Review Paper

Evolution and Prevalence of Cemeteries in Prehistoric Iran

Maryam Naseri

Department of Archaeology, Tarbiat Modares University, Tehran, Iran

Abstract: The tradition of burial, so-called interment, is one of the most prominent manifestations of man›s long-standing view of death. Although this tradition has a very long history, it has witnessed many changes and ups and downs along its path till now. The study of these developments can reveal various political, social, environmental, cultural, and religious aspects of different ethnic groups. The purpose of this study is to investigate other elements of cemetery emergence in the prehistoric period of Iran and identify the factors affecting the occurrence of this phenomenon as a public space for the burial of bodies outside the sites. This research data has been collected through library studies and according to archaeological, anthropological, and sociological evidence. Data analysis shows that, firstly, in prehistoric times, at a glance, no specific factor could be considered for the emergence of cemeteries. Because the time and nature of the formation of cemeteries in regions of Iran are different and have gone through a completely different process, instead of asking a general question, the following question should be considered: what are the factors affecting the formation of cemeteries? Factors influencing the formation of cemeteries should be regarded in their context and geographical location because most of them do not offer a single perspective, and each one is created with specific meanings and goals. The findings also indicate various geographical, environmental, economic, political, and social reasons for the emergence and evolution of cemeteries.

Keywords: *Burial, Cemetery, Factors of Emergence, Interment, Prehistory*

* Corresponding Author
 Email Address: maryam.naseri.19@gmail.com *(Maryam Naseri)*

Introduction

One of the most important issues that human beings have always been involved with is the issue of death. Humans have used different methods to deal with this phenomenon. One prominent aspect is the burial of corpses, and related rituals and ceremonies called burial traditions. The earliest evidence of burial dates back to the Neanderthals, the first human community to have a burial tradition (Daryab & Vahdati Nasab 2014). At the beginning of the Neolithic period, burial traditions also gained more meaning and importance in line with other manifestations of the Neolithic. In most societies, people buried their deceased under the floors of their houses (Talaei 2002: 175). Subsequently, with population growth and other cultural variables' involvement, the burial tradition became a social and cultural issue for the communities. Of course, the burial traditions of the Neolithic period continued until the end of the fifth millennium BC. Still, from the Chalcolithic period onwards, we have witnessed the burial of bodies in cemeteries, which are buried in the residential space that was common in the previous period and was different in terms of cultural and spatial aspects.

In the humanities, death is considered an incredible phenomenon. For this reason, everything related to death has taken on an aura of sanctity. It has been dealt with mainly single-causal approaches (specifically emotional aspects) (Nasiri & Sadeghi, 2018: 32). Therefore, when looking for a way to study cemeteries theoretically, we must consider other variables as well, and a holistic approach seems necessary. Although burial in the cemetery, known as interment, has always been considered a religious activity, it shouldn't be ignored that this phenomenon has been influenced and affected by other functions of society like policy, power, etc.

Despite the undeniable importance of the causes of cemeteries' emergence, alterations, and abandonment, burial archeology focuses more on the period when the cemetery was used and may be less concerned with why it was used and abandoned. On the other hand, the cemetery has not been the subject of much social and cultural research due to its association with the challenging concept of death and its emotional and ambiguous aspects. Based on archaeological excavations and studies, scattered studies have been carried out on the Chalcolithic and Bronze Age cemeteries in different parts of Iran. However, so far, research on cemeteries and the factors influencing their emergence have yet to be comprehensive to cover the majority of regions in Iran.

The importance of cemetery space is not only due to its emphasis on the chance of their more remarkable survival than other archaeological sites and a rich source for studying the general attitudes of past societies but also because of their impact on memory, attitude, the heritage of living and communicative relations they build with future generations is very significant. Because burial traditions and dead memories are deeply rooted in a long process, linking the burial of bodies in a cemetery to a mythical history has become a cultural memory of society. Thus, first of all, the performance of funeral ceremonies, as well as the creation of structural works, tombs, and cemeteries, is the basic framework of a particular society to create a culture of collective memory, which then strengthens the social bonds of the organization leading to unity (Arieas, 1983).

Given what has been said about burial and the importance of this ancient tradition from a political, social, economic, and geographical perspective, this study seeks to answer two essential questions. The first is how and why the first cemeteries were formed in Iran, and the second is the causes and factors influencing the emergence of cemeteries during the prehistoric time in Iran.

The most important question is: When and where can the tendency to bury corpses in cem-

eteries be observed in the Iranian plateau? And what environmental, cultural, social, and political changes in these areas are related to, compared to other regions of Iran? To answer this question, it should be borne in mind that the time of formation of cemeteries differs in different parts of Iran. For example, according to archaeological studies conducted so far in the northwestern, northern, and central plateaus of Iran, there is no evidence of the use of cemeteries in the Chalcolithic period. We are witnessing the use of this tradition in these areas from the mid and late Bronze Age onwards. Therefore, discussing the time and causes of the emergence, or in other words, the precedence and latency of using cemeteries in different parts of Iran, can be a way to understand other cultural issues. However, considering this issue and the multiplicity of the first cemeteries due to research limitations and the sensitivity of theorizing on issues related to burial, the first cemeteries in Iran were introduced. Theoretical issues and possible factors associated with the foundation of cemeteries were considered according to the developments that occurred in the fourth and fifth millennia of Iran since the formation of this phenomenon. Therefore, in another article written by the present author, the distribution and formation of cemeteries of the Chalcolithic and Bronze Ages in Iran have been described and analyzed with the separation of cultural areas.

The Emergence of the First Cemeteries in Iran

At first glance, burial forms can be divided into two distinct categories from the perspective of the burial site. First, burial in a residential area, the main form of which is the burial of the deceased on the floor of the house, and the second one is a burial in a cemetery as a public place that may be on the outskirts, inside, or completely unrelated to the burial ground.

