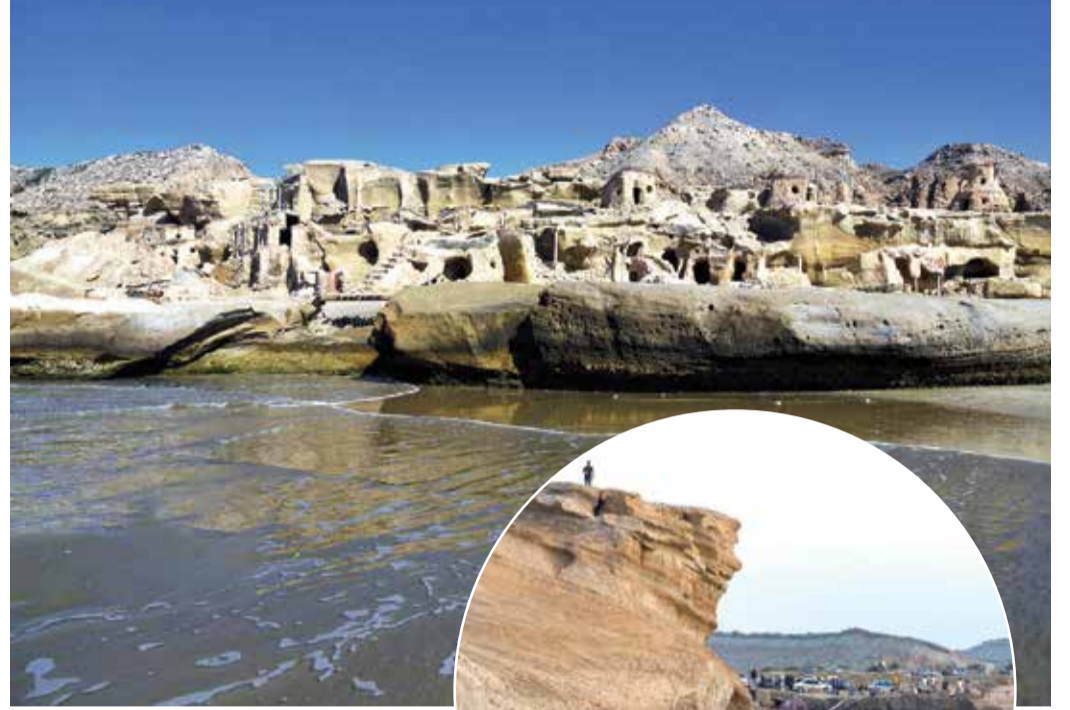


Explore the enchanting beauty of Banood village's rocky shoreline



Iranica Desk

Known for its rocky beach and close proximity to the Persian Gulf, Banood village is a popular tourist attraction in Bushehr Province. One of the reasons tourists are drawn to this pristine and beautiful beach is the rocky shoreline that opens up to the sea. Camping on the beach at night allows for the opportunity to enjoy the moonlight, light a fire, sit on the rocks, watch the bioluminescent plankton, and listen to the enchanting sound of the waves while witnessing the moon descending into the sea. Perhaps the most fascinating part of camping in the darkness of the night is the pleasure of seeing the surroundings at dawn to discover what wonders it has to offer.

After exploring the small beach, take a walk around it to reach a

small hill. If you can rappel down, you will find a small cave on the left, which leads to a larger cave where the waves of the beach and the sunlight enter through its two openings, presenting indescribable beauty to your eyes. Banood Cave is undoubtedly one of the main attractions of this area, considered a suitable place for photography and capturing unique moments. Therefore, a trip to Banood would not be complete without visiting it. Banood Beach is relatively close to Assaluyeh, free from environmental pollution. Therefore, when visiting this area, it's important not to leave any traces behind to preserve its untouched nature.

The Banood village coast, like other southern areas of Iran, can be very hot and exhausting in late spring and summer. Therefore, the best time to visit Banood

Beach is in late autumn, winter, and early spring, when the weather is mild and pleasant. It's best to plan your visit for the middle of the week to avoid the weekend crowds of local people.

