relegated Islam and its monuments to a minor position. Therefore, while this group of elite considered pre-Islamic monuments as cultural heritage and worthy of protection, they displayed little sympathy for the cultural merits of Islamic monuments such as the Friday Mosque.

It is therefore held that irregular Qajars' renovations of the Safavid monuments and the negligence of Islam by secular elites, garnered little support for the conservation of the Friday Mosque. This general disregard was noted by European travellers who visited Isfahan during this period. In fact, with the exception of Pascal Coste (Flandin & Coste 1900), European visitors to Isfahan during this period seldom mention the Friday Mosque. A few remarks are necessary to clarify the European lack of interest in the Friday Mosque. First, the equivocal geographical position of the Friday Mosque as an intricate part of the old centre of Isfahan had a bearing on attracting foreign travellers to this site. In contrast to the position of the Shah Mosque which was visible from afar and adorned with colourful motifs and attractive gardens from the Safavid period, the Friday Mosque was engrossed into the heart of the old town and as Graber (1990:15) argued, lacked a visible exterior edge. Indeed, the architectural prominence of the structure was only detectable from its own court-yard, a location closed to non-Muslims. Second, the European travellers who visited Isfahan were often inspired by the travelogues of previous visitors who wrote predominantly about the Safavid structures. Third, European travellers who visited Isfahan during the Qajar period had no personal or cultural ties with the monuments they explored, unlike Persepolis. The essential nature of their curiosity was one surpassed by the notion of the Orient with its unfamiliar buildings and peculiar costumes. Their curiosities were often unleashed by older travelogues describing Isfahan as a divine city under the Safavids and the acquisition of information about the religious minorities who lived there. Therefore, the Friday Mosque had a minor significance to the curiosities of foreign travellers.

This is, however, not to contest the foreigner's interest in Islamic archaeology. From the mid-1800s, foreigners had been collecting Islamic artefacts and engaging in commercial excavations in Iran. It is reported that Jean-Baptiste Nicolas and Jules Richard, the Frenchmen who resided in Iran, sold many tiles from buildings in Natanz, Varamin, Kashan, Damghan, and Qum, to Robert Murdoch Smith, who was collecting Persian artwork for the South Kensington Museum, later renamed the Victoria and Albert Museum (see Masuya 2000). Vernoit (1997:5) argued that from 1910 to 1914 commercial diggers such as Emile Vignier, the brother of the Parisian dealer Charles, were engaged in clandestine digging for Islamic

artefacts in towns like Rey, Sirjan and Sava. Further, the efforts of antiquarians such as Dikran Garabed Kelkian were imperative for the promotion of Islamic art. In fact, it was due to Kelkian's bias in the 'supremacy' of Islamic art from Persia that during the Pahlavi period Arab, Persian and Turkish art were clustered together and presented as "Persian Art" (see Jenkins-Madina 2000). As early as 1899, Kelkian had opened a gallery called *Le Musee de Bosphore* (Fig. 6.8), in New York to showcase his collection entitled *The Art of Persia and the Levant* (ibid.:73). The interest in Islamic art intensified in 1910 following the *Exhibition of Masterpieces of Muhammeden Art*, held in Munich (see Sarre et.al 1912).

The interest of foreigners in Islamic art and archaeology was often met through the collection of antiquity and fascination with the colourful Safavid monuments. Tiles were of particular interest, given they could be easily removed and transported. Although, there were restrictions for non-Muslims to enter religious complexes, there are accounts that testify to their accessibility to antiquity dealers. Some of these dealers, such as Jules Richard, also known as Reza Khan, were Muslims and hence able to enter religious places. Others, such as Jean-Baptiste Nicolas, were a part of diplomatic missions in Iran and therefore had influence within the Qajar court. Masuya (2000:50) argued that both these men, who contributed to the enrichment of Islamic collections abroad, had a strong relationship with Naser al-Din Shah. Masuya further contended that Naser al-Din Shah had no objections to the removal of artefacts from Islamic monuments, and in fact, these missions were authorised by the Shah (ibid.). Given the pious Iranian society and the influence of *Ulama*, however, the Qajar court was forced to issue an edict to ensure that religious buildings were not disturbed (ibid.). This is also evident in the second decree in the agreement of French Archaeological Concession in Iran (1895), whereby the French were band from entering and conducting research in religious places (Yazdani 2001:151-3).

It has been the intention of this section to argue that given the Qajar's failure to incorporate the Friday Mosque of Isfahan into a particular arrangement for the purpose of political and nationalistic manipulation, the site was largely overlooked during this period. In doing so, it was discussed that the irregular restoration projects of the Qajar authority invested in Safavid edifices as the 'golden age' of Shi'a patronage to satisfy their Shari'a source of legitimacy. The disregard for the Friday Mosque continued as the secular elite gave their support to ethnic nationalism that endorsed the protection of pre-Islamic monuments with no sympathy for Islamic remains which they associated with Iran's decline. Finally, the European search for an 'Oriental' city embodied in the monuments of the Safavid periods further propelled the Friday Mosque into the periphery. While the Islamic inclination of the Qajar period failed to recognise the artistic and archaeological merits of Iran's Islamic heritage, the secular and to some extent anti-Islamic reign of Reza Shah with its ethnic nationalism is distinguished with the birth of Islamic archaeology. It is here argued, that the developments during the Pahlavi period could not have

endured if the Qajar period had not provided the prelude. The popularity of Islamic art and archaeology, and the available collections in the European and American Museums were an impetus for the birth of Islamic archaeology during Reza Shah's reign (Fig. 6.9). The rhetoric of Major R. M. Smith, who was a collector of Persian Islamic art, foreshadowed the course of developments that emerged during the Pahlavi period. In his book on *Persian Art*, he wrote:

*"Unlike the Arabs, the Persians have always been, and still are, artistic ... the Turkish element in the population, although politically and religiously amalgamated with the Persian, has, however, never imbibed the artistic idiosyncrasies of the latter. Works of art are almost exclusively confined to the parts of the country inhabited by the old Aryan stock."* (Smith 1876:3)

As will be demonstrated, the emphasis on the Aryan ethnicity of Persian Islamic art provided for its incorporation within the interpretation of Iranian identity and ethnic nationalism adopted by Reza Shah's Government.

#### **6.4. Pahlavi Nationalism: Case Study of the Friday Mosque of Isfahan**

In Chapter 5, it was argued that the identification of pre-Islamic archaeology as the epitome of Iran's 'golden age' became an ideal source for the instigation of Iranian identity and the propagation of the ethnic-dynastic nationalism that the Pahlavi Administration utilised for its nation building project. However, as argued throughout this research, the adoption of this identity was the outcome of a mutual effort between the Iranian Administration and the foreign academics who performed a vital role in the affairs of creating and orchestrating the discipline of Iranian archaeology during the Pahlavi period. Therefore, the focus of this section is to highlight some of the issues that guided the direction of Islamic archaeology and the treatment of Islamic monuments such as the Friday Mosque. It is further argued that while the ethnic-dynastic nationalism of the Pahlavi Administration may have preferred to relegate Islamic archaeology to the periphery, the educational background of the primary characters who had a particular influence on the course of Iranian archaeology, prevented the official propagated disregard for Islamic monuments.

##### **6.4.1. Reza Shah's Government & Ethnic Nationalism: Islamic Archaeology**

The ethnic-dynastic nationalism that was adopted by Reza Shah's Government to build a nation rested on the concepts of "invention" or "selection" of traditions that aimed to rediscover and promote Iran's

ancient past. The ‘golden age’ selected by the Government constituted the pre-Islamic Achaemenid and Sassanid periods due to their cultural and political achievements that befitted the official’s model of a strong nation-state. Consequently, while the pre-Islamic site of Persepolis was adopted as the instrument behind the promotion of ethnic nationalism, Islamic sites were overlooked as functional spaces with limited significance worthy of systematic studies. However, it is the intention of this section to demonstrate that although Islamic monuments, such as the Friday Mosque, failed to feature in the nationalist quests of Reza Shah’s Government to build a nation, they were not subject to animosity and ignorance, primarily due to the interest of foreign scholars in their significance. With the efforts of these scholars, similar to pre-Islamic sites, the significance of Islamic sites was discussed in the context of ‘continuity’ and ‘superiority’, and therefore, incorporated into the ethnic nationalism of the State.

Before proceeding, two vital concepts have to be discussed. First, it has to be noted that the tenor of Islamic archaeology during this period was exceedingly anti-Arab with little recognition of their contributions to Islamic monuments. Rizvi argued that with respect to Iranian Islamic art and archaeology, the “Iranian” or “Aryan” rather than “Islamic” markers were often utilised to differentiate Iran and its ‘unique culture’, from the neighbouring Arab-speaking nations in the Middle East (Rizvi 2007:50). In fact, Pope (1939a:910-911) in his *Survey of Persian Art* argued, in a similar tone that the Arab culture was in comparison with that of Iran, primitive, and brought no impulse into Iranian architecture. Second, the emergence of Islamic art and archaeology as an independent field of inquiry in the nineteenth century triggered art historical debates about the origins of European architecture (Grigor 2007:570). For example, one of the more influential scholars of this period, Josef Strzygowski, identified certain crucial periods for the provision of archetypes that evolved into Christian art. He argued that the Sassanid, Islamic and especially Seljuk art were in debt to Hellenistic art and it was through their development that Christian art and hence European art was born (Strzygowski 1911:150). As illustrated in this section, these two factors had a bearing on the direction of development of Islamic art and archaeology in Iran. In doing so, foreign scholars appropriated this new discipline during Reza Shah’s rule, not only with emphasis on its ‘continuity’ and ‘superiority’, but also through its assertion as an integral part of Iranian heritage. This was further enforced by an enhanced interest with Seljuk architecture as an impetus in the evolution of Christian art. This encouraged foreign scholars working in Iran to engage in the study of Seljuk monuments, such as the Friday Mosque, which provides a clear example of Seljuk architecture.

From the above, it is argued that the development of the main strands of Islamic archaeology in Iran occurred simultaneously with the introduction of pre-Islamic archaeology, albeit lagging behind other



Islamic countries in the Middle East and North Africa. The principle reason for this delay rooted in the late introduction of archaeology as an independent discipline and its relatively recent institutionalisation in Iran. Nevertheless, it was during this period that along with the interest in Iranian Islamic artefacts that had long found their way into national and private collections abroad, emphasis was put on the scientific study of Islamic monuments. One of the very first monuments studied during this period was the Friday Mosque of Isfahan.

The three main individuals associated with the development of Iranian archaeology during Reza Shah's reign were Ernst Herzfeld, Arthur Urpham Pope, and André Godard, all of whom were familiar with Islamic art and architecture. In Chapter 5, it was argued that the comprehension and manipulation of ethnic-dynastic model of Iranian nationalism won Herzfeld and Pope the roles of mediators between the Pahlavi Administration and the American institutes in the course of obtaining the permission to excavate at Persepolis in the 1930s. This chapter focuses on the role performed by these same individuals, more or less, in developing Islamic archaeology in a political context that favoured pre-Islamic archaeological sites to support its brand of nationalism. As discussed above, the contributing factor in their success and that which procured the consent of Reza Shah's Administration, was the 'Persianisation' of Islamic archaeology and the application of the same approach they had utilised to denote the durable significance of the pre-Islamic history of Iran. In particular, their emphasis on the concepts of 'continuity' and 'superiority' that transcended the intrusion of foreigners and revived Iran as a unique nation is noteworthy.

In Section 5.4, Ernst Herzfeld's contributions to the politicisation of Persepolis were discussed in detail. However, it is noted that prior to his archaeological engagements in Iran, Herzfeld was involved in the study of Islamic monuments in Iraq and Syria and therefore was knowledgeable in Islamic archaeology (Hillenbrand 2005:414). Herzfeld revealed his fondness for Islamic archaeology in a lecture in front of the members of the *SNH* on 13 August 1925, as he identified the Achaemenid, Sassanid, Seljuk, and Safavid periods as the pillars of Iranian civilisations (Herzfeld in Grigor 2004:27). The significance of the Islamic period, in addition to the pre-Islamic period, as the 'golden ages' of Iranian civilisation was further affirmed by Herzfeld in his design of the vignette he prepared for the *SNH* (Fig. 5.5) (also discussed in Chapter 5), encompassing the three facades of the *Achaemenid Palace* at Persepolis, the Sassanid arch of *Taq-e Kasra* at Ctesiphon, and the Ziyarid monument of *Gunbad-e Qabus* in the Gorgan region. While *Achaemenid Palace* and *Taq-e Kasra* accommodated the ethnic-dynastic model of Iranian nationalism and expansionism, the selection of the tower of *Qunbad-e Qabus* was a testament to the merit that Herzfeld allocated to significance of Islamic archaeology. During this period particularly, Seljuk monuments were perceived as significant, considering they were regarded as an epoch during which

Islamic art and architecture reached its maturity in Iran and spread into the neighbouring regions (Korn 2010). In order to identify a Turkish dynastic period as one of the “golden ages” of Iranian history, a narrative was adopted to place emphasis on the Persian character of Seljuk monuments and their technical origin in the pre-Islamic Sassanid period (Korn 2010; Schroeder 1939:1043-45; Godard 1936:56). One of the greatest manifestations of this ‘golden age’ was the Friday Mosque of Isfahan with its *four-ivans* and perfect domes. Its Seljuk structure was attributed to Nizam al-Mulk, the Persian *Vizier* of the Seljuk king, and therefore, an Iranian identity was assigned to the monuments. In 1923, Herzfeld travelled through Iran and took black and white photos of mostly the exterior of few Islamic monuments, including the Friday Mosque.

Worthy of comment here is Herzfeld’s failure to contribute extensively to the development of Islamic studies in Iran considering his engagement with explorations at Persepolis. At a time when Iranian political culture was dominated by notions of ethnic nationalism, the presence of Herzfeld as a leading scholar to take over the task of studying and promoting the pre-Islamic site of Persepolis was more essential than any other site. Hillenbrand (2005:414, 419) argued that despite Herzfeld’s scholarly capacity for extending the knowledge of Islamic art he had acquired in Iraq and Syria, he failed to contribute to the development of these studies in Iran. Instead, considering the favourable political attitude towards pre-Islamic monuments and Herzfeld’s own interest in Hellenism, his research in Iran was fully engaged in the study of Persepolis (ibid.). With Herzfeld addressing the nationalistic policies of Reza Shah’s Government through his discoveries at Persepolis, other foreign scholars such as Pope were allowed more flexibility to explore the arena of Islamic art and archaeology.

The rhetoric of emphasis on the ‘continuity’ and ‘superiority’ of Iranian culture in both pre-Islamic and Islamic period was also employed by Pope. As an advisory Curator of *Mohammadan Art at the Art Institute of Chicago* (1919), Pope fundamentally influenced the introduction and promotion of Persian art and its underpinning Islamic architecture and archaeology. The impact of Pope’s 1925 speech entitled *The Art of Iran in the Past and Future*, in front of Iranian officials and Reza Shah was discussed in the context of its impact on Persepolis. In this section, it is argued that Pope’s speech, not only stimulated a revival of ancient Iranian history, but triggered awareness towards Islamic history of Iran as well. Consistent with his scheme of appealing to the Pahlavi authorities, Pope presented Iran as an authentic nation with an instrumental role in the development of art and architecture of the world (Pope cited in Yazdani: 245-46). He deemed Iran as a gateway that provided a bridge between the East and the West, and the pinnacle for this cultural exchange he considered to be after the advance of Islam in Iran (Pope 1938b:93-97). It was this “Persian spirit” that manifested itself in the art and architecture of the Asia Minor as the Persian

artists travelled to the region, spreading their “unique” art into the land of Semitic Arabs and the “barbaric” Turks (ibid.). He further stated:

“... hardly any of the art that are now called Turkish but what were in considerable measure of Persian origin. And in many ways Persian art reached the shores of Europe, there to teach new methods and new arts, to lend elegance, grace and decorative charm to those already established.” (ibid.)

As discussed in Chapter 5, as Reza Shah’s Government was more inclined towards the ethnic elements of nationalism and the Aryan origin of Iranians as a stepping stone to unite the nation and build a nation-state, the racial and anti-Semitic rhetoric articulated by Pope in his discourse, greatly appealed to Iranian officials. Therefore, although the Seljuk were not an ‘authentic’ Iranian dynasty and the Islamic period was not instrumental in building a secular nation-state, Pope’s emphasis on the “Persian spirit” with its ‘superiority’, ‘continuity’, and over-arching influence on the art and architecture of the world, sealed the importance of this period and allowed for the study of the Friday Mosque. Following his speech, Reza Shah ordered the immediate replacement and duplication of tiles missing from the dome of *Sheykh Lutfullah Mosque* in Isfahan (Grigor 2004:32). He further contributed 500 *Pounds* towards Pope’s *Survey of Persian Art*, which had a section attributed to the Friday Mosque (Goode 2007:170). The study of Islamic archaeology in Iran substantially advanced following the first pictures taken of Islamic sites. This was provided by the Government’s intention to restrain the institute of Shi’a Islam as a part of the policy to secularise Iran and a simultaneous interest in the artistic and cultural value of Islamic monuments inspired by scholars such as Pope. Therefore, an additional outcome of Pope’s speech was Reza Shah’s order to lift the ban for non-Muslims to visit Islamic monuments. Further, Pope was provided with an expert photographer to capture the very first colour photographs of the most sacred Shi’a shrines (Gholi Majd 2003:31, 36). This was a significant advance for the American institutes, since similar to the case of Persepolis, they had once again monopolised a field hitherto unexplored by any other experts of Islamic monuments in Iran. In addition, it was through these efforts that mosques were transformed from performing as religious functional spaces to their recognition as ‘cultural heritage’.

Pope went on to become one of the most enthusiastic promoters of Iran as the “source of artistic creativity in the Muslim world” (Rizvi 2007:48), which not only enhanced the value of Islamic monuments and established a bastion for the scholarly study of Islamic art and archaeology, but fed the growing demands of the private art collectors and antique dealerships. Gholi Majd (2003:8) argued that Pope himself, in collaboration with a dealer named Rabeno, was involved in illegal export of Islamic artefacts from Iran to museums abroad. It is argued that the *mihrab* on display in the Metropolitan Museum was acquired by

Pope during this period (Fig. 6.10) (ibid.). Vernoit (1997:5) further indicated that even Iranian officials such as General Zahedi became involved in clandestine digging and in this case the recovery of pottery, metalwork, and glass from a site in Gurgan in 1926.