A) Burial of Bodies in a Residential Area with the Beginning of a Sedentary Life

According to excavations in the early Neolithic villages, all community members were buried on the floor of their houses. Objects discovered from graves are low-value personal items, and burial objects are limited to several unique ornaments. Many theorists, including James Whitley, consider the burial of corpses in a residential context, along with agricultural roots and a kind of deed with an emphasis on ancestral land, to preserve the earth (Whitley, 2002: 19). In the Neolithic period, we were faced with the phenomenon of a sedentary lifestyle. The concentration of permanent core communities was within or near sites that contain environmental resources. It changed land ownership from a weak sense to a strong one, resulting in the protection of a small area is vital and included in group goals (Alizadeh, 1997). In such circumstances, individuals assert their ownership of their land and residence by burying the dead in the home without needing a deed or formal contract.

Significant changes exist in the fourth and fifth millennia B.C. archeological documents. These changes indicate that this period is a period of transition from a simple social structure to a complex one. Following these changes, in some parts of Iran, the long-standing tradition of burying the dead under the floors of residential houses was abandoned. A new style emerged in cemeteries, generally located outside habitats, and productive activities became commonplace (Talaei, 2002: 184). One of the critical factors in the emergence of cemeteries was the rupture of previous traditions. But according to archeological evidence, this rupture was not a sudden phenomenon. During this period, most of the graves were seen in abandoned or uninhabited areas (Hull, 2002: 76). In fact, burials took place in the form of solitary graves outside the residential area or in abandoned rooms. This stage can be considered a prelude to the emergence of public cemeteries outside the residential area.

B) Burial in a Cemetery

At the end of the fifth millennium B.C. and with the beginning of the Chalcolithic Age (Middle and Late Village settlement) in some parts of Iran, we witnessed the burial of bodies in open passages and large cemeteries outside residential areas and territories. Some of these cemeteries are located around the memorial structures, and others have appeared in places that seem to have been the moving path of nomadic people (Talaei, 2002: 184). So, was the formation of the cemetery the result of an independent idea? Humans have consciously concluded that they need a place outside the home in the form of a cemetery to bury their dead. Or did individual and separate burials together form the concept of the cemetery in the way we imagine it today? In nomadic communities, for example, people may have to bury their dead bodies in the same area next to their tent. On their return from the subsequent migration, they bury their bodies again next to the same grave. Over time, the repetition of this process led to the formation of single graves, which may not even include the concept of a cemetery in the modern sense. Therefore, the need to create and shape a cemetery may be associated with something other than prior thinking and the complexities of society (Valipour, personal communication).

A total of 8 cemeteries from the Chalcolithic Age have been identified; Shush (Hull, 2002: 44) and Chegasofli (Moghaddam 2016) cemeteries in Khuzestan, Hakalan, and Parchineh cemeteries, located at the back of the mountain, belonging to the Middle Chalcolithic period and probably the first half of the fourth millennium B.C. and the second half of the fifth millennium B.C. (Haerinck and Overlaet, 1996). Other cemeteries that have been excavated in recent decades are Chelo Cemetery in Khorasan (Vahdati and Biscione, 2013), Khajeh Askar in Bam (Eskandari et al., 2014), MahtutAbad in Jiroft (MajidZadeh, 2007), and Zavar II (Alidadi Soleimani 2006, 2013) in southeastern Iran; they are all related to the Chalcolithic period.

Factors Affecting the Formation of Cemeteries

It should be borne in mind that the nature of the formation of cemeteries may be quite different. In other words, any burial space should be analyzed based on the factors related to its unique foundation process, which might change over time. On the other hand, cemeteries belonging to nomadic communities may have been formed to adapt to the environment. The graveyard of sedentary communities at the local level can represent the expansion of a story of a group, family, ethnicity, or tribe that has been separated from a large kin group or due to the enforcement of power by political institutions and the control of rituals by elites. These mass graves have been transformed into collective graves (Metcalf and Huntington, 1991). Therefore, the main issue in this regard is that the nature of the formation of cemeteries in different areas has gone through a completely different process. It is better to consider the factors of cemetery formation instead of asking a general question. What are the characteristics of cemetery formation in its specific context and geographical location? The factors leading to the formation of Shahr-e Sukhteh cemetery, which is related to sedentary and urban communities, should be separated from the factors influencing the formation of Haklan and Parchineh cemeteries are among the first and oldest cemeteries in Iran. For this purpose, the formation of each of these cemeteries must be studied in its geographical context.

In this way, it is only possible to compile a single copy for some cemeteries. Various factors must be considered in examining these burial sites, such as geographical, political, social, cultural, and economic issues. In what follows, some of the most critical elements and influential factors in the formation of cemeteries are discussed. In the meantime, it should be noticed that these factors, while affecting the appearance of cemeteries, have also been affected by these neighborhoods.

A) Religious Backgrounds

No society can be found where religion does not play a significant role. But if the burial of the dead in a residential context is based solely on religious customs; therefore, the abandonment of this habit and the formation of cemeteries must also be due to religious changes in the early Neolithic period in Mesopotamia and Shushan. Archaeological evidence is not yet available to prove this. Therefore, we should look for explanations more consistent with archaeological and anthropological evidence (Alizadeh, 1997). It is impossible to explicitly discuss religion's cause or effect in forming the first cemeteries. Communities may have practiced and produced religious beliefs by creating cemeteries as part of a broader social sphere, like what we see in today's societies. In other words, people approve of their religion by burying bodies in cemeteries (Insoll 2004: 1-32; Rappaport, 1999). Beliefs, on the other hand, change over time and space based on our perspective.

Therefore, given the lack of evidence, vague concepts and the study of their impact on the formation of prehistoric cemeteries do not seem very valid, and they need to be more accurate. Rationality has played a vital role in the shape of the cemetery. Death has been an unnatural and ambiguous phenomenon for human beings in every period. Still, the extent and manner of thinking about this phenomenon have varied under the influence of various factors specific to the time and culture of their particular community. For example, with the modernization and change of attitude of people in today's societies, the experience of death is considered as the end of the material and spiritual suffering (Fokuhi, 2004: 53). Signs such as this can be seen in the creation of a central cemetery and its eviction from the residential area due to the savings in the urban land economy.

