

Time Museum, a heaven for history and architecture lovers



By Mahdieh
Qazvinian
Staff writer

EXCLUSIVE

Time Museum, the first of its kind in Iran, is one of the outstanding attractions of the capital city of Tehran, located in an old monument with amazing architecture and unique interior design.

The beautiful and relaxing atmosphere of the museum, located in a middle of a garden, causes visitors to enjoy the time they spend there. You are recommended to visit the museum, especially if you are interested in history and architecture.

Time Museum features a collection of clocks and watches from Iran and several foreign countries including France, Switzerland, UK and Germany.

The old pocket and wrist watches of famous Iranian and foreign figures, along with a number of old, luxury, decorative, mechanical wall and desktop clocks are being showcased in the museum.

This museum's garden courtyard hosts a sundial, an hourglass, a water clock, and a combustible clock, each of which belongs to a specific historical period.

A dragon boat, an ancient combustible clock, made in China, is among

the items showcased in the courtyard.

In an exclusive interview with Iran Daily, Hamid Azad, a senior expert working in the museum, said, "The edifice of Time Museum, extending in an area of 5,700 sq. m, dates back to 80 years ago. However, its garden, built during the Qajar era, belonged to Moayer-ol-Mamalek, Nasereedin Shah's son-in-law.

He noted that thanks to the efforts made by the Mostazafan Foundation's Cultural Institution of Museums, the Time Museum was inaugurated in 1999.

The expert continued that numerous old European clocks and watches, dating back from the 17th to the 20th centuries CE, are exhibited on the ground floor of the museum. There is an artistically decorated collection of mechanical, pendulum, spring-driven, tabletop, wall, freestanding and cuckoo clocks. In fact, in this section you can witness an amazing combination of sculptures, *mina-kari* (enameling), *moaraq-kari* (wood-engraving) along with the watchmaking industry.

Azad continued that a gold-plated French tabletop clock, made of bronze, dating back to the 19th century, is among the most outstanding artifacts of this section. The statue of Aristotle, the great ancient Greek philosopher, is seen on this spring-driven clock.

There is a room on the ground floor of the museum, whose design is known as *shahneshin* (a large room decorated with colorful glasses, delicate mirror works, and beautiful tiling), inspired by the Aali Qapu Castle of Isfahan. That is why it is called the Isfahani Room. About 99 percent of the yellow color of its walls are made of copper, and one percent of gold. Plasterwork by Issakhan Bahadori, a student of the well-known Iranian painter Kamal-ol-Molk (1847-1940 CE), is seen on the wall.

Azad continued that, on the second floor, there is a clock made by Hushang Forutan, from the unused spare parts of old clocks. Forutan made a number of such unique artworks, some of which were displayed in the US in 2013 and 2014. In a circular showcase, placed in

this section, you can see a number of tools used for repairing old watches and clocks. Wrist, pocket and custom-made watches as well as a clock-in machine, made by the Simplex Company of the US, are among other objects exhibited on the second floor.

A number of the clocks displayed in this part of the museum belonged to Qajar kings, including Nasereeddin Shah, Mozafareddin Shah and Ahmad Shah.

Some old astronomical tools such as astrolabe, a replica of Bisotoun inscription, and a number of tribal and religious calendars are on display there.

You can also see wristwatches donated to the museum by a number of well-known figures and celebrities, including Martyr Morteza Avini, late actors Jamshid Mashayekhi, Mohammad Ali Keshavarz and Davoud Rashidi, as well as the famous Iranian physicist, Mahmoud Hessabi.

Address of the Time Museum:
Tehran, Zaferanieh, at the Crossroads of Parzin Baghdadi St., No. 12.

Xerxes' shipping canal in Akte peninsula

After Darius the Great, his son Xerxes became the king. In the early years of his ruling, he had to suppress those rebels who stood against his father just before his death.

Then he made himself ready to fight against Greeks. Xerxes arranged a huge army and crossed Hellespont Strait. Many warships escorted the King. Xerxes' military attack to Greece was quite technical and well prepared. There were two important technical points which should be mentioned. One of them was the excavation of Xerxes' canal in order to pass the warships which was done as follow. First of all, it is necessary to give a brief explanation about Chaldikiki Peninsulas.

Chaldikiki Peninsulas formed from three large

peninsulas which were projected out into Aegean Sea and connected with the mainland of Greece. The most eastern ones were Akte Peninsula and Athos Peninsula were located at the lowest part of it.

After crossing the Hellespont Strait, Xerxes had to pass from marginal part of Athos Peninsula. As the Aegean's storms were very strong, Xerxes' warships became entangled in passing through. So the technical consultants suggested to excavate a canal at the lowest part of Athos Peninsula, so that the ships could pass through, instead of going through dangerous Aegean Sea. Herodotus, Greek author of the first great narrative history produced in the ancient world, declared "... Iranian drew a straight line on the ground near



Sane and each end was given to a tribe to excavate.

Some bodies were standing at the bottom and digging the ground. Some other people, handed the dug soil to some other groups. Those people who were standing at the top of the ladders picked the soil and

transferred it to the workers who were standing on the ground and spreading around the canal.

Except Phoenician tribes, other groups had to work twice in excavating because the edge of the canal they were digging would collapse all the time.

The reason was, that they chose the width at the top

as wide as the bottom. Phoenician showed their skill here as well. They chose the width of canal twice at the top in respect to the bottom, as they dug down reducing the width, they reached the bed of the canal, it had the same width as the other parts of canal had." Jakob Philipp Fallmer-

ayer, a German Tyrolean traveller, journalist, mentioned in his incomplete works about East, referring to some other historians' mote and put some doubts about Herodotus' statements about Xerxes' canal, because there was not any sign of the canal at that time.

They thought it was not possible to execute such a huge work with those primitive tools at that time. However, it is not right to neglect the Xerxes' canal and eliminate it from pages of history.

Besides the Herodotus' report, there was another historian named Thukydides who described the Ploponz Battles. He brought out the following report in his history book, volume 4, "... during that winter, Magerer conquered their own ling walls which were defeat-

ed by Athenian before. After occupying Amphibolis by Brasidas, he moved toward Akte in company with his allies. Akte was the land beyond the Iranian's canal located near tall mount Athos, which was projected out into the sea. Sane was one of the cities belonged to Andries, near the canal.

It should be notified that Thukydides born in 460 BCE, 20 years after Xerxes military expedition. He died in 400 BCE. So during his life the memory of Iran and Greece battles were still alive and people remembered them.

Thus, those ideas mentioned about lack of technical ability can't be right, because there are many documents about the Iranian ability in irrigation and water structures services in the past.