

# A Historical Examination of the Causes and Archaeological Evidence for the Political-Cultural Relations between Iran and Yemen during the 4 to 7<sup>th</sup> Centuries CE

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## Abstract

The vast territorial expanse and unique geographical position of Sasanian Iran necessitated that major inter-civilizational trade and communication routes between East and West either traverse the Sasanian heartland or skirt its peripheries. This strategic geography played a pivotal role in advancing the Sasanian policy of expansionism and economic monopolization, as well as in facilitating commercial, cultural, and political interactions with regional and trans-regional polities. Within this context, examining the political-cultural relations between the Sasanians and ancient Yemen is of particular significance, given both territories' possession of maritime fronts and their associated trade networks. Consequently, this research aims to investigate the nature and depth of the political and cultural relations between the Sasanians and Yemen, to identify the factors influencing the formation and evolution of these relations, and to assess the reciprocal impact of these relations on the historical developments of both lands. Furthermore, the role of archaeology in elucidating various dimensions of these relations will be considered. Through an analysis of historical and archaeological evidence, this study seeks to answer the following question: What factors led to the formation and perpetuation of political and cultural relations between the Sasanians and Yemen from the 4th to the 7th centuries CE? The findings indicate that hegemony over maritime trade routes played a central role in the interactions between Iran and Yemen during the Sasanian period. Moreover, the results of an examination of the artistic characteristics of specific archaeological finds from Yemen—namely, the Knight relief (from Dhofar), a female figure relief (from Dhofar), a fragment of a decorated textile depicting a Sasanian battle scene with Ethiopians (from Antinoë), and a carved four-faced capital (from the Qal'ā of Ḥasan al-'Ur in Yemen)—reveal shared features with Sasanian art and corroborate the cultural-artistic influence of the Sasanians in the land of Yemen.

**Keywords:** Ancient Iran, Sasanians, Yemen, Persian Gulf, Political and Cultural Relations.

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## Introduction

The ancient history of Iran demonstrates the existence of profound civilizational and geographical connections between the Persian and Arab peoples. Archaeological research indicates that seafaring and maritime trade played a central role in the commercial, cultural, and political interactions of these peoples. (Keall, 1998: 29). In this regard, the role of maritime trade routes in shaping the political and cultural relations between the Sasanian Empire and Yemen was of particular significance (Akbari, 2008: 3).

Yemen, a small country located in the southwestern part of the Arabian Peninsula, was one of the major centers of civilization on the peninsula during the millennium preceding the Common Era. It is among the ancient and affluent lands of the ancient world, with a historical background of nearly three thousand years. The coastal position of this region facilitated the country's access to open waters and maritime trade routes, turning it into a significant naval power (Mahmoudabadi & Dehghan, 2012: 44). Consequently, due to its strategically sensitive location, this land has consistently attracted the attention of both regional and extra-regional powers throughout history. Control over this territory has meant dominance over part of the Red Sea and influence on maritime communications within the region (Sangari & Asadi, 2022: 54–55). Yemen's strategic position during the fourth to seventh centuries CE transformed this land into a major maritime trade artery linking the East and the West in antiquity (Afrasiabi et al., 2005: 64). On the other hand, the region's aptitude for seafaring, along with its access to the rich commercial resources of India, Africa, and East Asia, contributed to the expansion of trade activities in this area (al-Hamedani, 1953: 166; Mahmoudabadi, 2014: 73). Moreover, the land's abundance of natural resources—such as rich deposits of precious minerals including gold, copper, agate, and ruby—as well as valuable agricultural products and commodities such as perfumes, spices, and various types of incense, further enhanced its economic importance in the pre-Islamic period (Chamankar, 2015: 11). Therefore, the great empires of antiquity particularly the Iranians (Sasanians) and the Byzantines undertook extensive efforts to gain control over Yemen, recognizing its strategic and economic importance and seeking to exploit its abundant wealth (Afrasiabi et al., 2005: 64). The Sasanians (224–652 CE) ruled over a vast territory that extended from the western regions of Mesopotamia, to Greater Khorasan in the east, the southern coasts of the Persian Gulf in the south, and up to the current borders of Russia in the north (Hosseini et al., 2023: 112). The extensive geographical borders and the Sasanian territory's location between the civilizations of China, India, and Rome provided the empire with a highly valuable economic position. The passage of trade and communication routes connecting Eastern and Western civilizations through or along the Sasanian territory generated substantial customs and transit revenues for the Sasanians (Frank & Brownstone, 1988: 155). This geographical advantage, along

