

# Anonymous Martyrs' Monument

## A Review on two approaches of landscape making in Iran and Iraq\*

**Fahimeh Farnoosh**  
M.A. in Landscape Architecture,  
University of Tehran, Tehran, Iran.  
fahimeh.farnoush@gmail.com

**Hossein Parvin**  
Ph.D. Candidate in Landscape  
Architecture, University of  
Tehran, Tehran, Iran.  
hosseinparvin@ut.ac.ir

**Abstract** | It is generally essential to study the monumental spaces as the presence of humans in the environment leads to the creation of social environments and builds identity of the city. Due to the importance of the concept of war and the role of the people or the government, the concept of the martyr and its reflection on the art of has been discussed. It includes the construction of memorials of anonymous martyr, and the Unknown Soldier. The artistic representations of warfare, is a common practice in different countries.

One of the most destructive wars in the 21st century could be considered as, the Iraq attack to Iran. It is recalled in Iran with the name of the holy war that took place over eight- years. In the Arab societies it is named as Saddam's Qadisiyah and the first Persian Gulf War. In Iran-Iraq war Iranian people were in the defensive aspect of the war and the other is humanity aspect. Probably it explains why the concept behind this war is not rooted in the materialistic issues and it created a rich literature. So significant differences in the definition of war among Iranian and Iraqis concept of war, in spite of their social and historical similarities exists. It further suggests two different point of view and two approaches to the martyr's memorial. The present paper evaluates some samples of anonymous Martyrs Monuments in Iran and Iraq and also attempts to show how recreating the epic memories and pride of a nation has an important role in connecting the cultural memory of the people for subsequent generations. This study compares the characteristics of Martyrs Monuments in Iran with Iraq and shows how different point of views may make a difference in the appearances, symbols and content of the monuments of war in two countries, defender and attacker. Considerable difficulty in the Iranian martyrs memorials is the lack of expertise in perspective and low attention to the potential of urban suitable spaces in the audience, although despite the technical weaknesses, they are enduring and significant due to their popularity. During time it can improve and strengthen the relationship with environment and daily life. In contrast the monuments of martyrs of Iraq, despite the superior physical features, are not as impressive as their counterparts in Iran.

**Keywords** | Landscape of war, Memorial of martyrs, the Holy war, Unknown martyrs tombs.

**Introduction** | Protecting the war heritage and values is necessary to repeat it in the future, which is done abundantly in the world. It is an environment that is concerned with everyday life. Constructing the monumental spaces in the city has a long history. In the midst of all memorials, war memorials have the utmost importance. With a glimpse to the monumental spaces for recreation memories of the Holy Defense in Iran, in the first instance we have examples like "Shalamcheh" which the destructed lands has been reserved and hasn't renewed. In the cemetery of martyrs, in more cases, memorials of martyrs is just for showing its difference with the other graves are built very simple. Over time martyr memorial monuments like martyr "Chamran" is built in "Dehlaviyeh" where he is not buried and has a stronger design than before. In recent decades the construction of monumental spaces is done outside the cemetery of war martyrs and for the unknown martyrs and have been extended across the country with various functions such as universities, mountains, cities, squares and parks, etc. We can see that they are designed better, but are still simple and hypothyroidism.

The war between Iran and Iraq have been the reason for comparing the memorial monuments in Iran and Iraq that after World War, can be considered the longest war between the two neighboring countries with cultural, historical and religious similarities. Iraq as invading country and Iran, a defensive country with different views on the war, despite the common aspects lead to issues with sometimes opposing approaches. In this paper, we have reviewed the literature and meaning of memorial spaces and then continue with the introduction of the Iraqi Unknown Soldier monument and the memorial of "Alshahyd" in Baghdad (Iraq government center) and Martyrs Monuments and grave of the Unknown martyrs in Tehran University, Imam Hussain (AS) Square, "Kahf alshohaday" in Velenjak-Tehran, "Njalblagha Park" and "Parvaz Park", and we have tried to explain the impact of differences in the conception of war monuments on the construction of two attacker and defender countries. Recognition of Memorial