Pope's efforts to promote Persian art resulted in a series of exhibitions and congresses organised under his direction in Philadelphia (1926), London (1930-31), Leningrad (1935), New York, Boston, Washington and Chicago (1949). A review of articles in *The Times* newspaper, illustrates the interest and enthusiasm that encircled these events outside Iran (*The Times*:1930a & 1930b; 1931; 1933; 1935a & 1935b). One of the more significant events for the purpose of this section was the *Second International Congress on Persian Art* that occurred simultaneously with the 1931 *International Exhibition of Persian Art* in New York and later in London. A great number of papers presented in this Congress concerned themselves with the influence of Persian art in China, Scandinavia, and European Architecture (Rizvi 2007:53). The participation of Josef Strzygowski was particularly notable, considering his support for the racial theory that the roots of 'Aryan art' lay in the traditions of Near East and particularly Iran (ibid.). It has to be noted that both Herzfeld and Pope were influenced by the racial theories espoused by Strzygoswki's idea of Iranian/Aryan cultural superiority (ibid.). In correspondence with this paradigm, the Islamic art and archaeology in these exhibitions were framed in the racial rhetoric of "Aryan" and "Iranian" while the term "Islam" was strongly marginalised (ibid.:50). Additionally, a correspondence by Ali Asqar Hekmat, a former Minister of Education and Foreign Minister, demonstrate the inclination of Iranian officials to refer to Islamic artefacts as *Sanaye'* (crafts) (Yazdani 2001:261) and avoiding Islamic markers. The launch of international exhibitions and the initial interests in the Islamic art and artefacts from Iran encouraged scholars to present a comprehensive understanding of the subject. In Brigg's view, to understand Persian art properly, "one must know something of Persian architecture and particularly of the ritual requirements and historical development of the mosque" (Briggs et al. 1931:3). Therefore, Persian mosques played an important role in the promotion of Persian art. Particularly, considering the presentation of the Friday Mosque as a blue-print in the Islamic architecture of Iran, the Mosque was brought forth to be subjected to in-depth studied.

Pope (1938a:5) was the first scholar to emphasise the importance of the Friday Mosque and to present its 'perfect dome' as the epitome of Iranian architecture. He argued that the impressive technical evolution of the Mosque that extending over a period of 900 years provided a manual to post-Islamic art and architecture in Iran (Pope 1938a:5). Early in the spring of 1931, at the *Exhibition of Persian Art* in the Royal Academy in London, Pope met Eric Schroeder and persuaded him to go to Iran with him to "make the plan of the most important building in the East, the Jami Mosque at Isfahan" (Welch 1969-70:14). Schroader who had previously made plans of monuments in the Arabian Desert accepted the offer and

spent four month in Isfahan to complete the project (ibid.). His plan of the Mosque was published in the *Architectural Survey* by the *American Institute of Persian Art and Archaeology* in 1931 and remained in use as a reference to future scholars (Fig. 6.11) (Schroeder 1939:949). Pope himself began photographing the Mosque in 1929 and continued to work on the site for ten seasons on behalf of the *American Institute of Iranian Art and Archaeology* (ibid.). Some of the results of this research were published in the *Survey of Persian Art*. The most significant contribution of these photographs, which were presented in the 1933 exhibition at the *Royal Institute of British Architecture* (*The Times* 1933), was the stimulation of the ongoing debates on the origins of European art and architecture. A correspondence between Arthur Pope (1933) and Martin Briggs (1933) in *The Burlington Magazine*, demonstrates the disputes around Pope's proposition of the origin of Gothic architecture in Persian art in reference to the photo exhibition that included the Friday Mosque and a number of other Islamic monuments in Iran. Further work on the Mosque was undertaken in 1934 by Albert Gabriel (1935) who published the result of his one week preliminary studies at the site in the 1935 issue of *Ars Islamica*. In addition, between 1935 and 1937, M.B. Smith a research fellow from the *American Council of Learned Societies* offered a comprehensive photogrammetric survey and relief drawings of the Friday Mosque (Galdieri 1984:26). A detailed analysis of the preliminary studies during this period reveal the initial interest of foreign scholars with establishing a chronology for the evolution of the Mosque's architecture, based on the styles each structure maintained, and the assertion of similarities between Iranian and European architectural elements in search of their origin.

Another instrumental character in the appropriation of Islamic archaeology during the Pahlavi period was André Godard, the Head of the *Archaeological Service of Iran* created in 1928. Similar to Herzfeld and Pope, Godard had a background in Islamic art and architecture through his studies in Samara (1910) and Egypt (1912) (Gran-Aymerich & Marefat 2001). Unlike Herzfeld and Pope who had a nationalistic rhetoric attached to their work, Godard presented himself as an archaeologist with "no interest in romanticising archaeology" (Godard 1936:7). He initiated the documentation of both pre-Islamic and Islamic monuments by adding them to the *Inventory of National Monuments* (Godard & Smith 1937:13). These documents contributed to the knowledge of the site through the provision of historical background, architectural plan, and photographic archives (Smith & Godard 1935:153). In this process, the more significant sites were identified and those in immediate risk of destruction restored to prevent further decay (Vernoit 1997:7). In his *Athar-e Iran*, Godard (1936:213-275) committed to the study of ancient mosques in Iran and in particular contributed a substantial section to the Friday Mosque. Similar to previous scholars, Godard focused on dating the various structures of the building and in doing so providing a history for the development of Islamic architecture in Iran. In addition, Godard marked the

transitory periods in which the Mosque had changed in style and in size (ibid.:208). Perhaps his most distinguished proposition in the structural formation of Iranian mosque was the theory of “Kiosk Mosque” and the assumption that due to their resemblance to Sassanid fire temples, the origin of the structure of sanctuary in the mosque may lie in pre-Islamic architectural traditions (ibid.:207, 226). The offered presumptions regarding the pre-Islamic origin of Islamic monuments, such as the Friday Mosque, provided foreign scholars with an opportunity to engage in the study of Islamic monuments that were adopted to the Iranian cultural tradition and therefore posed no threat to the brand of nationalism advocated by the Government. In addition to the study of the Mosque, Godard engaged in the repair and restoration of the decaying components of the Mosque. This project was carried out between 1936 and 1939 with the consolidation of the pillars on the western flank of the Mosque and the collapsing minaret (Galdieri 1984:30-34). However, Galdieri has noted that no official reports were provided by Godard regarding these restorations (ibid.:30-31). With the onset of World War II and following the departure of foreign archaeologists from Iran, activities at the Mosque were terminated. Apart from minor repair works by Godard in 1949 on the eastern *ivan* (ibid.:30-40) no critical studies were carried out. It was in the 1960s and during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah that interest was further enhanced in Islamic art and archaeology as the Government began investing in the tourist industry.

Before analysing the fate of the Friday Mosque during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah, it is essential to note that although as discussed in Chapter 2 Reza Shah’s official policy imposed the development of a secular discourse, and his reforms targeted the marginalisation of the clergy who were blamed for the backwardness of the Iranian society (Menashri 1992:99), he displayed no contempt for the study and preservation of Islamic monuments. Despite the Government’s acknowledgement of the cultural significance of Islamic monuments alongside pre-Islamic monuments, the merit of Islamic sites were undermined when caught in the political quarrels between the Pahlavi regime and the *Ulama*. This case was best illustrated in Reza Shah’s use of heavy artillery to quell the rebellion at the *Gohar-Shad Mosque* in 1935 and in the process destroying parts of the historic complex (Rajaei 2007:59).

#### **6.4.2. Mohammad Reza Shah’s Government & Dynastic Nationalism: Islamic Archaeology**

In the previous section it was argued that the secular approach of Reza Shah’s Government had set to assault the clerical establishment. This is while Mohammad Reza Shah took a decisively different approach to religion. Having survived a number of life threatening incidents, the Shah was convinced that he was in touch with the divine (Rahnema 2011:121). His conviction was particularly dominated by empathies towards Shi’a mythology and claims of encountering the Holy figures (ibid.:116-18).

Mohammad Reza Shah's relatively favourable attitude towards Islam did not translate into extensive deviations from the ethnic-dynastic nationalism promoted by Reza Shah's Government, but it had valuable implications for the treatment of Islamic monuments, which continued to be presented as an integral part of the 'superior' Iranian identity. Nevertheless, this period witnessed a change in approach towards Islamic art and archaeology. During Reza Shah's rule, the mainstream objective was the introduction of Iranian Islamic art and its equation in footing with that of Europe and the rest of Islamic world, mainly to feed the antiquity market and museums. During the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah, however, the preservation and restoration of sites became more prominent. With respect to the Friday Mosque, it was during this period that extensive restorations were implemented. In addition, the mode of research approach shifted from an artistic-architectural orientation in methodology to archaeological studies.

A series of developments, particularly in the 1960s, contributed to illuminating the significance of Islamic monuments and the necessity of their preservation. First of all, as foreign scholars persisted on their interest in Islamic monuments and as a new generation of Iranian archaeologists began to modify the terrain of cultural institutes, an intensified awareness about the preservation and appreciation of cultural heritage prevailed. The second discernible shift in the treatment of cultural heritage was a direct outcome of the launch of tourism as an expansive industry in 1963 and the establishment of institutions, such as the *NOCHMI* in 1965. These new developments were assisted by the personal interest of Farah Pahlavi in Iranian art and architecture, as well as the rise in oil revenue and the relative availability of financial support for the preservation and restoration of archaeological sites.

This favourable setting supplied the Islamic monuments of Isfahan with an opportunity to have their former appearance revitalised. According to Hojjat (1995:257), in 1963 Isfahan hosted a symposium with the collaboration of the *SNH*, in which the most important Islamic monuments of the city were identified and evaluated for preservation. The involvement of *SNH* is noteworthy considering, as discussed in Chapter 2, it had a significant role in building a nation by adopting an Iranian identity that according to the Pahlavis' official paradigm predominantly relied on the pre-Islamic past. The co-ordination of *SNH* is a testament to the change in the outlook towards Iranian identity and national monuments, to include both pre-Islamic and Islamic aspects. The outcome of this symposium was the first ever *Decree for the Technical Preservation of Cultural Heritage in Iran* (ibid.). It is important to note that this decree was released almost thirty years after the *First International Congress of Architects and Technicians of Historic Monuments in Athens*, but as Hojjat argued, conformed to the codes of the *Venice Charter* offered during the Second Congress a few month later in 1964 (ibid.;

<http://www.international.icomos.org/venicecharter2004/index.html>). This affinity, Hojjat argued, was due to

close collaborations between the Iranian authorities and *UNESCO* (ibid.:257). According to the articles of this decree which was published by the *SNH* in 1963, the Friday Mosque was amongst the more important monuments of the city in need of preservation (ibid.:413-23). The Mosque continued to appeal to scholars throughout the 1960s and Galdieri (1990:76) reported that in a 1966 tour of the Mosque accompanied by Giuseppe Tucci, he had mentioned the possibility of future collaborations between Italians and Iranians to fully study the site. Further, in 1967-68 Siroux carried a general survey of the Mosque on behalf of *UNESCO* (Galdieri 1984:87).

It is argued that although the source of this interest stemmed from foreign scholars and their appreciation of the historic merit of the Friday Mosque, the Iranian authorities, albeit influenced by foreign interest, initiated minor operations towards the restoration of the Mosque. Galdieri (1972:10) reported that in 1966 the local Archaeology Department replaced five flattened vaults on the western *Shabestan* of the Mosque. Further, there was an indication in the first *Decree for Technical Preservation of Cultural Heritage* that reported the replacement of the pavement at the Friday Mosque by the *SNH* with the financial assistance of the public (Hojjat 1995:417). In addition, it was during this period that Lutfullah Honarfar (1965) took on the task of recording all visible inscriptions and documenting them in a substantial volume entitled *The Treasures of Historical Relics in Isfahan*, before they became illegible due to further decay. Despite arranging projects to restore the Mosque, it has to be noted that similar to the Qajars, the Pahlavis were overwhelmed by the supremacy of the Safavid monuments. Therefore, the dominating trend in assigning more artistic value to this period persisted in the 1960s. However, unlike the Qajars who invested in the Safavid monuments for their merit as the vanguard of Shi'a patronage, the attention of Mohammad Reza Shah's Government was drawn to the relics of this period predominantly due to their appeal to foreign tourists and thus their consideration as a potential source of income. Consequently, in 1964 when the interest of Iranian authorities in the preservation of Isfahan's Islamic monuments brought an Italian team to take on the project of the conservation and restoration of the city's Islamic monuments, the natural inclination was towards the prime aim of restoring the Safavid pavilions (Callieri 2006:8, 18). This project developed by *IsMEO* in collaborations with the *NOCHMI*, and won the first *Aga Khan Award for Architecture* in 1980 (Gnoli 1980:197). According to Galdieri (1972:76) the collaborations between Iran and Italy continued into the 1970s when he was asked to prepare a campaign for the investigation of the Friday Mosque. He argued that the *IsMEO* projects at the Friday Mosque was especially noteworthy given the application of a multidisciplinary approach and the employment of various specialists including archaeologists, historians, and architects working on the site simultaneously (ibid.: XII). Indeed, this period marks a critical stage in the history of the Mosque's investigation as previous hypotheses



predominantly founded on the artistic and historical traditions of the Mosque were analysed through archaeological excavations.

Before discussing the archaeological investigations which began in 1972, it is necessary to examine the conservation work Eugenio Galdieri undertook from 1970 until 1978 when work was suspended due to political instability. The aim of the mission was mainly concerned with the identification and stabilisation of structural elements in danger of destruction as well as validation of the major chronological hypotheses proposed by previous scholars (Galdieri 1984:13). Graber (1990:23) argued that Galdieri's initial perception of the Mosque and his decisions on where to excavate or investigate were based on Godard's reconstructions, themselves affected by his theoretical assumptions on the evolutionary course in the formation of Iranian mosque. Galdieri (1984:80) reported that some of his time was spend on correcting the inaccurate and sometimes destructive repairs that had been completed during the restoration work in the late 1930s and early 1940s under the direction of Godard. Although the flawed restorations and the lack of proper attention to the original forms during this period could testify to Godard's general insensitivities towards Iranian cultural heritage, it has to be noted that such concepts very rarely prevalent in the 1930s (the Venice Charter and its resolutions on restorations was written in 1964). In addition, the scarcity of funds available to undertake such project contributed to the hasty and unprofessional interventions that solely aimed to prevent the buildings from destruction.

In the *IsMEO* project, as Galdieri (1990:76) argued, the task of technical restoration was simultaneously in progress in conjunction with research (Fig. 6.12). In 1972 an Italian Archaeological Mission was invited to conduct a series of research on the Mosque. This team was directed by Professor Umberto Scerrato from the *Istituto Universitario Orientale in Naples* (Galdieri 1984:416, 387). Unlike Persepolis where the Italian team engaged solely in the restoration of the site and the archaeological excavations was allocated to Iranians, in case of the Friday Mosque the task of restoration and archaeological research were granted to Italians and in conformity with the general trend of their project, the two projects progressed on parallel lines. Although the chief aim of the archaeological mission was to identify the Sassanid structure and the Arab hypostyle mosque that lay beneath the Friday Mosque, it was in this process that the loose foundation of the Mosque were discovered and restorations assumed (ibid.:89). From the excavations in the Nizam al-Mulk pavilion the remains of a Sassanid column decorated in stucco were uncovered confirming the hypothesis that the Mosque was constructed on a pre-Islamic building (Genito 2012:343). It is noteworthy that the newly discovered Sassanid decorative stuccos fragments were transferred to the *Iran-e Bastan* Museum (Galdieri 1972:7) as a manifestation of the 'continuity' of Iranian art and architecture. Excavations were also carried in the northern area leading to the discovery of further structures from the Sassanid period the ancient town of *Yavan* and Seljuq pottery,

as well as a hypostyle mosque (ibid.). These investigations made a major contribution to the historical reconstruction of the different building phases of the Mosque and its locality (ibid.).

*IsMEO*'s conservation and archaeological investigations were published in three volumes of *Restorations* (1972; 1973; 1984). Collectively, they present one of the few cases of the scientific studies of a mosque in Iran. It should be noted that despite the Pahlavis inclination towards the elimination of Islamic traditions, Iranian society remained largely traditional. Therefore, although the restoration and the conservation of an Islamic site, such as a mosque, may have appealed to the general public, they may have been less supportive of excavating underneath a sacred Islamic site. Indeed, it was only as late as the 1930s that Reza Shah had lifted the ban for non-Muslims to visit Islamic monuments. This may have contributed to the termination of restorations for a year in 1976 to allocate all available funding toward a rapid archaeological excavation. Galdieri argued that this was done in order to accelerate research in areas particularly visited by large numbers of worshipers (ibid.:77). Therefore, in the span of 40 years, the Friday Mosque was transformed from a site that prohibited the entrance of foreigners to an excavation site where foreign archaeologists excavated beneath the Mosque. The above transformations may have assisted the modification of the concept of a mosque as a place of worship to a historic monument worthy of preservation. As will be argued, these concepts underwent another wave of modifications following the Islamic Revolution.

The activities of *IsMEO* in Isfahan had great ramifications for the process of development in conservation and restoration of monuments in Iran. Of particular significance was the training of Iranian technicians in *NOCHMI* (Gnoli 1980:197). Indeed, *NOCHMI* and its technicians continued to render valuable services to the conservation of historical monuments in Iran (Hojjat 1995:198) and, as will be discussed, contributed to the restoration of the Mosque following its partial destruction during the War.