with exclusive oversight of the East–West trade routes, was of particular significance for the Sasanian government, as substantial customs and transit revenues served as a primary source of income for the empire (Alahyari, 2014: 19). In this context, ensuring the Sasanians’ monopolistic policies in trade—not only to prevent direct exchanges between the Romans and the East and to secure customs revenues—was not solely dependent on controlling the overland trade routes connecting East and West, but also required dominance over maritime trade routes (Reza, 1997: 87).

In this regard, Yemen, as a major maritime trade corridor between the East and the West, held special significance in the economic policies of the Sasanians due to its rich mineral resources (such as gold and precious stones), its aptitude for seafaring and agriculture, and its proximity to the prosperous commercial centers of India, Africa, and East Asia (Salim, 2001: 66). The control of Yemeni ports and the Red Sea enabled the Sasanians to dominate regional maritime trade and, in doing so, to amass substantial wealth (Sangari & Asadi, 2023: 12).

Accordingly, the present study aims to examine the remaining evidence of Sasanian–Yemeni relations through an analytical and documentary approach, based on historical texts and archaeological findings. Through the analysis of historical records and archaeological evidence, this study aims to determine the nature and depth of the political and cultural relations between the Sasanians and Yemen, to identify the factors influencing the formation and development of these relations, to examine their mutual impact on the historical transformations of both regions, and to assess the role of archaeology in revealing the nature of these interactions. In this research, components and indicators such as objectives, orientations, instruments, actions, and techniques of foreign policy have been analyzed.

**Research Question:** This study seeks to answer the question of what factors led to the formation and continuity of political and cultural relations between the Sasanians and Yemen from the fourth to the seventh centuries CE.

**Research Methodology:** The present study has been conducted using an analytical–documentary method and a library-based approach, relying on written sources to examine the historical causes and archaeological evidence of the political and cultural relations between Iran and Yemen during the Sasanian period (fourth to seventh centuries CE).

## Literature Review

Historical studies indicate that the relations between Iran and the Arabs—particularly with Yemen—were characterized by a high degree of complexity and significance during the Sasanian period. Accordingly, in a study entitled “Explaining and Analyzing the Impact of Geographical Location on Sasanian Foreign Relations and Commercial Activities” by Sangari and Asadi (2023), the authors, examining the influence of geographical

location on trade and foreign relations during the Sasanian period, acknowledged that the development and expansion of Sasanian maritime trade to the East, the Indian Ocean, and the Red Sea was one of the advantages of their maritime position, particularly in the Persian Gulf. Furthermore, in a study entitled “A Perspective on the Special Political and Economic Position of the Persian Gulf in Antiquity” by [Rezvantar and Parvaneh \(2018\)](#), the authors, illustrating the unique political and economic status of the Persian Gulf in ancient times, stated that Iranian dominance over the southern coasts of the Persian Gulf was consolidated during the Sasanian period, and the construction of numerous cities along the shores and coastal areas of the Gulf reflected the attention of Sasanian kings to this region. On the other hand, [Mahmoudabadi and Dehghan \(2012\)](#), in their article entitled “Yemen’s Trade before the Emergence of Islam”, examining the economic position of southern Arabia (Yemen), attributed Yemen’s commercial prosperity to its geographical location, abundant resources (agriculture, minerals, etc.), and its role as an intermediary between the civilizations of the East and the West. In addition, in a study entitled “An Analytical Examination of the Strategic Objectives of the Sasanian System and Khosrow I’s Military Campaign in Yemen” by [Alahiari \(2007\)](#), the author analyzed and examined the strategic objectives of the Sasanian system in southern Arabia and Khosrow I’s military expedition to Yemen within this framework, highlighting the Sasanian monarchy’s strategic aims to maintain exclusive control over global trade routes and to prevent Roman competitors from gaining access to new trade corridors. Furthermore, in a study entitled “Hira and Yemen: Gateways for the Introduction of Iranian Culture into Arab Lands” by [Afrasiyabi et al. \(2005\)](#), the authors, examining the historical and geographical context of the two regions of Hira and Yemen and their role in the dissemination of Iranian customs and culture among the Arabs, acknowledged that the proximity of geographical borders, the appointment of the rulers of these regions by Iranian kings, their location along major global trade routes, prosperous commerce, and considerable economic benefits for Iranian merchants were the main factors behind the comprehensive cultural, military, political, and economic influence of Iranians in Yemen and Hira. They further emphasized that throughout the Sasanian period, these two regions functioned as Iranian colonies and served as gateways for the introduction of Iranian culture into Arab lands.

