



ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

Playing at court: chowgan and tzykanion between Sasanian Iran, Constantinople and Samarra

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Abstract

The aim of this paper is to conduct a typological and topographical analysis of polo fields (*chowgan* in Middle Persian and *tzykanion* in Byzantine Greek) across a range of varied landscapes. The investigation focuses on both urban and extra-urban settings, examining the role of these fields in Constantinople, Bozpar, and Samarra. By examining the location, layout, and contextual significance of these sites, the study aims to identify patterns of spatial organisation that may reflect broader socio-political and cultural dynamics from the late antique to the early medieval periods.

?In urban contexts such as Constantinople and Samarra, polo fields were usually incorporated into palatial or ceremonial complexes, suggesting their association with elite activities and imperial power projection. In contrast, extra-urban sites such as Bozpar may have been associated with more localised forms of social interaction. By comparing these sites, the analysis seeks to highlight the multifunctional nature of polo fields as spaces for leisure, sport, and political symbolism.

?The research integrates findings from archaeological investigations, historical texts, and landscape analysis, thereby providing a comprehensive overview of the spatial and cultural significance of polo fields.

Keywords

Sasanian, Constantinople, Bozpar, Samarra, Polo

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