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An Introduction to Archaeology and Politics

Bahrām Ajorlū, PhD

Assistant Professor, Tabriz Islamic Art University

Abstract

From the very beginning, archeology has been used by politicians for political purposes. Politicians have employed archeology to destroy or create false national or ethnic histories and identities, or have taken advantage of archeology and its underlying cultural foundations to control the social and political phenomena within the society. Furthermore, the significant role of archeology has not been ignored by politicians for the expansion of cultural tourism and its economic benefits. Archeology can be noticed working behind the political phenomena of nationalism, ethnicism, separatism, internationalism and federalism; meanwhile, archeology provides politicians with the required historical documents for them to prove the truth of their political ideas. Archeology and politics are in interaction with one another. Marxist archeology was formed in the course of an enraged ideological revolution which survived for seventy years as part of the political ideology of the Union of the Soviet Socialist Republic. Nationalist and racist archeologists were in the service of the totalitarian governments so that the community may accept their historical legitimacy. In the occupied Palestine, too, the Zionist regime has been using archeology to give a historical embodiment to the ancient Israeli utopia; similarly the European Union has used this method to change the historical divergence of the European nations to the twenty first convergences. Whereas archeology has no way but to be engaged in politics, it seems that the only solution lies in realizing the global perspective of archeology within the framework of the common heritage of mankind further to the development of an anthropological approach to archeology.

Keywords: *archaeology, politics, Colonialism, Marxism, Nationalism, Zionism, European Union*

Cultural Characteristics of North-Western Iran during Parthian Period

With a View to Findings of the Second Season of Explorations in the Old Mound of Pāsgāh Tappeh Si

Bāyrām Āqālāri

MA in Archaeology, University of Tehran

Mostafā Dehpahlevān

PhD Candidate in Archaeology of Historical Periods, University of Tehran

Abstract

The North Western part of Iran belonged to the semi-autonomous province of Atropatene. The region witnessed several political and cultural events and developments during the Parthian Period; however, in its study and exploration, we are in short of cultural material relating to this period, a fact also admitted by Herring and Kāmbakhshfard. In the course of the past two decades, numerous field studies and researches have been conducted in the region investigation of whose findings will provide us with a clearer understanding of the Parthian rule in the North West of Iran. The issue at point is the old mound of Pāsgāh Tappeh Si which was explored in parallel with the project for saving the dam of *Khodā-āfarin* and other areas in two seasons. As a result of the material poverty of the region during the Parthian Period, the material and data derived from the region will definitely be able to fill, though partially, some of the gaps and material as well as cultural ambiguities and the manner of cultural interactions in the region. To this end, authors of the present article, have endeavored to introduce and carry out a comparative study of the findings of the Parthian Period belonging to this period together with other regions which were concurrent with it, with the aim to take an effective step in the qualitative and quantitative study of the data and the amount of bilateral interactions in the North West of Iran and the neighboring regions during the Parthian Period.

Keywords: *Parthian, Atropatene, North West, Khodā-āfarin, old mound of Pāsgāh Tappeh Si*

Designing Green Routes to Connect Natural-Historical Inner City Structures

(Case Study: Shahr-e Rey)

Maryam Berenji

MA in Environmental Design, Faculty of Environment, University of Tehran

Homā Irāni-Behbahāni

Associate Professor, Faculty of Environment, University of Tehran

Abstract

With the increasing trend in the expansion of urban areas in recent years, in addition to the gradual decrease in the number of intra-city natural environments, the link between natural environments has also faded away in such a way that the inter-city natural environments are enclosed like some separated spots within the urban area. On the other hand, similar to natural environments, the inter-city historical places, known as the only traces left from previous civilizations, are at risk of destruction with their quality being degraded. As its major objective, the present article seeks to preserve and provide links among the natural and historical structures within and outside the urban areas, aimed at building a coherent and interlinked network of historical and natural structures. The study uses two environmental approaches, landscape and history, to have a comprehensive perspective towards both natural and historical structures. Methodology of the present study includes: data collection and analysis, specifying the natural and historical structures in Shahr-e Rey, matching the natural and historical structures to reach the major links between them with the purpose of creating green routes, defining the major green routes and finally defining a natural-historical network. To accomplish the research objective, Shahr-Rey was selected as the sample of the study as it is a historical city with thousands of years of civilization and numerous natural potentials including green and open spaces within and outside its urban area. The article concludes by offering a strategic plan to create a network of green routes linking history to nature both to preserve the natural and historical intra-city structures and to create a unified and coherent network between the two.