In addition, [Nöldeke \(1999\)](#), [Daryaee \(2008\)](#), [Mirzania \(2009\)](#), and [Chamankar \(2009\)](#), by examining various aspects of the relations between ancient Iran (the Sasanian era) and Yemen, asserted that Iran’s geographical position, its rivalry with the Byzantine Empire, trade, and cultural exchanges were among the key factors influencing the formation and development of relations between Iran and Yemen.

### **The Geographical Position and Strategic Importance of Yemen**

Geographical location, as one of the most important natural and environmental factors,

influences not only the form and type of human settlements but also political, economic, military, and social activities and relations (Shokouei, 2004: 244). Maritime and coastal locations are among the geographical factors that have significantly contributed to the rise of empires and global powers, playing a crucial role in shaping political and economic relations and promoting the development of states (Ezzati, 2017: 81–82).

Yemen is a small country located in the southwest of the Arabian Peninsula, bordered by Saudi Arabia to the north, the Red Sea to the west, the Gulf of Aden, the Bab al-Mandab Strait, and the Indian Ocean to the south, and Oman to the east (Mirzania, 2009: 198). The country's maritime and coastal position has made Yemen one of the most important maritime crossroads in the world (Amirdehi, 2009: 116–118). Its access to open waters, maritime trade routes, and its location along the main communication routes connecting the East and the West (India, China, Africa, and the Mediterranean) were among the major geographical advantages that, during the fourth to seventh centuries CE, turned Yemen into a key maritime trade corridor between East and West in antiquity (Afrasiabi *et al.*, 2005: 64). On the other hand, the coastal position of this land facilitated access to the rich commercial resources of India, Africa, and East Asia, which contributed to the expansion of Yemen's trade activities in antiquity (Al-Hamdani, 1953: 166; Mahmoudabadi, 2014: 73). Moreover, Yemen's geographical and climatic features not only endowed the region with abundant natural resources—such as rich deposits of precious minerals (including gold, copper, agate, and ruby), agricultural products, and valuable commodities like perfumes, spices, and incense—but also enhanced its economic significance in the pre-Islamic era (Chamankar, 2015: 11). Archaeological evidence further indicates that, owing to its geographical advantages, Yemen had long served as a socio-political center and the cradle of ancient civilizations such as Saba, Ma'in, and Hadramawt (Taqizadeh, 2000: 39). Additionally, the historical geography of this region granted Yemen a decisive role in the political and economic relations and historical developments of the broader region in antiquity (Kuhkan, 2017: 2).

### **Historical Studies on the Expansionist Policies of the Sasanians and Their Influence in the Region**

The Sasanians came to power in AD 224 following the victory of Ardashir I over Artabanus IV, the last Parthian king, and ruled over a vast territory encompassing much of the modern Middle East until AD 652 (Daryaei, 2012: 11). The extensive borders and the unique geographical position of Sasanian Iran enabled the major trade and communication routes connecting Eastern and Western civilizations to pass through or along its territory (Sangari & Asadi, 2022: 20). Moreover, the maritime advantages of the Sasanian realm—one of its most significant geographical assets—facilitated access to sea trade routes and provided the empire with a highly valuable economic



Fig. 1: Map of the Himyarite Kingdom (Oxford University Press, 2009).

position. In this regard, the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman, located in the southern part of the empire, held strategic importance as maritime links between the East and the West. These waters played a crucial role in the Sasanians' economic rivalry with the Byzantine Empire and contributed significantly to the development and expansion of their political and commercial relations both regionally and beyond (Chamankar, 2006: 186). Maintaining this geographical advantage and the exclusive control over east–west trade routes, due to the substantial customs and transit revenues, was of exceptional importance to the Sasanian state as one of its main sources of income (Alahiari, 2014: 9).

