

Tracing trade routes, civilizations in western Iran



Ruins of ancient city of Seymareh
● safarzon.com



Ruins of ancient city of Darreh Shahr
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Iranica Desk

The ancient site of Homan, located in Darreh Shahr, Ilam Province, holds within it secrets from the Greeks, Assyrians, and Medes. Habibollah Mahmoudian told ISNA that the Homan archaeological site, situated on the western bank of the Seymareh River, contains remains of an ancient city known as Homan. The site covers an area of about two square kilometers, showing evidence of extensive construction activities. He noted that in recent years, large-scale agricultural operations in the area have caused many of the mounds and ancient structures to be leveled and turned into farmland. However, remnants of walls and rooms with arched ceilings made of stone and gypsum can still be seen in some parts, especially in the valleys overlooking the Seymareh River and its tributaries in the Darreh Shahr region, according to ISNA.

The archaeologist explained that the site lies about four kilometers from the city of Darreh Shahr and appears to have once served as a loading area and important trade center near the bridge. Mahmoudian said the existence of communication routes and proximity to the river probably made the area one of the main transportation hubs in ancient times. Referring to archaeological findings, he mentioned that decorated and glazed pottery from later historical periods has been discovered at the site. However, this does not rule out the possibility of an earlier origin. Among the artifacts are turquoise-glazed pottery fragments whose style and manufacturing techniques suggest a much older date. Citing local witnesses, he added that until a few years ago, the remains of buildings at the Homan site were still visible, but they have now been completely destroyed. These destructions are



Homan archeological site
● ISNA

a serious warning for the cultural heritage of the region and require immediate attention from responsible authorities. He referred to historical theories about the area and said that, according to the French archaeologist Jacques de Morgan, the ruins

of the ancient city of Darreh Shahr and Madaktu might lie beneath this site. Evidence also suggests that opposite Madaktu, on the left bank of the Seymareh River, there was an Assyrian city called Dur Andazi, which may correspond to the area now known as Homan.

The archaeologist concluded that precise excavation and documentation of this site could open new horizons in understanding the ancient civilizations of western Iran and further highlight the importance of Darreh Shahr in the region's archaeological map. In addition to Homan, the broader Ilam Province is rich in archaeological and historical heritage, reflecting its position as a crossroads of ancient civilizations. The region's varied topography, including rivers, valleys, and mountainous terrain, contributed to the development of settlements from prehistoric times through the Medes, Achaemenids, and beyond. Numerous sites across Ilam reveal evidence of early human habitation, including rock carvings, ancient cemeteries, and remnants of fortified cities, illustrating the long-standing cultural and strategic significance of the area. Darreh Shahr itself has long been considered a hub of ancient civilization, with evidence

suggesting that it was a center of trade and administration in various historical periods. The presence of bridges, caravan routes, and river crossings in the region indicates that it played a vital role in connecting western Iran to Mesopotamia and the broader Near East. Archaeological findings, such as pottery, tools, and architectural remains, highlight the sophistication of local communities and their interactions with neighboring cultures. Preservation of these sites remains a pressing challenge. Modern urban development and agricultural expansion continue to threaten the integrity of ancient ruins, underscoring the need for systematic excavations and protective measures. Properly studied and conserved, the archaeological sites of Homan and Darreh Shahr can provide invaluable insights into the region's rich past and strengthen Ilam's profile as a key area for Iranian and Near Eastern archaeology.

Fresh excavations begin at key historical sites of Qazvin Province

Iranica Desk

The head of the Archaeology Department at the Cultural Heritage, Tourism, and Handicrafts Organization of Qazvin Province has announced the launch of a new season of scientific excavations across the region's historical sites. Mohammadreza Asgari stated that fresh archaeological work will soon commence at Ebrahimabad Hill in Abyek and Kondor Hill in Takestan, while several other sites have already undergone exploration. According to him, the excavation at Ebrahimabad Hill — a significant prehistoric settlement site — has received official authorization from the Research Institute of Cultural Heritage and is

set to begin shortly under the supervision of Fazeli from the University of Tehran. This marks the second season of work at the site, following the first phase also directed by Dr. Fazeli. Outlining the scientific objectives of the project, Asgari explained that researchers aim to study the evolution of early village life and architecture in the 6th millennium BCE, trace the development of agriculture on the Iranian Plateau through archaeobotanical and archaeozoological studies, and examine the ritual and belief systems of Neolithic and Chalcolithic communities, ISNA wrote. He further noted that the upcoming excavation at Kondor Hill in Takestan is primarily administrative, focusing on defin-

ing the site's official boundaries and protection zones. Once these limits are determined, the team will proceed with detailed stratigraphic excavations as part of the second season of work. Asgari also pointed to ongoing excavations at Qestin Lar Hill, currently being led by Kambiz Kabiri, as part of the broader efforts to prepare the site for potential inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Reviewing the progress of archaeological projects conducted this year, he highlighted that the sixth season of excavations at Qal'eh Kord Cave has been completed under the joint supervision of Vahdati-Nasab and Milad Hashemi. The main focus of this campaign was the identification and study of Paleolithic sites in

the area. He said that discoveries from previous excavation seasons at Qal'eh Kord have revealed evidence of Neanderthal presence, dated to approximately 400,000–450,000 years ago. Research conducted last year suggested that the hominins at the site had already evolved beyond the Neanderthal stage, while recent work has explored even older cultural layers. Samples collected during these excavations are now being analyzed in laboratories to refine their chronological context. The official went on to mention the excavation of the Shakin Mine, explaining that the project's primary goal was to collect samples for laboratory analysis. The Shakin Mine, he noted, has

been continuously utilized from prehistoric times up to the present day, making it a unique site for understanding long-term patterns of resource exploitation. He also referred to the Meshkin Hill excavation, another key project undertaken this year. The work at this site has spanned two seasons — the first conducted as a training program for archaeology students from the University of Tehran, and the second focused on defining the site's boundaries and protection zones. Additionally, Asgari reported that excavations were carried out at the Lotfali Khan site, located within the residential area of Avaj. The objective of this project was to determine the extent and

boundaries of the archaeological area. During the course of excavation, archaeologists uncovered Bronze Age cultural layers dating back to the pre-Islamic era — a discovery regarded as one of the most significant findings of the current archaeological season. Discussing the next stages of work, Asgari explained, "After completing the field studies and preparing the preliminary reports, the documents will be submitted to the Ministry of Cultural Heritage for final approval. Once approved, the site boundaries and protection zones will be officially ratified. All excavations conducted this year have completed their fieldwork phases and were supervised by designated research teams."



Kondor Hill
● wikiwand.com



Qal'eh Kord Cave
● bartarinha.ir



Shakin Mine
● Fars