### The Definition of Memorial

Remembrance, memorial, tribute, commemoration and monument are the words that help to remember such event, person, place or concept (Yari, 2008: 20). Latin equivalent words in the dictionary means are a way to maintain memories ([www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary](http://www.m-w.com/cgi-bin/dictionary), keyword memorial). This recall can be physically divided into two general sets based on the samples. The commemorations that are embodied in the body. (Quoted memories physically) and its main samples are monuments, statues and volume memorials and those memorials that are quoted not physically (oral memories), such as ritual, lyrics and videos. Thus, in order to recall memories, a set of architectural buildings are defined, that we call them the third monumental symptom. Sometimes



Pic1: The monument of the Unknown Syrian Soldier in Damascus, Syria. Source: <https://sites.google.com/site/islamic-architecture/unknown-soldier-tom--damascus-syria>.

this recall is popularized and provides an overall message that can be caused by the ideals of a society or a culture, ideals such as freedom, peace, justice. And sometimes has a specific explanation which refers to the event or place or person in the history of a country that is considered important (Yari, 2008: 20). Traditional Latin equivalent for the words can be taken literally in monument and memorial.

The monument has following meanings:

- 1- A building, statue, or other large structure that is built to remind people of an important event or famous people.
- 2- A very old building or place that is important historically.

### The Meaning Aspect of Memorial

The concept of design of memorial is related to the selected topic. This abstraction using different levels of longitudinal and transverse succession axes in much of the semantic layers 4, is a more concrete expression of its ability to visualize its material as a way to increase formal memorial. Succession axe is a metaphorical structure which performance is placed on the relationship of signs. Expression and concept of this relationship are influenced by the cultural context of language use and has no connection with reality (Sojudi, 2008: 63).

### The Formal Aspect of Memorial

In the formation of the formal aspect of the memorial, the more abstract concept of language system that was created using rhetorical techniques in the creative process, becomes the idea of the memorial in the material body of architecture and two signal aspects come together in a sign of a link litigant. What would reduce the value of a memorial are the concepts that directly and without passing through a phase of creative spatial language, to become an architectural work. In Pic.1 the monument of the Unknown Syrian Soldier in Damascus, and Pic.2, the Monument of Victory



The Monument of Victory Hands in Baghdad, Iraq.

Source: [https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/97/9/Swords\\_of\\_Q%C81%4dis%C%4AByah\\_29%287112414819%.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/97/9/Swords_of_Q%C81%4dis%C%4AByah_29%287112414819%.jpg).

Hands in Baghdad, known elements such as the helmet - in the monument of the Unknown Syrian Soldier - and the sword and hands - in monument of Victory Hands without passing through the stage of creative spatial language, appear in monumental and far from human scale. So they will not be able to establish a proper physical relationship with target audiences of monument signs.

### Public Space and Places of the Monuments

Public space contains the symbols that are the reason of continuity of the public values of community and civil society and contains historical and cultural heritage. That is why the urban spaces due to this content are the center of symbolic public values and express its power and make it crystallized in the environment. Public space is a place for the flow of people's mentality from historical events and a place to present national monuments of each nation.

On the other hand, we also have meanings for the Memorial:

- 1- Something, especially a stone with writing on it, that people of someone who has died.
- 2- An achievement that reminds people of someone who has died.
- 3 - A comparison in the meaning of these two words can recognize two groups of memorial signs. The memorials of important events and for famous people as well.
- 4- Succession axis with the longitudinal motion of a subject to another subject creates semantic layers (Davoudi, 2009: 24).

### The Designer and Different Aspects of Meaning in Environment

Meaning in the environment in general and in a monumental space specifically, is divided into two general classifications,

and the basis of this classification is in control of the designer. These standards are based on written documents and symbolic studies and are classified by John Lang (Lang, 2009: 233). In Table 1 material and immaterial components of environment that can contain meaning are displayed.

