

Assessing the effect of Islam's entry role in Iranian cities' scientific development

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ABSTRACT

The history of Iran has experienced various periods in scientific terms and it has always been faced with a lot of rises and falls. Before Islam, the Sassanid Iran's scientific cities did not exceed the number of a hand's fingers in the most optimistic state and that in the besiege of a class system, on the one hand, and mostly comprised of Christian communities and centers than the original Sassanid-Zoroastrian centers, on the other hand. Dealing with the role of Islam's entry in the development of Iran's scientific cities is necessary through description and analysis in that the readers can be made familiar with the amount and depth of Islam's scientific services to Iran. As testified by the history, the highest scientific blooming as well as creation of a general knowledge-learning and science-fostering spirit in the history of Iran dates back to the period spanning from Islam's entry till the Mongols' raid. In this epoch, the Iranian cities were transformed one after the other along with the other Islamic cities to scientific-cultural centers of their time more than any other period.

Keywords: Sassanid Iran, Iran's convergence to Islam, Iran's scientific cities, Iranian cities' scientific development

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

Before the entry of Islam into Iran, knowledge-learning has been specifically exclusive and it was in the possession of the higher social classes but it was afterwards that knowledge-learning and science-fostering became public and the whole social classes were provided with abilities to educate (Motahhari, 1999); as a result of this huge cultural-scientific change that was undoubtedly brought about in the light of the constant recommendations by the holy Quran, the prophet (PBUH) and the immaculate Imams (peace be upon them) about the importance of learning science and acquiring knowledge (Zarrinkoub, 1990), the entire Iranian territory became the locus of countless scientific-cultural centers and cities from the east to the west and the north to the south within a short period of time and knowledge and science were notably developed in their Islamic and non-Islamic branches in such a way that the Greek civilization appeared pale before it (Honke, 1983). This was while there were a few scientific centers and cities during the Sassanid era and they were known mostly as Christian centers (Grantovsky, 1980). The exemplary specimen of this was

Jondi Shapour. The suppression and suffocation governing the country did not allow the Iranian thought and mindset to emerge and express in these centers. However, after the Islam's entry into Iran, the ancient cities that did not have much of a scientific background could gradually turn into their contemporary time's scientific pole only in one spot of Iran's soil, i.e. Khorasan, and they not only became famous in the land of Islamic civilization but they also gained global fame. As an example, ancient cities like Neishabour, Samarqand, Bokhara, Balkh, Khārazm, Herat and so forth in Khorasan State gained universal fame in knowledge-learning and science-production within less than three centuries (Asfarazi, 1959). On the contrary, some of the ancient scientific centers from the ancient period like Jondi Shapour in Khuzestan became pale before that much grandeur and were gradually forgotten with the increasing development in the reconstruction and science of the ancient and new Islamic Iran's cities (Hamiri, 1984). It has to be stated in the meanwhile that the Sassanid Iran's territory in its later period is intended by Iran in this article; it is a period near to Islam's entry into Iran and contemporary to the God's appointment of the great prophet of Islam (PBUH)¹. (The Iran intended in the present article has been marked with darker color in the following picture).

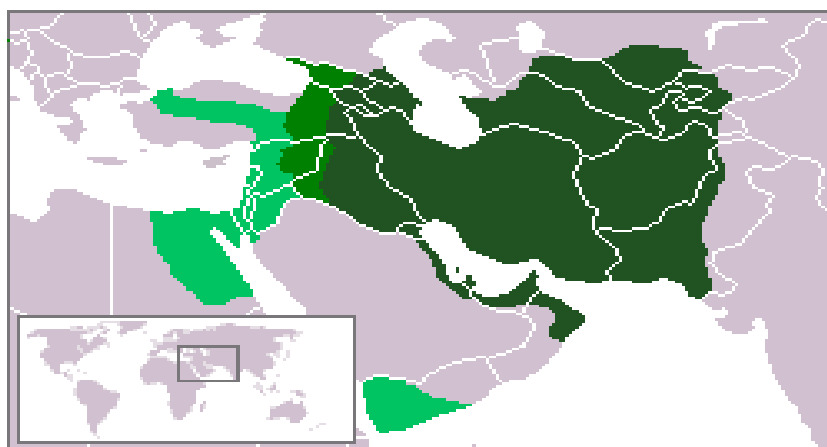


Figure 1

Now, the question is that to what extent the Islam's entry into Iran could bring about scientific changes in Iran and also which of Iranian cities were transformed into important scientific centers and cities of the then world with the Islam's entry and until before the Mongols' invasion. The necessity and importance of the present research lies in the idea that the recognition of the scientific and cultural functioning of Islam in Iran can make the readers acquainted with the vastness of the scientific services provided by Islam to the Iranians and the uncertain and hidden aspects of Iran's scientific convergence to Islam can be subsequently unraveled.