The use of cemeteries can also be a prelude to the emergence of religion in the modern sense, as religious practices such as burial in cemeteries have contributed to validating the status quo, integrating society, and maintaining social stability. Religious rites, including burial in cemeteries, are said to reduce a person's anxiety by providing answers to incredible experiences such as death. In addition to providing a semantic system and way of thinking about human existence, it offers specific ways to deal with the frightening ambiguities of life and, of course, plays a role in integrating social and maintaining social stability (Metcalf and Huntingdon, 1991).

B) Geographical and Environmental Contexts

In examining the role of environmental factors in the emergence of cemeteries, human agency and the spiritual dimension of burial in cemeteries are greatly diminished, and burials lose their sanctity. But this approach does not contradict human agency and its ability to change phenomena. Severe environmental changes are a warning that these changes may be the source of cultural events such as the emergence of cemeteries. Some examples include the relocation of habitats, the transformation of agricultural techniques, and changes in the mix of agriculture and animal husbandry (the emergence of the migration pattern). One of the critical factors in the abandonment of Shahr-e Soukhte is the rerouting of the Hirmand River. On the other hand, geographical phenomena such as climate change, floods, droughts, earthquakes, and similar phenomena and their effects on forming cemeteries are generally ignored. Although these natural phenomena may occur infrequently, they have undoubtedly had a profound impact on habitats, livelihoods, and, most importantly, on all human attitudes and worldviews.

The Iranian plateau is very diverse in terms of geographical features. This attribute has dramatically influenced the formation of various livelihood activities in this region. It is one of the areas that has witnessed nomadism for about three thousand years, with three interrelated lifestyles—sedentary communities, where most residents live in stable homes throughout the year.

Nomadic communities live part of the year in fixed houses and part of the year in mobile dwellings such as tents. Other nomadic communities use only portable shelters (Baharvand, 2004).

Haklan, Parchineh, Chegasofli, and Shush cemeteries are located in the foothills of the Zagros and plains of southern Iran, near Khuzestan, which is the winter residence of some nomadic ranchers. Therefore, the analysis of the relationship between farmers and nomads and a reflection on cultural events in Iran, including the formation of cemeteries, can be sought by a geographical study of these areas (Alizadeh, 2013: 68).

In examining the cultural structure of Iranian tribes, evidence was presented that tribal individuals act as a large family due to shared interests and the need to maintain them. Its most apparent reflection in the structure of social relations of tribes is the principle of support. Therefore, the focus of supporting is a kind of group effort. Without economic goals, it is an inseparable part of the nomadic social relations that requires the protection of common interests. Tribal society consists of several groups that make a whole and includes family groups and groups that common ancestors relate to. Such tribal communities that strengthen the sense of cooperation in individuals are of great importance (Sarlak, 2003: 148). Evidence is available that the two cemeteries of Haklan and Parchineh were in a group's territory. Aside from the apparent similarities of the pottery, the fact that Haklan is located at 1,200 meters and Parchineh at 900 meters above sea level indicates that they were located near both ends of the annual migration route. This means that the cemeteries close together are summer and winter camps. In this way, access to them is possible in these seasons, and it can be said that the purpose of creating cemeteries for nomadic communities is to determine a kind of boundary and land ownership on a large scale (Holl, 2002: 97).

Due to the great importance of the Chalcolithic cemeteries and then their sudden abundance in the Bronze Age and then cemeteries unrelated to the Iron Age settlement, which is one of the main features of this period, this question may be asked: Has the burial tradition among sedentary communities been influenced by nomadic communities, or have other factors been involved? Therefore, it seems necessary to study the impact of this type of livelihood pattern on changing burial traditions, i.e., the formation, continuation, and promotion of burial in cemeteries. Some consider population growth to be the leading cause of nomadism. They believe that after cultivating arable land, humans have been forced to choose a nomadic life to use the marginal areas that could not be produced with irrigation (Alizadeh 2013: 58). Burial in cemeteries also seems to be a compromise for this type of lifestyle. The emergence of nomadism is related to the Neolithic era. Irons (1975) notes that Turkmen shepherds in northern Iran would not have needed so much mobility if they had migrated to search for pasture. They also migrate because they want to maintain their political and cultural independence. Due to the unique biological necessities and limitations of this lifestyle, including long-distance walking, the need to maintain political independence, militarism, and events like these have led to the formation of new emotional experiences and fundamental changes following this lifestyle. These cases are very significant in terms of the factors that form cemeteries. For example, nomads are not able to carry the dead and the elderly over long distances (Alizadeh 2013: 61; Bates and Plug, 2011: 259-260).

C) Economic Aspects

Since the middle of the fifth millennium, a large number of specialized areas have emerged due to the dispersion of natural products and the development of market needs. Specialization has led to the separation of spaces with technological applications in settlements. Therefore, the separation of burial spaces from the residential context of the Chalcolithic period onwards

can also be studied in this regard (Holl, 2002: 78). In what follows are some of the economic factors influencing the changes that occurred in the burial process:

The emergence of religious experts: A change in worldview, free time to think about a particular group of people on the most important human concerns, including death, and a change in the general vision of human beings. Therefore, it is not far from the mind that burials become more organized.

The emergence of full-time specialists: Advances in technology and science, metal production management (mass production of metal and weapons of mass destruction). The use of metals such as copper, bronze, and iron at stages in the history of past societies has become so pervasive that these courses have been named after them because the technological developments of each of these periods have provided more effective tools to destroy and increase mortality than in the past. This issue is fundamental in the context of the emergence of cemeteries and the process of their evolution and pervasiveness, especially in the Iron Age. Regular use of copper and bronze in this period organizes inter-regional and supra-regional exchange systems (Valipour, 2012). Exchange, a vital part of any economic system, allows humans to supply more than their needs and obtain the materials they need from products over other human needs. In addition, they act as social heads. Some anthropologists believe that the act of exchange itself, regardless of what is exchanged, is a fundamental link that holds societies together (Bates and Plug, 2013: 611). Sometimes this connection and the need to seize more resources leads to war. The outbreak of war using copper and bronze tools has led to increased killings in communities and the need for a more significant burial place. The Chalcolithic period in western Iran coincides with the first agricultural settlement found in the southern plain of Mesopotamia. Thus, the stage was set for the changing and often hostile relationship between Iran and Mesopotamia, which became very important in the next millennium (Flannery and Abdi, 2010).