### Dependence on Intellectual Authority of the Designer and Monumental Architectural Vocabulary Enunciation

Producers monumental meaning in signs (designer) conscious or unconscious implicit meanings in codes based on their intellectual authority in the way of physical of signs. The meaning of a sign that is intended by the designer to sign sometimes is understood beyond his intentions by the audience who are consumers of the signs. In the general environment reflects the values of the people that form it (Idem: 241).

### Ideal Memorial Sign of War

After each war in the countries involved, some memories are constructed to commemorate those serving homeland and mentioning the name of the dead is an essential component of it. The ideal type of monuments has the following features:

- 1 - Conservative design - using conventional archetypes, sculptures, inscriptions and carvings on the stones.
- 2 - Priority in the design of these monuments is considering the general audience - the use of scrolls and using forms acceptable to the public.
- 3 - Memorial with sympathetically homeland features (motifs) - using the flag - memorial walls with the names of the dead.

Table 1: Various aspects of meaning in environment.  
Source: Lang, 233 :2009.

<b>Under the control designer - of material component of environment that has meaning.</b>	
Configuration of construction	Architectural shapes and patterns can carry the meaning.
Configuration of space	Volume, the closeness of space, spatial proportions are all meaningful.
Building Materials	Visual character and tactile, auditory and olfactory sometimes carries meaning.
Nature of light	For developers, the source of color and brightness has a meaning.
Color	Color and coloring of environment in various scales has various meanings.
Non-visual environment	Sound of environmental surfaces and tactile and olfactory qualities of surfaces and tissue levels has meanings
<b>Outside the control of the designer - an immaterial component of environment with meaning.</b>	
Environment that evokes the sectional or moment event	
Environment more closely associated with a group or individual	
Users of environment with different backgrounds	
Users of environment with emotional qualities	
Changes in users preferences from the environment during the period	
Current activities on the environment	
The name of the environment	

4- Memorial with features of state monuments (attention of common people) utilizing visual elements of stunning proportions in the level and height, use of materials with heavy visual weight.

5- Use the words of famous people about the war, related photos from the battlefield (in wartime), newspaper headline of that time, interview with soldiers, officers and people involved with the war and the use of their memories as inscriptions, carved in terms of providing information of educational - promotional.

6- These national monuments and in dialogue with political and government buildings adjacent to the other national monuments are found their locations.

7 - War memorials represent the positive and negative aspects of war and are transmitted of emotions in relation to it. The more authoritarian government is we will see the virtues of war and flattering praise of it. Covering the war diary (the conquests proud to mourn tragedies), transmitter of emotions involved in war such as sadness, grief, confusion, failure, fear and delusion.

8- Memorial of war has the role of the therapist of wounded audience (responsive to the emotional needs) as well.

9- Reconstructed scenes of war (an identification with the event) using the statues and familiar elements - an allegorical architecture.

10- Conflicting views about the war, considering the two sides at war memorials, victory or defeat (the difference in

the expression of memories with architecture language).

11- In addition to the traditional monumental spaces, places for the parade and official ceremonies in memorial days are mandatory and a place should be considered for light the the candles and lay flowers for presenting offerings.

12 - To use the body language of the audience is at its maximum (in connection with the name of the dead); (Parvin: 2013).

### Study of Samples of Unknown Martyrs Memorial

People who have sacrificed their lives to protect their homeland throughout history and in all countries have the utmost importance and this is not unique to Iran. Referring to the need to honor the martyrs, one of the ways to honor the martyrs is to keep their graves near the place the people's lives and unknown martyrs are the most oppressed martyrs. Unknown Martyrs in each country according to its culture are very important and well-respected. For example, in France and Russia, there is a square named Unknown Martyrs and at certain times of the year is always a special ceremony held to honor these martyrs. Also the leaders of other countries on an official visit to France and Russia, visit this place and cherish the memory of the Unknown Soldier. In continuing several unknown martyrs memorial in Iran and Iraq will be introduced and compared them with each other: (Successful example of it is in the National Park in Washington DC in which several monuments are in close proximity to the Capitol and the White House.)