Study Background

Before now, the article "the secret of sciences' blossoming in Islamic Iran" had pointed to the role of Islam in the creation of a scientific space and elimination of the strategic barriers and limitations of the science expansion during the Sassanid era but the present article concentrates on the creation and development of the scientific space in the Iranian cities and narrates about the effective and widespread role of Islam in transforming the Iranian cities to the then world's scientific centers (from Islam's entry into Iran until before the Mongols' attack).

¹ During the early Islamic centuries, the land called Iran was not so much well-known and it was generally termed the land of Fors in a general classification and it was consisted of parts each with its own specific name in a detailed classification: Jebal (Jabal), the great Khorasan (four quarters of Khorasan with the centrality of Marv, Balkh, Herat and Neishabour each of which was considered a great city in Iran and Islam world); Ibn Batuteh, Rahlah Ibn Batuteh (Tohfah Al-Nazar Fi Qara'eb Al-Amsar Wa Aja'eb Al-Asfar), v.3, p.44; Azarbijan (Iran's Azerbaijan and the current Republic of Azerbaijan and regions from Anatoly and minor Asia), Sajestan, Kerman, Fars, Jazireh and so forth can be pointed out in this regard; Samani, Ahl Al-Bayt (peace be upon them)'s relations with Iranians, p.45

“Development of the sciences in the Islamic civilization’s ground” is an article that seminally investigates the development of the sciences in the Islamic civilization in historical terms and secondly deals with the reasons of the Islamic and non-Islamic sciences’ blooming in the Islamic civilization. This article differs from the present research paper firstly from the perspective of the geographical domain for this article focuses on Iran (in Sassanid era) as a member of the Islamic nations and it, on the other hand, deals with the outstanding Iranian centers and cities’ development in scientific terms in the territory after the entry of Islam thereto.

The article “an analysis of the fundamental historical cultural-religious indicators of Islamic Iran during the early and middle centuries” deals with the effect of the new religion and culture (Islam) on the formation of the fundamental urban-engineering indicators and their growth in Iran or, in other words, with the elements stimulating culture and civilization and, in general, the civilization indicators influenced by the Islam’s entry into Iran. Besides the culture-provoking factors, the foresaid article deals briefly and implicitly also with the civilizational factors and cultural-scientific development in the Islamic Iran’s cities along with the civilizational development while the present article deals with the cultural discussions by relying on the Iranian cities’ scientific development in a case-to-case manner but does not enter the discussions on the civilization and progresses in such fields.

The article “elaboration of the Islam’s position in the urban-engineering process and spatial organization of Iran’s cities” believes that Islam, as one of the most important factors in the history of Iran, has made its cities initially undergo vast and essential textural and countenance changes and it has subsequently influenced all the urban life’s social organizations and structures in Iran and it has caused a full-scale sublimation therein. The intended article has studied the effects of Islam in a substantial part of the urban life’s arenas in Iran whereas the present article approaches the subject from the angle of scientific development and refrains from entry into the other aspects of urbanization and urban engineering.

Main Indices of Evolution in Iran’s Scientific-Educational System

The entry of Islam caused changes in the educational system in Iran for the vast and abundant recommendations of the Holy Quran and Islamic narrations about the importance of teaching and learning science and knowledge had primarily set the ground for this huge and full-scale evolution. It was with the entry of Islam that the science-learning could gain several important and influential indices and the first of them was borderless and transnational teaching and learning. In line with this, a knowledge or a science-seeker could easily travel from any spot in Iran to the scientific cities situated in the other spots in Iran as well as Iraq, Levant and even Egypt and Andalusia for acquiring various sciences (Sam’āni, 1962) and the reverse also held true (Krachovsky, 2000) and scientific journeys started forming and booming in the so-called Islam world with the Iran’s scientific cities being its signet (Yaghout Homavi, 1995). The multiplicity of the scientific journeys written in Iran and, in general, the Islam world, during the early Islamic centuries signify the same issue. The second point is that learning and science-teaching was kept up without any age limitation even for the adults and old people. One can daringly state that the great prophet (PBUH) is the first person who founded education and science-teaching for the old people². This important indicator was also kept on with the entry of Islam into Iran. The third indicator was the publicizing and rendering pervasive the science-learning and teaching and it provided all the social classes with the ability of learning knowledge which was exclusively specific to the aristocrats and noblemen till that time (in Sassanid era’s Iran) (Motahhari, 1999). Paying of salaries and wages to the knowledge students was also amongst the other scientific functions brought about by Islam for Iran (Mas’oudi). The other important factor that granted scientific sublimit to the Iranian cities like the other cities of the Islamic civilization was learning science disregarding the language and accent, belief and opinion, ethnicity and race and other considerations; in other words, the next index is the science’s becoming nation-oriented and clean of any color and odor of racial discrimination. Along with the people from all the Islamic nations, the Iranian people started exercising brotherhood and friendship and teaching and learning science and generating science and, more