Specialization of professions (need for glorious goods to bury elite people): Burial items with the deceased are removed from consumption and are economically harmful. On the other hand, the use of glorious goods, one of the main characteristics of ranking and aristocratic societies, becomes more important in the afterlife because of competition with other communities and the preservation of memory. The emergence of glorious goods and their transformation into ritual goods can influence the formation and spread of this tradition among societies (Rowlands, 1993). In burial rites, when utensils, gifts, and sacrifices were buried, they were removed from the life system, resulting in the need for more goods and the cost of producing that product. As long as the indiscriminate consumption of costly goods was a part of life, some different products and exchanges were used to obtain these goods.

Specialization of architectural spaces: According to archaeological evidence in the late Neolithic period, more diverse materials and advanced construction techniques were used. This is related to the specialization of professions and the consideration of public spaces for industry production. At the beginning of the fourth millennium and the end of the fifth millennium, most of the architectural works, including their houses and pottery kilns, and at least one monument, and perhaps more can be seen among the buildings (Holl, 2002: 90). Accordingly, due to the inability of the home space to bury a large number of bodies, the concept of public spaces was formed. Public space is accessible to all members of society (Barker 2008: 636). Therefore, if the cemetery space was a public space for public use, considering a public space for burying bodies outside the living area could indicate the separation of public and private spaces. So, humans had reached a stage of cultural evolution and social interaction where they could consider public space as their personal property, which has a different meaning for sedentary and nomadic

people.

The house's atmosphere, the development of architecture, and the emergence of memorial structures have played a significant role in the burial of bodies and the formation of tombs and cemeteries. For example, a pit burial is dug into virgin soil, or settlement remains are almost irregular and circular. The floor, ceiling, and side surfaces of this type of burial do not have remarkable architecture, and in terms of the kind of construction, it is the most basic type of burial in all periods. Examining the evolution of the burial structure, it can be given the possibility that this burial method and later methods are compatible with the settlement patterns and development of society (Chaichi Amirkhiz, 1996: 75). The type of graves in a cemetery is very similar to the settlement pattern.

Population growth, cultural developments, and the emergence of cemeteries: By the middle of the fifth millennium, food production techniques and methods were sufficiently reliable and caused a significant increase in population in the agricultural plains, which thitherto was practically uninhabited. At the beginning of the fifth millennium, the population density in the Dehloran plain was at its peak compared to other regions of Iran (Holl, 2002: 165). With the growth of the population, the demand for vital environmental resources increased. At this stage, we are facing industrial and cultural developments due to population growth and efforts to balance supply and demand. According to Boserup's hypothesis that population growth is a factor in technology change and more intensive land use (Boserup, 1965), humans need to adapt to the new environment. The formation of cemeteries and the successive evolution from sedentary to nomadic life and the return to the pattern of passive style in response to environmental or economic conditions have been related to the nature of human innovation. On the other hand, due to these events, people do not show any attachment to their feelings about the area where they live because they have to move from one place to another to make a better living. The reflection of these changes also occurs in human communication and material effects (Moshiri, 2013: 126).

Due to population growth, resource scarcity, war, the spread of infections, and the increasing and rapid spread of infectious diseases along with a high volume of deaths, there is a tremendous demand for ample space for burying bodies in a place away from the residential areas because burying this part of bodies in homes can cause many health and psychological problems. Looking at the cemetery in terms of crisis management, it can be said that with the occurrence of specific crises such as floods, earthquakes, droughts, wars, infectious diseases, and fires, the need for a place to bury the dead leads to the gradual formation of cemeteries. A large number of corpses in an area affected by disasters increases the expectation of spreading infectious diseases and puts the lives of living people at significant risk. Therefore, the actions of living people against these crises are meaningful (Masaeli and Darvishi, 2016). On the other hand, population growth and its consequences in the psychological dimension are associated with a decrease in the attraction to life and make suffering and death worthless. Increased mortality in large numbers causes death, and abandonment from the dead is more common and straightforward. Therefore, if we assume that the burial of the bodies in the residential area was due to the interest and proximity to the deceased, in later periods, due to cultural, social, and intellectual developments of human beings, this tradition has changed in the form of burial in areas separate from the place of residence and later in the form of cemeteries (Rugg, 2000).

Increasing human density and concentration of people in a limited area requires unique relationships between people. According to Tunis, in these societies, "reason, thought, and logic" have influenced communication, feelings, and emotions and have established a kind of arithmetic-based compromise relationship to achieve means and ends. Following the process of in-

creasing population and creating cities, new cemeteries have been formed at a relatively long distance from the urban areas and in the form of large spaces (Shohanizad and Haghir, 2011). Urbanization is generally associated with rapid population growth, density, and increasing size (Azimi, 2002), and each can play a significant role in forming the cemetery. In urbanization, we face having a single cemetery or the same problem of urban land economy. An event that led the city of Tehran to have a single cemetery in the early seventies, and then other cities in the country, following the capital, accelerated the single cemetery process. Each city allocated a large piece of land for its cemetery to the best of its ability. This issue becomes more highlighted by examining cemeteries belonging to pre-government communities and close to urban spaces such as Shahr-e Sukhte.