The perceived assumption within this thesis was that the study of Islamic monuments during the Pahlavi period would have been deliberately excluded from concepts of national heritage due to their association with the Islamic elements of Iranian identity. However, it has been the intention of this section to argue that despite Pahlavi emphasis on the pre-Islamic aspects of Iranian national identity, Islamic archaeology was born and the conservation of its monuments progressed during this period, within an appropriation of Islamic art as 'Persian art'. The Friday Mosque provides an excellent case study that demonstrates the foreign interest in Islamic art and architecture during the reign of Reza Shah, and the wave of interest in preservation and restoration of Islamic monuments during Mohammad Reza Shah's rule. During both periods, the involvement of foreign scholars in the affairs of Iranian Islamic archaeology was undeniable. However, while the austere approach of Reza Shah's Government to Islamic traditions restricted the

appreciation of the cultural merits of Islamic monuments to exhibitions and congresses beyond the frontiers of Iran, the somewhat more tolerant approach of Mohammad Reza Shah's Government towards these same concepts allowed for their appreciation and conservation in Iran itself. An additional factor to be considered with regard to Islamic monuments during the second Pahlavi period was the establishment of Iran's tourist industry and the investments in attracting foreigners to visits the historical monuments in Iran. Although the origin of the proposal for establishing this industry was born out of preparations for celebrating the Anniversary of 2500 years of Persian Monarchy and thus initially concerned with pre-Islamic icons, the value of Islamic monuments was recognised for their appeal to foreign tourists. The collaboration of the British Museum and the National Museum of Iran to exhibit "The Art of Islam" at the Hayward Gallery in 1976 (Kargar 2005:8) may be recognised as an effort to introduce and publicise Iranian Islamic art abroad to improve tourism. Therefore, it may be argued that while during the reign of Reza Shah Islamic art and archaeology was introduced to Europe and North American through exhibitions and congresses, during the time of Mohammad Reza Shah these monuments were exploited in situ through tourism. The commercialisation of Islamic monuments went as far as advertisements on the *GQ* and *Vogue* magazines in 1969 (Fig. 6.13). This was particularly pertinent to the analysis of Islamic monuments during this period due to its demonstration of the Pahlavis' exploitive approach towards cultural heritage. It demonstrates that just as they politicised the pre-Islamic monuments to legitimise their monarchy and provide support for an ethnic-dynastic form of nationalism, they commercialised Islamic monuments for economic advantage. It has to be noted, that similar to Reza Shahs Government, Mohammad Reza Shah's Government resorted to antagonising Islamic sites when caught in political affairs. In this regard, the demolition of the historic centre and the bazaars around the *Imam Reza Shrine* are noteworthy. Although this project was presented as part of an attempt to beautify Mashed, Abrahamian argued, it was assumed to eradicate the "out-dated" and "fanatical" bazaaris given their anti-Shah rhetoric and socio-political influence within Iranian society (Abrahamian 2008:151).

### **6.5. Post-Revolution & Nationalism: The Case Study of the Friday Mosque of Isfahan**

In Chapter 5, it was demonstrated that the Pahlavis utilised pre-Islamic sites such as Persepolis as an instrument to support an ethnic-dynastic form of nationalism. This defining feature of Pahlavi legitimisation altered after the Revolution and leaned towards the adoption of an Islamic past that was suggested to be the 'true' and 'authentic' Iranian national identity. In previous chapters it was demonstrated that this national identity increasingly relied on the discourse of Shi'a nationalism to combat monarchy and imperialism. Considering the Pahlavis' adoption of pre-Islamic Iran to legitimise their regime, it would be anticipated that in conformity with the revival of Islamic period as the 'golden

age' of Iranian history, and with the employment of Shi'a nationalism, the Islamic monument would have been utilised as an instrumental device to legitimise the new Islamic State. The intention of this section is to demonstrate that the nature of legitimisation in post-Revolutionary Iran relied on a set of concepts that marginalised the discipline of archaeology as a Western pseudoscience for the glorification of the monarchy. Therefore, although Islamic past was identified as the authentic identity of Iranians, there was seldom any reliance on Islamic monuments as archaeological sites in order to authenticate the government. This notion is especially accurate in the early years of the Revolution when legitimisation was drawn from 'populism', 'traditionalism' and 'charismatic leadership'. It was only following the Iran-Iraq War and the revived disputes over the identity of Iranians that Islamic sites such as *Imam Reza Shrine* in Mashhad, the most renowned Shi'a pilgrimage site, received attention and renovations were made to accommodate Shi'a pilgrims from neighbouring Muslim countries.

Similar to the previous case studies presented, the practice of Islamic archaeology and its impact on the Friday Mosque of Isfahan in the post-Revolutionary phase is divided into four periods. The period immediately following the Revolution was a transitory phase where "populism" and return to "native roots" was promoted by the doctrine of Khomeini's Government (Abrahamian 1993:38). The second period known as the War years and the subsequent reconstruction phase were integral for the resurrection of pre-Islamic Iranian identity as a principle component of the Iranian society. The third phase constituted the reconciliation period of Khatami, when Islamic and pre-Islamic Iranian national identities were equally appropriated to identify the Iranian nation (Holliday 2013:99). The fourth period was founded on the notions of 'populism' and 'principalism' endorsed by Ahmadinejad's Administration. This structure provides the framework against which the case study of the Friday Mosque will be investigated.

### **6.5.1. Populism & the Return to Native Roots: Islamic Archaeology**

In the previous chapter it was argued that while during the Pahlavi period, the officials held religious dogmatism of Islam responsible for deviating indigenous Iranian culture from its pre-Islamic roots, in the post-Revolutionary period, pre-Islamic Iranian identity was charged as a central component of the secular Pahlavi regime that tainted Iranian Islamic values by promoting Western ideals (Hunter 1992:11). The Revolution against the "tyranny" of the Pahlavi and Western incursions led to an anti-Western and pro-Islamic reaction that relied on Shi'a nationalism at its core (Keddie 1986:161). Even though, Khomeini had discredited nationalism as a doctrine introduced by the imperialists and self serving rulers to create an artificial state that divided the Muslims (Algar 1981:302; Martin 2000:124), many scholars including Ansari argued that he simply replaced "dynastic nationalism" with "Shi'a nationalism" (Ansari

2003:222). It is contended that although Khomeini's Government considered Shi'ism as an integral part of Iranian national identity; this new brand of nationalism was portrayed in an ambivalent manner by the officials (ibid.). The merit of Shi'ism as a part of Iranian identity is evident in Varjavand's decision to include the *Naqsh-e Jahan Complex* as one of the three sites registered on the *UNESCO* World Heritage List in 1979 (Also see Chapter 2 & 5). The selection of *Naqsh-e Jahan*, which symbolised the Shi'a composition of Iranian identity rather than the Friday Mosque as an emblem of the most eminent architectural blue-print of the Iranian mosque, demonstrated the inclinations towards employing Shi'a nationalism in preserving archaeological sites during the transitory period of Revolution. Despite these efforts the Government's main principle of rejecting the institute of monarchy as an illegitimate form of government had an unprecedented impact on the outlook towards archaeology, which also influenced the treatment of Islamic monuments. This antagonistic approach was reflective of the eulogies made by the Pahlavis to pre-Islamic monuments and, therefore, the Islamic Government's association of archaeology with the pillars of imperialism and monarchy (Abdi 2001:70). While in the previous chapter the impact of such rhetoric on pre-Islamic monuments was investigated in detail, it is the objective of this chapter to evaluate how this same outlook towards archaeology exposed Islamic monuments such as the Friday Mosque to a parallel detrimental treatment.

As previously argued, the Islamic Revolution was pre-eminently founded on the principles of populism that promoted anti-imperialism and anti-monarchism by seeking refuge in Islamic theocracy. This return to Islamic authenticity, however, had no positive outcomes for Islamic archaeology as the source of legitimacy laid in the populism of Khomeini's Government. While archaeology was dismissed considering that the ideological Shi'a nationalism of the Government seldom required the adoption of Islamic monuments to legitimise its doctrine, the anti-Western outlook of the zealous Revolutionaries further isolated Iranian academics. In addition to discrediting university intellectuals as agents of imperialism, the Cultural Revolution that aimed to re-evaluate and re-organise the education system, prohibited contact with foreign scholars (Algar 1981:295-98). Following the restrictions of foreign policy, archaeological projects were halted and with that the excavation and renovation of the Friday Mosque was terminated. Following *IsMEO*'s departure in 1979, the Head of the Institute repeatedly requested the resumption of cultural activities between Iran and Italy (Callieri 1999). However, as will be discussed these collaborations only resumed following the discourse of 'Dialogue among Civilisations' adopted by Khatami's Administration in 1997.

During this period, although archaeology was undermined as a Western science to adopt the policies of the Pahlavi monarchy, the lack of interest in the archaeological value of Islamic monuments did not result in their complete disregard. Rather, Islamic monuments such as mosques began to assume a new practical

role in the Iranian society. As Hojjat (1995:214) argued, mosques had become the focal point of political activities that preceded the Revolution and continued to retain this functional role following the Revolution and especially during the Iran-Iraq War. The daily operations in the mosque required the construction of temporary shade roofs and public facilities that were completed swiftly and on a restricted budget leading to disregard for the conservation standards (ibid.:219). Galdieri (1984:11) reported that following his visit to Iran after the Revolution he was pleased and at the same time troubled to see workers engaged in the maintenance, conservation, and the general embellishment of the Friday Mosque. He argued that although these activities were nominally under the direction of the local technical office of *NOCHMI*, which had survived and remained in operation following the dismantling of the Ministry of Culture and Art, the work was assumed in the absence of previous agreement for planned restoration and on its own initiative (ibid.). According to Galdieri, these restorations were in accordance to the methods laid down by *IsMEO*; nevertheless, he displayed concerns regarding his lack of authority to act against the ongoing restorations (ibid.).

From above it may be concluded that while Islamic monuments lost their archaeological value in the post-Revolutionary period, they attained a cultural value that had deteriorated during the Pahlavi period. As a consequence, mosques such as the Friday Mosque once again converted into places for congregation and were restored to pious Muslims who assumed the traditional rule of restoration and preservation of their communal space. In the following section it will be demonstrated how this transformation affected the treatment of Islamic monuments during the War.

### **6.5.2. War Years & the Reconstruction Period: Islamic Archaeology**

The Iran-Iraq War became an incentive to reduce the ambiguities that were presented about nationalism as a result of the Revolution. Therefore, while prior to the War the tenor of nationalism was restricted to emphasising the Iranian nature of the Islamic Revolution and stressing the universalism of Islam (Ansari 2003:223), following the War, these changed to appeal to Iranian nationalism. Milani (1988:206) argued that with the coming of Islamic Revolution, many of the Arab States of Persian Gulf felt vulnerable and worried that it would lead to the de-stabilisation of the region through its Shi'a communities. Indeed, as Ansari contended, the Iranian Islamic revolutionaries were eager to "export" their Revolutionary ideas (Ansari 2003:229). With the Iranian Government's insistence on spreading the Revolution, regions of the Muslim world with sizeable Shi'a communities, such as Iraq, became increasingly sensitive to Khomeini's narrative of populist Islam (ibid.:230). Finally in 1980 this rhetoric led to a War between Iran and Iraq that ended in 1988. In order to justify a war between two Islamic States, the Iranian Government

increasingly employed the narrative of the ‘oppressed’ fighting the ‘oppressors’. In addition, Iranian nationalism was slowly making its way to the political scene due to the necessity of obtaining popular support not only from those who sought salvation in Islam but also those who maintained an Iranian nationalistic rhetoric (Hunter 1992:93). Following the War both *Iraniat* and *Islamiat* continued to be a part of the Government discourse (Holliday 2011:72). While the pre-Islamic and Islamic Iranian identities were reconciled, the impact of the War on Islamic monuments was noteworthy.

As discussed above, during the War, mosques were transformed into centres to register and dispatch volunteer forces to the lines of battle, collect donations, and assemble military equipment (Hojjat 1995:214). Daily operations in the mosque required the construction of public facilities that were completed quickly with disregard for conservation standards (ibid.:219). Despite various requests from *IsMEO* to resume activities at the Friday Mosque (Callieri 1999), the restorations continued in conformity with the slogan of “Nor East, Nor West, only the Islamic Republic of Iran”. Therefore, despite financial restrictions that dominated the years of Iran-Iraq War, the Iranian authorities remained invested in adopting policies that demonstrated their independence from foreign scholars. It should be noted that the training of Iranian technicians by *IsMEO* played an instrumental role in equipping Iranians with the necessary means to take over the restoration of Islamic monuments without the consultation of foreign institutes.

The technical competence of the Iranian trained technicians was challenged on 12 March 1984 when after the bombardment of Isfahan, two Iraqi missiles destroyed two separate areas at the north and southern flank of the Friday Mosque (Nomination File 2012:87). One of the missiles destroyed twelve vaults and damaged another twelve, demolishing the area south-east of the Mosque which mostly belonged to the Seljuk period (ibid.). Further, shock waves damaged the inner structure of *Taq-o Cheshmeh* (Fig. 6.3 area 5) and pieces of shrapnel damaged the domes and tile works of the court-yard (Fig. 6.14) (ibid.:183). According to Galdieri (1990:86) who investigated the site in 1986 in order to inspect the War damage, the reconstruction was executed with ‘great care’ and ‘high technical ability’, despite financial restrictions and political pressure for rapid reconstruction. The Friday Mosque was the only war damaged monument that was reconstructed immediately following its destruction. This indicated its importance, not only as a place of congregation for prayer and a centre to recruit militias, but also as a symbol of the Iranian brand of Islam that was under attack by an ‘oppressor’. Although, the presence of trained technicians who had experienced working on the site had a tremendous impact on the immediate project of reconstruction, the above political overtone of this event was highly significant.

The Friday Mosque has also been depicted as a national monument on stamps in two instances. In 1980 the *Uljaytu mihrab*, which marked the imprint of the restoration of the Mosque to the Shi'a sect was depicted on a stamp during the Anniversary of *Higra* (Prophet Mohammad's journey from Mecca to Medina) (Fig. 6.15). In 1988 the south-west dome and the minarets of the Friday Mosque were depicted in a series of stamps to celebrate Iranian Mosques. These examples illustrate the significance of the Friday Mosque as a cultural component of Iranian 'authentic' Shi'a identity that was promoted during this period.

The Friday Mosque provides an excellent example for the substitution of archaeology by sectors that were involved in restoration projects, such as *NOCHMI*, during the period immediately after the Revolution. Considering the antagonism towards the discipline of archaeology and its lack of competence to support Shi'a nationalism, it seldom assumed a central role during this period, however, the restoration of functional Islamic sites such as mosques were essential in order to consolidate the Shi'a unity against foreign invaders. Further, the preservation of mosques was associated with guarding the legacy of Islam which was highlighted as an integral component of Iranian identity. Considering the perceived role of archaeology as an instrument to legitimise ethnic-dynastic nationalism, this task was allocated to conservators following the Revolution but given the restriction of budget, these restorations were highly sporadic.

In previous chapters the impact of the closure of academic institutions on Iranian archaeology was discussed in detail. It was further demonstrated that when universities were reopened in 1982 following the structural modifications made by the Committee of Cultural Revolution, archaeology had lost its position as an academic science. Ironically, although the return of archaeology as a discipline was indebted to references to Islamic ideologies that advocated the preservation of cultural heritage (see Appendix I, Doc 4), Islamic archaeology was marginalised and restricted to the study of Islamic art.

### **6.5.3. Khatami's Administration & Reconciliation with the Past: Islamic Archaeology**

Central to the Islamic Revolution was the populist movement that according to Akhavi (1986:212) represented a popular reconstruction of the state, as opposed to an elitist one. He argued that following the Iran-Iraq War and the reconstruction period, new elitist tendencies emerged that could no longer rely on populism for legitimacy (ibid.). Therefore, the practice of adopting Iran's cultural past to support a particular political system resurfaced during this period. This revival fully matured during the Presidency of Khatami and with his discourse of *Iraniat* and *Islamiat* as integral components of Iranian identity



(Holliday 2013:104). The reconciliation between these two often conflicting national identities in Iran diminished the unfavourable attitudes towards particular 'authentic' Iranian identities and reinforced their scientific study. However, despite this new approach, Khatami's Administration continued to emphasise the employment of these policies based on the "essence of Islam" (Brumberge 2001:233) and therefore the official nationalist discourse remained Shi'a nationalism.

In addition to these domestic reconciliation, Khatami's Administration proposed the notion of 'Dialogue among Civilisations' and improved Iran's foreign relations. This positive outlook towards the West and its scientific achievements had an impact on the revival of Iranian archaeology and the return of Western scholars to resume their projects. It was only during this period that the cultural and academic relations between Iran and Italy were resumed and *IsMEO* now returned as *IsIAO* to Iran under the condition that it launched its first project in Isfahan (Callieri 1999:15). *IsIAO* was the only foreign institute which had managed to maintain a prolonged association with Iran following the Islamic Revolution. Although this relationship had remained largely nominal, a review of *IsIAO*'s attempts to return to Iran (ibid.:9-17) demonstrate the mutual interest to restore academic relations between the two countries. In 1999 *IsIAO* offered a proposal to the Iranian authorities that detailed the resumption of activities in Isfahan (ibid.:15).

The first Italian mission to Iran following the Revolution was in 2000 and focused on the management of material discovered by *IsMEO* at the Friday Mosque prior to the Revolution (Callieri 2011, pers.comm.). The Director of the mission was Bruno Genito from the *Universita degli Studi di Napoli*, who with the exception of the year 2001 continued to carry annual work in Iran until 2010 (Gnoli 2011, pers.comm.). The project mainly involved the assortment and digital cataloging of the material stored in 5000 containers. In addition, the proposal to assemble a Museum for the Mosque in the south-east area associated with the Muzaffarid period, which was proposed during the Pahlavi period, was once again submitted and considered by the Iranian authorities. The normalisation of these activities corresponded with the nomination of the Mosque on the Tentative List of *UNESCO* in 1997 (ICOMOS Evaluation 2012:135) and the prospect of its further nomination as a World Heritage Site in the future.

The resumption of collaboration between Iranian and foreign scholars was modestly constructive for the state of Islamic archaeology but the majority of these co-operations were either rescue missions or focused on Prehistoric sites. However, these efforts along with the launch of an international exhibition entitled "7000 years of Iranian Art" which started in Vienna in 2000, had a positive impact on re-introducing Islamic Iranian culture and art to the world. The emphasis of Khatami's Administration on Islamic art and archaeology may also be seen as part of the effort to recast the image of Islam as a rich and peaceful civilisation. This policy was evident in Khatami's 2002 visit to the Alhambra at Granada,

home to the last Muslim Kingdom in Spain, and using it as a platform to caution about a clash with the Islamic civilisation. He argued “whoever practices terrorism and killing in the name of Islam is only denying its spirituality” (<http://middle-east-online.com/english/?id=3065>). The initiatives of Khatami’s Administration to promote ‘dialogue’ were further combined with reduced restrictions on visa applications to improve Iran’s tourist industry as interest towards both pre-Islamic and Islamic monuments in Iran revitalised.

From the above analysis it may be argued that the adoption of archaeology as an instrument to legitimise the state was resumed with Khatami’s Administration and the policies of ‘Dialogue among Civilisations’. This approach allowed for further archaeological collaboration that unfolded during the period of Ahmadinejad, but soon were terminated. In addition, the economic growth during Khatami’s Presidency supplied the larger scale construction projects which continued during Ahmadinejad’s period, albeit with little regard for their implication on archaeological sites.