² It was in such a way that every slave incapable of paying tribute, blood money, could be freed after Battle of Badr by teaching ten Muslims and Zaid Ibn Thabet was amongst the individuals who learnt how to read and write in this way; Ibn Sa’ad, Al-Tabaqat Al-Kobra, v.2, p.16

importantly, rendering the Islamic civilization more developed (Honke, 1983). Alongside all these useful indicators, it should be noted that the education system's ideologization that was brought about in the light of the glorious Islamic civilization in Iran caused the Iranian cities to become one after the other an important scientific school and center in its time. The huge scientific evolution was owed to the countless encouragements by the holy Quran, the great prophet (PBUH) and the immaculate Imams (peace be upon them) through asserting about the importance of acquiring knowledge and science. It should not be ignored that these important indicators of the education system that have always been propelling and subliming could not be even imagined during Sassanid era at all (Motahhari, 1999). As a result of all these causes and indicators along with the other subliming cultural factors, the ground was set for the scientific and cultural hence the scientific development of the Iranian cities.

Scientific Cities of Sassanid Era's Iran:

The number of Sassanid era's scientific Iranian cities did not surpass the number of a hand's fingers in the most optimistic state and Jondi Shapour in Khuzestan was one of the most important of them. Although Jondi Shapour's hospital was inside the Zoroastrians' religious realm and under the administration of the Sassanid government, the Syriac Christians and, probably, scholars from other religions have been busy exercising medicine and teaching therein. Of course, it seems that it was originally possessed by the Christians and Zoroastrians did not enjoy much of a role therein. The Islamic period's physicians, as well, like Jirjis Ibn Bukhtishu (head of Jondi Shapour Hospital) and his son, the Christian Bukhtishu (Ibn Al-Ebari, 1992). Raha, Nasibain and Herran were also amongst the other scientific cities of Iran. Of course, it is worth mentioning that Raha and Nasibain cannot be considered as completely Sassanid centers. These centers were constantly exchanged between Rome and Iran and the Syriac Christians used to prove a vaster presence in these centers and they were mostly famous as Syriac centers and schools (Dinvari, 1989). After the shutdown of Raha's school of Iranians, the directors of the primary school therein returned to their country, Iran, and scattered around the various spots therein (Ravandi, 2003). After these territories, the turn finally came for the city of Herran (positioned in the upper side of Arabian Iraq between Raha and Ra'as Al-Eyn)³ which was the center of the Mandaean with its scholars being especially well-known in mathematics. This city was famous since the late Sassanid era till the early Abbasids' caliphate as the center of the Greek wisdom and philosophy in Asia (Brown, 1988).



Figure 2: Outstanding Examples of Iran's Scientific Convergence with Islam in Cultural-Scientific Cities:

³ There were important regions in this land which was most often exchanged between the Iranians and Romans and the influence of both of the civilizations was clearly discernible in them. Alexandria and Antioch as well can be enumerated amongst the important and old scientific centers in the soil of Byzantine empire. The map of these regions has been presented in the overview section.

1) Marv:

This city and the other Transoxiana cities have never been scientifically and culturally important until before the Islam's entry and it was after the Islam's entry that these regions became famous and known worldwide. Khorasan and Transoxiana were transformed into the best centers of science and literature and art after the Islam's entry and resulted in the emergence of a brilliant period in the history of Islamic Iran before the Mongol's assault. As an important part of the Islamic Iran, Transoxiana has been the cradle of science and culture for a period of time and many great scientists have been born therein (Qatqān, 2006). Marv was amongst the important cultural centers in Khorasan and it was the locus of such activities as translation from Pahlavi or modern Persian into Arabic and these were continued for centuries (Gutas, 2001). Marv was famous for its libraries and some learners and teachers have been busy studying Persian books in there (Gutas, 2001). Marv was amongst the important Iranian cities and it was the center of the fellows of science and it owned many public and private libraries (Yaghout Homavi, 1995).