D) Social Contexts of the Emergence of Cemeteries

Since death is an actual event, its actions stem more from the emotional dimensions of living people and are mainly influenced by social, cultural, and other factors. Burial in the home prevents the spread of dialogue between individuals (social evolution and the need for burial in cemeteries). Still, the tomb of bodies in cemeteries is associated with soothing properties and increased social interactions. The cemetery space is a place that inevitably brings everyday experiences for the survivors. In general, the person who enters this space possibly meets people with a typical attitude or feeling. Considering the public space for burial may increase the possibility of communication and social interactions between people and reduce the experience's unpleasantness. Therefore, the social dimensions of graves in cemeteries are critical in strengthening society's cultural and religious relations (Bloch, 1982).

In addition to a public space and a space that contains elements related to collective identity, the cemetery also shows individual identity. The arrangement of the graves and the contents inside them cause a small piece of public space makes a personal relationship with a specific physical sign with a person. Therefore, the experience and burial of corpses are not uniform, especially in the cemeteries of ancient societies, and are distinguished according to the individual's culture, social class, and variables related to different elements of life and personal actions of individuals. The differences and variations in the objects associated with the deceased that archaeologists constantly encounter depict the dead's biography and the individual's social differentiation. According to archeological evidence, burial traditions have also changed with changes in societies' social and political systems.

Burial in the Egalitarian Societies

Excavations in the early Neolithic villages uncovered worthless personal belongings from tombs. Burials under the floors of the houses show the continuity of residence and lineage. These tombs are more critical than the tombs of later periods. Because the bodies of men and women of different ages can be seen in them, all members of society were apparently buried on the floors of their houses. It can be imagined that a kinship organization has the authority to keep assets in the family, so in this case, it should be expected that the burial of corpses happens with emphasis on the lineage (Holl, 2002: 261).

Burial of the Ranked Societies

In the old rural period, with the beginning of the Chalcolithic period, fundamental changes appeared in burying corpses. After this period, the bodies of adults are rarely found in residential areas. Infants were buried in small communities' habitats, and sometimes adults were buried there. This burial was increasingly practiced in tombs made of raw clay with high-quality pottery. Although small, the samples obtained from the old rural period are consistent with those

of later periods. In such burials, burial indicates the continuation of previous methods to some extent due to the use of other flowers and some decorative objects. The cemetery is thought to have been used for adult burial. Large buildings appeared alongside small buildings, and the privileged group's access to better food was not similar to other groups in society. These cases indicate a hierarchically organized and, to some extent, effective system of work and distribution of resources. The growing size of the organization caused problems in unifying family activities and resolving disputes, and there was little experienced leadership or privileged assignment. For example, the ever-increasing emphasis on group interests is probably motivated by the construction of a 48-square-meter raw clay platform in Chaghamish, which indicates the activity of people at the social level (Holl, 2002: 180-183). At this stage, the social evolution of human beings gradually emphasizes the construction of a unique identity and a separate heritage from other groups, i.e., the separation of "us" versus "them," and by increasing the desire to do group work, they have benefited from collective burials.

Burial in Hierarchical Societies

In most societies, if not all, there are inequalities in the distribution of wealth and other privileges such as credit and burial (Burke, 2002: 56). In terms of the evolution of social systems, these societies, in contrast to the simpler ones, have social positions, which are formed based on power and ultimately the political power of the people occupying those positions. A hierarchical and state-based society is led by a ruling group whose power and preferences are monitored by the religious and belief systems *(Yadollahi, 2004: 19)*. Since property, administration, economics, and consequently, religion came into the service of chieftains, and new rituals were created for their purposes, the leaders who came under the banner of religious rule gradually showed signs of their ideology and beliefs. It indicates the loss or reproduction of some social ideals and spirituality of the previous religions. In this context, burger likens the logic of religious activity to the sense of a free market economy. Religious institutions must organize themselves in such a way that they can attract large numbers of consumers to their goods. With the advent of free competition, they also impose their concern for more profit on religious institutions. This requires the generalization and rationalization of the social structures of sacred centers, the expansion of sound systems and chieftaincy in a religious institution, and finally, the emergence of these institutions (Kheirkhah, 2013: 33).

E) Political and Governmental Contexts of the Emergence of Cemeteries

Interest in reforming burial in cemeteries is directly related to the secularization of communities. One of the basic features of ownership is secularization. There is no doubt that the burial place of rulers will be located in an area separate from those of ordinary people. This style of tombs, in addition to having a profound effect on the mentality of the people of the present and future (such as the pyramids of Egypt) with their emphasis on the majesty and sanctity of the gods, has also become an attractive and economical place for tourists. Here we are dealing with a significant issue.

Historically, cemeteries belonging to elites and those promoting national identity have been highly respected. While ordinary cemeteries are quickly demolished, and new ones are built in their place or wholly destroyed. Therefore, other burial places (ordinary people) are more vulnerable due to being a neutral space. The burial of relatives and other nobles with a lesser degree of sanctity near the ruler's grave or khan and the efforts of ordinary people to bury next to these people can lead to the expansion and evolution of family graves. The ownership of the spaces is under the ruler's control, and khan and the authorities are always concerned about the private sector. So, it's possible, like today's societies, they may pay as offerings and gifts for

asking permission to bury in their vicinity so that they also may have a degree of sanctity and stability. The cemetery space is sacred only if the site is treated with respect. So, many of these respects should continue. One of the requirements for the stability of cemeteries is to turn them into places of pilgrimage. Pilgrimage, in the modern sense, is a term used to describe visitors to a burial space to visit a particular grave. Some cemeteries are protected by passing special laws and directing public opinion to what is appropriate. Therefore, these practices and visits to graves can have a common reason, and gifts and offerings can be offered when visiting graves (Rugg, 2000).

It can be said that the cemetery is not free from the heavy shadow of power. Power in the graveyard also emphasizes official values. A policy, like other social relations, is manifested in material works. One of the most visible power methods is controlling spaces, primarily cemeteries. In this type of space, power makes society readable in materialized forms (Tanxis 2009: 92). If we consider the formation of cemeteries to be influenced by political factors, we should also look for cause-and-effect relationships because the beginning of the first political governments was influenced by other factors such as drastic and dramatic changes in the habitat pattern, the transformation of pottery, exchange, etc. (Holl, 2002: 58). In other words, the emergence of political power itself has been influenced by a variety of factors, including livelihoods, extensive economic ties, and the military rivalries of urban complexes.

