

Bavanat's natural, cultural treasures await discovery

Iranica Desk

Bavanat is one of the scenic and culturally significant areas of Fars Province, known not only for its picturesque natural landscapes but also for its rich historical and cultural heritage, diverse handicrafts and traditional local foods. Highlighting these assets can play an important role in introducing Bavanat to tourists and helping preserve the region's valuable heritage. September 6 has been designated as Bavanat Day. One of Bavanat's natural attractions is Pir Kadoo Spring. The spring lies west of Mazayjan village, about 40 kilometers from the city of Surian. Several springs gush from the ground in the area, covering a considerable part of the surrounding landscape. Large, mature trees near the spring add to the area's scenic appeal. These features have made Pir Kadoo a popular destination, attracting many visitors from neighboring areas each year seeking to enjoy nature and spend their leisure time. Pir Kadoo Spring is also significant from a historical and cultural perspective. In the past, the spring's water was considered sacred by local nomadic communities and livestock herders. During the seasonal migration of nomads from warmer regions to



the pastures of Bavanat, a ritual known as "Gooshvaran" or "Gos-fandshooran" was performed. Local people believed that carrying out the ritual would protect their livestock from disease and misfortune. The spring has therefore become part of the traditions and cultural heritage of the local population. Mohammad Hanafi Recreational Area is another important attraction in Bavanat. Located south of Surian at the foot of Mount Khafun, the site contains the remains of a pre-Islamic ritual structure and is locally known as the Qadamgah-e Mohammad Hanafi. Lush trees and a beautiful spring emerging from beneath a large

boulder have turned the area into a peaceful and scenic retreat. Other tourist attractions in Bavanat include Qanat-e Ebrahim village and the historic village of Shahzadeh Abu'l-Qasem. The historic cemetery of Qanat-e Ebrahim is located alongside the main road in Sarchehan and is listed as a national heritage site. Shahzadeh Abu'l-Qasem, with its lush natural surroundings, historical background, attractive Imamzadeh building, historic cemetery and ancient trees, is another popular destination in the Sarchehan area. The availability of suitable accommodation for travelers near the Imamzadeh has also created favorable conditions for



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tourists to visit the village. Located in Surian, the administrative center of Bavanat, the Jaame Mosque of Bavanat dates back to the Ilkhanid period. The building is not particularly significant from an artistic perspective. Its most important feature was a large carved wooden pulpit, commissioned by Mozaffar al-Molk and made in 771 AH from the endowment of Khwaja Sa'd ibn Mohammad. The pulpit has since been transferred to the National Museum of Iran. Because of its location along the north-south route through Iran and its distinctive climate, Bavanat is home to numerous historic villages. One of them is

Monj, which contains a Sassanid Chahar-Taqi, or four-arched structure. The Sassanid Chahar-Taqi stands on top of a hill beside a river. It was once a substantial structure, but today only four columns and their connecting arches remain. Some experts believe that the building served a ritual or religious purpose and dates to the Sassanid period. A pool in the center of the structure may have been used for purification. Local residents today refer to the site as Heydar Beyg Castle. The Sassanid Chahar-Taqi was deemed eligible for registration on Iran's National Heritage List in 2001 because of its historical value.

The culture and artistry of people are also reflected in the Bavanat's handicrafts. Carpets, kilims, pictorial carpets and woodturning are among the area's most important traditional crafts. Beyond their economic value, these arts form an important part of the cultural identity and heritage of the local community. Bavanat is also known for its agricultural products and traditional foods. Raisins, walnuts, and dried grapes are among the best-known local souvenirs. Traditional dishes also form an important part of Bavanat's culinary culture. Bavanat Day provides an opportunity to highlight the area's valuable assets and draw attention to the importance of preserving its natural and cultural heritage. Its springs, recreational areas, historic villages, handicrafts, local products and traditional foods each represent a part of Bavanat's identity. Protecting these assets, promoting the area's tourist attractions, and supporting local artisans and producers could help boost tourism and contribute to regional economic development. Bavanat Day is a celebration of a land where natural beauty, ancient history and authentic culture come together — a region worthy of greater recognition, protection and pride.