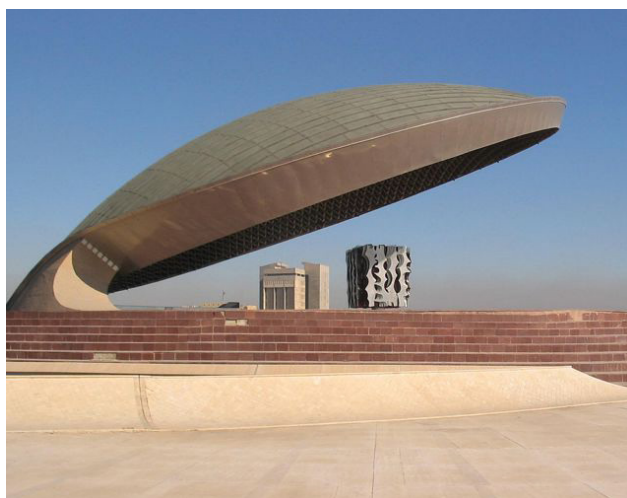
## The Monument of the Iraqi Unknown Soldier - Baghdad - Iraq

- Designed in 1982 by Hisham Monir.

Located in the vicinity of the national celebrations square in which all national events and military processions and parades are held. The monument of the Unknown Soldier is made to honor the martyrs of Iraq, in the Iran - Iraq war. In the political - governmental area and in the vicinity of the monument of the Victory Hands locates the celebrations and parade route. According to the location and features of the site and its design ideology of the Baath dictatorship led to the formation of a government memorials monument features. Iraqis monument with the name of a traditional shield Deira in diagonal situation that protects brave Iraqi fighters from the clutches of death. The monument, as it is observed, is an artificial plate, in the form of a truncated cone, low and to a diameter of 350 meters that the museum is buried in its heart (Pic.3).

The triangular-shaped girders oblique cone surrounded by an oval-shaped laminated coating of marble. The plate elliptical terraced of red granite is formed the field that dome (shield) is placed on it to create as well as the cube (www.architect.com). Using the platform in order to emphasize visual monumental form that has been common in aristocratic - governmental monuments for a long time. Heavy visual and applied form and the geometric symmetry and its center are another feature of this category of the monument (Pics. 4 & 5).

Pic3: The Monument of the Iraqi Unknown Soldier - Baghdad – Iraq.  
Source: <https://sites.google.com/site/islamic-architecture/unknown-soldier-tom---damascus-syria>.



Pic 4: The Monument of the Iraqi Unknown Soldier - Baghdad – Iraq.  
Source: <http://www.michaeljohngrist.com/-7/10/2009bizarre-monuments-of-saddams-iraq/>



Pic 5: The Monument of the Iraqi Unknown Soldier - Baghdad – Iraq.  
Source: <http://www.skyscrapercity.com/showthread.php?t=1093703&page=13>.

