

Temporary world heritage dossier for Seymreh Valley completed

Iranica Desk

The temporary nomination dossier for the global registration of the “Natural and Historical Landscape of Seymreh Valley,” proposed as a mixed natural-cultural site, has been completed following preliminary research and with the cooperation of experts from various fields. The dossier has been submitted to Iran’s Ministry of Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts for review and completion of administrative procedures. According to Sharifi, the area represents one of the

world’s most outstanding examples of the consequences of a major geomorphological event — the massive Kabir Kuh landslide — on the formation of natural landscapes, ecosystems, and patterns of human settlement, IRNA wrote. He noted that the proposed dossier was prepared in accordance with the criteria of the UNESCO World Heritage Convention. The Kabir Kuh landslide, recognized as the largest known landslide in the world, provides a unique illustration of active geological processes in the Zagros region.

Sharifi added that the continuity of human habitation, displacement, and cultural adaptation in the Seymreh and Kashkan valleys over a span of approximately 85,000 years represents an exceptional example of the enduring relationship between humans and nature within an inherently unstable landscape. Explaining the scope and components of this cultural and natural landscape, he said the Seymreh Valley and parts of the Kashkan Valley, the northern slopes of Kabir Kuh, the vast landslide mass, natural dam lakes, sedimen-

tary terraces, the eleven wetlands of Pol-e Dokhtar, and a series of prominent valleys and gorges together form a coherent system of natural and cultural phenomena whose outstanding universal value can be demonstrated in an integrated manner. He emphasized that submission of the dossier marks the first step toward the site’s global registration. Following evaluation by the ministry and review by the National World Heritage Committee, and if approved, the site will be added to Iran’s tentative list for future nomination to UNESCO.



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Restoration work begins on Ivan-e Qadamgah in Arsanjan

Iranica Desk

The Achaemenid-era monument known as Ivan-e Qadamgah in Arsanjan, a nationally registered heritage site in Fars Province, has suffered extensive damage over the years, caused by both natural factors and, more significantly, human activities. According to recent reports, preparations are underway for a new phase of restoration and conservation of the ancient structure, which is expected to commence in the near future.

Also known as Chashtgah, the site is among the numerous legacies of the Achaemenid Empire and is situated on the slopes of Mount Mehr near the village of Chasht-Khvar, approximately 25 kilometers from Arsanjan, IRNA reported. Carved from stone and displaying architectural features comparable to Achaemenid rock-cut tombs, the monument is thought to have served a rit-



ual purpose, or possibly functioned as a tomb or an ossuary. Nevertheless, its precise role continues to be debated and studied by archaeologists and historians. Despite being officially registered as a national monument of Iran, Ivan-e Qadamgah has long lacked sufficient protection and has never benefited from a comprehensive restoration program. Following a recent field inspection, the Director General of

the Cultural Heritage, Tourism and Handicrafts Organization of Fars Province announced that a formal restoration and conservation process for the historic site is planned to begin soon. Behnam Moridi described Ivan-e Qadamgah as one of the most important surviving examples from the Achaemenid era, emphasizing its particular significance in Fars Province due to its rock-cut design and historical value.



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He added that documentation, technical assessments, and executive planning for the restoration of the monument have been placed among the top priorities of the department’s annual agenda. Emphasizing that safeguarding Chashtgah’s ancient heritage is a serious national responsibility, Moridi said orders have been issued to secure dedicated funding and to launch specialized conservation studies,

which will be pursued with determination. According to him, cultural heritage plays a key role in sustainable development across different parts of the province, including Arsanjan. Proper restoration of Ivan-e Qadamgah could help strengthen tourism in eastern Fars, while tourism development based on preserving historical authenticity can protect cultural identity, create local employment, and unlock

regional potential. Moridi also pointed to the site’s proximity to the World Heritage complex of Pasargadae, noting that this creates an opportunity to form a coherent historical tourism route that would increase visitor stays and contribute to the region’s economic growth. Arsanjan is located approximately 130 kilometers east of Shiraz, the provincial capital. Ivan-e Qadamgah is carved into a rocky mountainside and consists of two stone porticoes. These two porticoes are connected by twin staircases, with the upper portico linked to the lower one through a series of steps. Above the upper portico, five large cavities have been carved into the rock, while a number of spherical hollows are distributed around the structure. In front of the monument lies a pool, which was historically fed by a spring flowing from the lower platform of the site.