Furthermore, Yemen, as a major maritime trade corridor between the East and the West, played a significant role in the Sasanian monopoly policy over commercial routes and in achieving their economic objectives, owing to its rich mineral resources (such as gold and precious stones), maritime potential, agricultural productivity, and proximity to the major trade centers of India, Africa, and East Asia (Salim, 2001: 66). Accordingly, through the implementation of coherent expansionist and monopolistic policies, the Sasanians integrated their political–military strategies with economic considerations, marking a turning point in the history of the Persian Gulf, the Sea of Oman, the Red Sea, and the economic developments associated with these regions (Asadbin, 2011: 27). In this regard, the actions of Ardashir I, Shapur II, Bahram V, and Khosrow I Anushirvan in conquering the hinterlands of the Persian Gulf (such as Bahrain and Yemen) demonstrate the great importance that the Sasanian monarchs placed on maintaining control and

security in these regions to prevent the Romans from gaining economic and political advantage (Hasanpour Hafshejani *et al.*, 2018: 27; Asadbin, 2011: 54).

During the reign of Bahram V (Bahram Gur), (AD 421–439), the first attempts were made to establish a permanent Iranian military base in the southwest of the Arabian Peninsula (Yemen). Following his victories in Makran and Debal along the shores of the Sea of Oman, Bahram dispatched his troops toward Yemen, which subsequently became a vassal region of Iran (Kolitsnkov, 1978: 268). Similarly, Ardashir Babakan, recognizing the strategic importance of Yemen, established naval bases along its coasts. These bases not only ensured maritime security but also served as strategic outposts for expanding Sasanian influence in the Indian Ocean and controlling key trade routes.

Yemen was repeatedly captured by Sasanian proxies and Abyssinian Christian claimants, yet it ultimately returned under Sasanian control during the reign of Khosrow I Anushirvan, remaining under their dominion until the end of the Sasanian dynasty (Bowersock, 2021: 125–129). The conquest of Yemen and the fertile Hadramawt region allowed the Sasanians to dominate one of the most important trade routes of the ancient world—the maritime Silk Road—and facilitated and consolidated maritime commerce in the Persian Gulf and the Sea of Oman (Boyle, 2001: 716; Chamankar, 2015: 10). Archaeological findings along the southern coasts of the Persian Gulf further confirm Sasanian control over these regions.

This period can be regarded as the era of consolidation of Sasanian political and economic power and influence in the Persian Gulf basin (Kervan & Hiebert, 1991: 337–348; Barmaki, 1975: 66). In this context, due to the influence of Iranian culture and art in Yemen, the southern Arabian (Yemeni) coins have been compared to Sasanian coinage (Azarnoush, 1995: 216–220).

### **Analysis of Archaeological Studies: The Relationship between Sasanian Iran and Yemen**

The combination of diverse cultural and artistic elements led to the emergence of a unique, syncretic artistic tradition in Yemen (Potts, 2008: 199). In this context, the architecture of ancient Yemen (e.g., Corinthian columns and capitals) was largely influenced by Roman architectural styles (Labbaaf-Khaniki, 2022: 163).

At the same time, some archaeological artifacts recovered from the region reflect the influence of Sasanian Iranian culture and art. Notably, scenes depicting royal ceremonies and hunting, carved in a style characteristic of Sasanian art, have been identified (Labbaaf-Khaniki, 2022: 163).

Additionally, the gray limestone relief known as the “Cavalier Relief” from Zafar (Fig. 2) is among the significant artistic finds in Yemen. This relief, dating to the fourth century CE, bears a resemblance to the Sasanian rock relief at Naqsh-e Rostam 5, which

depicts the hand-to-hand combat of Hormizd II against his enemies (Mohammadifar & Amini, 2015: 221). The relief in question, framed and inscribed, depicts a heavily armored cavalryman and an infantryman (Fig. 3). The left portion of the relief is missing; however, on the left side, the horse's hoof is visible, possibly indicating one of the adversaries (Fig. 4), (Skupniewicz, 2016: 2). Costa interprets this scene as representing a hunting episode (Costa, 1976: 448).