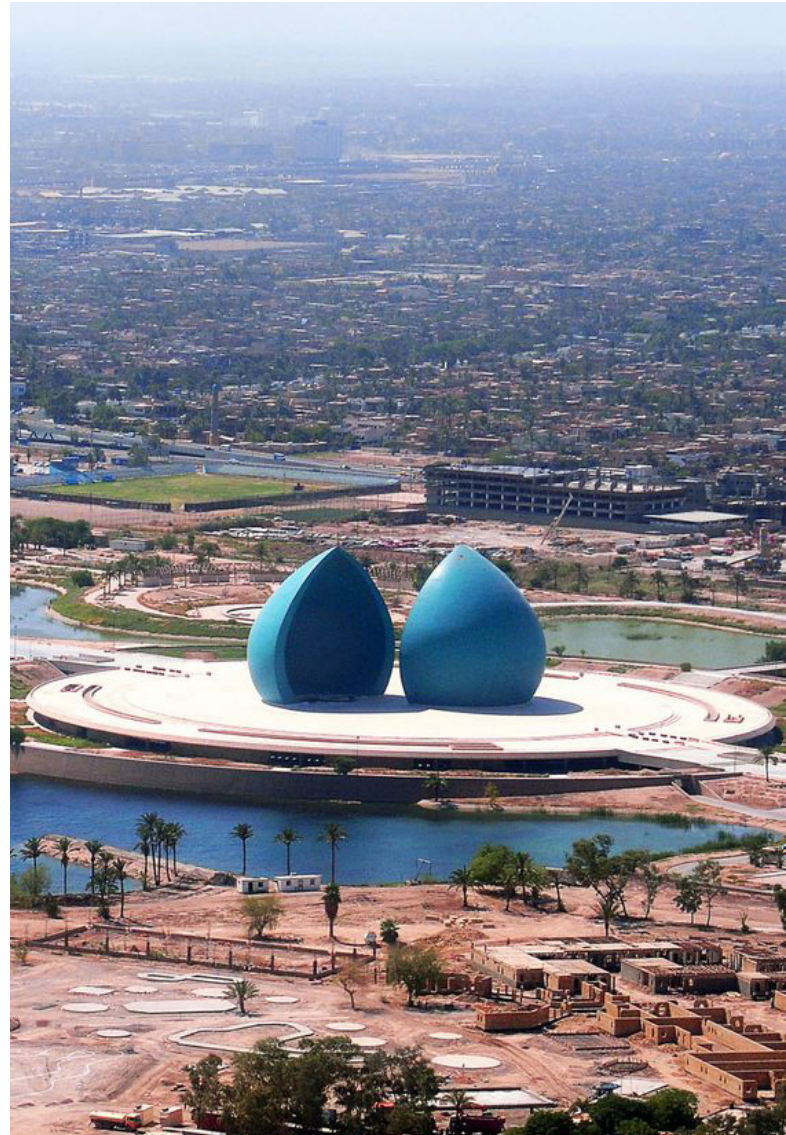


## The Alshahyd Monument - Baghdad - Iraq

- Designed in 1986 by Vejdán Mahir.

This monument is Located in Razafeh neighborhood in Baghdad - in urban fabric and has been assigned to soldiers killed in the Iran - Iraq war. The memorial includes a circular with a diameter of 190 m and is located in the middle of an artificial lake, on the plate of an elliptical dome which diameter is 40 meters (Pic.6). This dome is like Abbasid era domes and covered with turquoise tiles. The dome is divided into two parts that parallels the fragmented martyrs of Iraq in Iran - Iraq war. As seen in Pic. 7 in the there is a statue of Iraq's flag middle of the two domes.

For the common use of well-known patriotic motifs such as flags, in memorials formed in the minds of dictatorships that are seeking public comment is very usual. Two floors of underneath the artificial plate include applications such as museum, library, cafeteria, lecture rooms, gallery and support spaces ( www.archnet.org).



Pic 6: The Alshahyd Monument - Baghdad - Iraq.  
Source: <https://www.pinterest.com/pin/457185799654653141/>



Pic 7: The Alshahyd Monument - Baghdad - Iraq.  
Source: <http://www.michaeljohngrist.com/-/7/10/2009bizarre-monuments-of-saddams-iraq/>



### Graves and the Monument of Unknown Martyrs at University of Tehran

In Iran, unknown martyrs' burial sites have been led to the universities in the last decade. One of these monuments is the simple, no- designing the site for five anonymous martyrs alongside the entrance of mosque of University of Tehran (Pic.8), away from luxury and well-designed memorial, behind the mosque on 2008 dedicated to the University of Tehran's students who killed in Iran-Iraq war (Pic.9). The perspective of the site gradually comes to the monument, but the priority is still with the architecture of the monument. It should be noted that the communication of non-students with the graves and memorials is not possible in normal times.