Keywords: *nature, history, coherence, green route, city, Rey*

Archaeological Analysis of Early Bronze Age Distributions in Northwest of Iran

Ahmad Chāychi Amirkhiz, PhD

Iranian Center of Archaeological Research

Abstract

Early Bronze Age (EBA) in the Middle East is considered to be the dawn of civilization, spread of writing, and proto-urbanism; and Mesopotamia was the center of these historical events.

Cultural material remains at the beginning of this period in this vast area – including Western Iran, Caucasus (also beyond), Anatolia, Levant and Northern Mesopotamia – have wonderful similarities in spite of different names (EBA, Trans-Caucasian, Yanig culture, Kura-Arax culture).

Unluckily, for many reasons Archaeological researches focused on this vast area like Caucasus separately. For recent three decades there have been numerous surveys and excavations and multi-disciplined studies in western Iran. It seems EBA culture spreads out to Central Plateau of Iran so that the core of this culture could be Arax-Urmia-Kura basin.

Presented here are the results of an archaeological analysis on Early Bronze Age from Northwest of Iran, Central Zagros, Central Plateau of Iran and borderlands using some scientific information and data such as GIS and obsidian provenance studies.

Keywords: *Early Bronze Age, Northwest of Iran, Central Zagros, Central plateau of Iran*

Recognition of Metal Sources Used for Extracting Silver for Minting Parthian Coins in the Medes Province by the PIXE Method

Bitā Sodāei

PhD Candidate in Archaeology, Department of Archaeology, Tarbiat Modares University

Farhang Khādemi Nadooshan, PhD

Assistant Professor of Archaeology, Tarbiat Modares University

Javād Neyestāni, PhD

Assistant Professor of Archaeology, Tarbiat Modares University

Muhammad Nāyebpur, PhD

Assistant Professor, University of Law Enforcement Sciences, Tehran

Abstract

Sources which were used for minting coins may help us recognize the mines that Parthians used for mint houses that were marked on their coins. These signs may solve many politico-economic issues or may even lead to the recognition of their mines.

The coins under study were related to Ecbatana mint house and were extracted from silver mines through cupellation. The chemical composition of these coins was similar to those extracted for minting coins. In addition to the re-melting of metals, the increased population and expansion of business made new sources for minting coins necessary.

In this article, we try to recognize mines and workshops used for minting coins by examining chemical compositions of Parthian coins, and determine the least number of metal workshops for minting coins at the time of the rulers of that dynasty.

Keywords: *Parthians, Medes, coins, silver, mint houses, chemical compositions*

**Presentation of 12 Kinds of Stucco Works Used in the Architectural
Decoration of the Islamic Period in Iran
Based on Technical Properties**

Ahmad Sālehi Kākhki, PhD

Assistant Professor, Art University, Isfahan

Hesām Aslāni

PhD Candidate of Art University, Isfahan

Abstract

According to technical presages, in the preliminary studies, we have found that there are at least 12 different kinds of stucco decorations belonging to the Islamic periods of Iran. Technical executive details in each kind of these decorations depending on composition and method of treatment, manner of forming, and measure of relieve are different. Unlike two common categorizations which are based on method of forming and/ or measure of relieve, this kind of new categorization has founded on technical details and executive methods. Therefore it can be more suitable for conservation and restoration goals, technological and archeological aims, as well as in scientific research for understanding and presentation of traditional methods and technology used to create these works of art. The results of these studies have lead us to a technical classification of stucco decorations that contains: high relief, semi relief, mould stucco, *Koshtehbori*, *Cupbori*, combined with tile or glass, *Tongbori*, lattice, and coiled paste on the flat mirror, combined with Simgel, and mosaic stucco decorations.

Keywords: *Iran, Islamic period, Architectural decorations, Stucco, Technology*

Trends in Evolution of Pottery in Qal'eh Khān, Bojnūrd

Vahid Askarpūr

PhD Candidate, Prehistoric Archaeology, University of Tehran

Emrān Gārāzhiān, PhD

PhD in Prehistoric Archaeology, University of Tehran

Abstract

Relying upon the theories concerned with the cultural evolution of anthropology and archaeology, and providing a brief review of the related literature, the present article conducts a careful examination of the evolutionary trends in pottery of the layers from the prehistoric periods of Qal'eh Khān. Testing several variables affecting pottery, the article proposes that while cultural evolutionism can describe and partly clarify the chronological evolution of cultural items, it will not be possible to carry out a comprehensive analysis of such evolutions and therefore realistic interpretations cannot be provided without due consideration of the environment (including the landscape, social organization, internal and external social relations, relations with other environmental contents, and interactions with the environment). It is argued that, from among a variety of statistical analyses, while the evolution of pottery is moving towards complexity and development, this is not indicative of its technological evolution. Pottery has undergone evolution, in the course of history, by changing from one form to another and matching to its environment.

