



● Khorramabad Valley

Khorramabad Valley: A potential UNESCO World Heritage Site

Iranica Desk

Iran has been known as one of the ancient human civilizations, which has led archaeologists and cultural researchers from different eras to focus on it. The presence of rugged mountains, unique nature, and most importantly, water as the source of human life in Lorestan Province has turned this region into one of the most sought-after areas for human habitation before recorded history, leading to the formation of the first human settlements in this area.

Khorramabad Valley, with the ancient city of Shapurkhist at its center, along with natural attractions and historical sites such as the seven caves, is considered significant evidence of human history in this region.

Recently, the process of registering Khorramabad Valley as a World Heritage Site in UNESCO has begun, which, if successful, will play a significant role in attracting tourists and boosting the economy of Lorestan Province.

Ata Hassanpour, the director general of Khorramabad Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts, and Tourism Organization in Lorestan Province, told ISNA: Some archaeologists and anthropologists believe that after humans left Africa in prehistoric times, they traveled through Asia to Europe and settled in places like the Zagros Mountains, in a valley called Khorramabad, where encounters between Neanderthals and modern humans took place. He added that some, like Professor Marcel Otte, believe that areas in the Zagros Mountains, including Khorramabad Valley, are among the ancient habitats of human-

ity, providing multiple locations for human habitation.

Hassanpour stated that in this ancient valley there are 17 prehistoric sites, seven of which have been the subject of archaeological excavations, including the Qamari Cave, which is one of the five caves in this valley, making a total of seven with two rockshelters.

He added that in addition to the explored caves, there are 10 rock shelters in the heart of Khorramabad Valley. He noted the presence of scattered stone and pottery chips on the surface of the caves and ancient mounds, emphasizing their significance as a valuable guide for archaeologists. He recommended against moving these chips, as their displacement could potentially mislead researchers and archaeologists.

Hassanpour pointed out the formation of caves, attributing the cavities in the heart of the Zagros Mountains to the weathering of limestone formations in these areas.

Further discussing the Qamari Cave, particularly its western part, he mentioned that caveers had concluded that this cave, spanning 200 meters, was an endless space that had served as a place of human habitation before recorded history.

He emphasized that these sites indicated favorable living conditions for humans in prehistoric times, particularly in the post-Ice Age period. The presence of abundant water from numerous ponds and flowing rivers, along with prehistoric caves, suitable weather, the presence of animals, and abundant fuel from oak forests, collectively rendered this valley a conducive environment for human livelihood, especially after the hunting pe-

riod and during the agricultural revolution.

He also highlighted the presence of historical houses in Lorestan Province and Khorramabad, dating back to the early Qajar period, up to the first Pahlavi era, as a potential driver for tourism promotion and attracting tourists.

Mohammad Jafari, an economic expert, stated that Lorestan Province has significant potential in the field of tourism, but unfortunately, the historical, ancient, and natural attractions of the region have not been properly introduced to attract visitors.

He emphasized the need for investment in creating suitable accommodations, eco lodges, and improving air, rail, and road transportation infrastructure. According to Jafari, Lorestan is like a paradise in the heart of the Zagros Mountains. Jafari continued by highlighting that the Zagros Mountains, particularly Khorramabad Valley, was the habitat of early humans, but efforts to introduce this historical significance have been lacking. He stressed the importance of facilitating the process and creating the necessary infrastructure for tourism development.

Referring to the local hospitality in Lorestan Province, Jafari stressed the need for providing up-to-date training to hotel personnel and others in the tourism sector. He also pointed out that the global registration of Khorramabad Valley would attract international and domestic tourists to the region.

Furthermore, he underscored that the capabilities of Lorestan Province, especially Khorramabad Valley, are incomparable to other regions, and the registration of this valley would lead to the development of the regional economy.



● Qamari Cave

Evolution of knowledge and art in Iran

The word knowledge has been defined as a collection of some logical and experimental information in a particular field. The different branches of science do not originate from a unique system, but there may be some close links or relationships between them such as chemistry and physics. No doubt, earth sciences, astronomy and medical sciences are the oldest kind of human sciences. Our forefathers sometimes believed that there are some connections between the different branches of science, for example they assumed that the human's fate or future had something to do with the position of the stars which was studied in astronomy, though nowadays according to the scientific findings that theory no longer carries any validity. Their attempts in the field of astronomy emanated from their curiosity about their environment and their desire to track down the secrets of nature, but their involvement in the earth sciences derived from their need to overcome the natural problems and harmonize with nature. In the face of all their scientific efforts, if they failed to discover the real cause of a natural process, they resorted to some

superstitions which are still remaining among some nations.

The history of science in Iran is so long that it deserves to be studied for many years. Iran can be considered not only as the cradle of science, but also it acts as a junction between east and west. Richard Frye writes: "Iran has been the territory of the important scientific interactions in Middle east. Egyptians, Babylonians and Indians who were once included in the Iranian territory took advantage of each other's knowledge, and in this regard one can say that Iran played an important role in the development of the ancient sciences."

Some historians refer to the fact that even Achaemenian kings were so concerned about scientific activities. For example Ibn Nadin writes: "After Alexander occupied the Persian capital, he gave the order to translate whatever he found in the royal libraries into Greek, and after he withdrew the Persian sciences on medicine, astronomy, etc. he set fire to the books." Ibn Nadin adds: "the Persians had already made some copies of their books and sent them to India and China for a rainy day. Later

Ardeshir Babakan sent out some officials to those countries to get the books back to Iran."

In the course of the Iranian history, many scientific records vanished during the bloody conflicts and invasions. There are also some scholars who refute the fact that there was a scientific development in Iran. If we can name the mental powers as the spiritual powers, so Art emanates from the artist's spiritual inspirations which may take various shapes such as painting, music, poetry, etc. There are some relationships between the different branches of art as Goethe believed that architecture is associated with music and likened architecture to a "solid music". In Persian language, the word art is sometimes a synonym for the word technique. For example, it is usual to say such term as the art of irrigation, perhaps due to the fact that a technique like irrigation is rooted in the human mind and emotion just the way an art is. Even in ancient Egypt, irrigation was called the art of kings, and the Iranians used to place a high value on irrigation, before & after Islam.



An ancient Persian qanat in Shahzadeh Gardan, Mahan, Kerman Province