2) Neishabour:

It has possibly been due to the distantness from the caliphate center that it took cities like Khorasan a short while to become important scientific centers in the Islam world and Islamic civilization. The Islam world's cities in Khorasan have been highly populated and very active in the interval between the third and fourth to seventh hegira centuries, to wit the 10th to 13th centuries along with the other central cities of the Islam world and they have had mosques and schools, caravansaries and inns, fences and gates of different kinds amongst which Neishabour, Herat, Ray, Bokhara, Samarqand, Balkh, Farqaneh, Sarakhs, Khārazm (Jorjaniyeh) and Marv can be enumerated. At the same time, the newly founded and low-populated lands devoid of the European activities during the 12th and 13th centuries could not be compared with the Iranian cities and the towns in the other lands featuring Islamic civilization (Ravandi, 2003). The land of Neishabour that is known as "Dar Al-Elm" [house of science] in the historical and cultural resources is amongst the greatest and most important birthplaces and centers of the Iranian scholars, scientists, literary men and outstanding poets in the Islam world (Yaghout Homavi, 1995). This city has been the gathering locus of a lot of hadith scholars (Sam'āni) and more than 800 hadith scholars (in addition to the scholars of the other fields) emerged in this city. Realized as the "Umm Al-Bilād" [motherland] of Khorasan in the historical texts, Neishabour that has been the center and one of the four most important cities of Khorasan for centuries and its pivotal role in the scientific, cultural, social and political evolutions of Khorasan is not hidden from the experts in the area of the culture and civilization histories' studies. Neishabour is one of the main bases of science-learning and insight-seeking in the Islam world's scientific history and many famous and prominent figures have emerged in this land especially in the area of hadith sciences⁴.

3) Bokhara:

As it was mentioned, Transoxiana's cities have never scientifically and culturally important until before the Islam's entry and these regions only happened to become famous globally after the Islam's entry in such a way that Nelson Fray realizes Bokhara as the Medieval centuries' achievement; he has written a book under the same title and its contents have been utilized for the writing of this article. Of course, it has to be noted that most of the scientific cities in Transoxiana have undoubtedly kept pace with Bokhara. Since the first independent and semi-independent governments in the Islamic Iran's cities appeared in Transoxiana and the great Khorasan, this land's cities were more vastly turned into scientific and cultural centers. Bokhara was the center of the scholars and scientists and it is not reckoned that any other community comprised of the same individuals can be found anywhere in the course of history. During the second and third hegira centuries (8th and 9th centuries), Baghdad was enumerated amongst the Muslims' scientific areas and the only center of the intellectual sciences in the area of the Islamic territories.

⁴ Moslem Ibn Hojjaj Ibn Moslem Qashiri Neishabouri (819-874) is amongst the people of Khorasan and the great Sunni hadith scholars in the third hegira century. He died in Neishabour and buried therein; Haji Khalifeh, Taghvim Al-Tawārikh, p.274

After Baghdad, other areas appeared in the world of Islam with Transoxiana being one of them; Bokhara became one of the important scientific spots in Transoxiana. Jowaini realizes Bokhara as the assembly of every religion's elders and some know Bokhara as the center of the glory and base of the esteem and luck (Qatqān, 2006). After the Islam's entry into Iran, this city became one of the most important Islamic centers and played a significant role in the promulgation and expansion of the Islamic culture during the consecutive centuries in such a way that the city had become known as the "Qobbah Al-Islam" [Dome of Islam] for the presence of the Islamic scholars and scientists (Narkhashi, 1984). Bokhara underwent a lot of expansion in social and scientific terms and it was one of the largest Transoxiana's cities and one of the Iran's knowledge and literature centers for learning sciences (Ibn Al-Ebari, 1992).

As one of the largest cities in the great Khorasan and eastern territories, Bokhara was called Dome of Islam and it was peripherally termed "City of Islam" and "Scientists and Jurisprudents' light" (Jowaini, 2006). The whole Khorasan and, particularly, the capital of Samanids (Bokhara) was one of the cradles of Persian literature after the Islam's entry into Iran (Brown, 1988).

Famous persons like Avicenna, Bal'ami, Mohammad Bokhari, Rudaki, Ferdowsi, Narshakhi and many of the other great scholars have emerged in this city. Ismail Samani endeavored to make Bokhara the base of the Islamic Iran's language, art, culture and civilization. Samanid's Bokhara gradually entered a competition in culture with Baghdad. Rudaki has composed a verse in this regard⁵. In his most well-known ode (the scent of the masters' river is continuously smelled ...), Rudaki has praised Bokhara a lot⁶. Mowlavi, as well, introduces Bokhara as the center and mine of sciences⁷.