Reading Room

History of money in Iran from Safavids to Qajars

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Money, and for much of history its predominant form, the coin, has been one of the most important achievements of human civilization. For thousands of years, it has served not only as a medium of exchange but also as a means of organizing economies, exercising political power and regulating relations between governments and society. Iran was among the lands that, following the conquest of Lydia, traditionally regarded as the birthplace of coinage, entered a new stage in its monetary history roughly 2,500 years ago, when coins and official currency began to play a decisive role. The book *A History of Money in Iran from the Safavids to the End of the Qajar Period* examines money not simply as coins and a medium of exchange, but as an economic, political, social and international phenomenon. Its authors are Rudi Matthee, professor of Middle Eastern history at the University of Delaware; Willem Floor, an independent scholar specializing in the social and economic history of Iran; and Patrick Clawson, deputy director of research at the Washington Institute for Near East Policy. The book examines the distinctive features of Iran's monetary system from the Safavid period through the end of the Qajar era, including the circulation of cash, the bimetallic — or more precisely, trimetallic — system

based on gold, silver and copper, the operation of mints and the role of the state in managing the currency. The authors show how governments influenced the monetary system through coinage and, at times, by reducing the weight or precious-metal content of coins as a way of generating revenue. One of the book's major strengths is its placement of Iran within a broader regional and global economic system. Because of chronic shortages of money and the absence of significant domestic supplies of gold and silver, Iran remained dependent on the inflow of precious metals from abroad until the discovery of oil. Iran's monetary history therefore cannot be examined separately from global trade networks. The authors trace the movement of bullion and precious metals between Europe, the Ottoman Empire, Iran and the Indian subcontinent, as well as government efforts to control these flows through restrictions and taxation. The book's significance lies in the fact that it goes beyond technical descriptions of coins, their designs and inscriptions to examine money as part of the economic and social life of society. Earlier works had addressed coins and monetary history in different periods of Iranian history, but many focused primarily on identifying coins and describing their physical characteristics or touched on monetary issues

only within the broader framework of economic history. This book, by contrast, explores the role of money in the economy, politics, government, everyday life, domestic and international trade, and Iran's relations with the outside world. Javad Abbasi, a historian and the book's Persian translator, says the idea of translating the work emerged in 2014, after he became acquainted with its authors when the book received the Houshang Pourshariati Award on the sidelines of the 14th Middle East Studies Association conference in Washington. In his view, the book can be considered a pioneering work that uses coins and other material evidence as research sources to provide a broader picture of Iran's monetary and financial history. From this perspective, the

monetary system was one of the threads linking the roughly five-century period from the Safavids to the Qajars. Money played a role in determining government revenues, paying state employees and soldiers, collecting taxes from subjects and conducting transactions among domestic and foreign merchants. Although the ways in which money functioned and was used changed over time, many features of the monetary system remained in place. The relationship between money and politics is another major theme of the book. Iranian governments, which generally had centralized and interventionist economic structures, played a significant role in managing money. At the same time, the value and effectiveness of currency were closely connected to political stability and authority. Changes in the monetary system could also have a direct impact on people's lives. Because communications were limited in the premodern period, however, monetary conditions were not always uniform across Iran. In some cases, the value and metal content of currency differed significantly between the capital and the provinces, particularly in border regions. The book also shows that Iran's monetary developments cannot be explained solely by domestic government policies. The country's geographic position



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and its increasingly close ties to the global economy from the Safavid period onward gave external factors a greater role. Trade relations with the Ottoman Empire, Europe and India, the movement of precious metals and changes in the global economy all affected Iran's monetary conditions. The study also draws on a wide range of sources. In addition to Persian sources, travel accounts, documents from the Dutch and English East India companies, and coin collections held by museums and private collectors have played an important role in the research. Ultimately, the importance of the book lies in its argument that monetary history cannot be reduced to the history of coins and transactions. Money is intertwined with Iran's political, social and economic history, as well as its culture, foreign relations and even the ways in which governments exercised power. From this perspective,

examining Iranian history through the evolution of its monetary and financial system could lead to a reassessment of aspects of the country's past and reveal relationships that have received less attention in conventional historical narratives. The second edition of *A History of Money in Iran from the Safavids to the End of the Qajar Period* was published by Naamak Publications roughly a decade after the first edition. In addition to offering a new perspective on Iran's economy during the premodern period and its transition toward modernity, the book highlights the importance of interdisciplinary research in economic history. Such research can bring together history, economics, foreign relations, archaeology, and the study of documentary and material evidence to provide a more accurate picture of Iran's economic and social mechanisms in the past.