#### **6.5.4. Ahmadinejad’s Administration & Populism: Islamic Archaeology**

As discussed in Chapter 2, Ahmadinejad’s Administration adopted policies that were based on a juxtaposition of ‘populism’ and ‘principalism’ that relied on Islam and its Revolutionary principles. Although throughout this period, the populist approach of Ahmadinejad’s Administration altered to appeal to pre-Islamic and Islamic Iranian identities, the tenor of such discourse was to employ Shi’a nationalism in Iran and abroad. In Chapter 5 the emphasis was on the adoption of populist policies by Ahmadinejad’s Administration to appeal to the growing social interest in the pre-Islamic history of Iran. In this section it is contended that a similar populist approach towards the Islamic Iranian identity had a modest impact on any improvements in the treatment of Islamic archaeological sites. It is argued that the controversial approach of the Government’s foreign policies and the emphasis on a nuclear Iran once again interrupted scientific relations with foreign institutes and their scholars. In addition, the populist nature of the Government’s approach towards archaeology transformed the discipline into an organisation with the main aim to promote tourism. These efforts were assumed while the influence of *ICHHTO* was reduced and modest professional consultancies were inquired for monitoring the construction projects. One of these projects was the modernisation of the *Atiq Square*, adjacent to the Friday Mosque. In addition, in conformity with the principalist rhetoric that advocated the exportation of Shi’a Islam, despite various incidents of dismissal of the cultural merit of Islamic monuments, patronage was provided for renovation of mosques beyond the borders of Iran. In this section, these issues will be investigated in detail.

The economic improvements that followed the normalisation of foreign relations during Khatami's Presidency led to an explosion of constructive projects that continued to dominate Ahmadinejad's period. In 2009 the authorities proposed a project through which the *Atiq Square* of Isfahan was to be reconstructed and a train route was to run under the historic square (<http://www.iranicomos.org/?p=490>). This was part of a modernisation project implemented by the authorities to improve living conditions and facilitate public transportations in Isfahan (Harrison 2007). In respect to the *Atiq Square*, *ICHHTO* argued that the planned modifications were necessary to accommodate tourism and the increasing population of Isfahan (<http://www.iranicomos.org/?p=490>). Countering this plan, the archaeologists argued that given the antiquity of the vicinity at the centre of old Isfahan, any development projects should be preceded with thorough archaeological investigations. In addition, they argued that the employment of heavy machinery and resulting vibrations could damage the Friday Mosque. Notwithstanding the complaints of the archaeological community, this project was pushed forward despite numerous concerns about its harmful impact on the site. The issue was raised again by *ICOMOS* after the Mosque was nominated as a World Heritage Site to *UNESCO* in January 2011 (*ICOMOS Evaluation 2012:135*). The main concern was the threats caused by the *Atiq Square Project* which was within the buffer zone of the Mosque and endangered the integrity and historic authenticity of the property by changing the flow of pedestrian movement and putting added pressure on the eastern section of the Mosque as well as causing visual disorder in the buffer zone (*ibid.:139*). In addition, it was argued that the two year limit to complete the project did not allow an opportunity for archaeological excavations ahead of implementing the project (*ibid.*). The case was revised several times before Iran was able to accommodate some of these concerns.

The *Atiq Square Project* provides an example for *ICHHTO*'s lack of authoritative power to prevent the extensive projects that could harm various Islamic sites in Isfahan. The issue of constructing an underground metro has become a serious threat to the Islamic monuments in Isfahan that continues to this date. The lack of consultation with professional archaeologist and the de-centralisation of archaeological institutes were the hallmarks of Ahmadinejad's Presidency. These issues were intensified in 2010 when the research institute of *ICHHTO* was transferred from Tehran to Fars and Isfahan Provinces. This further weakened *ICHHTO* and the private sector took over a number of projects formerly under the management of *ICHHTO*. Therefore cultural projects were conceded simply in respect to their profitable values while the merits of cultural heritage were overlooked. Despite these uncertainties, in the year 2012 the Friday Mosque of Isfahan was registered as a World Heritage Site. Seiyyf Allah Aminian, the Deputy of Cultural Heritage and Tourism in Isfahan, reported that the legal process was delayed considering the fact that the Mosque was under the authority of several different organisations (Mohajer 2005). Reportedly the Mosque was under the patronage of *ICHHTO*, the Department of *Vaqf* (Endowments) and a Board of

Trustees of the Mosque (*Heyat-e Umanay-e Masajed*), and its confines were allocated to the municipality (ibid.). As a precursor to its enlistment on *UNESCO*, the final restorations at the Mosque were assumed two month prior to its registration by a team of one hundred conservators (Hamshahri 2012). It is interesting that the Mosque was registered by *ICOMOS* under Criterion (ii): *exhibit an important interchange of human values, over a span of time or within a cultural area of the world, on developments in architecture or technology, monumental art, town-planning or landscape*, where as its nomination by the Iranian State was based on all five Criteria (*ICOMOS Evaluation 2012:139*). *ICOMOS* accepted the registration of the Mosque considering that it is the first Islamic building that adopted the *four-ivan* courtyard layout of Sassanid palaces to Islamic architecture that became the prototype for mosque design thereafter; as well as the consideration of *Nizam al-Mulk Dome* as the first doubled-shell ribbed dome structure in the Islamic Empire (ibid.:140). As such, the innovative aspects of the Mosque were considered by *ICOMOS* as a harmony between pre and post-Islamic architectural styles. Whilst the State party also acknowledged the influence of Achaemenid and Sassanid architectural style on the Mosque, their main objective was to exhibit the overarching influence of the innovative style of the Mosque as a prototype for Mosques in the Islamic world (*Nomination File 2012:112-174*).

Having presented the modernising experience of Isfahan in the recent years, it may be concluded that the weakening of *ICHHTO* and restricting its function to promote tourism had a damaging impact on Islamic archaeology during the Presidency of Ahmadinejad. His Administration's populist discourse of Shi'a nationalism had little impact on the treatment of Islamic sites and rather than consolidating their scientific study led to the demise of their cultural value through the employment of irrational projects to appeal to the underdeveloped tourist industry in Iran. This rhetoric resembled the approach of Mohammad Reza Shah's Government towards Islamic cultural heritage as a source of income through the expansion of the tourist industry. During Ahmadinejad's Presidency, however, this approach was amalgamated by rhetoric of populism and the advocacy of "serving the nation".

On the international level, too, Islamic archaeology was adopted as an instrument for political purposes as the Iranian Government continued its patronage of Islamic monuments in other Islamic countries. In 2007, Iranian miniaturist, Mahmoud Farshchian was commissioned to build the new *Zarih* (outer sarcophagus enclosure) for the *Shrine of Imam Hossein* (third Shi'a Imam) in Karbala, Iraq (<http://www.presstv.ir/detail/2012/11/27/274846>). The *Zarih* was made of 119 Kilograms of Gold and completed in 2011 (ibid.). Following two days of showcasing it at the *Mausoleum of Imam Khomeini*, the *Zarih* was transferred to Karbala for instillation (ibid.). This symbolic act confirmed the commitment of Ahmadinejad's Administration to the 'principalist' rhetoric of Imam Khomeini and the fulfillment of his declaration of exporting the 'Iranian brand' of Islam. The construction of the replica of Jerusalem's *Al-*

*Aqsa Mosque* to commemorate Ahmadinejad's visit to south of Lebanon in 2010 is yet another manifestation of this rhetoric, given that this border town overlooks Israel (see Fig. 5.22).

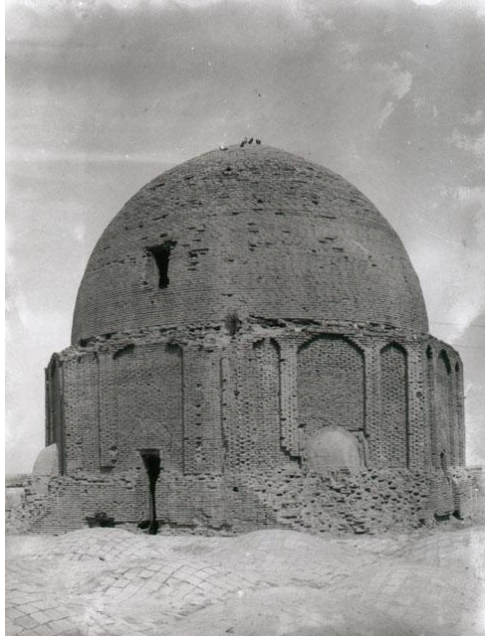
## 6.6. Conclusion

It has been the aim of this chapter to argue that Islamic archaeology in Iran was born and has been dominated by nationalistic rhetoric and political dynamics. This was demonstrated during Reza Shah's reign when Islamic archaeology was developed through its appropriation as an integral part of Iranian identity and its 'Persianisation'. During Mohammad Reza Shah's rule policies were focused to capitalise on the merit of these historic monuments to feed the newly established tourism industry. The Islamisation of Iranian politics following the Islamic Revolution and its influence on the Iranian Islamic monument is particularly noteworthy. It has been argued that the adoption of Shi'a nationalism during the post-Revolutionary period had little impact on the development of Islamic archaeology. Through a historical contextualisation of this discourse it was demonstrated that the populist nature of Iranian nationalism detached itself from historical legitimacies and relied on the popular demand of the society instead. Although this populist approach was subsequently modified during Khatami and Ahmadinejad's Presidency, the general tenor of Iranian nationalism remained invested in a populist Shi'a nationalism. Therefore, it may be argued that the mode of treatment of Islamic archaeology after the Revolution reflected those of the Qajar period, with irregularities in interest and spasms in restorations. These restorations were mostly concerned with the promotion of Shi'a nationalism.

The above historical contextualisation has demonstrated several factors crucial to the understanding of Islamic archaeology during the post-Revolutionary period. First, the general disregard for Iranian archaeology and its lack of participation in constructing the Islamic State transformed the discipline into a pseudoscience that never fully recovered after the Revolution. There were isolated instances where Islamic archaeology appeared to have been favoured over other archaeological periods. The allocation of Islamic artefacts to a more modern building adjacent to the old *Iran-e Bastan Museum* in 1996 and the neglect towards the latter is a good example of this favouritism. Nevertheless, the general tenor of this period was one of negligence towards both pre-Islamic and Islamic archaeological sites. Although modest attention was paid to Islamic monuments such as mosques and Shrines, many of the important archaeological sites that belonged to the Islamic period, such as Siraf, were not only overlooked, but were subject to destruction due to development

(<http://www.chn.ir/NSite/FullStory/News/?Id=101240&Serv=0&SGr=0>). The second phase of the *Siraf Project* only began in 2007 with the collaboration of the British Museum

([http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/projects/british\\_museum\\_siraf\\_project.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/research/projects/british_museum_siraf_project.aspx)) within the geo-political narrative of Iran reaffirming its historic sovereignty across the Persian Gulf. Second, mostly Islamic sites that were incorporated within the rhetoric of Shi'a nationalism received attention, both within Iran and abroad. The case of the Friday Mosque provides an excellent example of the treatment of historic mosques during this period. While its function was modified following the Islamic Revolution, its lack of competence to reinforce a Shi'a identity led to its exclusion from becoming a national symbol. Therefore, while the Shah Mosque (renamed Imam Mosque) in Isfahan became the symbol of Shi'a nationalism and displayed on 20,000 *Rial* banknotes, the Friday Mosque was only represented on stamps in two occasions (discussed previously). A further comparison between the *Naqsh-e Jahan Square*, which was enlisted as a World Heritage Site in 1979, and the Friday Mosque testifies to the authorities' investment in the rhetoric of Shi'a nationalism. Therefore, while the registration of the *Naqsh-e Jahan complex* prevented substantial damage to its enclosing mosques, the old structures within the vicinity of the Friday Mosque were not protected with the same vigor following the construction explosion of the 1990s and many were demolished. The example of the developmental activities at the *Atiq Square* supports this argument. Similarly, considering the popularity of *Naqsh-e Jahan* and its mosques with tourists, they not only received more appropriate maintenance treatment, but were also less frequently disturbed by daily ceremonies. In comparison, the Friday Mosque appealed to fewer tourists and therefore remained a major ceremonial centre in the heart of Isfahan. Considering its modest appeal to tourists and its functional role as the largest mosque in the city, the Friday Mosque has gone through modifications to accommodate everyday requirements. Therefore, just as Graber (1990:41) proposed that the chronological modifications that were made to the Mosque through the past 800 years were to accommodate the requirements of the people, it may be argued that today the Mosque continues to be modified for similar reasons.



**Figure 6.1:** The view of the north dome chamber prior to restorations. Taken by Robert Byron 1933-34.  
([http://archnet.org/library/images/thumbnails.jsp?location\\_id=3696](http://archnet.org/library/images/thumbnails.jsp?location_id=3696)  
Accessed 10/11/11)



**Figure 6.2:** The view of the south dome chamber prior to restoration.  
Taken by Robert Byron 1933-34.  
([http://archnet.org/library/images/thumbnails.jsp?location\\_id=3696](http://archnet.org/library/images/thumbnails.jsp?location_id=3696)  
Accessed 10/11/11)

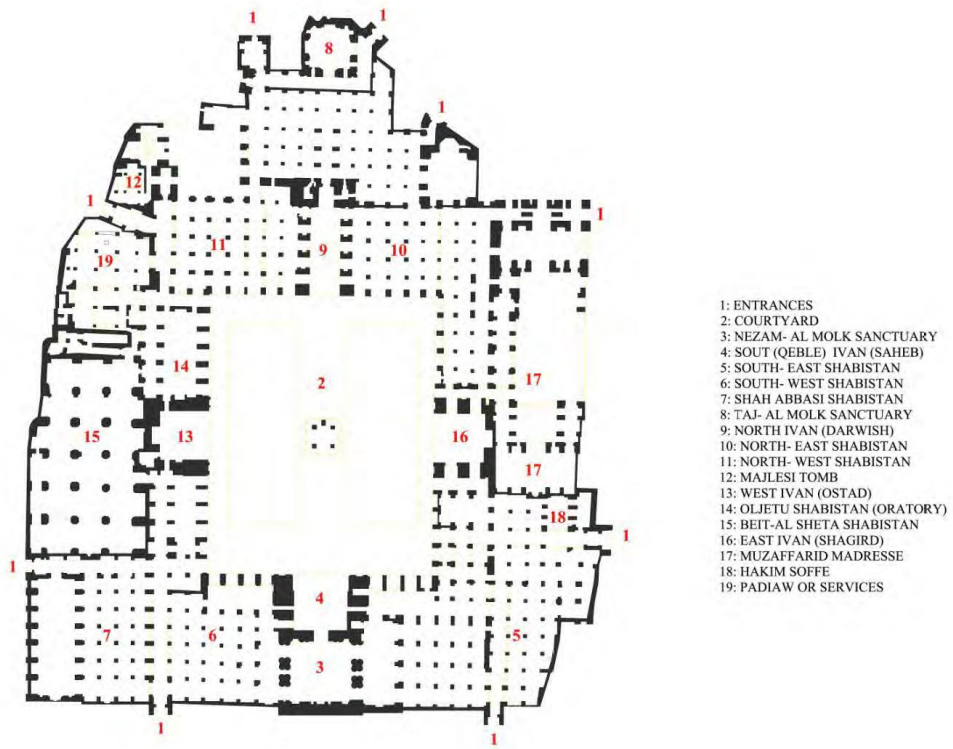


Figure 6.3: Introduction plan to the Friday Mosque. (After Nomination File 2012:11.)

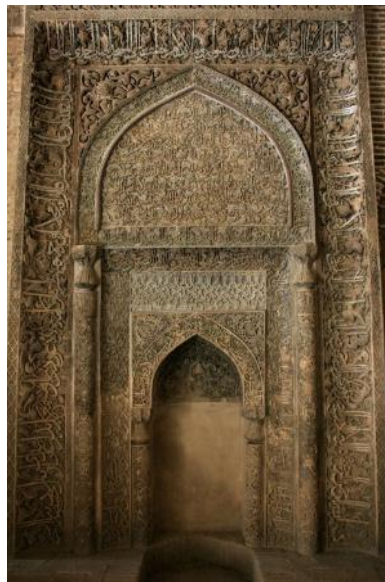
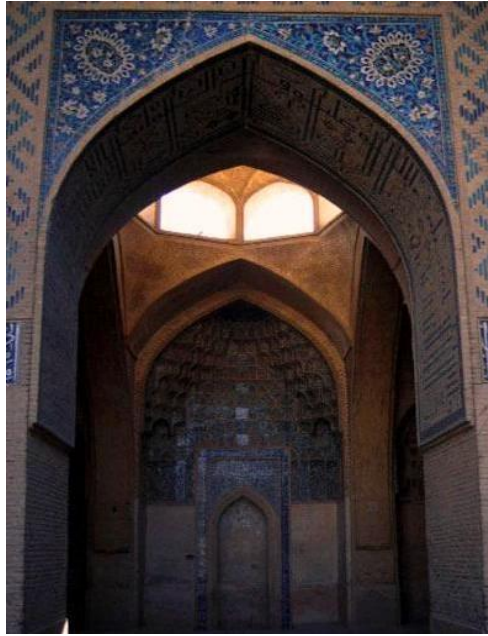


Figure 6.4: Interior view of the sanctuary of Uljaytu displaying the stucco *mihrab*.  
 (Photo by Author 2009)





**Figure 6.5:** View of the *mihrab* of the Madrasa Muzaffari on the southeastern side of the Friday Mosque. (Photo by Author 2009)



**Figure 6.6:** Isfahan city core during the Seljuk (1) and Safavid (2) periods and the passage that connected the two. (After Assari et al. 2012:1975)



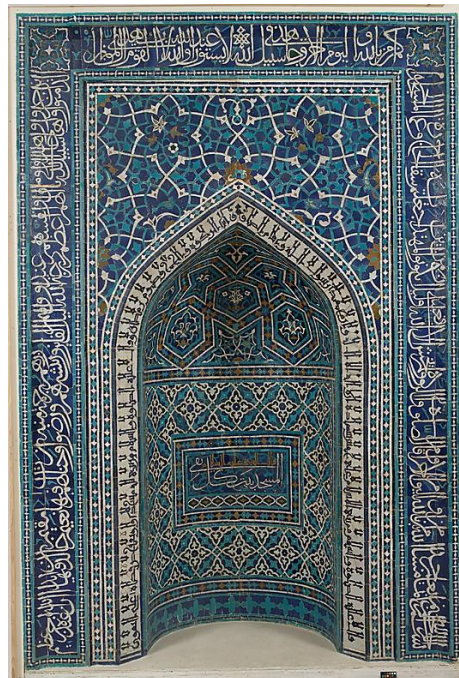
**Figure 6.7:** The pictorial depiction of the Friday Mosque of Isfahan by Pascal Coste. (After Coste 1867: Plate V.)