4) Samarqand:

Amongst the other important scientific centers of the great Khorasan was Samarqand. The troopers of Bani Omayyeh Caliphate could recapture Samarqand and bring it out of the Turks' control under the leadership of Qatibeh Ibn Moslem (Dinvari, 1989). The Zoroastrian fire-temples (Ibn Faqih, 1996) were destroyed and mosques were constructed therein (Tabari, 1965) and a vast part of the city was converted to Islam after its conquering in (728) (Tabari, 1965). Resultantly and in the long run, Samarqand was transformed into one of the Islamic-Arabic education centers (Moqaddasi, 1991). The common sciences of this city were the linguistics, eloquence, logics, wisdom, discourse, jurisprudence, principles, hadith, reading, interpretation, math and so forth (Safa, 1999). Ibn Faqih realizes Samarqand as the center of paper production (Ibn Faqih, 1996). At the time of Abbasids' Caliphate, the secret of paper preparation⁸ was prosecuted from two Chinese prisoners from the Talas Battle in 751 and it led to the creation of the first paper-production factory in Samarqand in Islam world and paper-production was expanded in Samarqand in such a way that the city became also famous for it (Jamshid Kashani, 1940). This city was the capital during Khārazmshahi and Timurid governments (Clifford, 2002). Samarqand could gradually achieve a valuable stance in Iranian territory's art and literature.

5) Herat:

Herat and Samarqand rapidly became the center of the common sciences in the Islamic civilization. Sciences like linguistics, eloquence, logics and wisdom, discourse and jurisprudence, principles and hadith, holy Quran's reading and interpretation, mathematics and astrology were famously taught in this center (Safa, 1999). In describing and defining Herat, it only suffices to say that all of the Islamic historians and geographers have agreed that the aforesaid city has been enjoying a considerable importance and its population has been more than the sum of those in the other cities in Khorasan and also that its land has

⁵ "Nowadays, Baghdad is Bokhara one way or another***victory is where the Khorasan's governor is"; Rudaki, Rudaki's book of poems, p.101

⁶ "O Bokhara be happy and live a long life***the Amir of your life is coming happily" "Amir is the cedar and Bokhara is the garden***the cedar is coming towards the garden"; Rudaki, Rudaki's book of poem, p.87

⁷ "The Amir is the moon and Bokhara is the sky***The moon is coming towards the sky" "Leave the past and jump up lightly for you are now the soul of spring***the Bokhara of the world and the quarry of the science"; Mowlavi, Shams Book of Poem or Diwan Kabir, sonnet no.2168

⁸ This invention was spread to the rest of Islam world thence to Europe. During the 9th and 10th centuries, Samarqand was amongst the Amir-dwelling cities of Sassanid empire. Ibn Khaldūn, the history of Ibn Khaldūn, v.2, p.20

been remarkably reconstructed and fertile and also that it has been the center of business and trade as well as the locus of the affluent people's assembly and additionally that it has been full of the scientists and educated men (Hamiri, 1984).

Herat was the biggest city of Khorasan and a storehouse of the merchandises and business commodities. Its people have been wealthy and many scientist groups lived therein. Many of the great scholars and important persons are attributed to Herat (Herawi, 2004). In the era that the large cities of Europe did not accommodate a considerable population and the Europe's culture and civilization were inferior and trivial in comparison to those of the near east and industry and trade were not so much booming in there, some cities in the Asia's southwest like Baghdad and Bokhara and Neishabour and their scientific schools and circles were substantially booming during the 3rd and 4th hegira centuries (9th and 10th centuries Gregorian calendar) though they were no more than a hundred thousand people in population and their economic and industrial activities were considerable (Rawandi, 2003). Herat's separation from Iran during Naser Al-Din Shah Qajar's era was the isolation of half of Iran's history from it.

6) Balkh:

In Medieval centuries and at the same time with the golden period of the Islamic civilization, Balkh was one of the four sections (four quarters) of the great Khorasan along with Herat, Neishabour and Marv. Balkh was the center of Khorasan's administrative formation (Schpuller). In 736, Asad Ibn Abdullah Qasri translocated Khorasan's capital from Marv to Balkh and this city started booming (Ibn A'atham, 1991). In 869, this city was captured by Ya'aghoub Laith Saffar. In 900, Amru Laith Saffar was defeated and killed by Ismail Samani near Balkh and Balkh was brought under the governorship of Samanids (Narkhashi, 1984). Since then, the city was gradually transformed into one of the important centers of science and art in the east of Iran. Balkh has been mentioned with various names in the historical resources due to its cultural and civilizational position. The lofty Balkh, the motherland, the house of readers, brilliant Balkh, the dome of Islam, the house of jurisprudence, the house of exegesis and the beautiful Balkh are amongst the famous names of this cultural and civilized city in Khorasan in the Islamic Iran (Bal'ami, 1994). It is clear from the historical documents and evidence that Balkh has been the center and initiator of Avestan language and Zoroastrianism during the times before Islam (Gardizi, 1984).

