



## ABSTRACT SUBMISSION

# Who owns these bone receptacles? An insight into burial customs in the Sasanian Period.

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## Abstract

The Pre-Islamic Persian Empires, from the Achaemenids to the Sasanids, exhibited significant cultural diversity influenced by their cosmopolitan communities and close interactions with neighboring regions. Despite this cultural, religious and traditional diversity, centralized rules were widely accepted within the empire. The Sassanid Empire officially practiced orthodox Zoroastrianism, characterized by distinctive burial customs. Bodies were first defleshed by scavengers, followed by the secondary burial of bones to prevent the contamination of natural elements—water, fire, and earth—by the corpse.

This topic is regarded as complex and contentious among scholars, highlighting the need for more in-depth archaeological research into Sasanian burial practices. To address this, a multidisciplinary approach is employed, incorporating archaeological evidence, pictorial representations, and textual sources.

This approach aims to develop a comprehensive view by evaluating diverse sources contextually, resulting in a temporal, regional, and cultural categorization of burial customs within the Zoroastrian sphere of influence. This comprehensive analysis not only expands and refines existing research in the field but also sheds light on the broader cultural and religious dynamics of the pre-Islamic Persian empires, revealing the complexity and adaptability of these ancient societies.

## Keywords

burial customs, sasanian archaeology, Zoroastrianism, bone receptacles, dakhma

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