

Artistry, significance of Golpayegan's petroglyphs



Iranica Desk

Human factors are among the most significant dangers and challenges facing the valuable historical petroglyphs of Golpayegan, a city in Isfahan Province, known for its rich cultural heritage and archaeological significance, said an archeologist. Mohsen Jamali added that any kind of line or mark left by human on stones and rocks is referred to as a petroglyph.

He added that the development of mines within the vicinity of the petroglyph sites is a prominent aspect of these threats. Currently, at the Teymareh petroglyph site in Golpayegan, mining activities have become a disaster for these valuable engravings, IRNA wrote.

The archaeologist and author of the books "Petroglyphs of Golpayegan" and "The Passage of History"

emphasized that unregulated tourism is another harmful factor affecting these historical engravings. He noted that the entry of some unaware tourists into the pristine areas of the petroglyphs has led to vandalism and digging in their surroundings.

He added that the level of protection for these historical artifacts must be increased, and tourism should be conducted by trained individuals and in an organized manner in the petroglyph region of Golpayegan. He stated that the existence of 36,000 examples of engraved pictorial and linear designs on the Golpayegan petroglyphs is a manifestation of Iran's thousands of years of culture and civilization in the world.

He further noted that the petroglyphs reflect the history and culture of our ancestors, and because most

of them were created by ordinary people without the orders of rulers and sovereigns, they are considered some of the purest and most authentic documents of human life in various parts of the world.

He added that by studying the petroglyphs carefully, signs of various animal

species that once lived in Iran can be identified. Jamali pointed out that the petroglyphs of Golpayegan feature various animal species such as tigers, leopards, cheetahs, lions, deer, wild goats, and mountain sheep. He mentioned that many of these designs can be studied based on findings from ancient ethnological studies (a

branch of social sciences that examines very distant pasts using material evidence), and it is possible to unveil the mysteries of some of their narrative scenes.

He clarified that discussing the history of petroglyphs may be challenging, and currently, the conditions for accurately dating these en-

gravings of inorganic origin do not exist in Iran. However, relatively, the age of some specific artworks can be estimated, particularly as recent research indicates that the history of some petroglyphs reaches back to the beginning of the Copper Age (the period between the Neolithic and the Bronze Age, starting around 6,000 years ago and ending about 5,000 years before Christ) and extending to Islamic and contemporary periods. Petroglyphs are divided into two categories: relief engravings and incised carvings, with rock art in Iran predominantly being of the incised type. Across Iran, many petroglyphs have been identified, each reflecting the dominant culture of that specific region.

In Golpayegan, there are numerous petroglyphs, and through 17 years of continuous research on various areas of this district, 32

sites with petroglyphs and about 36,000 rock surfaces have been identified, making it one of the largest and most complete collections of petroglyphs and rock engravings in the country. Golpayegan itself is a city steeped in history, situated 170 kilometers west of Isfahan. It is surrounded by beautiful landscapes and is known for its traditional architecture, historical sites, and vibrant local culture. The abundance of petroglyphs in the area not only highlights its archaeological significance but also serves as a testament to the rich cultural tapestry of Iran.

Of approximately 50,000 petroglyphs registered in Iran, more than 36,000 examples have been identified in Golpayegan, underscoring its importance as a center for studying ancient human expression and interaction with nature.

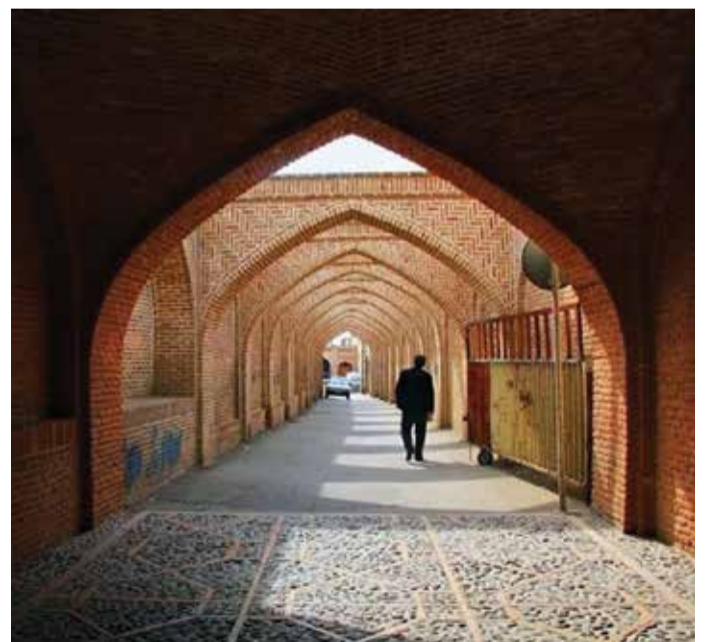
Balancing progress, preservation in Shiraz's cultural landscape



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The 57-hectare map for the historical-cultural fabric of Shiraz, the capital of Fars Province, has been approved by the Supreme Council of Architecture and Urban Development, despite the map and specifics of the resolution remaining unclear. Reports indicate that this plan, which has been a subject of

dispute for years, has been approved in agreement with the Ministry of Cultural Heritage. It includes amendments such as "refraining from further demolitions" and "revitalizing life in the historical fabric of Shiraz."

Shahrokh Kalantari, a researcher and graduate in the preservation and revitalization of historical monuments and fabrics,

told ISNA: "According to discussions I had with experts from the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, this plan will have minimal intervention in the fabric of Shiraz, with no intention of carrying out new demolitions. The 57-hectare map will remain the same as the previous one, but modifications will be made, including the removal of the proposed

boundary by the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and the cancellation of the squares planned for the development of the Shah Cheragh (the holy shrine of Ahmed bin Musa (PBUH) brother of Imam Reza (PBUH) the eighth Imam of Shia Muslims).

Only in areas already demolished in the past will the extension of the Shah Cheragh shrine be permitted.

He added: "In the previous 57-hectare map, a boundary proposed by the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage would have led to the demolition of 95 parcels, 35 of which were either registered on the national heritage list or considered valuable. According to experts from the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development, this boundary and the associat-

ed demolitions have been removed in the new resolution, which emphasizes the preservation of the historical fabric of Shiraz.

He stated, "However, we must wait for more details about the new map to become clear. Until the text of the resolution is made public, everything remains uncertain, and it is not possible to provide a precise expert opinion on the matter. The

concern with the previous plan was that the proposed boundary by the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage would have resulted in widespread demolition within the historical fabric. Experts from the Ministry of Roads and Urban Development have confirmed that this proposed boundary has been removed and amended in the new plan and resolution."