In the relief, the cavalry and infantry are moving toward the left. The cavalryman holds a small shield in his left hand, covering his chest. On the outer edge of the shield, small triangular decorations are visible. The horse is depicted with loose reins in an attacking posture. The cavalryman holds a spear in his right hand, raised in a manner that angles the spearhead downward, seemingly targeting an enemy directly. His body and arms are protected by armor with long sleeves, following a triangular pattern.

The helmet is depicted as a single piece, covering not only the head but also extending over the shoulders and the back. This type of helmet resembles the probable depiction of the Himyarites in the relief of Bahram II at Naqsh-e Rostam and the Arab soldiers in the Bishapur II relief. Additionally, the continuous horizontal lines on the horse's neck may be interpreted as a horse necklace.

Diamond-shaped motifs were used to cover the flanks of the horse, while the horse's skull cap features a strap accompanied by a decorative element and a reinforced piece. The horse's bridle is partially obscured by the shield held in the cavalryman's left hand, but the lower portions and the tail of the horse have been largely damaged or lost (Gall, 1998: 55–56).

The infantryman depicted on the right side of this relief, behind the horse, appears to be mounted on the horse's flank. The soldier's attire consists of a torso covering with four vertical bands. The arms are elongated and thick, with multiple vertical lines on the upper arms, likely indicating a padded soft armor worn over the body. Furthermore, the pelvis and thighs of the infantryman are covered with a skirt adorned with horizontal decorative lines (narrow and thin elements) arranged in two rows. The warrior's head is bare, lacking any helmet or headgear. It seems that the artists who executed this relief were inspired by Hellenistic art in their depiction (Overlaet, 2009: 218–219).

On the other hand, some researchers, including Yule and Robin, associate this relief—based on stylistic similarities—more closely with Naqsh-e Rostam 7 (Yule & Robin, 2007: 263).

In Sasanian art, scenes depicting a king on horseback confronting his opponent are known as “jousts”. However, in the Tangab-e Firouzabad relief, instead of illustrating armored combatants in direct engagement, the emphasis is placed on moments of the opponent's defeat and their attempt to escape inevitable punishment. The combination of spear and shield, a common feature in the art of frontier cities between empires, is



Fig. 2: Himyarite Relief from Al-Hamiri, Depicting a Cavalryman and an Infantryman from Dhofar (Yule & Robin, 2007: 13).

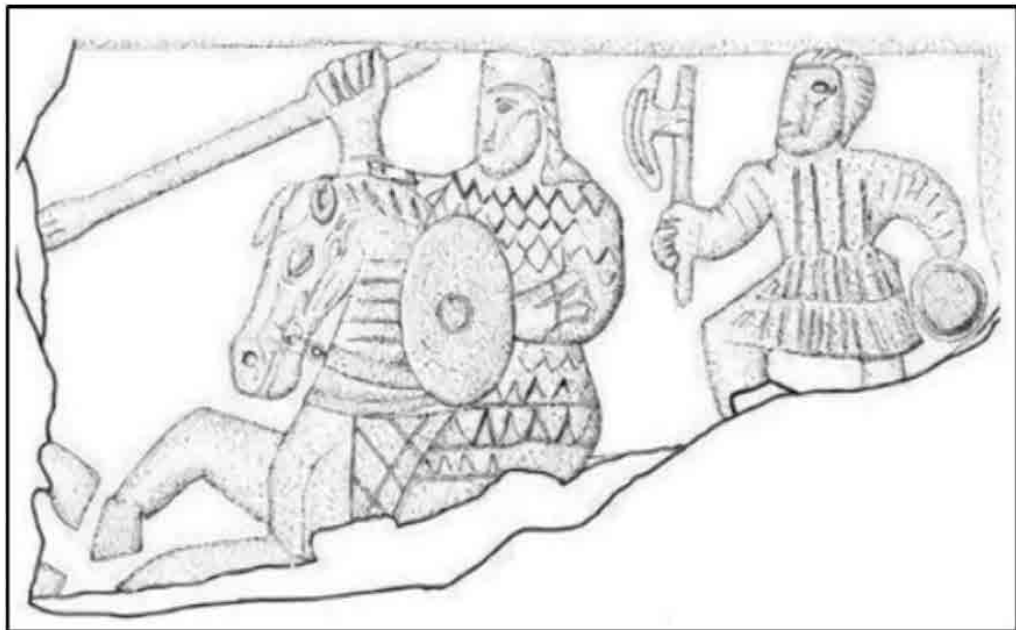


Fig. 3: A Drawing of the Himyari Relief Discovered in Dhofar (Yule & Robin, 2007: 13).

