

Stair-stepped architecture of Hoyeh village attractive to tourists



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Hoyeh village is located in the western part of Kurdistan Province, between the cities of Sanandaj and Marivan, in the Kellaterzan region. Although the village is located in a mountainous area, it is in a relatively hollow place, surfiran.com reported. Among the neighbors of Hoyeh village we can mention the names of Oihang, Bisaran, Serhoyeh and Salian villages. This village attracts the eyes of every viewer with its interesting stair-stepped architecture.

The architecture of this village, located in the lap of the mountains, displays an extremely attractive view. Hoyeh village is divided into two parts.

Like any other terraced village, the roof of every house is considered the yard of the above house. This type of architecture requires less land, and in such a mountainous area, where suitable land for construction is rare, it is known as an interesting and widely used method.

Kurdistan Province is located in a mountainous region. The existence of the Zagros mountain range has given a special beauty to this province.

There are also some mountain ranges around Hoyeh village, among which Zardeh Khani Mountain, which is located directly in front of the village, is the most important.

Other mountains around this village that give it a special beauty are Shah Neshin and Se Bid, each contributes to the beauty of Hoyeh village.

Valeh Mecheh Cave is located in the heart of Zardeh Khani Mountain. Although this cave is small, it was very important and widely used in its time. It is still considered a must-see attraction.

The village has two popular springs and a waterfall which give a special effect to the surrounding nature.

The best season to visit Hoyeh village is in the spring and summer.



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Printed books of Isfahan's Armenians

In the efforts of Isfahan's Armenians to maintain a spiritual connection with their Armenian past, and with their brethren scattered throughout the world, printed books played a role second, perhaps, only to illuminated manuscripts.

The monks in New Julfa set up the first printing press in Iran, and pioneering presses as far away as Amsterdam were sponsored by New Julfa merchant families.

Although early Armenian printed books included practical handbooks, works of entertainment, and histories, the great majority of them were designed to guide the Armenian people in matters of faith. Prayer books of various types, books for church use, and educational publications make up three-quarters of the early Armenian printed books.

The printing of books was above all a European art, and European powers tried to limit Armenian access to it. As early as 1511, a rather secretive printer in Venice (who identified himself only as Yakob the Sinner) was publishing Armenian books. He printed modest works of popular religion, mixtures of prayer and

charms, astronomy and medicine, offering information on the Armenian Church calendar alongside advice on the interpretation of signs.

These books would seem to have appealed particularly to Armenian merchants, away from home and church for long periods. The press had to avoid the Catholic Church's censors; this would seem to explain the lack of surviving information about Yakob. Europe developed and controlled the technology of printing, and the Catholic Church vigilantly limited printing to what it considered orthodox works, thus curtailing most Armenian religious printing.

Furthermore, the Armenian clerics who had converted to Catholicism and guided the Inquisition in judging Armenian texts were extremely sensitive to the areas of contention between the two churches. They fostered an atmosphere of suspicion in which the Catholic Church came to view most Armenian activities as heretical.

Most early Armenian printing was done by Armenians with Catholic sympathies, who were able to gain papal permission

for their projects. Exceptions appeared in places beyond the control of the pope, especially in the Muslim world. Armenians established the first printing presses in any language in Ottoman Turkey and in the Holy Land, as well as in Iran.

The Ottoman sultan Bayazid forbade printing in his realm in 1483, and, except for a few clandestine Armenian publications of the late sixteenth century, the ban lasted until an Armenian press gained a foothold (also, initially, clandestine) in Istanbul in 1695. It fell to the Armenians of Isfahan to develop printing for Armenians. When the Armenian bishop Khach'atur of Caesarea established a school at the monastery of the Holy Savior in New Julfa in about 1630, he began negotiations to establish an Armenian press in Rome. The substantial accommodations he was able to make to papal views were not sufficient, however, and the negotiations failed. In 1636, therefore, Khachatur started his own press at his monastery.

The press of the monastery of the Holy Savior was the first printing press in Iran in any language. This was a remarkable endeavor,

for the monks virtually had to reinvent the whole printing process. None of them had ever seen a printing press; they depended on what information they could gather from travelers who had. The monks made their own ink and paper and employed Armenian goldsmiths of Isfahan to make type. They concentrated on essential devotional books, beginning with a psalter that they completed in 1638. Unhappy with the result, Khach'atur dispatched a learned and energetic member of the monastic community to Europe to learn printing. Yovhannes of [New] Julfa managed to set up a press in Livorno, Italy, where he published a psalter in 1644 before returning home to share his skills. In the meantime, his brethren in New Julfa continued their efforts. The Lives of the Fathers that they published in 1641 gives poignant testimony to the difficulties they (barely) overcame. The paper has a very soft surface, quite unlike the polished paper used in manuscripts, which is often strikingly similar to parchment. The marks of the screen on which it was made are quite evident.



The above is a lightly edited version of part of a chapter entitled 'Importing Europe: Armenian Printed Books' from a book entitled 'Book Arts of Isfahan', written by Alice Taylor, published by the J. Paul Getty Museum. The photo was taken from the book.