Pic 8: The Unknown martyrs' burial site- University of Tehran – Tehran-Iran.  
Photo: Housien Parvin, 2016.

### Graves of Unknown Martyrs in Imam Hussain (AS) Square

Imam Hussain (AS) square is one of the main squares in Tehran. After implementation of the reorganization plan of this square and the 17th Street on 30/12/2012, five anonymous martyrs were buried in a simple rectangular shrine in the north side of it and according to the images are still there (Pic.10).

Mehr news agency reported on 19/10/2015 Deputy of the Urban Services of Municipal of Tehran, Mojtaba Abdollahi, notified about the construction and operation of the monument of the Unknown Martyrs on Imam Hussein (AS) Square before Arbacin (40th day) of Imam Hussein (AS). Abdollahi said that a competition had been



Pic 9: The University of Tehran's martyrs monument – University of Tehran –Tehran- Iran.  
Photo: Housien Parvin, 2016.



Pic 10: Graves of Unknown Martyrs in Imam Hussain (AS) Square, Tehran, Iran.  
Photo: Housien Parvin, 2016.

held on March 2013 and on May 2013 between received ideas ultimately the jury selected one of them and with the leading of the group of professors of architecture and urban planning, the final design was chosen. The design includes a concrete 5-sided design, a symbol of five anonymous martyrs, and the head of one of the five-sided is in the direction of the Qibla and the opposite side is the entrance. In this concrete five-sided building is cracked while creating a visual connection between the inside and outside of the building, using the motifs used in the scheme of shrine the species from outside the building. Choosing concrete as the materials for constructing this memorial, in addition to simplicity resembles the strength and stability of the warriors in an unequal battle. Also by using concrete inside the monument, it creates the soft and subtle forms. So that the stability and strength of the concrete from the outside and softness and elegance from the inside, it shows simplicity and this concept reflects and evokes contrasting the main feature of warriors in area of holy defense. Deputy of the Urban Services of Municipality of Tehran continued: there are some concrete platforms in the corner of the wall for sitting and praying of visitors. On the roof is an elegant geometry while creating a hollow circle and on the tiles around it, which is depicted one fo the the noble verse in Qoran will be implemented and visitors from within the monument can see the image of this verse in the sky which is a metaphor for the high places of the martyrs to God and their spiritual journey. (<http://www.mehrnews.com>). The important point about the location of it is that interacts with the urban and its people, in other words, is accessible to all

sections of people all year round.

### The Graves of the Unknown Martyrs - Kahf al- Shuhada in Velenjak

The Graves of the Unknown Martyrs - Kahf al- Shuhada locates at the top of a mountain in north of Tehran, in the region Velenjak, on which five unknown martyrs were buried in this place on 17/06/2007. A distance of 500 soils (without a predetermined plan for landscaping of graves) should be passed into the cave with the walls were decorated with stone that inside is a space with a width of 2 meters and a length of 7 meters. A room with five gravestones in perfect simplicity as though it is far from the urban but reachable for all people ([/HTTP: //www.tafahoseshohada.ir](http://www.tafahoseshohada.ir)); ( Pic.11).

### The Graves of the Unknown Martyrs Monument in the Park of Nahjolbalaghe

In front of the mosque of Nahjolbalaghe park three unknown martyrs' body were buried on 03/11/2010. Memorial shrines were built to form the familiar dome over the graves continued emphasis on architectural monuments without using the potential of space to park. Placing a grave inside the park is a reminder of the grave in a garden in the past with a combination of pilgrimage and leisure leads to increased social control, security and sense of belonging there. In addition the correct use of such a site that is easily accessible to all members of society, could reminds the epic memories and pride of our nation and play a significant role in connecting people and their cultural memory to the future generations (Pic.12).