During the Islamic period, Balkh has always been the center of science and culture and it has nourished a lot of educated men and women on its lap. Mowlana Jalal Al-Din Balkhi, Shahid Balkhi⁹, Amir Khosrow Balkhi (known as Dehlavi) (Khurshah), Abu Shakur Balkhi (Unknown author, 2005), Rabe'eh Balkhi (Safa, 1999), Naser Khosrow Balkhi (Astar Abadi, 2008), Onsori Balkhi (Shah Astar Abadi, 2008), Daghighi (Ripka, 2002) and others can be mentioned amongst its famous persons and well-educated figures.

7) Khārazm:

Khārazm and its center, Jorjaniyeh, is amongst the scientific, literature and cultural centers in Khorasan. Jorjaniyeh or Gorganj, Khārazm's capital, was one of the highly populated and most prosperous lands of Islamic lands in Iran and it was enumerated amongst the centers of science and literature and discussion and lessons and it had big schools and libraries (Eqbal Ashtiani, 2005). Khārazm was one of the most credible centers of Khorasan's education and upbringing and it had libraries, observatories, schools, scientists and fellows of literature (Eqbal Ashtiani, 2001). Amongst the well-known scientists of this land, the myth of the middle centuries' sciences, the prominent figure of the intellectual and narrational sciences and the all-knowing great and well-known person, i.e. Abu Rayhan Biruni, can be pointed out. Amongst the other scholars of Khārazm region, elders like Muhammad Ibn Musa Khārazmi (the greatest mathematician of the Islamic civilization's history) (Moqaddasi, 1991), Majd Al-Din Baghdadi (Hamdullah Mostowfi), Ahmad Najm Al-Din Kobra (Zahabi, 1993) and Jarollah Zamakhshari (Ibn Omrani, 2001) can be pointed out; these great figures have authored many books and articles on Islamic and non-Islamic sciences.

⁹ He lives contemporaneously with Rudaki and he has been an attendant of Amir Nasr Samani along with him; Pirnia and Eqbal Ashtiani, the History of Iran from the beginning till the downfall of Qajar dynasty, the text of the detailed history, p.231

8) Sarakhs:

There is not much information available about the scientific centers of Khorasan with reference roles for the fellows of science during the early Islamic centuries. It is just known that some scholars and scientists have become famous during these centuries and that they have acquired their knowledge and insight from these same centers. Fazl Ibn Sahl, Ma'amūn's minister and one of the famous astronomers of his time, was a person from Sarakhs and he had learnt astronomy in Khorasan at the time that this science had just become known to the Muslim Arabs and it was still in the beginning of its booming. Omar Ibn Farkhan, as well, was one of the famous engineers and astronomers of his time and he was originally from Tabaristan in the north of Iran (Mohammadi Malayeri, 2000). Based on a narration, Yahya Barmaki, minister of Harun, and, according to another narration, this same Fazl Ibn Sahl, minister of Ma'amūn, had been asked to go to Baghdad from Tabaristan and assigned to the translation and authoring in astronomy (Sajjadi, 2006). Before these, as well, great astrologists were in the center of the caliphate like Nobakht, the great astronomer of Nobakhti Family, and Mashā Allah, another great astronomer, in the same era both of whom were consulted by Mansour, Abbasid caliph, during the construction of Baghdad and Abu Sahl, son of Nobakht¹⁰, who was also one of the well-known astrologists in Mansour's time with his treatises on astrology being the first writings of this science in Arabic and mostly translated from Persian (Mohammadi Malayeri, 2000).

9) Ray:

The residents and inhabitants of Ray are called Razi. The residence in this city dates back to 8000 years BC. Ray has been larger than all the Medes' cities (Pirnia, 1996). In the onset of the fourth hegira century, Ray started a glorious period of growth and development. It was seminally the capital of Mardavij Dailami, the first king of Zayyari Family, and, then, Rokn Al- Dawleh Bouyeh made it his capital and added more to the Ray's importance. In this period, Ray became the political and cultural center of Iran and Islam world and this was followed by the booming of knowledge and literature in this city. During Āl-e-Bouyeh's time, Ray has been one of the largest scientific-cultural centers of the Islam world and, besides enjoying economic booming, it was the dwelling place of the scholars and it possesses numerous schools and libraries (Moqaddasi, 1991).