When rulers die, social order is threatened because the ruler has become a symbol of unity (Kertzer, 1988: 18). The results show that respect for ancestors and the need to symbolize burials are more evident in emerging or unstable political systems. There seems to be a need for the corpses of elites, rulers, and saints to maintain power and national unity by creating burial structures and, in other words, trying to change the concept of death and the destruction of power to the continuation of life, power, and passing through family and mass graves to large cemeteries. For example, the existence of the Royal Cemeteries in the city of Ur in southern Mesopotamia is commonly referred to as the "death" of large royal families (Oiki). It is formed more to show some emerging families to compete and realize their will and power. Thus, the control of power by institutions through a public function such as burial in a cemetery empowers life, which occurs through the management of death (Metcalf and Huntington, 1991; Cohen, 2005).

These centers and the holy cemetery have become the city's main centers. The deceased are transported to these cemeteries from the towns and even other countries for burial. In cemeteries within the urban context, cemeteries have played the role of open spaces, squares, and sacred places, the primary and pre-urban example of which can be considered as the cemetery next to the platform in Shush. On the other hand, these cities owed a vital part of their economy and prosperity to the existence of cemeteries. During this time, mass graves seem to have evolved into collective graves. The graves may be located inside the context of the city in such a way that one grave acts as a focal or central grave, and others are gathered around it over time.

It should be noted that the dimensions of these cemeteries are more than the needs of society. Hence, due to the expansion of the population and the popularity of monuments that have put pressure on such spaces and the limited capacity of the area, more distinction appears. If the development space is limited, there is a need to expand the space. The growth of religious centers, the inability of religious centers to place the majority of bodies next to family graves, and the inability to protect their individuality was perhaps why the burial went to the cemetery.

Archaeological reports indicate that the residence of the main person, lifetime khan, was usually located in the central section. Even if this place is periodic, usually the existence of notable buildings for the khan and sometimes noteworthy monuments and the performance of life or

death ceremonies gave glory to the central place (Holl, 2002: 198) like what we see in the cemetery of Shush. The high platform of Shush is unique among contemporary ancient monuments. Next to the cemetery, there were almost a thousand graves or more (Johnson, 1973). According to Wright and Holl (1975), chieftaincy requires controlling vital resources if it's not merely a ceremonial position, whether in the form of food, labor, goods, access to water, or the supernatural. Depending on the extent to which he controls these resources, khan devotes a large or small share of the products from these resources to himself and spends the rest directly on celebrations, giving gifts indirectly in the form of public works to his villain. These are the methods of redistribution. Redistribution is carried out as a partnership ritual (Holl 2002: 199), and a special place, such as a platform, may be considered for this purpose.

In simpler chieftaincy societies, people who are relatively superior in social rank are buried with better rituals. In complex chieftaincy societies, it can also be expected that the aristocracy, at the time of death and when they were alive, would be separated from others and buried next to ritually symbolic places (Flannery and Abdi, 2010). According to what was said, although the presence of a temple and platform next to a cemetery does not seem to be a significant issue today, it should be noted that it is a turning point in the evolution of the structure of historic cities. First, cemeteries belonging to sedentary people, such as Shush and Chegasofli, were formed next to religious platforms, which later became temples, as we see in the Choghazanbil temple and the surrounding cemeteries. Therefore, it is conceivable that sedentary cemeteries were located initially within government centers.

Discussion and Conclusion

Cemeteries' formation is a phenomenon with no specific cause, and it's likely to evolve in any community based on its limitations and necessities. In other words, in their emergence, use, and abandonment, the cemetery has taken entirely different paths in nomadic, sedentary, and urban communities. Based on what was covered during this article, the need to create and use cemetery space in the prehistoric societies of Iran has several interrelated necessities that can be mentioned based on these cases: ownership and purpose of burial in cemeteries, needs of the community, and the ability of the site to maintain stability and protect the identity of the deceased.

The study of cemeteries is also essential because it takes up so much space. Humans could burn corpses. Why did they use an expensive burial method that takes up much space? At first glance, it may be said that burying corpses under the ground is accompanied by aspects of emotional dimensions such as interest in the deceased, rejection of his death and destruction, or matters of faith. What is certain is that the elements of the benefit and necessity of the skeletons, along with all their accompanying attachments, are for the survivors, and even in the absence of the corpse, the use of the structure in the tombs has not been ineffective. Burning and other factors are associated with the destruction of the deceased. The burial ground is indeed associated with the general concept of where the corpse "disappears", but as discussed during the study, a careful analysis of the burial spaces does not show this concept. It is entirely contradictory to the previous image. To find answers to the questions raised, we addressed one of the basic psychological needs of human beings. The need for the property is also associated with determining the identity and status of human beings. In the process of changing from a hunter-gatherer life to a sedentary life, it has become so crucial that the burial of corpses at home alleviated his worries at the beginning of the Neolithic period. In hunter-gatherer societies, a person may own a weapon or tool, but this ownership is seldom interpreted as an exclusive right. A hunter who owns a throwing spear only holds the device because he has the right to use it when he is not

using it. Others may claim that hunters work closely together and that their survival depends on public participation, so they often lend tools and weapons to each other or exchange them for free. Ownership is generally more approved and formal in places where production is more specialized and not accessible to all. In nuclear families and farming communities, people have been highly dependent on agricultural land (Alizade, 1997). In nomadic societies, the purpose of burying corpses in cemeteries is based on the particular necessities and biological limitations that this lifestyle brings and to adapt to the environment. These cemeteries are a reflection of an almost non-ranked society, and probably in nomadic communities, the generalization of the burial of the dead in cemeteries has little to do with the ranking of communities (Holl, 2002: 135). Cemeteries belonging to this group can be considered a kind of family graves and express social relations based on blood ties and the patriarchal system to preserve common interests or ownership and privacy on a large scale.