**Figure 6.8:** Le Musee de Bosphore, New York 1899 (After Jenkin-Madina 2000:74)

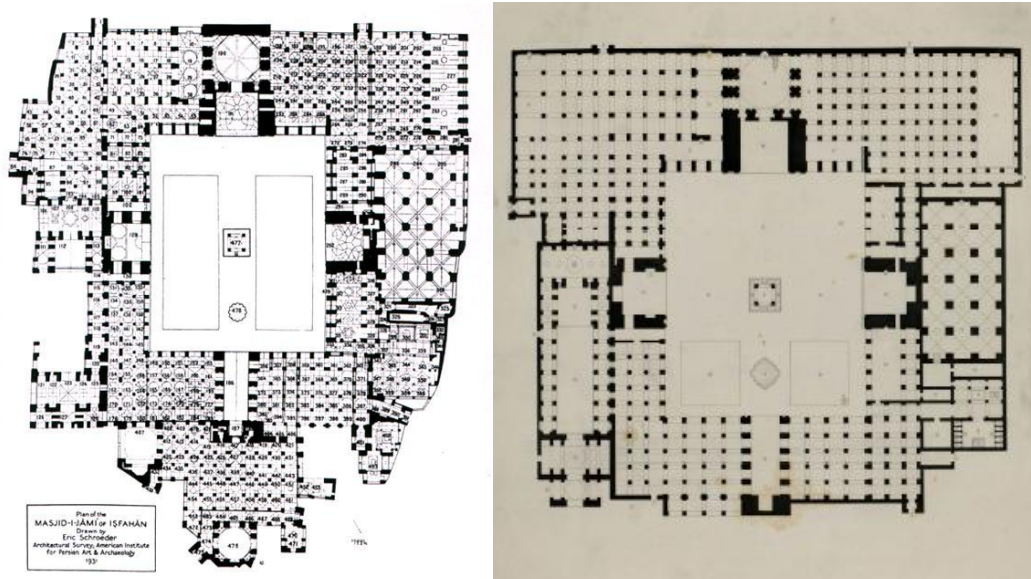


**Figure 6.9:** The view of the Islamic Gallery at the Metropolitan Museum of Art 1918  
(After Jenkins-Medina 2000:fig. 10.)

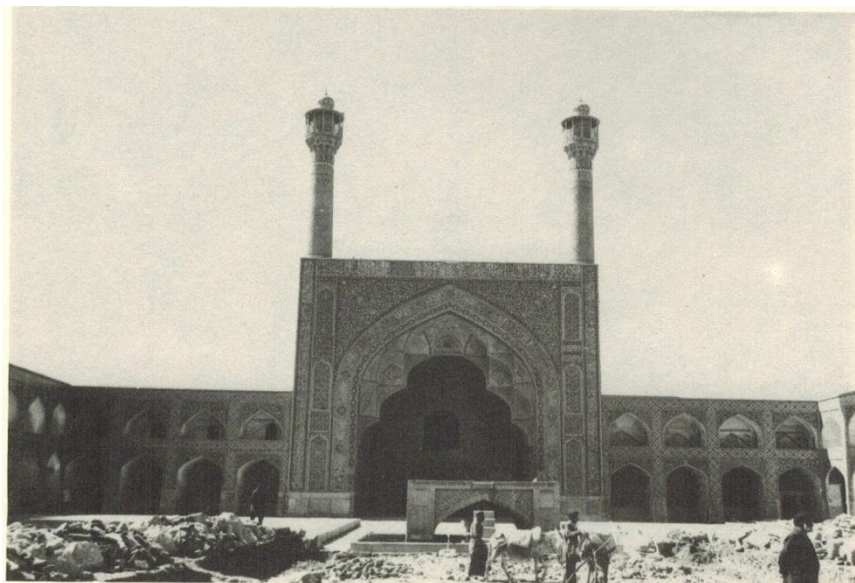


**Figure 6.10:** The *mihrab* was originally set in the *qibla* wall of Madrasa Imami in Isfahan, now on display in Metropolitan Museum. (After The Metropolitan Museum of Art, Islamic Collection)

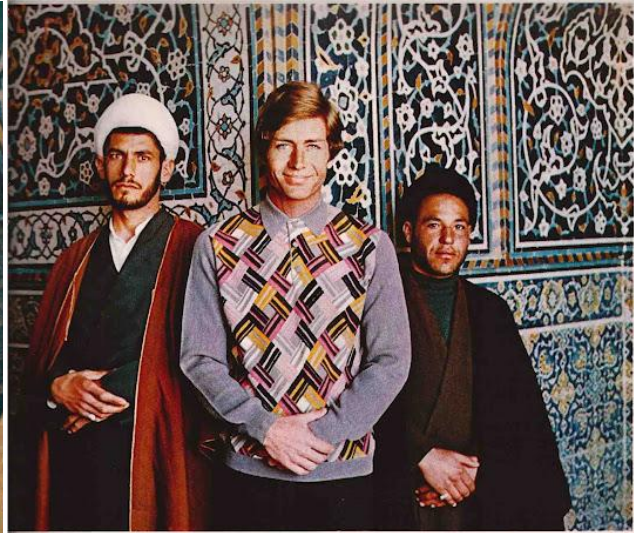
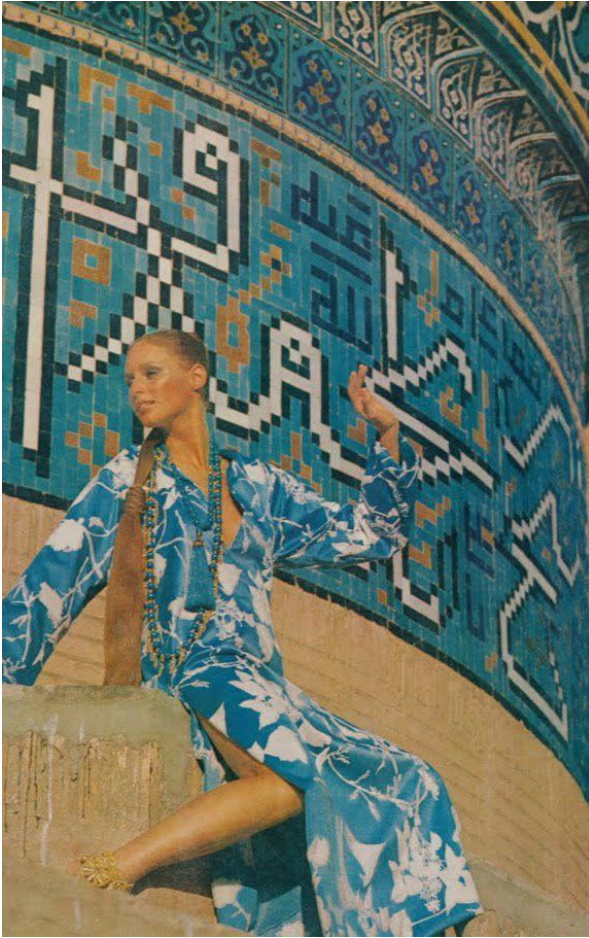




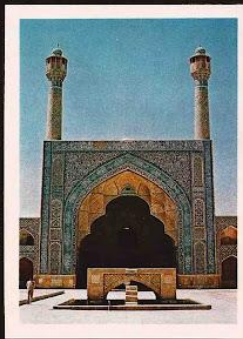
**Figure 6.11:** The ground plan of Masjid-Jami' of Isfahan as depicted by Eric Schroeder from American Institute of Art and Archaeology 1931 (left) in comparison with Pascal Coste's depiction of the Mosque in 1867 (right). (After Ernest Herzfeld papers. Free Gallery of Art and Arthur M. Sackler Gallery Archives, Smithsonian Institute & Coste 1867 Plate: IV.)



**Figure 6.12:** Court Façade, towards south, during the restorations of *ISMEO*. (After Graber 1990:fig. 5.)



Opposite page, above,  
 Shaikh Lutfulah Mosque . . .  
 A lively horizontal lineup  
 on a wool pullover shirt with  
 inset and button decoration.  
 By Prince Dineri. About \$20.  
 Wilson's Shop, Charlotte, N.C.;  
 & G. Hempstead, New York.  
 Opposite page, bottom,  
 the Khwaju Bridge: from atop  
 watch the ancient Persian art  
 of carpet washing . . .  
 y-striped wool sweater-coat  
 with fabric-covered buttons.  
 Europa Craft. About \$27.50.  
 Carson/Kicks & Lids, Atlanta;  
 Bamberger's, Newark.



Above,  
 more of the fantastic  
 mosaic tiles  
 on the walls of the  
 Shaikh Lutfulah Mosque . . .  
 One of our favorite pullovers:  
 broken stripes  
 present a basket-weave effect.  
 Of flat-knitted wool,  
 it has a buttoned placket.  
 By Gino Paoli. About \$45.  
 At Mog Miller's, Sherman Oaks, Calif.;  
 Eddy Harth, Miami Beach.  
 At left, a snapshot  
 of the Friday Mosque,  
 considered the epitome of  
 Persian architecture.

**Figure 6.13:** From the collection of *Vogue Magazine* 1969 (left) and Jame' Mosque and male model depicted in *GQ Magazine* in 1969 (right) (<http://shahrefarang.com/en/vogue-iran/> Accessed 03/26/13)





**Figure 6.14:** Sections of the Mosque destroyed during the War. (After ICOMOS Evaluation 2011:Photo 4.4.)



**Figure 6.15:** The *Oljaytu Mihrab* depicted on a stamp in 1980 to commemorate the anniversary of Higura (Stamp Directory 2007:263)

## Chapter 7

### Conclusion

#### 7.1. Introduction

The aim of this research was to evaluate the extent to which the tradition of Iranian archaeology is Nationalistic as the discipline was born and continues to sustain its inclination as an instrument to supply support for policies of various Governments, their brand of nationalism and prevalent ideologies. This aim was explored considering the prevalence of “regional traditions” (Trigger 1984:355) in archaeology and the necessity of investigating the impact of socio-political tendencies that led to the emergence of such traditions in Iranian archaeology. In this regard, the thesis employed an interdisciplinary analysis of various Externalist and Internalist dimensions to provide a platform for an interpretive study of Iranian archaeology. Following the presentation of socio-political dynamics that fostered the emergence of different forms of nationalism and national identities during various political periods, their influence on the three components of Iranian archaeology, Prehistoric, pre-Islamic, and Islamic were analysed. It was suggested that the structure of Iranian nationalism, irrespective of its form, corresponded with Anthony Smith’s Ethno-Symbolic approach as it relied on “ethnic ties” and cultural sentiments rather than the elements proposed by modernist theories (Smith 2009:27). It was this emphasis on ethnic nationalism defined by ‘common origin of birth’ and ‘native culture’ that manifested itself in the intellectual trends dominated by concepts of Aryanism and Shi’ism, albeit with varying degrees of prominence during different political periods. I have argued that the dependency of Iranian archaeology on ethnic nationalism has been instrumental in fostering the emergence of the Nationalist tradition of Iranian archaeology. My aim was not limited to the identification of this tradition, but to determining the definitive factors that contributed to its formation. Therefore, although this thesis has primarily focus on the influence of nationalism on archaeology, other factors such as intellectual trends, financial resources, tourism and foreign relations have been taken into account.

In order to structure the general aim of this thesis, a series of objectives were proposed. First, the extent to which the development of Prehistoric archaeology in Iran was shaped by its suitability to support political agendas, different brands of nationalism, and instigation of national identity, was investigated through exploring the treatment of Sialk as a case study. Second, the birth and development of pre-Islamic archaeology in relation to affirming the above trends was investigated by evaluating the treatment of Persepolis. Third, the impact of the same factors was explored in relations to the birth and development of

Islamic archaeology by analysing the Friday Mosque of Isfahan. This arrangement has allowed for drawing parallels between different political periods and the depiction of influence of their adopted brands of nationalism on the development and treatment of each archaeological period. In this chapter, the conclusions that emerged from the above objectives are discussed in detail.

The relationship between nationalism and Prehistoric archaeology was explored in Chapter 3 with Sialk as a case study. This analysis has demonstrated that despite the sporadic instances in adopting the Prehistoric period for nationalistic purposes, nationalism, irrespective of its form, has been a driving force in the birth and development of Prehistoric archaeology and thus it may be concluded that the discipline adheres to a Nationalistic tradition. The potential of Prehistory to be adopted as a political tool was not realised during the Qajar period, as their source of legitimacy was sought in the institute of “monarchy” and “Shari’a” (Amanat 1997:7-9). It was during the reign of Reza Shah that Prehistory was first utilised as an instrument to satisfy the Government’s political agenda by providing support for the projected image of Iran as the homeland of Aryans and supplying the ethnic nationalism of the State. The significance of Sialk in affirming such rhetoric was emphasised by Ghirshman’s (1938:101-3; 1977) studies that aimed to discover the trace of Indo-Iranians and their migration patterns within the Iranian Plateau. While Prehistoric archaeology was introduced and the Department of Archaeology was established at Tehran University during this period, a shift in the brand of nationalism adopted by Mohammad Reza Shah’s Government directed attention away from Prehistoric studies. The Government’s emphasis on dynastic nationalism and the historical periods facilitated the apolitical development of Prehistory. The State’s lack of interest to sponsor Prehistoric studies provided for the domination of theoretical debates by foreign archaeologists. Therefore, theories associated with ‘New Archaeology’, as a new approach for the scientific study of Prehistory was introduced and research questions became concerned with locating the origins of food production and urbanism in south-west Iran (Braidwood et al. 1961:2008). While the orientation of such theoretical debates directed attention away from Sialk, the scientific framework of these projects offered support for disentangling Prehistoric studies from nationalistic rhetoric. The interest of Iranian archaeologists in science, further contributed to the institutionalisation of the discipline and a rise in the number of Iranian Prehistorians. However, despite the introduction of these new paradigms, the approaches of these scientific traditions never fully disseminated into the infrastructure of Prehistoric archaeology in Iran.

The consideration of Prehistoric studies as an apolitical ‘science’ provided for the revival of this division of archaeological studies following the Islamic Revolution when archaeology was condemned for its contributions to legitimising the rule of the Pahlavis. With the Presidency of Khatami and the adoption of the discourse of ‘Dialogue among Civilisations’ by the Administration to affirm Iran’s “independence”



and “dignity” (Pollack 2004:310), the Iranian Government once again began the utilisation of archaeological sites, in particular Prehistoric sites, for political purposes. This was considering the lack of an immediate connection between Prehistoric period and the Pahlavi monarchy, as well as the Government’s intention to portray Iran as an ancient nation that has made contributions to human civilisation and thus is worthy of national independence and international political recognition. The competition for identifying Iran’s earliest contributions to humanity was best demonstrated in the *ICHO*’s attempts to promote a number of Prehistoric sites as the heirs to oldest civilisations in the world. Excavations at Sialk (Malek Shahmirzadi 2002:15) and other Prehistoric sites such as Jiroft (Majidzadeh 2007; 2010) were further publicised to affirm these policies. Following Ahmadinejad’s Presidency, attention diverted towards the doctrine of Iranian and Shi’a nationalism, devising another spasm in the development of Prehistoric archaeology as excavations at Sialk came to an end in 2009.

The above analysis demonstrates that the two most formative phases in the study of Prehistoric archaeology occurred during political periods that Prehistory was seen as an aiding instrument to assist the State’s nationalist rhetoric and preferred national identity, during the reign of Reza Shah and Khatami’s Presidency. This is considering that although the introduction of approaches associated with ‘New Archaeology’ during a period where less emphasis was laid on Prehistoric periods as a defining component of Iranian nationalism led to the introduction of a scientific tradition to Iranian Prehistoric archaeology, such trends were never fully adopted into the infrastructure of the discipline. The disruptions that occurred in the study of Iranian archaeology following the Revolution further contributed to hindering the progress of Prehistoric studies towards formulating a scientific tradition as outdated approach remained to dominate the discipline.

The relationship between nationalism and pre-Islamic archaeology was investigated in Chapter 4 with Persepolis as a case study. Given that as a general trend Nationalist archaeology tends to emphasise the more recent past and the achievement of ancient civilisations (Trigger 1984:360), the influence of nationalism on the birth and development of pre-Islamic archaeology in Iran has been more pronounced. This tendency was manifested in casting this period as the ‘golden age’ of Iranian history and the major contributor to the implementation of Iranian nationalism and the construction of national identity. The manipulation of pre-Islamic archaeology began during the Qajar period with emphasis on Persepolis and the reproduction of its motifs in architectural buildings and iconic symbols. While the structure of the Qajar court did not require the appropriation of historical past to legitimise its rule, the interest in Persepolis and pre-Islamic history was apparent in the *Bazgasht* movement and the anti-Arab nationalistic rhetoric of intellectual elite. The active manipulation of Persepolis began with the establishment of Iran as a modern nation-state during the reign of Reza Shah and the necessity to prove the continual existence of

Iran as a nation with a 'glorious past' through archaeological discoveries. This was achieved by cultivating the myth of Aryans that manifested in the ethnic nationalism of Reza Shah's Government. Considering the identification of Achaemenid as the heir to the Aryan race, their capital at Persepolis was selected as an expression of Iranian 'superiority' and cultural 'continuity'. The motifs of Persepolis came to dominate symbolic icons on stamps and banknotes, while principle public buildings were constructed to inspire Achaemenid motifs. The discoveries made by the Americans during their excavations at Persepolis further supported the adopted nationalist rhetoric of Reza Shah's Government. The ratification of the Antiquity Law in 1930, the re-organisation of the *GOA* in 1936, the foundation of the National Museum in 1936 and the Department of Archaeology in 1937, were not only integral to institutionalisation of Iranian archaeology, but were closely associated with the management of discoveries at Persepolis. The domination of the Department of Archaeology by nationalist with educational backgrounds in Ancient Iranian Cultures and Languages (Abdi 2001:62) further demonstrated the influence of nationalism on the birth and development of pre-Islamic archaeology during this period.

These trends intensified during the reign of Mohammad Reza Shah as his Government sought to legitimise the institute of monarchy through the promotion of dynastic nationalism. Persepolis became the emblem of this political rhetoric by providing a platform for the Government to build a bridge between the Shah and the ancient kings through various celebrations, the most significant of which was the celebration in 1971 for the Anniversary of 2500 years of Persian Monarchy. It was during this intense manipulative phase that pre-Islamic archaeology was further institutionalised. The first Iranian archaeologists began their careers by excavating and restoring Persepolis following the departure of American teams after the outbreak of World War II. Persepolis became the first archaeological site with its own scientific bureau in the 1950s (Mousavi 2002:236). The preparation of Persepolis celebrations in 1971 were preceded by further restorations and excavations undertaken by *IsMEO* that began work in 1964 (Tucci 1972: XII). In October 1971, royalty and representatives from various nations arrived at a banquet set in Persepolis as the site became the focal point of the Government's dynastic nationalism.