Keywords: *evolutionary archeology, cultural evolution, pottery, Qal'eh Khān*

Relative and Absolute Dating of Sagzābād Mound, Qazvin Plain

Hasan Fāzeli Nashli, PhD

Faculty Member, Department of Archeology, University of Tehran

Hojjat Dārābi

PhD Candidate in Archeology, University of Tehran

Yūsef Fallāhiyān

Faculty Member, Archeological Research Center

Abstract

Sagzābād Mound was one of the first areas excavated in the course of archeological surveys conducted by the University of Tehran in Qazvin Plain. Findings indicate its permanent establishment since the end of the third millennium up to the mid-first millennium B.C.; However, during the recent explorations made by the University of Tehran in October and November 2008, absolute dating was carried out on Sagzābād Mound as a result of which the area was estimated to have been established at around 1700 B.C., in addition to the southern part of the Mound which contained layers established since the mid-fourth millennium B.C. Excavations revealed that the area between the two regions of Sagzābād and Qabrestān is likely to contain layers established in the second half of the fourth millennium B.C. buried under a large amount of sediment. Accordingly, it is most probable that in the New Chalcolithic (Copper-Stone) Age the establishment of Qabrestān Mound must have been towards the east.

Keywords: *Sagzābād Mound, absolute dating, relative dating, New Chalcolithic (Copper-Stone) Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age*

Location of Fourfold Fire Temples of Mihr Narseh
(A Study of Fire Temples along Bishapour-Ardashir Khorrah Route)

Javad Neyestani, PhD

Assistant Professor, Department of Archeology, Tarbiat Modares University

Abbas Namjoo

Student, Department of Archeology, Tarbiat Modares University

Mehdi Mousavi, PhD

Assistant Professor, Department of Archeology, Tarbiat Modares University

Farhang Khademi Nadooshan, PhD

Associate Professor, Department of Archeology, Tarbiat Modares University

Abstract:

Based on writing of Tabari as well as other historical researches, Mihr Narseh, Prime Minister of Bahram V (421-439 AD) founded a number of buildings in the province of Ardashir Khorrah. Among public utility buildings, he built four fire temples in four villages in Baryn plains of the same province. The current paper tries to find the exact locations of those temples based on references available in historical sources, studying communication routes between the city of Bishapour and Ardashir Khorrah as well as field and archeological studies about the features of existing fire temples along the two actual routes linked these two cities. Consequently, principal archeological researches have critically been studied and suggestions were presented for determining the location of the abovementioned fire temples.

Keywords: *Ardashir Khorrah, Bishapour, Sassanid, Fars, Mihr Narseh*

An Analytical Look at Archaeology and Its Place in Iran

Simā Yadollāhi, PhD

Assistant Professor, University of Tehran

Abbās Yalveh'i

Abstract

Almost a century and a half ago, the name or concept of archeology was not commonly known in Iran. As a branch of human sciences, archeology emerged in Iran as a consequence of the political-economic influence of the West, and reached its present condition after many vicissitudes; presently, therefore, archeology has penetrated into diverse levels of the Iranian society. This, however, is a very general statement; by a survey on the overall outlook of archeology in Iran, it is very much noticed that there is the need for a criticism, which is by itself something natural. Concerning the definitions given to archeology as a word, a field, or a craft, several cultural layers can be distinguished at the present time: common people who constitute the major corpus of the society; educated people who are not archeologists; politicians and lords of media, mainly those of the radio and television who represent the political system, and finally the Iranian archeological society, which includes university professors and students and those working in the field. With a view to the general cultural, social and historical conditions in Iran, it is expected that there be differences and similarities among the above four classes in terms of their interpretation of archeology, awareness of which can be useful and serve as a source of warning for the Iranian archeology and the archeological society of Iran.

Keywords: *Iranian archeology, theoretical foundations, different social layers, media, problems, strategies and solutions*