In sedentary societies, we face cultural and environmental changes such as population growth and concentration which leads to the social relations of human beings in an organized environment. Burial rites have also changed in line with other categories. With the secularization of societies, the ownership of spaces came under the control of the ruler and khan because ownership was primarily secular. The cemetery was created to preserve individual identity and determine and promote group identity to safeguard the common interests of the ruler or khan and the people. Let's consider burying the bodies outside the house. The space's ability to preserve the deceased's individuality and identity and prevent destructive acts by other individuals and groups seems essential. The need for this sustainability is possible through group actions and the secularization of societies in later stages. The burial space is considered sacred to the deceased's family because of the grief it brings, and activities called "disrespectful" must be protected. The cemetery's stability is protected by passing legislation and directing public opinion to what is appropriate. The purpose of creating these sites is to establish identity.

Cemetery space is considered sacred only if the site is treated with respect. Respect is associated with stability. Observing this respect and protecting this space from inappropriate actions also warns the consolidation of individual and group identities and has led to the determination of specific social rules. Promoting the sanctity of cemetery space by directing public opinion about what is appropriate and passing particular laws has taught respect for space and its sustainability. It can be noted that, in general, one of the requirements for the stability of cemeteries is to turn them into places of pilgrimage. The importance of preserving these places in religion's production, propagation, and promotion is undeniable. Even corpses buried near essential people, to a lesser degree, earn degrees of sanctity and respect. So, it is not far-fetched that in the past, the burial of relatives and other aristocrats with a lesser degree of sanctity near the tomb of the ruler or khan and the efforts of ordinary people to get buried next to these people can lead to the expansion and evolution of family graves (Rugg, 2000). The presence of a platform next to the cemeteries of sedentary communities, which has been abundantly seen as a temple in later periods, can also be examined in this regard because, in such so-called holy places, people could easily offer their offerings and gifts. This proves that the cemeteries of sedentary communities can result from socio-political changes in communities. Unlike nomadic communities, the purpose of burying the dead in cemeteries in these communities was directly related to the ranking of communities.

Finally, the sites handed over to archaeologists in cemeteries, or as we think of them today as cemeteries contain valuable information about all aspects of life in ancient societies. Considerable evidence and documents unavailable from other archeological sites can be obtained from a careful and scientific study of cemeteries. But how well the evidence contained in cemeteries

can be well analyzed depends on our study methods and how it is researched, recorded, and documented. In general, it isn't easy to study the aspects of cemetery formation due to cause and effect relationships because human behavior is complex and has many elements. On the other hand, the nature of the construction of cemeteries may be completely different from each other, and each archaeologist has paid attention to some archaeological aspects of the cemeteries. These ideas are hypotheses that should be evaluated by careful study, exploration, and analysis. Addressing each factor is problematic, but if all of them are interpreted and applied together, it is possible to create one or more patterns based on the dispersion and typology of the cemeteries. According to this new view, the cemetery should be considered a complex collection with multiple layers, such as religion, politics, economics, and culture. The worldview of cemetery formation can be influenced by culture, politics, economy, religion, interest in the deceased and rejection of death, insufficient knowledge of the phenomenon of death, observance of customs and traditions, etc. Understanding the relationships between these factors and the priority of the impact of each of these on the formation of a cemetery seems complex because we can only obtain evidence from inanimate burial methods, not from religious ceremonies. Finally, we must accept that cemeteries' formation has intangible, irrational, and indefinable aspects and is not limited to a logical and utility-based framework. It is a system constructed by a long and distant tradition of thoughts on the fundamental issues of man, life and death, or in other words, his real concerns. Therefore, the traces of these changes and interactions can be identified in a new cemetery space, and a more accurate understanding of cemetery space can be achieved. Family tombs, for example, are reviewable signs that can lead us to fundamental changes in the family system. Therefore, examining new definitions of cemetery space is essential to research this cultural landscape.

Bibliographical References

Abdi, K.

2001   "Excavation in Lorestan", *Journal of Archeology and History* 30, pp. 76-78.

Alidadi Soleimani, N.

2006   *Archaeological survey and identification report - Jiroft city - Esfandagheh area,* the General Directorate of Cultural Heritage and Tourism of Kerman province.

Alizadeh, A.

1997   "My ancestors are buried here: archeology, the nuclear family, and the evolution of the sense of land ownership", *Journal of Archeology and History* 20, Spring and Summer, pp. 4-9.

2013   "Combining, conflicting and complementary livelihoods of agriculture and nomadic livestock in southwestern Iran", *Archeology of Iran* 3, pp. 41-68.

2004   *The origin of governmental institutions in the prehistory of Fars*, translated by Korosh Roustaei, Tehran, Cultural Heritage and Tourism Organization.

Alizadeh Sula, M., K. Hajizadeh, B. Afkhami

2018   "Archaeological Surveys of East Azerbaijan Chapter One; North of Namin city, Ardabil province", *Archaeological Studies* 10 (2), pp. 221-238.

Arieas, P.

1983   *The hour of our death,* Harmonds worth: Penguin.

Azimi, N.

2002   *Urban dynamics and the foundations of the urban system,* Tehran; Nika Publishing.

Baharvand Amanullahi, S.

2004   "The decline of nomadism in Iran, the sedentary of tribes and nomads", *Journal of National Studies* 5, pp. 155-183.

Barker, Ch.

2008   *Cultural Studies (Theory and Practice)*, translated by Mehdi Faraji and Nafiseh Hamidi, Tehran: Research Institute for Cultural and Social Studies.

Bates, D. and F. Plug

2011   *Cultural anthropology,* translated by Mohsen Salasi, Tehran: Scientific Publishing.

Bloch, M., and J. P. Parry

1982   *Death and the Regeneration of Life,* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Boserup, E.

1965   *The Conditions of Agricultural Growth*, Chicago: Aldine.

Burke, P.

