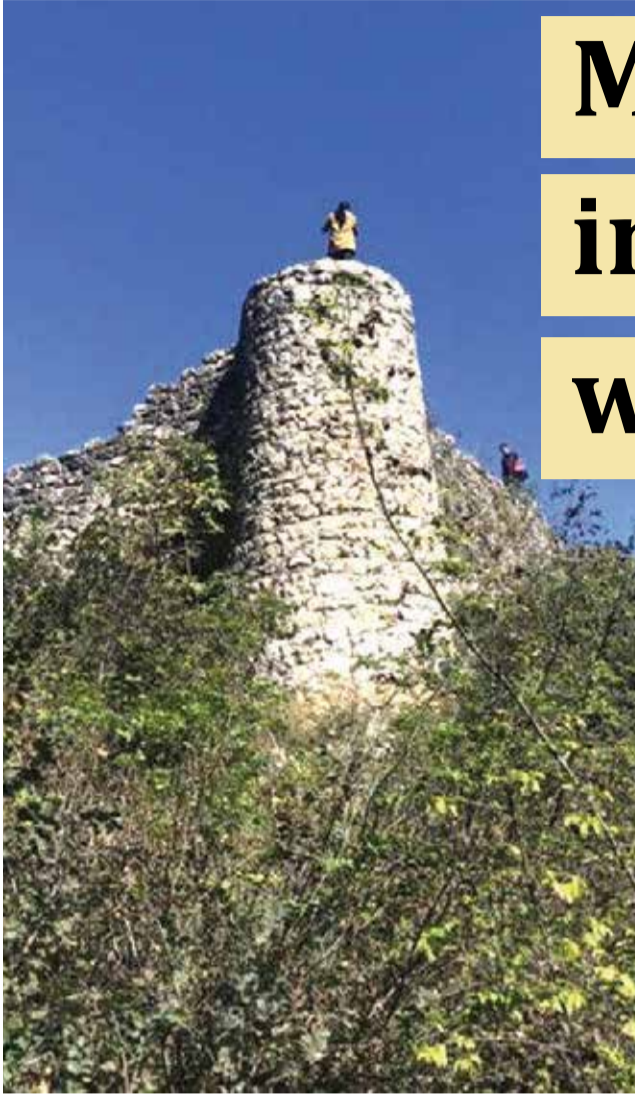


Markuh Castle

in Ramsar, a military fortress with historical significance



fararu.com



lastsecond.ir

Iranica Desk

Castles are significant historical and architectural landmarks in Iran, serving various purposes. Some castles were built for military defense, while others functioned as the residences of city or state governors or as administrative centers. The location and design of a castle can give insight into its intended use. Castles situated outside cities or villages, strategically positioned in mountainous areas, were typically constructed for military defense, to protect against enemies and safeguard the local pop-

ulation. The location and layout of Markuh Castle in Ramsar, Mazandaran Province, suggest that this historic site was primarily a military fortress. One notable aspect of Markuh Castle is its architectural similarity to Babak Castle in East Azarbaijan Province. The castle offers a captivating view, with its strategic position providing a stunning panorama from the north to the sea. The sight of the Alborz Mountains adds to the scenic beauty visible from the castle's vantage point. Additionally, the presence of nearby hot springs, recog-

nized as a national heritage of Iran, attracts visitors to the area surrounding Markuh Castle. In recent years, significant efforts have been undertaken to restore Markuh Castle with precision and care, ensuring the preservation of its original structure. These restoration projects have not only enhanced the castle's historical significance but have also contributed to the growth of tourism in Ramsar. For those drawn to exploring historical landmarks amidst the breathtaking natural beauty of northern Iran, a visit to this site is highly recommended.

History

While historical records suggest that the castle was constructed after the advent of Islam to Iran, the significance of Iranian castles in ancient times and certain architectural clues indicate that Markuh likely originated as a Sassanid fortress. It is believed that the castle was reconstructed during the Islamic period, repurposed for military functions in the third century.

Naming

The name Markuh Castle derives from the mountain on which the castle is situated, known as Markuh. Various interpretations and stories surround this mountain. Some view it as a sacred site, linking its history to the worship of Mithra, an ancient Iranian deity.

Area

Markuh Castle spans an area of approximately 600 square meters. Today, only four side walls and supporting towers of this once magnificent castle remain standing. The entrance to the castle is located in the northeast, leading to a refurbished room constructed from rubble stone, mortar, and cement, serving as the residence of the current castle guard. Remnants of various rooms are scattered throughout the castle. The castle staircase, connecting to the southeast and southwest towers, is the last visible part of the structure. The construction materials primarily consist of stone, mortar, and gypsum. The internal layout of Markuh Castle is spacious enough to house a hundred soldiers comfortably. At the center of the castle lies a dungeon, initially thought to be a hidden tunnel near the coast, but later identified as a water reservoir.



khabaronline.ir

Qasabeh Qanat, one of the oldest and deepest in Iran



Iranica Desk

Qanat is a significant aspect of Iran's historical civilization which recognized as a unique and innovative method of water engineering, particularly suited to Iran's climatic conditions. Across Iran, there are numerous qanats still in operation. Qasabeh Qanat, located on the southern outskirts of Gonabad along the Gonabad-Kakhak route, is approximately 295 kilometers south of Mashhad in Khorasan Razavi Province. It stands as a remarkable attraction, representing a harmonious blend of human ingenuity with nature. Dating back 2,500 to 2,700 years, Qasabeh Qanat is acknowledged as one of the oldest and deepest under-

ground aqueducts globally. In 2,000, it was designated as national heritage site by the Cultural Heritage Organization and is now proudly listed in UNESCO's World Heritage List. The qanats in Gonabad are categorized into mountainous and plain types. Mountainous qanats, often excavated in steep valleys and fed by rain and snow, have flow rates ranging from one to 25 liters per second and lengths between 50 to 500 meters. In contrast, plain qanats, dug in flat lands, travel long distances to reach underground water sources, showcasing a grandeur that seemingly surpasses human capabilities. Qasabeh Qanat, spanning 33 kilometers, comprises two main branches and is renowned as one of Iran's

most water-rich qanats. Its history is rich with stories, with pottery artifacts near one of the qanat wells suggesting its significance as the primary channel. Believed to have been constructed during the Achaemenid period, the qanat has stood the test of time as a marvel of water engineering. The qanat's main branch, stretching 13,135 meters along the Khanik Valley, is estimated to have a mother well depth exceeding 200 meters. Additional branches were dug during periods of drought to mitigate collapses. Dividing the qanat into two branches 683 meters from the mother well was an ancient solution to ensure continuous water flow, even if one channel collapsed or was obstructed.

Canals and tunnels

The interior space of Qasabeh Qanat features impressive canals and tunnels that have been identified through conducted investigations. Apparently, these sections were used to place torches and lighting fixtures.

Best time to visit

Gonabad is a dry and semi-desert region on the outskirts of the central desert of Iran. In this area, in addition to hot summers and cold winters, the temperature difference between night and day can be challenging. The best season for traveling to Gonabad and visiting Qasabeh Qanat is spring.



alibaba.ir