Following the Islamic Revolution, Persepolis was condemned due to its identification as an instrument to legitimise the institute of monarchy and the Pahlavis' ethnic-dynastic nationalism. During this period archaeology, and particularly pre-Islamic archaeology, failed to be incorporated as an instrument of legitimation, given that the Revolution gained its legitimacy from 'charismatic leadership' and 'populism'. The Iranian national identity was re-constructed with the Islamic period as its 'golden age' and Shi'a nationalism was promoted. Archaeology was de-institutionalised as the Department at Tehran University was closed in 1980 and only began restricted research following its re-launch in 1982 (Abdi 2001:70). Following the Iran-Iraq War and with the death of the Revolution's 'charismatic leader', the

source of the Government's legitimacy was undermined. In the search to revitalise this legitimacy, successive governments sought to appeal to all Iranians, including those who adhered to Iranian nationalism. Therefore, pre-Islamic identity was once again incorporated as a legitimate component of Iranian national identity with official visits to Persepolis by President Rafsanjani (1992), Khatami (2001) and Ahmadinejad (2007). As Persepolis re-emerged as a source of national pride in this new socio-political context, pre-Islamic archaeology consolidated its institutional infrastructure with the inauguration of *Pars-e Pasargad Research Institute* in 2002, while the construction of the *Sivand Dam* brought an international team to *Tang-e Bolaghi* in 2005 to save pre-Islamic archaeological remains (<http://www.payvand.com/news/05/jan/1014.html> ). The partial return of the *Persepolis Fortification Tablets* by the Oriental Institute of Chicago in 2004 (Stein 2007:3) marked another occasion of the Government's investment in pre-Islamic archaeology to support the discourse of 'Dialogue among Civilisations'. The manipulation of pre-Islamic archaeology, and the site of Persepolis in particular, intensified during the Presidency of Ahmadinejad with a proposal to celebrate *Norouz* at Persepolis in a style that resembled Mohammad Reza Shah's 1971 festivities. Nevertheless, the Government's populist rhetoric in support of pre-Islamic achievements of Iran were often accompanied by lack of support for research and a general disregard for the welfare of archaeological monuments.

This analysis supports the concept that pre-Islamic archaeology was born and institutionalised in response to nationalistic rhetoric and the orientation of its development or demise reflects the image that each political entity aimed to promote. The site of Persepolis has been instrumental in appropriating Iranian nationalism across different political periods and therefore has been adopted more intensely for political purposes. The casting of pre-Islamic Iranian history as the 'golden age' has encouraged an archaeological tradition that is deeply rooted in history. As further illustrated in Section 7.2, a heavy emphasis on historical periods make archaeology particularly susceptible to political manipulations and reinforces the Nationalistic tradition.

The relationship between nationalism and Islamic archaeology was explored in Chapter 6 with the Friday Mosque of Isfahan as a case study. The analysis demonstrated similar patterns in the treatment of Islamic monuments during the Qajar and post-Revolutionary periods, when the Islamic (Shi'a) past was casted as the 'golden age' of Iran and Shari'a was an essential component of administrative infrastructure. It was demonstrated that while the Qajar had comprehended the potentials of Islamic monuments as an instrument of legitimisation, there were extensive irregularities in their exploitation of these monuments, depending on the economic circumstances and the constructive mood of the nobilities. The general financial deficit during this period directed the available funds towards restoring Safavid monuments, while Islamic buildings from other periods, such as the Friday Mosque, were neglected. The birth and

development of Islamic archaeology was simultaneous with the promotion of secular ideologies and the selection of pre-Islamic period as Iran's 'golden age' during the reign of Reza Shah. It was argued that although Islamic archaeology was not initially incorporated into the ethnic nationalism of Reza Shah's Government to support the project of 'building' a nation, its significance was eventually acknowledged as foreign scholars appropriated this period by 'Persianising' it to fit the official's rhetoric of Iranian racial 'superiority' and cultural 'continuity'. The significance of the Friday Mosque was realised during this period and attempts were made to study its artistic technical evolution as the blue-print for the architectural development of Iranian mosques (Pope 1938a:5). The Friday Mosque was studied in the context of its over-arching influence on the art and architecture of the world (Pope 1938b:93-97; Rizvi 2007:53) and was promoted through various international exhibitions and congresses (*The Times*:1930a & 1930b; 1931; 1933; 1935a & 1935b). Such appropriations provided for the birth and advance of Islamic archaeology and the recognition of Islamic monuments as 'cultural heritage'. As the emphasis on pre-Islamic Iranian identity continued during Mohammad Reza Shah's reign, Islamic sites underwent extensive renovations to accommodate the newly established tourist industry in 1963. The Friday Mosque became one of the few structures that was restored despite its dissociation with the often preferred Safavid monuments. The study of Islamic archaeology was further advanced as research approach shifted from an artistic-architectural orientation to archaeological studies. This allowed for the excavation of the Friday Mosque which became one of the few functioning mosques in Iran and the Middle East that was scientifically studied by archaeologists. Conservation work at the Mosque began by *IsMEO* in 1970 and continued to 1978, while in 1972 excavations began under the direction of Umberto Scerrato (Galdieri 1984:13). The excavations were concerned with validating the presence of a Sassanid structure and later Arab hypostyle mosque beneath the Mosque (ibid.:89). The discovered Sassanid stuccos were transferred to the *Iran-e Bastan* Museum (Galdieri 1972:7) as the manifestation of 'superiority' of Iranian art and its contributions to Islamic culture, as well as its 'continuity' over time. This review demonstrated that the Pahlavis' exploitation of cultural heritage was not restricted to the pre-Islamic period and Islamic monuments were appropriated for their cultural and commercial value.

The renaissance in the study of Islamic art and archaeology during the Pahlavis is balanced against the negligence towards Islamic monuments after the Islamic Revolution when Shi'a nationalism was central to legitimising the State. It was argued that despite the identification of Islamic identity as the 'authentic' identity of Iranians, Islamic monuments were seldom adopted for the purpose of state building, given that the post-Revolutionary Administration authenticated its legitimacy through 'populism' and 'charismatic leadership', rather than in history. The identification of archaeology as a Western pseudoscience for the glorification of the Pahlavi monarchy further marginalised archaeology as a discipline (Abdi 2001:70).

Islamic monuments were no longer considered as museum spaces that showcased Iranian art and architecture, but as functional places where the community gathered to facilitate the promotion of Islamic identity and the ideals of the Revolution. During the War, mosques transformed into centres to register and dispatch volunteer forces to the lines of battle, collect donations, and assemble military equipment (Hojjat 1995:214). Therefore, although the State preferred symbolising Islamic monuments that were intimately associated with Shi'a identity, such as *Naqshe-e Jahan Complex* and *Imam Reza Shrine*, when in 1985 Iraqi missiles destroyed the southern flank of the Friday Mosque (Galdieri 1990:77), immediate restoration was assumed given the attack was perceived as an offence against the ideals of the Revolution. The completion of the task by an all Iranian team reiterated the Government's policy to portray Iran's independence from foreigners. As archaeological activities were resumed during Khatami's Presidency, Islamic archaeology was also revived and *IsIAO* returned to follow up on studies of the Friday Mosque in 2000. During Ahmadinejad's Presidency, the general disregard for archaeology, including Islamic archaeology, was apparent in the transformation of archaeological institute into organisations that promoted tourism. This was achieved by reducing the influence of *ICHHTO* and promoting construction projects to beautify cities, a policy that corresponded with the Government's populist rhetoric. During this period, despite the registration of the Friday Mosque on the *UNESCO* World Heritage list, construction projects threatened the cultural value of the Mosque.

The analysis of the employment of Islamic monuments and their role in the construction of the Islamic State has been difficult given the irregularities that manifested in the construction of numerous new mosques, the utilisation of Islamic symbols on bank notes and stamps, and the provision of patronage for renovation of mosques outside Iran, while simultaneously overlooking the development of Islamic archaeology. Nevertheless, Islamic monuments were utilised in their traditional capacity to bring the community together and provide a platform to consolidate Shi'a nationalism and propagate the policies of the new State. In addition, in conformity with Iran's ambition to be perceived as the guardian to the legacy of Islam and export its Revolution, numerous construction and restoration projects were assumed in other Islamic countries (Fig. 7.1 & 5.22). These policies provide support for the conclusion that similar to other divisions of Iranian archaeology, Islamic archaeology was also employed for nationalistic purposes, albeit occasionally with an imperialist inclination. Such trends were observed during the Pahlavi period by 'Persianisation' of Islamic archaeology and during the post-Revolutionary period by its 'Islamisation'.

Through the articulation of above objectives, the internal and external dimensions that have shaped the formation of the Nationalist tradition in Iranian archaeology were verified. A major question revolves around the reason for the longevity of this Nationalist tradition, given the introduction of scientific

archaeology to Iran in the 1960s and its re-introduction during Khatami's Presidency. This chapter will continue to investigate the reasons by articulating three points that have further aided the process of embedding nationalist traditions within Iranian archaeology. First, it is argued that as Trigger (1984:359) contended, in countries where the emphasis of archaeology is on historical periods, the past is vulnerable to maltreatment from political movements and state policies. As illustrated in this thesis, given Iran's ancient past, there has been great emphasis on historic periods, particularly the Achaemenid, Sassanid, Seljuk, and Safavid, to serve the means of strengthening a certain political regime's credibility as the rightful sovereign of the nation. Secondly, it is argued that although the ineffectiveness of Prehistoric archaeology in validating the dynastic nationalism of Mohammad Reza Shah's Government contributed to the emergence of this discipline as the most scientific division within Iranian archaeology, similar to historic archaeology, Prehistoric archaeology failed to generate an indigenous scientific tradition. This failure is attributed to differences in the social context that dominated Iran in comparison with other countries where approaches associated with 'New Archaeology' was prominent, such as United States. Thirdly, it is argued that as Trigger (2009:261) contended, Nationalist archaeology is prevalent among people who feel threatened or deprived of their collective right by more powerful nations or in countries where appeals for national unity are made to counteract internal divisions. Throughout this research it has been argued that the core incentive for the initial rise and resurrection of various forms of Iranian nationalism was to counter Western political expansion and to establish Iran as a civilised and sovereign nation. This argument is further elaborated in this chapter by discussing the occasional display of an antagonistic rhetoric by the West against Iranian culture. It is argued that the prevalence of this discourse, which occasionally portrays itself in various manifestations of 'Orientalism', further contributed to sustaining a Nationalistic tradition in Iranian archaeology. In the following, each of these arguments will be discussed in more detail.

## **7.2. Historical Archaeology: A Pervasive Source of Identity & Legitimacy**

In this section, a further platform of evidence for the Nationalistic tradition of Iranian archaeology is provided by arguing that given the emphasis of Iranian archaeology on historical periods, the past has become vulnerable to manipulation by political movements and state policies. The articulation of this point is provided by comparing the treatment of the same archaeological periods, pre-Islamic and Islamic, during two different political periods of Pahlavi and post-Revolution. It is demonstrated that despite the prevalence of conflicting brands of nationalism and ideology, these archaeological periods were utilised as instruments to influence the Iranian identity and to legitimise both Government's by emphasising

different interpretations of the same archaeological period. In this thesis, this has been demonstrated in the representation of Persepolis as a source of ‘national identity’ and ‘pride’ for the Pahlavis and post-Revolutionary Governments (Fig 7.2). This was exhibited in the adoption of Persepolis and the Cyrus Cylinder on a set of stamps (see Chapter 5) issued before and after the Revolution. Further, the Islamic Government’s decision to celebrate *Norouz* in the style that closely resembled the Persepolis celebrations during Mohammad Reza Shah’s reign, demonstrates that irrespective of the type of nationalism adopted by different Governments, the same pre-Islamic period was selected as an instrument to support different political rhetoric. With regards to the Cyrus Cylinder, the examination of the two periods led to the emergence of certain themes that echoed in both pre and post-Revolutionary Regimes. These were emphasis on a ‘just ruler’, promotion of historical continuity, as well as the stress on the narrative of Iran as an ancient power with prospects to regain its past glories and sovereignty over the region. In addition, both Governments utilised the values attached to the Cylinder as an instrument to offer an Iranian approach in managing the world. However, despite both Regimes’ promotion of the legacy of Cyrus as a flag-bearer of justice and a forerunner to human right policies, there was one sharp difference between the two Administrations; while Mohammad Reza Shah’s Government sought to gain legitimacy through emphasising Cyrus’s legacy of monarchy, the post-Revolutionary Government took refuge in Cyrus’s significance as a liberator. This latter claim served the adventurous nature of Iran’s Islamic regime to export its brand of Islam to other countries. Nevertheless, the featuring of the same pre-Islamic artefact in two regimes with competing brands of nationalisms demonstrates that a reliance on historic aspects of Iranian archaeology may have had an aversive impact on the discipline through its domination by nationalist rhetoric.

The same emphasis on history can be detected with regards to the instrumentalisation of the Islamic archaeological period across different political governments. This is particularly prevalent in the “Persianisation” of Islamic archaeology during the reign of Reza Shah and its presentation as an extension of pre-Islamic Iranian art that expanded to other neighbouring nations and influenced their architectural developments. Similarly after the Islamic Revolution, the various Iranian Administrations adopted a policy to become the guardian of Islamic monuments in other Islamic nations as a part of the appeal to export the Iranian Revolution. The articulation of these examples further testify to Trigger’s (1984:198) proposed argument that in countries where emphasis is on historical periods, archaeology is considered as a state sponsored discipline that is utilised for political discourse.

### 7.3. 'New Archaeology' & the Opportunity to Break with Traditions

In Chapter 4 it was argued that although Prehistoric archaeology was subjected to nationalistic rhetoric during Reza Shah's reign and later during Khatami's Presidency, in comparison with the historic past, the adoption of Prehistoric sites for political aims was less prevalent. It was particularly contended that the ineffectiveness of Prehistoric archaeology as an instrument to support the dynastic nationalism of Mohammad Reza Shah's Government allowed for the apolitical development of this discipline during this period. The failure of Prehistoric archaeology to generate a scientific tradition in Iranian archaeology supplied the foundation for the second argument made in this chapter which is centered on differences in social context between Iran and other countries where new approaches associated with 'New Archaeology' were prevalent. In Chapter 4, it was argued that there were parallels between the socio-economic climate that harboured the unfolding of New Archaeology as a new scientific approach in both United States and Iran. In this section, this theme is continued by articulating similarities and differences between the archaeological communities in these countries and how their work transformed Prehistory into an independent discipline in one country, while in the other Nationalistic traditions prevailed.

In the book *Reconstructing Archaeology: Theory and Practice*, Shanks and Tilley (1996) described the inferior status of Prehistoric archaeology in the United States prior to the advent of New Archaeology. They argued that New Archaeology was readily embraced by American Prehistorians due to its capability to adopt scientific approaches and therefore to accredit their field with more disciplinary power and prestige (ibid.:31). In the 1950s and 1960s, archaeology in Iran was facing similar crisis and Iranian archaeologists were struggling with issues that reflected those of their American colleagues. As noted by Negahban (2006:75), in the late 1950s academic archaeology was reduced to a discipline that fed the demands of uninterested students in seek of a Bachelor Degree to heighten their chance of employability at the job market. Therefore, there was a collective desire to disentangle archaeology from its struggling status and enhance its position by portraying it as a scientific enterprise. However, the scientific approach introduced by American archaeologists was commonly concerned with deductive theories about the Prehistoric period. Therefore, while the archaeology of the pre-Islamic period was inclined towards State sponsored propagandas and Islamic archaeology was regarded as art, the Prehistoric period was perceived by young Iranian archaeologists as a scientific enterprise. This resulted in a rise in the number of Iranian archaeologists who pursued the study of Prehistory in Iran and abroad. The association of Prehistoric archaeology with science is accounted for the bias that persist today in perceiving Prehistoric archaeology as 'real archaeology' while marginalising archaeology in other periods as history and art, in other words, unscientific disciplines.



The scientific approach introduced by foreign archaeological teams and in particular the Americans had an additional appeal to the emerging Iranian archaeological community by allowing them to dissociate their discipline from the nationalist mandates that had dominated the field for decades. In so far, the similarities between American and Iranian archaeological communities and their dominating socio-political climate have been discussed to articulate the rationale for the interest of Iranian archaeologists in familiarising themselves with theoretical frameworks that they associated with 'New Archaeology'. However, despite these similarities, there were structural differences between these societies that set the experience of applying these new theories in Iran apart from other countries. In essence, there were significant differences in how nationalism was conceived in Iran and the United States. As Trigger (2009:409) argued, American nationalism was based on values that embraced present mindedness and shackling the burdens of the past, while Iranian nationalism was based on a constructed past that relied on the 'superiority' of Aryans and the 'grandiose' of an age of Empires. Therefore, there were significant differences between American archaeologists who practiced new approaches and their Iranian counterparts who were the by-product of an age of nationalism and often had difficulties in distinguishing science from national sentiments. This thesis has thus provided a supporting narrative for Niknami's (2003:3) argument that despite its wide application, 'New Archaeology' failed to take root in Iranian archaeology as the dominant trends remained heavily restrained by 'Culture-Historical approaches'.

During Khatami's Presidency, Iranian archaeologists invested in Prehistoric archaeology, given its lack of associations with political issues. Nevertheless, as was discussed in Chapter 4, the adoption of Prehistoric archaeology to aid the political rhetoric of Khatami's Administration prevented the autonomous development of this discipline. Instead, Prehistoric archaeology became the new means to support the Government's image of Iran as a country with an ancient heritage that has contributed to human civilisation. Therefore, it may be argued, that the politicisation of Prehistoric archaeology during this period, prevented the adoption of scientific approaches that were introduced by foreign archaeological institutes, and Iranian archaeology continued to retain its Nationalistic traditions.

