

Urgent need for conservation of Tappeh Hesar in Damghan



● IRNA

Iranica Desk

Tappeh Hesar of Damghan, in Semnan Province, is an expansive prehistoric site situated in northeastern Iran, covering a vast area of 12 hectares. Its historical significance dates back from the late 5th millennium BCE to the mid-2nd millennium BCE. This ancient Iranian heritage site served as a crucial center for production, particularly in the manufacturing of stone and metal objects, during the 4th and 3rd millennia BCE.

Regrettably, the survival of this 7,000-year-old civilization faces grave threats from the presence of two railway lines intersecting the area and the movement of approximately 80 trains daily along the Tehran-Mashhad route. In addition, the detrimental consequences of illicit excavations further contribute to the gradual erosion of this invaluable civilization, rendering it perilously close to the brink of irreparable destruction, IRNA wrote.

According to experts, the passage of trains through Tappeh Hesar would not leave any trace of this ancient heritage. Therefore, it is necessary to take action by re-

locating the railway line, or constructing a bridge for the railway in order to preserve and revive this national monument. Given the damage incurred to Tappeh Hesar due to previous excavations, serious cooperation between the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, and the Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts is necessary for the restoration of this ancient heritage.

Director-General of Semnan

Province's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization Amir Karamzadeh said extensive studies have been conducted on the displacement of the railway, in collaboration with the Research Center of the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development.

Tappeh Hesar, a seven-thousand-year-old mound, was first explored by "Erich Schmidt," from the University of Pennsylvania, in the year 1912. Then, in 1955,

a team of archaeologists from the universities of Pennsylvania and Turin, and Iran's Center for Archaeological Research, led by Robert Dyson and Maurizio Tosi, conducted excavations in the area.

Based on extensive research, Tappeh Hesar has witnessed three prominent cultural phases, spanning from the late Neolithic period to the end of the Chalcolithic era. Excavations have revealed that settlement in Tappeh

Hesar endured for approximately 1,700 years BCE, forming a continuous presence. However, subsequent to this period, no further signs of habitation were found. Notably, during the Sassanid era, an impressive architectural structure, adorned with exquisite plasterwork, was erected around 200 meters from Tappeh Hesar.

In excavations carried out in 2006, a cemetery dating back to the Iron Age was discovered in

the western part of Tappeh Hesar. This finding revealed that contrary to previous assumptions, this area had been inhabited by various communities even after the Bronze Age.

Another fascinating detail about Tappeh Hesar is the burial of the deceased towards the east, facing the rising sun. This custom reveals the significance of the sun as one of the prominent deities in this culture. However, this tradition was disrupted with the introduction of black vessels, which deviated from the norm. Alongside the deceased, a variety of objects were placed, including pottery, bronze tools, utensils, and occasionally even weapons. Damghan, also known as the "City of a Hundred Gates" in history, is one of the ancient and historical cities of Iran. It was the capital of the Qumis during a period, and some consider it as the capital of the Parthian period.

Damghan, with a history spanning seven thousand years, boasts 2,000 historical and cultural treasures. Out of this remarkable collection, 400 have been identified and, thus far, 131 have been officially recognized as national heritage.



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Sassanid burial site discovered in West Azarbaijan Province

Iranica Desk

The first burial site of the Sassanid era in West Azarbaijan Province has been found at an ancient hill in Oshnavieh, marking yet another evidence of the region's antiquity, said the head of the city's Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handi-

crafts Department.

Ronak Tasa stated that in conducted studies, 11 historical sites within the vicinity of the Chaparabad Dam reservoir were identified, and underwent restoration operations. She added that the burial site from the Sassanid period was unearthed during the third sea-

son of excavation.

Tasa emphasized the rarity and historical importance of this burial site, considering the Sassanid period's burial traditions. She noted that various artifacts, ranging from pottery vessels to stone and bone objects, were discovered and are currently being preserved in the Oshna-

vieh Museum.

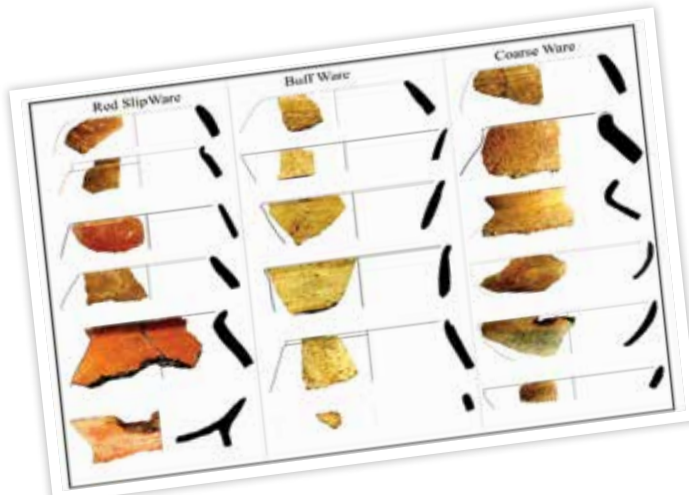
She said the third excavation season at Chaparabad Hill, corresponding with the dam filling process, lasted for 50 days.

Ten trenches of different sizes were examined, uncovering over 230 square meters of architectural remains from this prehistoric settlement

The three phases of excavation have unveiled a small village dating back to the second half of the fifth millennium BCE within Chaparabad Hill. Currently, there are 11 historical sites in the vicinity of Chaparabad Dam, with five ancient hills situated in a zone at high risk of being submerged, and six hills

on the dam's periphery.

She said that the filling of the Chaparabad Dam started in early September of this year. As of now, the water level of the dam has covered the northern and eastern slopes of the site, but the exposed architectural remains on top of the hill remain uncovered.



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