Pic 11: The Graves of the Unknown Martyrs - Kahf al- Shuhada in Velenjak-Tehran- Iran.  
Source: <http://www.defapress.ir/Fa/News/11076>





Pic 12: The graves of the Unknown Martyrs Monument in Nahjolbalaghe park-Tehran-Iran.  
Source: <http://ayande.blogfa.com/post>

### The Graves and the Monument of the Unknown Martyrs in Parvaz Park

The bodies of two Unknown Martyrs was buried in Parvaz Park, and a monument inspired by the tulip was built with 8 mm steel shell (Pic.13).



Pic 13: The Graves and the Monument of the Unknown Martyrs in Parvaz Park.Tehran-Iran.  
Photo: Housien Parvin, 2016.

**Conclusion** | According to the survey on samples in Iraq and Iran, we can reach the following conclusion. It should be noted that it was impossible to study all dome shape monuments in Iran due to their large number. In the other hand their forms and concepts have been relatively repeated. Due to the evolution of war memorials, the following points can be mentioned:

- At the beginning the construction of monuments, have been merely formed a dome like or better yet, an abstract of the dome and chevron arc or forms. It seems the designers simply considered these forms as the representatives of Iran and the Islamic architecture and form. Selection of the site also was often the burial place of the martyr. At this stage they didn't pay a great attention to the perspective of the site.
- Another point to be considered as an improvement is the moving away from traditional forms toward the minimalism, the essence of Iranian art. Of course, there is still a kind of crudity in design and direct references. Selecting a site drives to the places where the war has happened in governmental or academic centers, but still not to the everyday lives of people. Landscape of Site, gradually affected the design, but the priority is still the architecture. The important and common point in designing the elements of the graves of Unknown Martyrs memorial of tested samples is the lack of experience in architecture design. Perhaps managers do not

pay attention to its lowest potential in terms of attracting both national and international audiences, and promote a culture of defense and scarifying is not considered. In this compares this to say:

- Iraqi monuments and memorials are made based on authoritarian approach and despite a strong design, are devoid of soul and spirituality. For a reformation there is almost nothing to do. Iraqi monuments are of environment - oriented constructions and there is no possibility to make changes in them.
- Iranian monuments and memorials have approaches arisen of people. They are process-oriented phenomenon that can be changed over time. However they do not have a well-designed landscape and the site itself hasn't selected properly. In general sites in certain areas with certain accessibility have been selected, such as governmental and university centers or in areas with difficult access. Recently parks and public spaces have been selected, although, we can still place the graves of the martyrs in public place. Finally, we need to follow the process while maintaining war and unknown martyr's memorials, and we need to come out from the initial state and build the better monuments and memorials.

Due to the foregoing, in turn, comparing the results of the Iranian and Iraqi monuments has been collected in the following table:

Table 2: the comparison between Iranian and Iraqian approaches in designing the martyr's memorials.  
Source: Authors.

Iraq	Iran
Seen from different points	seen locally
The massive scale and superhuman	Small and human scale
Costly and glamorous	Low costs
Near the areas of governance	In different parts with different functions
Professional designs	Lack of professional designs
Minimal and net volumes	Folk forms using several famous symbols
The interior decoration	No decoration
Space with the ability to go and walking inside for the people	Usually in the form of the volume and sculpture to space entry
Made by the order of the central government	Built by the decision of local authorities
Often at the center of government (Baghdad)	In all cities
Superhuman scale	Public scale
A professional aesthetics	A folk aesthetics
High durability	Weak durability
The atmosphere with space	Independent of space, with no idea of urban space and daily life
Landscaping and has around spaces	No Landscaping and has around spaces
Despite the superior physical features, but because of authoritarian approach has poor spiritual dimension.	Despite technical shortcomings, due to being popular, is enduring and significant. In the long should reinforce the relationship of people with space and daily life.
Not amendable	Amendable

## Endnotes

\* This paper is based on a research project titled "warscape and city" which was conducted by NAZAR research center.

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