#### **7.4. Persian Empire as the Axis of Evil**

In this section, a third argument that contributes to the sustenance of a Nationalistic tradition in Iranian archaeology is provided by articulating the influence of the 'West' and its occasional 'Orientalist' outlook towards Iran and Iranian archaeology. It is contended that as Trigger (2009:261) argued, Nationalist archaeology is prevalent among people who feel threatened or deprived of their collective right by more powerful nations. In the previous chapters, the rise of Iranian nationalism as a reaction to Western

political expansion has been illustrated. It is argued here, that to counter the threats to Iran's political entity and cultural values, Iranian archaeology has often been utilised by Iranian politicians as an instrument to verify Iran's place in history. In contrast, there is a strong Western tradition of presenting Iran as the symbol of history's tyrannical 'Orient' which was defeated by the 'democratic Athenians' (the West) and this has influenced the perception of Iranian archaeology from the Qajar period to contemporary times. Such narratives are often apparent in history books and documentaries dealing with the Classical period and are amalgamated with contemporary political discourse. They often draw links between Greece, Europe and democracy/freedom, against Persia, Asia and despotism/slavery. In *The Battle of Salamis: The Naval Encounter that Saved Greece and Western Civilisation*, Barry Strauss (2005:13, 14) concluded that the Greek's democratic nature enabled them to overcome the Persian advance. Richard further argued, "The Persian Wars decided the fate of Western civilisation. Had the Persians been able to incorporate the Greek polities into their vast empire, they might have crushed the spirit of Greeks. The achievements of classical Greece would not have survived to form the basis of Western culture" (Richard 2003:29). Although prevalent in Classical literature, in 1993 and with Huntington's (1993) proposition that future global politics will be dominated by patterns of clashes between civilisations, the historic battles and traditional rivalries between ancient civilisations emerged as a new political discourse. With notions such as that the clash between Western civilisation (Europe & North America), and Islamic civilisation (Arab, Turkic & Malaya subdivisions) will create political conflict (ibid.:24), the theme of Orientalism was revitalised. These notions were further re-enforced by the political conflicts following the events of 9/11 and the application of Orientalist rhetoric became a prevalent political discourse. It is argued that this Orientalist outlook had an adverse impact on how Iran and its archaeology were perceived globally.

In Section 7.2, it was contended that Iranian archaeology relied heavily on the historic period and that the 'golden age' selected to promote nationalism often corresponds with the Achaemenid dynasty (Persian Empire) or Safavid dynasty (Shi'a Empire); both held in opposition with Western cultural values. The promotion of historic periods, particularly imperial archaeology, was pursued by most young nation-states, especially in Greece, Italy and Egypt who possessed an imperial ancient past. There was, however, a difference in the international reception of imperial archaeology in Iran in comparison with the latter countries, given their association with the Classical world and their consideration as shared cultural heritage. Thus, while Mussolini engaged in the excavations of the Classical period in Italy to promote his Fascist ideology, there was a wide global support from archaeologists that enthusiastically followed the discoveries (Dyson 2006:181). Iran did not benefit from this global support, as instead any attempt by the Iranian Government to promote its past was associated with chauvinism and the advocacy of an eastern-

despotic form of government. As discussed previously, this Eurocentric outlook was dominant during both the Pahlavi and post-Revolutionary periods. According to recent files release from the Public Record Office in the United Kingdom in 2001, the Queen was advised not to attend the “tasteless” Persepolis celebrations in 1971 as it was not appropriate for her to go to what promised to be “a bit of an *omium gatherum* affair” (Tweedie 2001). In retrospect, Tweedie drew attention to the celebrations as symbolising the “excess of the Pahlavy dynasty” (ibid.), echoing the ancient Greek’s perception of the Persian kings as the oriental despot, incapable of moderation.

During the post-Revolutionary period, the manifestation of this Eurocentric outlook was best presented in the events around the exhibition of *The Forgotten Empire: The World of Ancient Persia* (see Chapter 5). The exhibition at the British Museum aimed to offer a scarce opportunity to introduce the history of Ancient Persians to a Western audience (Curtis & Tallis 2005:9). As discussed previously, the preparation of this exhibition was a continuation of policies on ‘Dialogue among Civilisations’ and these tendencies were demonstrated with references made to such ‘dialogues’ by Kargar (2005:8), the Director of National Museum of Iran at the time, while discussing the National Museum’s collaboration with British Museum to prepare for the exhibition. Despite endeavours to represent a segment of the Iranian identity that was overlooked after the Revolution, the global political stance immediately transformed the occasion into a contemporary political propaganda and the initial intention for ‘Dialogue among Civilisation’ was once again replaced by the paradigm of ‘clash of civilisations’. The existing ambiguities about the history of Persian Empire were further reinforced by the publication of an article in the *Guardian*.

On 8 September 2005, one day before the opening of the exhibition, Jonathan Jones wrote a controversial article in the *Guardian* entitled *The Evil Empire*. The article revoked various political bearings that continue to surround the paradigm of ‘Orientalism’ and the polarisation of the world as “civilised” and “barbarians” (Said 2003). Arguably Jones portrayal of the “strange”, “flat”, and defective Persian art, compared to “Greek masterpieces” was an attempt to recast the image of a civilisation that was “evil” long before it transformed into its contemporary state. In the same manner the content of the article encourages the reader to get caught in the fifth-century B.C. Greek propaganda to portray the Persians as “Barbarians” and “history’s original villains” (see Jones 2005). Jones further drew historical parallels between the ancient world where the Greeks, which he portrayed as the Western liberators, triumphed over the “Oriental despots” in Persia; and the contemporary world, by reminding the readers that “Persia is now Iran”. While the casting of Iran as a ‘historical villain’ who threatened world security from the outset continued, Jones further elucidated that Ancient Persia’s notoriousness as a tolerating Empire was in fact a myth and all that “openness had an emptiness at its heart” (ibid.).

The article received severe criticism from the general public and a number of specialists who shared their disappointment in disseminating such obsolete notions about Iran and its ancient history through various correspondents. Daryaei (2005) criticised Jones for his retreat to the foundations of “Orientalism” and Alizadeh (2005) questioned Jones’ scholarly knowledge about Persian Art. Jones was further accused of retaining a biased political agenda to vilify an ancient nation by extending it to the current Regime in Iran (Alizadeh 2005). The exhibition, thus, triggered efforts to distort history in order to achieve particular political agendas in regards to contemporary Iran. Despite such rhetoric, it would be erroneous to underestimate the impact of the exhibition in dispersing knowledge about Ancient Persia. In addition, there were other art historians, such as Andrew Graham-Dixon (2005), who wrote an account of the exhibition, devoid of Eurocentric rhetoric. His article aimed to bridge the gaps between the East and West by highlighting the shared heritage and the links between cultural influences (ibid.).

From the above arguments, it is contested that Iranian archaeology has also been politicised by Western powers, who drew parallels between contemporary Iranian politics and its ancient/Islamic legacies; as well as by Iranian politicians, who aimed to counter these accusations by taking refuge in the appropriation of the past to attain political legitimacy. These continuous debates over Iranian ‘civilisation’ to discredit or legitimise Iran’s sovereignty as a nation confirmed that Iranian archaeology is deeply entangled in a tradition of political rhetoric and nationalist discourse that threatened, and continues to threaten, the emergence of scientific traditions within the discipline. This trend has further reinforced a Nationalist tradition in Iranian archaeology which will remain dominant as long as Iranian ‘civilisation’, its past and contributions are challenged.

## **7.5. Limitations of Research & Future Prospects**

This thesis has successfully contributed to knowledge by identifying and comparing the socio-political issues that have impacted on the development of Iranian archaeology within a comparative historical framework and by providing a fresh platform for the beginning of more open debates in future studies. Although an all inclusive analysis was provided in this research, given the dearth of Iranian archaeological studies that engage in such debates, the thesis was challenged to develop a strong body of literature on which to build its arguments. Therefore, this analysis required the author’s familiarity with every component, whether socio-political, ideological, economical and religious, to generate a comprehensive interpretation. In this regard, I cannot fail to recognise the limits of self-instruction as the simultaneous training in two or more academic fields, such as politics and history, along with archaeology has been difficult and occasionally led to leaving the subjects only half-explored. The unequal access to

documents has further limited this research as I was not able to consult available sources in Iran due to University travel restrictions. Although this research contended that the interpretive study of the history of Iranian archaeology is necessary, nevertheless, it is acknowledged that there are inherent problems with the application of this framework given its subjectivity. However, as discussed in Chapter 3, the employment of this approach does not confine this research to the embracement of relativism, but rather has encouraged the demonstration of the very many different concepts and ideologies that influenced Iranian archaeology. This is best represented in the consideration of the various types of nationalism at play in Iran during different political periods. Although Trigger (1984) broadened the debate on the politicisation of archaeology by discussing it in terms of Nationalist, Colonialist and Imperialist forms, the more recent concept that all archaeologies are Nationalist is more prevalent (Diaz-Andreu & Champion 1996:3). This study has, however, demonstrated that even within Nationalist archaeology, various types of nationalism are at play by highlighting the ethnic, dynastic and Islamic variations of Iranian nationalism and their influence on molding the orientation of Iranian archaeology. To account for the socio-political context embedded within the tradition of Iranian archaeology this research has remained loyal to the embracement of diversity by consulting primary sources on various subjects and in different languages to devise a comprehensive analysis, free of personal biases. In spite of this claim, it is acknowledged that as Murray (2012:144) argued, any academic work is inherently influenced by the contemporary ideals and prevalent traditions. Nevertheless, it is suggested that given the lack of a coherent analysis in the examination of key milestones in the history of Iranian archaeology, this thesis can contribute to knowledge by providing a preliminary foundation for future research.

Despite these limitations and challenges, this thesis represents the first in-depth analysis to explore the ways in which Iranian archaeology has been influenced by political discourse, different brands of nationalism, various aspects of Iranian identity, and the prevalent ideological trends. Also this is the first study that details the analysis of the influence of an Islamic State and its prevalent ideologies on shaping archaeological traditions. It has been demonstrated that the lack of reliance on historical foundations to legitimise the State and emphasis on charismatic leadership and populism leads to diminishing the role of scientific archaeology in such conditions. Although other factors, such as economy, conflict, and global outlook towards Iranian archaeology have been discussed, given the lack of archaeological studies that engage in such debates, this area of research remains in need of further analysis. In particular, it is required that Iranian archaeological community regenerates itself and cultivates an environment receptive of reflective self-criticism and debate. To provide for this context, research in history of archaeology needs to be acknowledged as an emerging sub-field of the discipline. Further, it is imperative to move beyond the restrictions that prohibit or discourage the involvement of archaeologists with backgrounds in

other disciplines, as this may contribute to the analysis of Iranian archaeology from a multidisciplinary perspective and supply the progress of Iranian archaeology. This is given that according to Trigger “there is not one history of archaeology, but many depending in part on the differing assumptions that individual historians bring to their work” (Trigger 1994:121). Therefore, the contextualisation of debates varies depending on the social and ethnic background of the researcher. It also differs with accordance to their disciplinary background in history of art, architecture, history, philosophy, politics, ecology and intellectual trends such as Romanticism, Rationalism, Orientalism, Feminism and other approaches. It is only in consideration of the above, that Iranian archaeology can move beyond its current state and acquire a new self-awareness. This transformation is necessary as Iran remains as one of the few isolated cases where the history of its archaeology is under-studied. As noted in Chapter 3, this lack of concern is of twofold; the politicised nature of such research and the absence of interest in a self-critical interpretive approach. The two factors are inter-related as social constrains and career threatening repercussions associated with interpretive archaeology has prevented the cultivation of the tradition of debate which is imperative to this approach. Although this research has made attempts to reduce the gaps between different academic fields and to provide the first comprehensive interpretive study of the history of Iranian archaeology, future work will be able to expand this preliminary research by investigating the interactions between intellectual trends such as Feminism or the influence of political rhetoric such as Orientalism on shaping Iranian archaeology. In addition, considering that this research has not devoted an in-depth analysis to the influence of socio-political context on the foundation and promotion of archaeological museums, both indoor and outdoor, and their role in the construction of an Iranian State, future studies are required to address these omissions. In addition, this research has covered the impact of nationalism and politics on Iranian archaeology until the end of the Presidency of Ahmadinejad. The same approach can be applied to the analysis of the impact of alterations by the Government of President Rouhani (r.2014-present) on Iranian archaeology. It is only through such studies and with raising awareness about the subjective biases that threaten the discipline that the promotion of a more objective approach in Iranian archaeology is attainable.



**Figure 7.1:** Sayyida Khawla (daughter of Imam Hossein) Shrine in Ba'albak, Lebanon. The inscription on top of the entrance reads "the reconstruction of this shrine was made by Grand Ayatollah Imam Ali Khamenei and his Wakil (deputy) Imam Sheykh Muhammad Yazbek in the year 1995". (Photo by Author 2010)



**Figure 7.2:** The political manipulation of the same historic period (pre-Islamic, Achaemenid) is apparent in the pictures from two different political periods, Pahlavi (left) and post-Revolution (right). (After *Vogue* 1969:8-11 and *National Geographic* 2008:14-18)

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# Appendix I

## Official Documents

This appendix provides additional background to support the analysis presented in the preceding chapters. Given that most of these documents are in Farsi language, for each of the items, a descriptive section is introduced to contextualise the subject analysed.

تاریخ ۶۴/۱۱/۱۰

### قانون تشکیل سازمان میراث فرهنگی کشور

ماده واحده - به وزارت فرهنگ و آموزش عالی اجازه داده می‌شود به منظور:

الف - مطالعه و تحقیق در آثار باقیمانده از گذشتگان جهت معرفی ارزش‌های نپخته در آنها.

ب - انجام پژوهش‌های باستان‌شناسی و مردم‌شناسی و هنر - های سنتی.

ج - بررسی، شناسایی، ثبت و حفاظت از آثار ارزشمند منقول و غیرمنقول فرهنگی تاریخی کشور.

د - تهیه و اجرای طرح‌های لازم به منظور تعمیر و احیاء

قوانین / ۱۹

تبصره ۳ - آن دسته از کاخ‌ها که فاقد ارزش فرهنگی - تاریخی باشد به اکثریت آراء هیأتی مرکب از وزراء فرهنگ و آموزش عالی، و بهداشت، درمان و آموزش پزشکی و سرپرست بنیاد شهید برای هر وزارتخانه یا نهادی مناسب‌تر تشخیص داده شود به آن وزارتخانه یا نهاد اختصاص داده می‌شود.

تبصره ۴ - وزارت فرهنگ و آموزش عالی موظف است درآمد سازمان میراث فرهنگی کشور را به خزانه واریز کند.

تبصره ۵ - وزارت فرهنگ و آموزش عالی موظف است با همکاری سازمان امور اداری و استخدامی کشور ظرف مدت ۳ ماه از تاریخ تصویب این قانون اساسنامه «سازمان میراث فرهنگی کشور» را تهیه و تقدیم مجلس شورای اسلامی نماید.

تبصره ۶ - از تاریخ تصویب این قانون کلیه قوانین و مقررات مغایر با آن ملغی می‌باشد.

قانون فوق مشتمل بر ماده واحده و شش تبصره در جلسه روز پنجشنبه دهم بهمن‌ماه یکهزار و سیصد و شصت و چهارم مجلس شورای اسلامی تصویب و در تاریخ شانزدهم بهمن‌ماه یکهزار و سیصد و شصت و چهارم به تأیید شورای نگهبان رسیده است.

رئیس مجلس شورای اسلامی  
اکبر هاشمی

۱۸ / مجموعه قوانین...

آثار، بناها و مجموعه‌های با ارزش فرهنگی - تاریخی از اذنام واحدهای مشروحه زیر سازمانی به نام «سازمان میراث فرهنگی کشور» به صورت سازمانی وابسته به خود تشکیل دهد.

- ۱- مرکز باستان‌شناسی ایران تابع وزارت فرهنگ و آموزش عالی
- ۲- اداره کل هنرهای سنتی تابع وزارت فرهنگ و آموزش عالی
- ۳- مرکز و موزه مردم‌شناسی تابع وزارت فرهنگ و آموزش عالی
- ۴- دفتر آثار تاریخی تابع وزارت فرهنگ و آموزش عالی
- ۵- موزه ایران باستان تابع وزارت فرهنگ و آموزش عالی
- ۶- اداره حفظ میراث فرهنگی شهرستانها تابع وزارت ارشاد اسلامی
- ۷- اداره کل موزه‌ها تابع وزارت ارشاد اسلامی
- ۸- اداره کل بناهای تاریخی تابع وزارت ارشاد اسلامی
- ۹- اداره کل کاخ‌ها تابع وزارت ارشاد اسلامی
- ۱۰- سازمان ملی حفاظت آثار باستانی: وابسته به وزارت فرهنگ و آموزش عالی
- ۱۱- اداره کل بیوتات (کساح گلستان) وابسته به وزارت امور اقتصادی و دارایی

تبصره ۱ - کلیه وظایف، اختیارات، کارکنان، اموال منقول و غیرمنقول، دیون، تمهیدات، مطالبات، بودجه و اعتبارات واحدهای مزبور به سازمان میراث فرهنگی کشور منتقل می‌شود.


تبصره ۲ - وزارت فرهنگ و آموزش عالی موظف است از میان کاخ‌های باقیمانده از درباریان سابق و وابستگان آنها آنچه را ارزش فرهنگی - تاریخی دارد در اختیار گرفته، حفظ، احیاء و معرفی نماید.

**Document 1:** The Terms of the Decree on the Foundation of Cultural Heritage Organisation in 1986 which clarified the activities of the institute that largely relied on research and the assignment of different aspects of the cultural heritage to different executive organisations. The decree was signed by Akbar. Hashemi Rafsanjani (After Samadi Rendi 1993:17-19).

رای صادره سیصد و پنجمین جلسه شورای عالی برنامه ریزی مورخ  
۱۳۷۴/۷/۳۰ در خصوص برنامه آموزشی دکتری باستانشناسی

(۱) برنامه آموزشی دوره دکتری باستانشناسی که از طرف گروه  
علوم انسانی پیشنهاد شده بود با اکثریت آراء بتصویب رسید  
(۲) این برنامه از تاریخ تصویب قابل اجرا است.

ای صادره سیصد و پنجمین جلسه شورای عالی برنامه ریزی مورخ ۱۳۷۴/۷/۳۰ در مورد برنامه آموزشی  
وره دکتری باستانشناسی صحیح است بمورد اجرا گذاشته شود.

سید محمد رضا هاشمی گلپایگانی  
  
وزیر فرهنگ و آموزش عالی  
مورد تأیید است.


مورد تأیید است.

دکتر علی شریعتمداری

سرپرست گروه علوم انسانی

رونوشت: به معاونت محترم آموزش وزارت فرهنگ و آموزش عالی جهت اجرا ابلاغ می شود.

سید محمد کاظم نائینی

  
دبیر شورای عالی برنامه ریزی



**Document 2:** The decree issued by the Ministry of Science and Higher Education to begin a Doctoral Programme in State Universities- January 1995. While this decree was issued in 1995, its implementation was delayed until 1999-2000 (After <http://www.irphe.ac.ir/> Accessed 09/09/12).