well attested and can also be observed in the iconography of southern Arabia. The small round shield may have been adopted by Sasanian warriors from their Arab neighbors, whether allies or adversaries (Skupniewicz, 2016: 7).

A stone inscription discovered in the Mahram Bilqis Temple (located 9 kilometers from the city of Marib, Yemen) is another example of the artistic heritage recovered from Yemen. This inscription narrates the dispatch of the Himyari ruler Shammar Yahri'sh to Ctesiphon and Seleucia, accompanied by gifts and a political (diplomatic) delegation. Based on Shammar Yahri'sh's reign and the sculptural style of Bishapur IV reliefs, it is

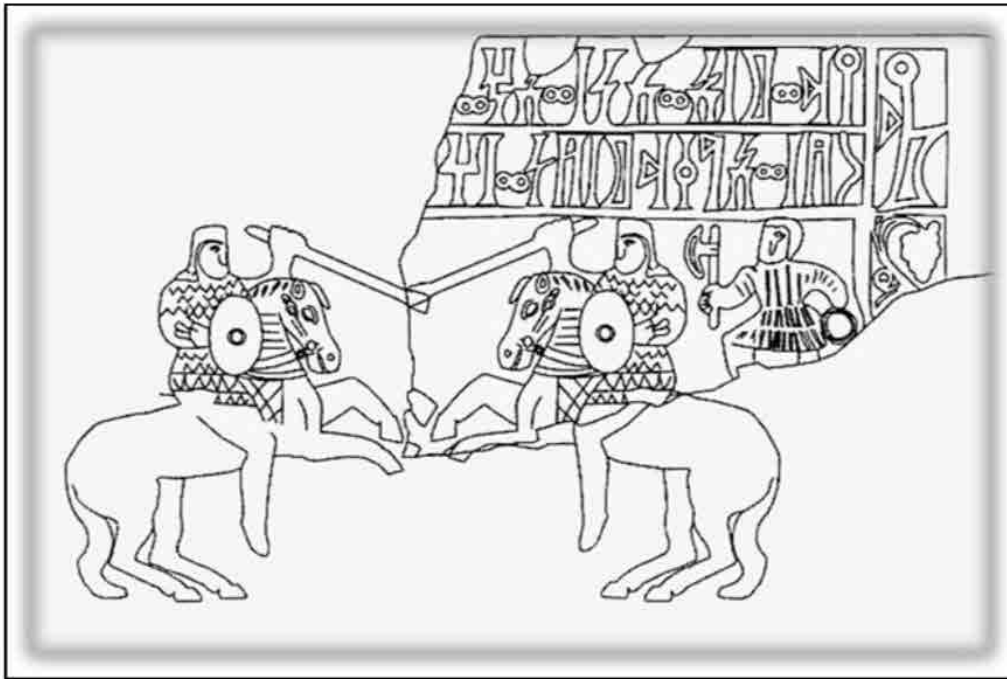


Fig. 4: Graphic Reconstruction of the Missing Portion of the Himyarite Relief Discovered in Dhofar (Yule & Robin, 2007: 15).

suggested that this relief was created during the early reign of Bahram II, and its story is also depicted in the Mahram Bilqis Temple (Overlaet, 2009: 220–221).

The center of the Himyari kingdom was the city of Dhofar, located approximately 150 kilometers southwest of Marib in the southern Arabian Peninsula, in what is now southwestern Yemen. Dhofar's geographical position, situated in the elevated region of southern Yemen and connected to the Red Sea and the Indian Ocean, rendered the area strategically significant.

Archaeological excavations conducted between 1998 and 2010 under the direction of Paul Yule in the Dhofar region led to the discovery of a settlement, the remains of which “indicate the presence and influence of various cultures, including Sasanian culture, at this archaeological site” (Labbaḥ-Khaniki, 2021: 315).