2002   *History and Social Theory,* translated by Gholamreza Jamshidi, Tehran: University of Tehran.

Chaichi Amirkhiz, A.

1996   *Burial in Iran from the beginning to 5000 B.C.*, Master Thesis, Tehran, Tarbiat Modares University.

Chapman, R. W.

2003   "Death, Society, and Archaeology: The Social Dimensions of Mortuary Practices." Mortality 8 (3), pp. 305-312.

Cohen, A. C.

2005   "Death Rituals, Ideology, and the Development of Early Mesopotamian Kingship: Toward a New Understanding of Iraq's Royal Cemetery of Ur", *Studies in Ancient Magic and Divination*, Volume 7, Leiden: Brill.

Daryab, S. and H. Vahdati Nasab

2014   "Neanderthal Man: Death and Death- Awareness of", *Anthropological Research in Iran* 1, Spring and Summer, pp. 131-149.

Flannery, K.

2014   "Evolution of Prehistoric Societies", *Journal of History and Archeology* 49, pp. 63-76.

Fokuhi, N.

2002   *History of anthropological ideas and theories*, Tehran, Markaz Publishing.

Eskandari, N.; H. MullaSalehi, M. Shafiei, B. Firoozmandi Shirehjini, N. Alidadi Soleimani

2014   "Khajeh Askar: A cemetery from the fourth millennium BC in southeastern Iran from visible data to missing data", *Archaeological Research of Iran* 6 (4), pp. 47-64.

Haerinck, E & B. overlaet

1996   *The Chalcolithic period parchinah and Hakalan*, Royal museums of art and history, Brussels.

Hole, F.

2002   *Archeology of Western Iran*, translated by Zahra Basti, Tehran, Samat Publications.

Insoll, T.

2004   *Archaeology, Ritual, Religion,* Themes in Archaeology. London: Routledge.

Ismaili, Sh.

2009   "We and the Cemetery, A Look at the Cemetery Space from the Anthropological Perspective of the Place", *Andishe Iranshahr Quarterly* 4 (13), pp. 31-34.

Kheirkhah, M.

2013   *Cultural Studies of Jestari Cemetery in Modern Cemetery*, Faculty of Social Sciences, Allameh Tabatabai University.

Kertzer, D. I.

1988   *Ritual, Politics, and Power*, New Haven: Yale University Press.

Kolbuszewski, J.

1995   "Cemeteries as a text of culture", in *Czerner & Juszkiewicz (Eds), Cemetery art,* Wroclaw: Icomos.

Majidzadeh, Y.

2007   "A Brief Report of the Fifth Chapter of Archaeological Excavations in the Sandal Sites and Cemeteries of Mahtout Abad and Qala-e-Kouchak: Jiroft 2006", *Archaeological Reports 7*, Vol. 1, Tehran: Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization.

Masaeli, M. and M. Darvishi

2016   "The occurrence of infectious diseases after natural disasters and the role of society in controlling and preventing them", *Nurse and Physician* 4 (10), pp. 72-79.

Moshiri, R.

2013   "A Look at the Concepts and History of Nomadism and its Teaching in Iran", *Geographical Research* 34, pp. 126-135.

Nasiri, M., and A. Sadeghi

2018   "A Critical Look at the Relationship between Knowledge and Religion in the Sociology of Max Weber", *Ministry of Science* 15, pp. 23-44.

Metcalf, P., and R. Huntington

1991   *Celebrations of Death: The Anthropology of Mortuary Ritual*, Second Edition. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Moghaddam, A.

2016   "A fifth-millennium BC cemetery in the north Persian Gulf: the Zohreh Prehistoric Project", *Antiquity* 90, pp. 1-6.

Pearson, M.

1999   *The Archaeology of Death and Burial*, Texas A & M University Anthropology Series 3, College Station: Texas A & M University Press.

Rappaport, R. A.

1999   "Ritual and Religion in the Making of Humanity", Cambridge Studies in Social and Cultural Anthropology 110, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Rowlands, M.

1993   "The Role of Memory in the Transmission of Culture", *World Archaeology* 25 (2), pp. 51-141.

Rugg, J.

2000   "Defining the place of burial: what makes a cemetery a cemetery?", *Morality* 5 (3), pp. 259-275.

Robin, R.

1995   "A foothold in Europe: the aesthetics and politics of American war cemeteries in Western Europe", *Journal of American Studies* 29 (1), pp. 55-72.

Sarlak, S.

2003   "Factors influencing the formation of various types of tomb architecture and burial methods in the Iron Age Cemetery of Serm-Kahak Hill, Qom", *Archaeological Reports 2*, First Edition, Tehran: Cultural Heritage Organization, Archeology Research Institute.

Shohanizad, Y. and S. Haghir

2011   "How to Improve the Status of Cemeteries in the Cultural and Social Aspects of Sustainable Urban Development in Iran (to reduce the UN Agenda 21 in not paying attention to cultural diversity)", *Bagh-e Nazar* 8 (17), pp. 81-94.

Talaei, H.

2006   *Bronze Age of Iran*, Organization for the Study and Compilation of University Humanities Books; Samt Publication, Tehran.

2002   "Traditions and methods of burial in the Iron Age (about 1800-1450 B.C.)", *Journal of Literature and Humanities* 50 (162), University of Tehran, Summer and Fall, pp. 173-192.

Vahdati, A. & R. Biscione

2013   "Exploration (Iran-Italy joint) Chapter 2 of Chelo Jajarm Hill - North Khorasan Province", *Reports of the 13th Annual Iranian Archaeological Conference*, pp. 320-324.

Valipour, H.

2012   "A Theoretical Introduction to the Concept of Specialization in Archaeological Studies", *Journal of Archaeological Message* 9 (17), pp. 33-56.

Whitley, J.

2002   "Too Many Ancestors", *Antiquity* 76 (291), pp. 119-126.

Yadollahi, S.

2004   "Social archeology; A Look at Reconstruction Methods", *Archaeology Quaterly* 12, pp. 16-25.