مشخصات کلی برنامه آموزشی دوره دکتری باستانشناسی



۱- مقدمه :

از تاسیس گروه باستانشناسی در مقطع کارشناسی و کارشناسی ارشد در دانشگاه تهران بیش از پنجاه سال می گذرد. در این مدت تغییرات و تحولات عظیمی در زمینه های آموزشی، کاوشهای باستانشناسی، مرمت و حفاظت و احیا بناهای تاریخی و اشیاء فرهنگی و شیوه های معرفی آنها بوجود آمده و حفاریهای باستانشناسی بسیاری از زوایای تاریک تاریخ ملل را روشن نموده است. در طول یکصد سال اخیر بسیاری از مکانهای باستانی مشرق زمین به خصوص ایران عمدتاً به وسیله دانشمندان غربی مورد کاوش قرار گرفته و آثار و اشیاء بیشماری نیز به غارت رفته که موزه های مهم آمریکا و اروپا را مزین کرده است. هر چند باید اذعان کرد که مطالعات علمی دقیقی نیز به وسیله بعضی از کاوشگران و هیئتهای خارجی انجام گرفته که نتیجه آنها در تدوین هزاران جلد کتاب و نشریات گوناگون باستانشناسی ایران و خاورمیانه ثبت شده است.

بعد از انقلاب شکوهمند اسلامی به دلیل مشکلات فراوان آنچنانکه انتظار میرفت علم باستانشناسی جایگاه مخصوص خود را پیدا نکرده و تا زمان تصویب کارشناسی ارشد آن در دانشگاه تربیت مدرس دوره فترت هشت ساله ای را طی کرد هر چند که سازمان میراث فرهنگی که عهده دار امور باستانشناسی کشور است با تمام تلاش به فعالیت مشغول بوده است ولی به نظر می رسد که

(۳)

برای کشوری که تاریخ هزاران ساله دارد و شگرفترین آثار تمدن انسانی را نیز در خود جای داده است جای بسی تأسف باشد که بجای فعالیت محققان باستانشناس و دانشمندان این رشته، حفاریهای قاچاق اماکن باستانی انجام پذیرد و به غارت آثار ارزشمند مدنی منتهی شود.

آیات مبارکه قرآن کریم و همچنین احادیث معتبری اهمیت شناخت آثار پیشینیان و عبرت گیری از آنها را گوشزد می نماید منزلت ویژه ای به تاریخ و گذشته اقوام می بخشد. حال با توجه به موارد فوق، لزوم ایجاد دوره دکتری باستانشناسی با تکیه بر امر تحقیق و پژوهش بیش از پیش احساس می گردد. چنانکه کشورهای مثل هندوستان، پاکستان و ترکیه قریب دهها سال است که دوره دکتری باستانشناسی دایر کرده اند ولی کشور جمهوری اسلامی ایران با همه غنای آثاری که در آن وجود دارد فاقد دوره دکتری رشته باستانشناسی می باشد.

نکته ای که ذکر آن در اینجا لازم است ویژگی برنامه آموزشی دانشجویان رشته دکتری در ایران است که ذیلاً ارائه می گردد. بر اساس این برنامه هر دانشجو می تواند با همکاری استاد راهنما و پس از هماهنگی لازم با سازمان میراث فرهنگی کشور در یکی از مناطق باستانی متناسب با گرایش تحصیلی در راس هیاتی مشغول به کاوش شود و گزارش کشفیات خویش را که رساله پایانی کار او خواهد بود به سازمان مذکور ارائه نماید.



۲- اهداف

۱- تربیت مدرسین و نیروهای انسانی متعدد و متخصص در باستانشناسی برای رفع نیازهای آموزشی دانشگاهها

(۴)

**Document 3:** The explanation provided by Tarbiat Modarres University for launching the Doctoral Programme in 1999-2000. It highlighted the central aim for the launch of this programme as a means to enable Iranians to take over archaeological activities in Iran and to prevent further damage to Iranian cultural heritage by export of antiquities or antiquarian activities (After <http://www.modares.ac.ir/edu> Accessed 04/09/12).

۵ - ضرورت و اهمیت :

در مورد اهمیت و ضرورت آموزش این علم باید گفت که با شناختن زمین‌شناسی زنا ریخ  
استه در قرآن کریم آیات زیادی در باره قلع و سنت ها نقل شده است و در همه آنها به انسانها  
هشدار داده شده است که از گذشتگان عبرت گیرند و در زندگی پیشینان مطالعه کنند .

فدخلت من قبلکم سنن فیروانی الارض فانظر واکیف کان عاقبة المکذبین هذا نبین للناس  
و هدی موعظه للمتقین . قرآن کریم ( آیه ۱۲۷ و ۱۲۸ از سوره آل عمران )  
همانا که قبل از شما سنتهایی گذشته ، پس بگردید در زمین و ببینید چگونه هلاک شدند  
آنانکه وعده‌های خدا را تکذیب می کردند . این قرآن بیانی است برای مردمان و هدایت  
و پندی برای پرهیزکاران .

قل سیروانی الارض فانظر واکیف کان عاقبة الذین من قبل کان اکثرهم مشرکین .

قرآن کریم ( آیه ۴۲ ، سوره روم )

• ای رسول بگو به مردم که در زمین سیر کنید و ببینید چگونه بوده است  
عاقبت طوایف پیش از شما بیشتر آنها کافر و مشرک بوده‌اند .

انلم یسیروا فی الارض فینظر واکیف کان عاقبة الذین من قبلهم دمرالله علیهم وللكافرین  
امثالهم . قرآن کریم ( سوره محمد ص ) آیه ۱۰ ) .

آیا در زمین نگردیدند تا به چشم خود عاقبت حال پیشینان را مشاهده کنند که  
چگونه خدا آنها را هلاک کرد ، این کافران هم مانند آنها به کیفر خود می رسند .

مولای متقیان ، علی ابن ابی طالب علیه السلام نیز در نامه به امام حسن علیه السلام  
در این باره چنین می فرماید :



**Document 4:** The Ministry of Culture and Higher Education, Committee of Programming in Archaeology, 1986. This document provided support for restoring archaeology as an institutionalised discipline following the Islamic Revolution by referencing the significance of the past in the Quran and Islamic ideology (After <http://www.irphe.ac.ir/> Accessed 09/09/12).

# **Appendix II**

## **Translation of Text**

## Translation of the Text on the Cyrus Cylinder

1. [When ... Mar]duk, king of the whole of heaven and earth, the ..... who, in his ..., lays waste his.....
2. [.....] broad? in intelligence, ..... who inspects (?) the wor]ld quarters (regions)
3. [.....] his [first]born (=Belshazzar), a low person, was put in charge of his country,
4. but [.....] he set [a (...) counter]feit over them.
5. He ma[de] a counterfeit of Esagil, [and .....]... for Ur and the rest of the cult-cities.
6. Rites inappropriate to them, [impure] fo[od-offerings .....] disrespectful [...] were daily gabbled, and, as an insult,
7. he brought the daily offerings to a halt; he inter[fered with the rites and] instituted [.....] within the sanctuaries. In his mind, reverential fear of Marduk, king of the gods, came to an end.
8. He did yet more evil to his city every day; ... his [people .....], he brought ruin on them all by a yoke without relief.
9. Enlil-of-the-gods became extremely angry at their complaints, and [...] their territory. The gods who lived within them left their shrines,
10. angry that he had made (them) enter into Shuanna (Babylon). Ex[alted Marduk, Enlil-of-the-Go]ds, relented. He changed his mind about all the settlements whose sanctuaries were in ruins,
11. and the population of the land of Sumer and Akkad who had become like corpses, and took pity on them. He inspected and checked all the countries,
12. seeking for the upright king of his choice. He took the hand of Cyrus, king of the city of Anshan, and called him by his name, proclaiming him aloud for the kingship over all of everything.
13. He made the land of Gutu and all the Median troops prostrate themselves at his feet, while he shepherded in justice and righteousness the black-headed people
14. whom he had put under his care. Marduk, the great lord, who nurtures his people, saw with pleasure his fine deeds and true heart,
15. and ordered that he should go to Babylon. He had him take the road to Tintir (Babylon), and, like a friend and companion, he walked at his side.
16. His vast troops whose number, like the water in a river, could not be counted, were marching fully-armed at his side.
17. He had him enter without fighting or battle right into Shuanna; he saved his city Babylon from hardship. He handed over to him Nabonidus, the king who did not fear him.
18. All the people of Tintir, of all Sumer and Akkad, nobles and governors, bowed down before him and kissed his feet, rejoicing over his kingship and their faces shone.
19. The lord through whose help all were rescued from death and who saved them all from distress and hardship, they blessed him sweetly and praised his name.
  
20. I am Cyrus, king of the universe, the great king, the powerful king, king of Babylon, king of Sumer and Akkad, king of the four quarters of the world,
21. son of Cambyses, the great king, king of the city of Anshan, grandson of Cyrus, the great king, ki[ng of the ci]ty of Anshan, descendant of Teispes, the great king, king of the city of Anshan,
22. the perpetual seed of kingship, whose reign Bel (Marduk) and Nabu love, and with whose kingship, to their joy, they concern themselves. When I went as harbinger of peace i[nt]o Babylon
23. I founded my sovereign residence within the palace amid celebration and rejoicing. Marduk, the great lord, bestowed on me as my destiny the great magnanimity of one who loves Babylon, and I every day sought him out in awe.
24. My vast troops were marching peaceably in Babylon, and the whole of [Sumer] and Akkad had nothing to fear.
25. I sought the safety of the city of Babylon and all its sanctuaries. As for the population of Babylon [..., w]ho as if without div[ine intention] had endured a yoke not decreed for them,
26. I soothed their weariness; I freed them from their bonds(?). Marduk, the great lord, rejoiced at [my good] deeds,
27. and he pronounced a sweet blessing over me, Cyrus, the king who fears him, and over Cambyses, the son [my] issue, [and over] my all my troops,
28. that we might live happily in his presence, in well-being. At his exalted command, all kings who sit on thrones,

29. from every quarter, from the Upper Sea to the Lower Sea, those who inhabit [remote distric]ts (and) the kings of the land of Amurru who live in tents, all of them,
30. brought their weighty tribute into Shuanna, and kissed my feet. From [Shuanna] I sent back to their places to the city of Ashur and Susa,
31. Akkad, the land of Eshnunna, the city of Zamban, the city of Meturnu, Der, as far as the border of the land of Gutu - the sanctuaries across the river Tigris - whose shrines had earlier become dilapidated,
32. the gods who lived therein, and made permanent sanctuaries for them. I collected together all of their people and returned them to their settlements,
33. and the gods of the land of Sumer and Akkad which Nabonidus – to the fury of the lord of the gods – had brought into Shuanna, at the command of Marduk, the great lord,
34. I returned them unharmed to their cells, in the sanctuaries that make them happy. May all the gods that I returned to their sanctuaries,
35. every day before Bel and Nabu, ask for a long life for me, and mention my good deeds, and say to Marduk, my lord, this: “Cyrus, the king who fears you, and Cambyses his son,
36. may they be the provisioners of our shrines until distant (?) days, and the population of Babylon call blessings on my kingship. I have enabled all the lands to live in peace.”
  
37. Every day I increased by [... ge]ese, two ducks and ten pigeons the [former offerings] of geese, ducks and pigeons.
38. I strove to strengthen the defences of the wall Imgur-Enlil, the great wall of Babylon,
39. and [I completed] the quay of baked brick on the bank of the moat which an earlier king had bu[ilt but not com]pleted its work.
40. [I ..... which did not surround the city] outside, which no earlier king had built, his workforce, the levee [from his land, in/int]o Shuanna.
41. [... ..with bitum]en and baked brick I built anew, and [completed] its [work].
42. [... ..] great [doors of cedar wood] with bronze cladding,
43. [and I installed] all their doors, threshold slabs and door fittings with copper parts. [... ..]. I saw within it an inscription of Ashurbanipal, a king who preceded me;
44. [... ..] in its place. May Marduk, the great lord, present to me as a gift a long life and the fullness of age,
45. [a secure throne and an enduring rei]gn, [and may I ..... in] your heart forever.

- a. [Written and check]ed [from a...]; (this) tablet (is) of
- b. Qishti-Marduk, son of [...].

**Document 1:** Translated by Irving Finkel. Assistant Keeper, Department of the Middle East (After [http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/articles/c/cyrus\\_cylinder\\_-\\_translation.aspx](http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/articles/c/cyrus_cylinder_-_translation.aspx) Accessed 01/11/13)

**Table. 1. Rulers and Administrators of Iran**

<b>Administrations</b>	<b>Duration of Reign/ Presidency</b>
<b>Achaemenid Dynasty</b>	
Cyrus II, The Great	r. 559-530 BC
Cambyses II	r. 530-522 BC
Darius I, The Great	r. 522-486 BC
Xerxes I	r. 486-465 BC
Artaxerxes I	r. 465-424 BC
Xerxes II	r. 424-423 BC
Darius II	r. 423-404 BC
Artaxerxes II	r. 404-359 BC
Artaxerxes III	r. 359-338 BC
Arses	r. 338-336 BC
Darius III	r. 336-330 BC
<b>Parthian Dynasty (early rulers not noted)</b>	
Mithradates I	r. 171-138 BC
Phraates II	r. 138-128 BC
Artabanus II	r. 128-123 BC
Mithradates II	r. 123- 87 BC
Gotarzes I	r. 91-80 BC
Orodes	r. 80-76 BC
Sinatruces	r. 76-70 BC
Phraates III	r. 70-57 BC
Mithradates III	r. 57-55 BC
Orodes II	r. 57-37 BC
Phraates IV	r. 37-32 BC
Tiridates II	r. 30-25 BC
Phraataces	r. 2 BC- 4 AD
Orodes III	r. 4-7 AD
Vonones I	r. 7- 12 AD
Artabanus III	r. 12-38 AD
Tiridates III	r. 36 AD
Vardanes	r. 39-47 AD
Gotarzes II	r. 38-51 AD
Vonones II	r. 51 AD
Vologeses I	r. 51-80 AD
Pacorus	r. 79-115 AD

Oroses	r. 109-128 AD
Artabanus IV	r. 80-81 AD
Vologeses II	r. 105-147 AD
Mithradates IV	r. 128-147 AD
Vologeses III	r. 148-192 AD
Vologeses IV	r.191-207 AD
Vologeses V	r. 207-227 AD
Artabanus V	r. 213-224 AD
Artavasdes	r. 226-227 AD
<b>Sassanid Dynasty</b>	
Ardeshir	r. 224-240 AD
Shapur I	r. 240-272 AD
Hormizd Ardashir	r. 272-273 AD
Bahram I	r. 273-276 AD
Bahram II	r. 276-293 AD
Bahram III	r. 293 AD
Nerseh	r. 293-302 AD
Hormizd II	r. 302-309 AD
Shapur II	r. 309-379 AD
Ardashir II	r. 379-383 AD
Shapur III	r.383-388 AD
Bahram IV	r. 388-399 AD
Yazdgird I	r. 399-421 AD
Bahram V	r. 421-439 AD
Yazdgird II	r. 439-459 AD
Hormizd III	r. 457-459 AD
Peroz	r. 459-484 AD
Valash	r. 484-488 AD
Kavad	r. 488-531 AD
Zamasp	r. 496-498 AD
Chosroes I	r. 531-579 AD
Hormizd IV	r. 579-590 AD
Chosroes II	r. 591-628 AD
Kavad II	r. 628 AD
Ardashir III	r. 628-629 AD
Boran	r. 629-630 AD
Hormizd V, Chosroes III	r. 630-632 AD
Yazdegird III	r. 632-651 AD
<b>Seljuk Dynasty</b>	
Togrul	r. 1029-1063 AD

Alp Arsalan	r. 1063- 1072 AD
Malik Shah I	r. 1072- 1092 AD
Mahmud I	r. 1092-1094 AD
Barkiyaruq	r. 1094-1105 AD
Muhammad I	r. 1105-1118 AD
Mahmud II	r. 1118-1131 AD
Toghrul II	r. 1132-1134 AD
Ahmed Sanjar	r. 1097-1157 AD
Mas'ud	r. 1134-1152 AD
Marlik Shah II	r. 1152- 1153 AD
Muhammad II	r. 1153- 1160 AD
Suleiman Shah	r. 1153-1155 AD
Malik Shah II	r. 1160 AD
Suleiman Shah	r. 1160-1161 AD
Arsalan	r. 1161-1176 AD
Toghrul III	r. 1176- 1194 AD
Sanjar II	r. 1189-1191 AD
<b>Safavid Dynasty</b>	
Shah Ismail	r. 1502-1524 AD
Tahmasp I	r. 1524-1576 AD
Ismail II	r. 1576-1577 AD
Mohammad Khodabande	r. 1578-1587 AD
Shah Abbas I	r. 1587-1629 AD
Safi I	r. 1629-1641 AD
Abbas II	r. 1642-1667 AD
Sulaiman	r. 1667-1694 AD
Hussein	r. 1694-1722 AD
Tahmasp II	r. 1722-1732 AD
Abbas III	r. 1732-1736 AD
<b>Afsharid Dynasty</b>	
Nadir Shah	r. 1736-1747 AD
Adil Shah	r. 1747-1748 AD
Ebrahim Afshar	r. 1748 AD
Shahrukh	r. 1748-1796 AD
<b>Zand Dynasty</b>	
Karim Khan Zand	r. 1750-1779 AD
Mohammad Ali Khan	r. 1779 AD
Abol Fath Khan	r. 1779 AD
Zaki Khan	r. 1779 AD



Sadiq Khan	r. 1779-1781 AD
Ali Murad Khan	r. 1781-1785 AD
Jafar Khan	r. 1785-1789 AD
Sayed Murad Khan	r. 1789 AD
Lotf Ali Khan	r. 1789-1794 AD
<b>Qajar Dynasty</b>	
Aqa Mohammad Khan	r. 1794-1797 AD
Fath-ali Shah	r. 1797-1835 AD
Mohammad Shah	r. 1835-1848 AD
Naser al-Din Shah	r. 1848-1896 AD
Muzaffar al- Din Shah	r. 1896-1906 AD
Mohammad Ali Shah	r. 1907-1909 AD
Ahmad Shah	r. 1909-1924 AD
<b>Pahlavi Dynasty</b>	
Reza Shah	r. 1925- 1941 AD
Mohammad Reza Shah	r. 1941- 1979 AD
<b>Islamic Republic</b>	
Mehdi Bazargan	February 1979 AD-November 1979 AD
Khomeini	1979-1989 AD
Rafsanjani	1989- 1997 AD
Khatami	1997-2005 AD
Ahmadinejad	2005-2013 AD
Rouhani	2014- Present

Table after Frye 1968: 110-114 with added sections