The most significant structure uncovered in the Dhofar site is an architectural complex organized around a central courtyard. The stones covering the courtyard floor feature raised edges that were carved by masons. On the eastern side of the courtyard, a stone wall has been identified, with four horizontal rows of carved images on its facade. In the first row, symmetrical depictions of animals such as deer, leopards, and sphinxes are accompanied by small shrubs on either side. The second row presents a continuous sequence of front-facing bull heads. These rows are separated by borders of vegetal (grapevines and leaves) and geometric motifs.

At the end of this wall, a carving depicts a man wearing a crown and a pleated,

striped garment. This figure is rendered in a style influenced by Parthian and Byzantine art (Yule, 2013: 126–129).

In the stone relief discovered in Dhofar (Fig. 5), a woman is depicted wearing traditional Sasanian female attire. In the relief, she holds a cluster of plants in her left hand. Based on this stone relief, it can be inferred that the artwork bears a close connection to the culture of Sasanian Iran (Yule, 2013: 28–30).



Fig. 5: A section of a female relief discovered in Dhofar (Yule, 2013: 127).

Furthermore, a series of carved reliefs depicting women holding pomegranates, along with a column decorated with intertwined vegetal motifs, indicate the sculptors' familiarity with Sasanian art. These artistic elements demonstrate that the Arab inhabitants of this region during the Sasanian period were acquainted with Iranian art and culture (Yule, 2013: 28–30).

The story of the Sasanian entry into Yemen and their liberation of the Yemeni people from Abyssinian rule is recounted in a heroic and impassioned manner, often embellished with exaggerations and dramatic details. A visual depiction of the Sasanian battle against the Abyssinians appears on a Coptic textile (Fig. 6) discovered in a tomb at the Greco-Roman city of Antinoupolis. This textile, part of a pair of trousers, is now preserved in the Museum of Textile History in Lyon and the Louvre Museum in France.

The upper register of the textile illustrates the battle scene, while the lower register portrays a prominent figure seated on a royal throne in the typical Sasanian style, holding a long sword whose tip rests on the ground. The Abyssinian enemies—distinguished by their curly hair and prominent lips—are depicted as foot soldiers, clearly differentiated from the Sasanians. The Sasanian warriors, both mounted and on foot, are shown turning backward on horseback and shooting arrows toward their adversaries. The textile, dated

to around AD 600 or the early seventh century, reflects the artistic influence of the Sasanian Empire in this region (Bénazeth, 2006: 121).



Fig. 6: A fragment of a woven trouser decorated with a battle scene between the Sasanians and the Abyssinians, discovered at Antinoupolis, accompanied by a reconstructed drawing of the design ([www.louvre.fr](http://www.louvre.fr)).

The carved capital (Fig. 7) from Qal‘at Ḥasan al-‘Awṛā (in the Hadhramaut region, approximately 20 kilometers east of the city of Tarim) represents another significant example of ancient Yemeni art (Labbaḥ Khaneiki, 2021: 357).



Fig. 7: The four sides of a carved capital from Qal‘at Ḥasan al-‘Awṛā, Yemen (Keall, 1998: 147).

This trapezoidal-cuboid stone carving features four narrative scenes engraved on its four sides, all executed in the Sasanian artistic style.

In the first scene, mounted and footed hunters armed with long spears are depicted hunting a lion, shown below the composition lying on its back in agony and near death.

The second scene portrays a horseman pursuing several deer, while another man on foot is shown grappling with one of the animals.

In the third scene, several hunters with long, puffed hair are represented, each holding a dagger and a bow.

The fourth scene shows several deer in a naturalistic manner, calmly grazing.

On two corners of the capital, decorative panels featuring animal motifs intertwined with vegetal patterns—including grape clusters and interlaced vine tendrils—have been carved (Keall, 1998: 142–143).