As Banood Beach lacks facilities, make sure to bring your own water and food. You can obtain the necessary supplies from Assaluyeh or Banood village. If you visit during the tourist season, beware that the weather gets colder at sunset, so warm clothing is essential. Additionally, mosquitoes tend to appear at sunset, so it's advisable to bring insect repellent for protection. If you're considering camping on this beautiful beach, ensure you have all the necessary equipment.

While at Banood Beach, consider enjoying activities such as volleyball, beach football, and sandcastle building, or simply relax and

sunbathe. As the sea water here is relatively clean, ask the locals for a suitable place for swimming and water sports. Boating in this area is also enjoyable; you can rent fishing boats for this purpose from local fishermen.

If you're interested, camping on Banood Beach can offer a memorable stay in the heart of nature. Alternatively, you can head to Assaluyeh or Siraf Port (75 kilometers away) for accommodations.

The village of Banood is situated in the southernmost part of Bushehr Province, bordering Hormuzgan provinces. This village boasts a rich history, with remnants of a Sassanid dam, water mills, and the Nahire Spring. The surrounding springs, ponds, and palm trees offer an ideal setting for tourists seeking tranquility away from the hustle and bustle of city life.

IRNA

Central Asian collection at National Museums Scotland



When the Department of History and Applied Art at National Museums Scotland (NMS) underwent restructuring and the world cultures collections were established separately in 2004, the Middle East and South Asia (MESA) was created as a section independent from that of East and Central Asia (ECA).

Geographically, the Middle East was defined as an area from Turkey to Afghanistan and including the Levant and the Arabic Peninsula as well as the North Africa, whereas ECA would comprise a territory from Turkmenistan and Kazakhstan to Japan. This division had been set in advance through the interests the respective curators had developed over years before, although with one exception.

Central Asia, which corresponds with what was formerly Turkestan, had been a region with no clear responsibility, but rather a field of opportunistic attention.

Jennifer M. Scarce, while the curator in charge of the collections of Eastern Cultures from the early 1960s had specialised in the Middle East, with the Muslim western Central Asia being part of her remit. On her retirement in 1998, Jane Wilkinson, who had concentrated as her assistant on the Far East and subsequently become curator for these collections, took over the region of Central Asia in its entirety.

With this internal division following the national borders of the late 19th and early 20th centuries, Ulrike Al-Khamis, appointed curator for the Middle Eastern and South Asian collections and succeeding Jennifer Scarce, inherited all those Central Asian objects and specimens that originated from the Turkmen, Uzbeks and Tajiks who have settled in the present-day territory of Afghanistan and Iran.

Unlike North Africa which remained with its predominant Muslim population an indisputable part of the Middle East, the new allocation of responsibilities for the Central Asian holdings neglected existing cultural affiliations.

This inconsistency had to be resolved, and it was felt that for the purpose of best care the Central Asian collection should be split, taking into account Turkestan's longstanding historical and cultural relationships to its southern and eastern neighbours. Following the Arab conquest of Iran in the 7th century, Transoxiana had become a frontier area of the new Muslim empire. Its large cities of Bukhara and Samarkand were hubs of the main trade routes, facilitating the economic exchange between China and the Abbasid Iraq.

As the heart of the Timurid Empire in the late 14th and 15th centuries, this region devel-

oped into a centre for artistic innovations within the Iranian world, establishing styles and forms that continued to be standards for patronage even under the succeeding dynasties. The attempt of Russian power in the 20th century to replace the Islamic cultural tradition by a common ideology for all Soviet citizens did not prove to be successful; rather people have adhered to their ethnic identity and belief. To reflect these strong connections of western Central Asia with the Islamic world, the decision was made that the collections from Chinese Turkestan, now the Xinjiang Uyghur Autonomous Region, which had throughout history experienced mainly Chinese influence, would stay with ECA, while the holdings from the Central Asian Republics of Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan, and Kazakhstan would be transferred to the MESA section.

The above is a lightly edited version of part of a chapter entitled, 'The Central Asian Collection at National Museums Scotland: History and perspective', from a book titled, 'The Shaping of Persian Art: Collections and Interpretations of the Art of Islamic Iran and Central Asia' edited by Yuka Kadoi and Iván Szántó, published by Cambridge Scholars Publishing.



A silk carpet woven in different colours with a blossoming tree, two flower vases and cartouches with an inscription in National Museums Scotland from Iran, Kashan