Reading Room

Legacy of Nomadi Bartaia; bridging Persian and Georgian cultures

By Ehsan Houshmand
Researcher in Ethnic Studies in Iran

Nomadi Bartaia, one of the renowned Iranologists of Georgia and the Caucasus region, passed away after several decades of scholarly activity that significantly advanced Iranian studies in the region. Over nearly six decades, Professor Bartaia played a key role in educating new generations of scholars and in highlighting the linguistic and cultural connections between Persian and Georgian through his teaching and research on Iranian studies and the Persian language. Nomadi Bartaia was born in 1944 in western Georgia. In the 1960s, he officially began his academic career in departments of Oriental Studies, focusing on the Persian language and the cultural and literary ties between Iran and Georgia. Over nearly six decades of research and teaching, he trained many students who later became prominent Iranologists. Bartaia held professorships in Oriental Studies and Iranian

Studies at Tbilisi State University and Kutaisi University, and he also studied at several universities in Iran. This combination of advanced academic education in Iran, fieldwork, documentary research, and library studies in Georgia enabled him to pursue Iranian studies with notable breadth and depth. In addition to teaching and research, he served as editor-in-chief of several publications, thereby contributing to the strengthening of cultural relations between Iran and Georgia in the public sphere. One of his notable works, Persian Vocabulary in the Georgian Language According to Yossef Grishashvili’s “Urban Folk Culture”, was published with the cooperation of the Cultural Office of the Iranian Embassy in Georgia. The historical and civilizational ties between Iran and Georgia constitute one of the most significant areas of Iranian studies. The presence of Iranian heritage from ancient to later periods — including inscriptions, stone carvings,



Nomadi Bartaia (L) and Ehsan Houshmand
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manuscripts, buildings, palaces, fortresses, jewelry, and coins — clearly demonstrates these deep connections. The influence of Shahnameh-based names among Georgians, as well as the role of Georgian elites in Iran’s military and administrative structures, particularly during the Safavid era, are also key subjects of scholarly research. Iranian mosques represent another enduring sign of shared Iranian-Georgian heritage. The influence of the Shahnameh on Georgian narratives and epics

— especially The Knight in the Panther’s Skin, Georgia’s most celebrated literary work — has attracted considerable scholarly attention. Notably, some of the earliest translations of the Shahnameh and other Persian literary works over the past eight centuries were carried out in Georgia, highlighting the resilience of cultural ties despite political fluctuations. The shared historical and cultural foundations between Iran and Georgia contributed to the growth of Iranian studies in Georgia over the past century.

However, in recent decades, Iran’s institutional support for Iranian studies and the Persian language in the Caucasus has faced neglect. Over the last century, Iranian studies benefited from the work of major scholars such as Yuri Nikolaevich Marr, Ivane Javakhishvili, and Jamshid Giunashvili, alongside dedicated figures like Professor Nomadi Bartaia. In recent years, I had the opportunity to meet and converse with several distinguished Iranologists in Georgia, including the late Bartaia. In our discussions, he emphasized that cultural relations between Iran and Georgia date back to ancient times and were never fully severed, unlike political relations, which experienced interruptions. He noted that literary relations between the two countries began in the 12th century CE and continued despite historical disruptions, including the Russian occupation of Georgia. He also explained that many major Persian literary works—such as the Shahnameh, Vis and Ramin, the romances of Nezami Ganja-

vi, and Kalila and Demna—were translated into Georgian, although only some have survived due to historical events. Bartaia expressed optimism about contemporary cultural exchanges, noting that while Georgia once primarily translated Iranian literature, Iran has recently shown growing interest in Georgian culture. He cited the Persian translations of The Knight in the Panther’s Skin as an example of this renewed engagement. Emphasizing his enduring affection for Iran, he stated that genuine understanding of Iranian culture requires firsthand experience and close interaction with its people. After a lifetime of dedication to Iranian studies, Nomadi Bartaia’s name remains enduring. His legacy — reflected in the scholars he trained and the works he produced — continues to inspire those interested in Iranian culture and civilization, particularly in the Caucasus and Georgia.

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