## Conclusion

Trade was a fundamental pillar of the Sasanian state, with east-west commercial routes serving as a primary source of revenue through customs duties and transit fees. Within this context, maritime trade routes played a crucial role in advancing the Sasanians' monopolistic policies, shaping their commercial interactions between East and West, and forming political and cultural relations with regional and transregional powers. Yemen, as a key maritime corridor linking East and West, with its rich mineral resources (such as gold and precious stones), maritime and agricultural capabilities, and proximity to the abundant trade resources of India, Africa, and East Asia, was central to the realization of Sasanian monopolistic control over trade routes and their expansionist and economic objectives.

Sasanian dominance over Yemen not only extended their territorial reach but also facilitated economic growth and strengthened their control over maritime commerce. Archaeological evidence from Yemen indicates the influence of Sasanian artistic and cultural traditions. Notable examples include the artistic features of the Knight Relief (from Dhofar), a female relief (from Dhofar), a fragment of a painted textile depicting the Sasanian campaign against the Abyssinians (from Antinoe), and the four faces of a carved capital (from Qal'at Ḥasan al-ʿAwṛā). These artifacts display clear affinities with Sasanian art, demonstrating that local artists were familiar with Sasanian cultural and artistic conventions.

These shared artistic traits not only reflect the local understanding and adaptation of Sasanian culture but also confirm the cultural and artistic influence of the Sasanians in Yemen. Therefore, it can be concluded that Sasanian political dominance over Yemen was accompanied by significant cultural and artistic penetration into the region.

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## Author Contributions

All authors contributed equally to the writing of the paper.

## Conflict of Interest

In adherence to ethical publication standards, the authors affirm that there are no conflicts of interest, either personal or financial, that could have influenced the content or conclusions presented in this research.

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# بررسی تاریخی علل و شواهد باستان‌شناختی از روابط سیاسی-فرهنگی ایران و یمن در دوران قرون چهارم تا هفتم میلادی

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## چکیده

گسترده‌ی مرزها و موقعیت ویژه جغرافیایی ایران عهد ساسانی موجب عبور راه‌های تجاری و ارتباطی تمدن‌های شرق و غرب از سرزمین ساسانیان یا کناره‌های آن شده بود. این موقعیت جغرافیایی نقش مهمی در پیش‌برد سیاست توسعه طلبانه و انحصارگرایی اقتصادی ساسانیان و تعاملات تجاری، فرهنگی و سیاسی با حکومت‌های منطقه‌ای و فرمانطقه‌ای داشته است. در این میان، بررسی روابط سیاسی-فرهنگی ساسانیان و یمن باستان به سبب برخورداری هر دو سرزمین از موقعیت دریایی و راه‌های تجاری مرتبط با آن حائز اهمیت ویژه است؛ از این رو، هدف این پژوهش، بررسی ماهیت و عمق روابط سیاسی و فرهنگی ساسانیان و یمن، شناسایی عوامل مؤثر بر شکل‌گیری و تحول این روابط و ارزیابی تأثیر متقابل این روابط بر تحولات تاریخی دو سرزمین است. هم‌چنین، نقش باستان‌شناسی در روشن‌سازی ابعاد مختلف این روابط مورد توجه قرار خواهد گرفت. با بررسی شواهد تاریخی و باستان‌شناسی، این پژوهش به دنبال پاسخ به این پرسش است که، چه عواملی باعث شکل‌گیری و تداوم روابط سیاسی و فرهنگی بین ساسانیان و یمن در قرون چهارم تا هفتم میلادی شده است؟ یافته‌های پژوهش نشان می‌دهد که تسلط بر مسیرهای تجارت دریایی نقش محوری در ارتباطات میان ایران و یمن در دوره ساسانیان داشته است. هم‌چنین، نتایج بررسی ویژگی‌های هنری نقش برجسته شوالیه (از ظفار)، نقش برجسته یک زن (از ظفار)، بخشی از یک شلوار پارچه‌ای منقوش به صحنه کارزار ساسانیان با حبشیان (از آنتینوئه) و چهار وجه یک سرستون حجاری شده (از قلعه حسن‌العور یمن) به دست آمده از کاوش‌های باستان‌شناسی در یمن حاکی از وجوه اشتراک با هنر ساسانی و مؤید نفوذ فرهنگی-هنری ساسانیان در سرزمین یمن است.

**کلیدواژگان:** ایران باستان، ساسانیان، یمن، خلیج فارس، روابط سیاسی و فرهنگی.

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