10) Isfahan:

In 931, Mardavij Zayyari moved along with his army from Gilan and freed Isfahan and selected it as his capital and held the century celebration therein with a great splendor therein. In 938, this city was captured by Rokn Al-Dawleh Dailami and he also made it his own capital city. During the times of Āl-e-Bouyeh and Seleucids and Rokn Al- Dawleh Bouyeh and Alā'a Al-Dawleh, many buildings and edifices were constructed in Isfahan and Malek Shah Saljūqi made it his own capital following which Isfahan gained general prosperity and credibility (Afshar, 2001). Afterwards, Isfahan recovered its prior progress and became the center for the gathering of the scholars and composers. In addition, Toqrol Saljūqi translocated his governorship's capital from Ray to Isfahan. The city's expansion was also continued during Alb Arsalan's time and it was by the efforts of Malek Shah's sagacious minister, Khajeh Nizam Al-Molk Tusi, that the city reached its peak of magnificence in such a way that the city's population was doubled and many buildings were constructed therein. Naser Khosrow Ghobadiani has presented a lot of extolments and praises about Isfahan after entering it in 1052 (Naser Khosrow, 2002).

Isfahan was the capital and the house of science [Dar El-Elm] and the literary men went there from everywhere to complete their knowledge. During Seleucids' time, Isfahan, as it is usually recounted, has been the center of the knowledge and science in the Jebal [mountains]¹¹. The city became more famous with the migration of Ibn Hilāl Thaqafi from Kufa to Isfahan and also with the settlement and advertisements of Saheb Ibn Ebād, minister of Āl-e-Bouyeh, therein¹².

¹⁰ The two other astronomers from Nobakht Family are possibly the grandchildren or the nephews of Fazl and they became famous a little later: Hasan Ibn Sahl Nobakht and, probably, his brother, Abdullah Ibn Sahl Ibn Nobakht were prominent figures in astrology; Ibn Al-Ebari, the brief history of the states, the text, p.136; Tabari, the Tabari history, v.9, p.151; and, an unknown author, *Mojmal Al-Tawārikh wa Al-Qisas*, the text, p.352

¹¹ *Qomi, Tārikh Al-Wozarā'a*, p.36

¹² *Ibn Emād, Shazarāt Al-Zahab*, v.4, p.352

11) Qom:

During Achaemenids' time, Qom has been a prosperous city but it was destroyed by the assault of the Macedonian Alexander. The Sassanid Ghobad ordered the reconstruction of the city. Qom has also been prosperous during Khosrow Parviz's time, as well. Due to being positioned on the silk road, Qom has been enjoying connective importance in the past. After the entry of Islam into Iran, Qom became the destination of Arab migrants from Iraq and then Alavis and Shiites. This city gradually became the religious capital of the Shiites since Omavi and Abbasi periods. Qom is recounted as the holy shrine of the prophet's family, the city of knowledge, the city of the most generous of the prophet's family and the cultural capital of the Shiites' world. After the demise of her highness Ma'asūmeh (may Allah hail on her) and her burial in Qom, this city was gradually expanded. Qom has been the focal point of the knowledge seekers and penmen's attention from various perspectives and each of them has dealt with a corner thereof in proportion to his or her field of expertise and study and left an artwork behind¹³. Ash'aris are enumerated amongst the noble and well-rooted families of Yemen's Ārebeh [pure] Arabs. Their first origin is Yemen and then Kufa and, upon migrating to Qom¹⁴, they transferred all their Arabian properties and characteristics thereto and established a city with all the attributes of an Arabian-Islamic city (symbolizing Kufa) in Iran's central plain. Therefore, Qom has been described with the trait "the small Kufa" in that period of time as evidenced in the historical narrations. Although individuals from Shiite-Iranian families such as Bouyeh family, could reach outstanding scientific successes later on, it seems that the dominance has been still in possession of Ash'ari Family and several Iranians have not been able to metamorphose the city's Arabian visage. Qom school's large deal of attention to hadith and jurisprudence and their avoidance of discourse and rational and philosophical discussions might have been originated from this same Arabian spirit and nature¹⁵.

A) Diversity and Vastness of Qom's School:

Besides originally Arab Ash'aris who founded Qom's school as well as outstanding figures from this family who were amongst the disciples and close persons to Shiites' Imams (may Allah hail on them), a large group of fellows of science, especially from diverse Alavi races, who had narrative inclinations started moving from Kufa, Medina, Baghdad, Samarra, Khorasan and Ray towards Qom and exerted a good effect on the diversification of the Qom's school¹⁶. However, the sure thing is that Ash'aris rapidly developed Qom and separated it from Isfahan and made it appear as an independent city and added to its importance¹⁷. Ash'aris' entry into Qom caused the influence and expansion of Islam and Shiite beliefs in there thence to the entire Iran. Besides Qom, Ash'aris had dominated over Āveh, Saveh, Tafresh and Kashan, as well¹⁸. Some even have realized Qazvin as one of the other cities dominated by them¹⁹. These cities were transformed to the first Shiism centers in Iran²⁰.

