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Author(s): Ajdar Mehriban Xosbext

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Middle Persian Inscriptions of the Era of Khosrow Anushirvan in Darband, Caucasus (Dagestan)

Ajdar Mehriban Xosbext¹ 

Abstract

Historically, the Caucasus region during the Sasanian period was among the important parts of Iran. Many studies have been conducted by archeologists, historians, and linguists on this region. The book entitled *Middle Persian Inscriptions of the Era of Khosrow Anushirvan in Darband, Caucasus (Dagestan)* by Cyrus Nasrollahzadeh is one of the attempts to investigate this region through available inscriptions.

Keywords: Middle Persian Inscriptions; Khosrow Anushirvan; Darband; Caucasus.



¹ Phd of Archaeology, Azarbaijan.  ajdarmehribanxosbext@gmail.com

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Introduction

The Caucasus region in the Sasanian period was considered one of the important lands of Iran. Many studies have been done by archeologists, historians, and linguists (see Sauer, 2020; Rostami & Aryamanesh, 2020; Maksymiuk, 2021; Skupniewicz, 2021; Matloubkari & Shaikh Baikloo, 2022; Skupniewicz, 2022; Gugushvili, 2023).

Middle Persian Inscriptions of Era of Khosrow Anushirvan in Darband, Caucasus (Dagestan) is written by Cyrus Nasrollahzadeh and published by Fravahar publication in Tehran.

This book includes a preface, an introduction, and two chapters. In addition, the bibliography and index are at the end of the book. Several pages of introduction review the Khosrow I era whose surname was Anushirvan. He was the Sasanian king and the third child of Kavad I and ruled 41 years and passed away in 579.

In the first chapter entitled "Defense Structure of Darband" the author reviews how this place became famous with this name and its geography using various references. He then describes the background and construction technique of the Darband structure during the Sasanians based on archeological explorations. Probably, the first construction phase of the defensive structure of Darband was a north-facing wall and castle over the period of one year. The first phase of construction might be done during 568-569 AD. According to the available information about the political and military conditions in the Caucasus during the 6th century, the 37-year governance of Khosrow I is more confirmed indicating that the northern wall and castle of the city were built during 568 and 569 AD. This defensive wall had been constructed against the newly arrived immigrants of Turk Khagans. All historical sources of the Islamic period attribute the Darband structure to Khosrow I. The newly discovered Kufic inscription in Darband belonging to 792 AD also attributes the construction of Darband Castle to Kasra/Khosrow.

The second chapter of the book entitled "Reading Sasanian Pahlavi Inscriptions of Darband" examines the inscriptions discovered in this city. As we know, two inscription types have remained from the Sasanian period: the includes "governmental or royal inscriptions" and the second category consists of "private inscriptions." The difference between the two types is the use of a "separate inscription alphabet." The first category belongs to Sasanian kings or court officials. Darband inscriptions are related to the late Sasanian period when governmental inscriptions were highly important.

The author then examines the history of this inscription in this chapter, and reviews the discovered inscriptions in terms of grammatical features, and finally investigates and introduces all inscriptions and writes some characteristics for them. First, he introduces inscription No.1 which is placed in the northern wall between Castles 18 and 19 at 1.7m height from the surface level. Five lines are carved on a stone-made block with 97×62cm dimensions.

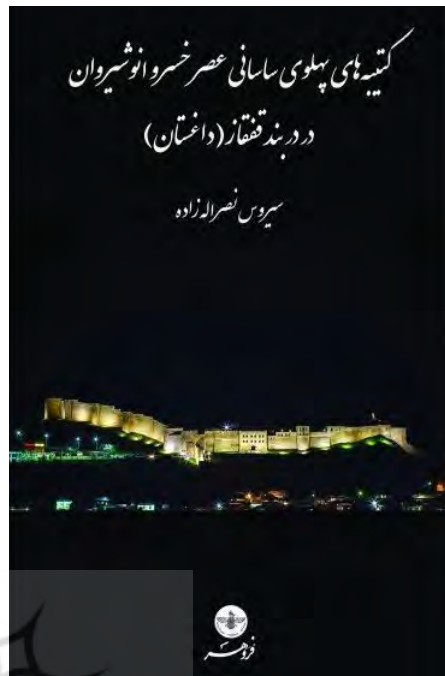
The author then examines inscription No.3 which is placed on the northern wall of Darband City between Castles 9 and 10 within 2m distance from Castle 9. The importance of this inscription originates from its history and determines the accurate

construction time of the defense complex of Darband.

Inscription No. 35 is the last one investigated by the author. This was discovered in October 2022. This inscription is on the left side of Castle 36 of the northern wall. Inscription 26 also exists in this castle. The inscription is readable consisting of three rows in vertical form. The conclusion chapter of this book consists of two pages.

Conclusion

This is a fine researched work that has investigated the inscriptions of Darband in the Caucasus and reviewed the researchers' comments about this important defensive structure and inscriptions there. This book provides important information about inscriptions with their images, but it was better to present a more suitable and valuable conclusion of them.



Middle Persian Inscriptions of the Era of Khosrow Anushirvan in Darband, Caucasus (Dagestan), Cyrus Nasrollahzadeh, Tehran, Fravahar, 2024, 117 pp, ISBN: 978-600-7844-49-6

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