

Rostam Castle, a timeless fortress in Sistan and Baluchistan Province

Rostam Castle is one of the most valuable historical monuments and places of interest in Sistan and Baluchistan Province. With a history of 500 years, this castle is attributed to the legendary warrior of Iran and its clay and mud facade shows its historical grandeur and grandeur in the desert.

Rostam Castle is one of the famous places of Zabol and its vast construction dates back to the Seljuk to Safavid eras. The area where the castle is located is known as the historical area of Hozdar. There are remains of an ancient city with brickwork, numerous buildings, an entrance gate, a guard tower and 15 defense towers in the Hozdar area. Rostam Castle belongs to the Sistani khans during the Safavid period; those who ruled under the names of Rais Rostam, Rais Bahman, etc. in Hozdar region. This castle is considered the biggest and most magnificent castle of the Islamic era of the region. The greatness of Hozdar has bestowed a legendary historical aspect upon this castle, naming it after the most famous figure of Sistan, Rostam. There is also a collection of about 15 prehistoric hills in this area. Archaeologists have discovered several silver coins related to Sassanid King Purandakht in this area.

Due to its distance from the main road, Rostam Castle is less visited by the people of the region and by travelers and tourists. Despite factors such as weather conditions, the change of the Hirmand River, and the lack of human and financial resources, this historical building is being demolished, and unauthorized excavations have accelerated its destruction.

In general, taking into consideration the historical texts as well as the surviving works of the architecture of Rostam Castle and the accuracy of surface pottery, the construction of this castle can be attributed to the middle of the Islamic era. Rostam Castle was used until the Safavid period. It is believed that this castle was abandoned four to five hundred years ago. So far, no scientific archaeological research has been done in this castle; but the pieces of glazed and unglazed pottery found tell a tale of a long history. The main elements of the castle's architecture are the entrance gate on the eastern front, the guard and defensive towers of the castle fence, the moat, the *yakhdan* (a place that people used to keep their food).

Also, other internal residential facilities are among the other constituent elements of Rostam Castle, which have been

destroyed to some extent.

The awe and strength of the entrance gate and 15 defensive towers surrounding the magnificent castle still shine against the adversities of nature. The beams inside the wall and the towers and congresses of the fence clearly show the defense status of the castle.

Shahneshin: The main elements of *shahneshin* include the central courtyard, north and south porches, a series of different rooms around the central courtyard and the ruler's building, which is connected to the above complex and the security building. In some rooms, by placing bricks next to each other, they have created beautiful lattice-like windows, which is one of the architectural features of the region.

Fence: The fence or rampart of the castle is built using the natural position of the castle from east to west, with an irregular polygonal plan. According to the existing plan, the castle was built based on a predetermined plan; so the northern side of the castle is a very suitable wind-breaker against the 120-day

winds of Sistan.

Yakhdan: It is located in the eastern part of the castle and faces shahneshin, which includes a relatively large circular space five meters above the ground.

Stable: It is located a short distance from the shahneshin. Behind it, there is a long building with rows of mangers on its sides.

Moat: Currently, a moat with a width of 7.5 meters surrounds the castle. Due to the accumulation of soil, the depth of the ditch is not very deep.

The climatic conditions and the strategic location of the region have prompted architects and builders to create a strong fortress for military-residential operations. For this purpose, raw clay has been used, and in some cases, plaster traces can also be seen in the rooms.

Radkan Tower drawing visitors with historical and architectural marvels

Radkan Tower is a captivating historical and architectural attraction of Mashhad, Khorasan Razavi Province, drawing visitors from near and far. Situated in Chenaran, this iconic structure stands at an impressive height of 25 meters, boasting a cylindrical body and a cone-shaped dome. Believed to date back to the Ilkhanan period, the tower's exterior features a striking 12-sided design, tran-

sitioning into 36 semi-cylinders leading up to the dome, while the interior is octagonal.

The tower's construction is often attributed to Khwaja Nasir al-Din Tusi, although there is some debate among scholars regarding its origins. Some suggest it may have been built during the Daylamite period. The tower's construction date is a subject of contention as well, with some

sources suggesting it was built in 680 BCE.

The tower is thought to have had astronomical significance. Some believe it was used for astronomical observations, while others argue it may have served as a tomb due to its resemblance to Daylamite era tombs.

The precision in the placement of doors and vents, as well as the presence of Kufi and Pahlavi in-

scriptions, adds to the intrigue surrounding the tower's purpose and history.

While the exact function of Radkan Tower remains a mystery, its unique architectural features and potential astronomical significance continue to fascinate historians and visitors alike, offering a glimpse into the rich history and scientific advancements of its era.