B) Reconstruction of Qom and Its Transformation Into an Islamic City:

Ash'aris played an important role in the development and reconstruction of Qom and transformed it from a region comprised of scattered villages to an Islamic city. About 50 of Qom's Ash'aris have narrated hadiths from 400 sheikhs and some of them have written more than 160 books. The main axis of these books is jurisprudence though they also have books about beliefs (Farshchian, 2005). On the other hand, scientists like Ali Ibn Ibrahim Qomi, Muhammad Ibn Hasan Saffar, Al-Hamiri, Kolaini, Ali Ibn Babouyeh, Ibn Hammam, Sheikh Saduq, Ibn Qulevayh, Sheikh Tusi and Najjashi have repeatedly cited narrations from Ash'aris' elders (Farshchian, 2005). This family has well served Shiism and many outstanding figures have

¹³ Numerous books have been written about Qom and its residences. Books about the general history of the city, the elders of Qom, the narrators of Qom, the poets of Qom, the hadiths stated about the glory of Qom and others of the like; Qomi, the history of Qom, translator's introduction, p.40

¹⁴ Sam'āni, *Al-Ansāb*, v.10, p.485

¹⁵ Qomi, *history of Qom*, translator's introduction, p.29

¹⁶ Qomi, *history of Qom*, p.278 and *Ja'afarian, Safavids in the area of religion, culture and politics*, v.1, p.434

¹⁷ Qomi, *history of Qom*, pp.29-30

¹⁸ Qomi, *history of Qom*, the text, p.97

¹⁹ Qomi, *history of Qom*, p.263

²⁰ Qomi, *history of Qom*, p.279

been fostered in this family and they are enumerated amongst the prominent Shiite figures. Some mention 130 as the number of the famous figures of this family. Studies show that, out of a total of 83 Ash'ari hadith scholars and narrators, 38 lived in the second hegira century, 33 lived in the third hegira century and seven lived in the fourth hegira century and this is well expressive of this family's scientific blossoming and decline trends (Haj Taghi, 1997) In the fourth hegira century and with the onset of the major occultation, the Ash'aris' magnificence and fame started declining with the consecutive military attacks and repeated uprisings by Qomis against the central government being the most important factor thereof. Qom is a city that never separated from Shiism from the beginning of its establishment till the power takeover by Safavids (Ja'afarian, 2000).

C) Qom, Center of Shiism Sciences and Shiites' Uprising:

Zakaria Ibn Adam, Ali Ibn Babouyeh, Ibn Qulevayh Qomi, Ali Ibn Ibrahim and Qotb Ravandi and Omran Ibn Abdulla Ash'ari Qomi who was greatly venerated by Imam Sadeq (PBUH) (Majlesi, 1982) were amongst the first famous and well-known Shiite jurists and scientists who grew and perfected in Qom. The people of Qom started uprisings during the governments of Harun Al-Rashid, Ma'amun, Mo'tasem, Mo'tamed Abbasi and other rulers and most of them were suppressed (Tabari, 1967) During the ruling of Āl-e-Bouyeh and Seleucids, Qom fell in the focal point of attentions. Ibn Amid was amongst the people of Qom and one of the sagacious and smart ministers in the royal court of Dailamis²¹. Again, Qom sustained a lot of damages with the Mongols' attack (Ibn Athir, 1965) and the city was gradually developed eventually with the power takeover by Safavids in Iran and the declaration of Shiism as the formal religion (Naser, 2000)

Conclusion

Undoubtedly, the greatest and the most important cultural achievement made following the Islam's entry into Iran has been in the area of science and knowledge. The Iranian genius started sophisticating with the Islam's entry and experienced a full-scale development in all the areas which was unprecedented till that time. This scientific booming and inflorescence that happened to form during the growth and blossoming of the Islamic civilization was the product of Iran's convergence with Islam in various cultural domains and, especially, in the field of science and knowledge; thus, it transformed the Iranian cities one after the other to the centers of growth and scientific and cultural sublimity. Having been entangled in the intensively merciless and back-breaking siege of the Sassanids' class system till that time, Iran could free itself of the preventive chains and fences like the science-learning's aristocratic nature after the Islam's entry and, of course, after a while of hesitation till the achievement of the cultural congruence and stood on top of the medieval and the then world's scientific apices with a full-scale and glazing growth and its cities became one after the other the most important scientific-cultural centers of the then world.

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²¹ Qomi, history of Qom, pp.364&411-412 and Mohammadi Malayeri, the history and culture of Iran during the transition from Sassanid Era to Islamic Era, v.4, p.298

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