

## In Case You Missed

### Cat Goddess Temple Found in Egypt

Archeologists have unearthed a 2,000-year-old temple that may have been dedicated to the ancient Egyptian cat goddess, Bastet, the Supreme Council of Antiquities said on Tuesday.

The ruins of the Ptolemaic-era temple were discovered by Egyptian archeologists in the heart of the Mediterranean port city of Alexandria, founded by Alexander the Great in the 4th century BC.

The city was the seat of the Greek-speaking Ptolemaic Dynasty, which ruled over Egypt for 300 years until the



suicide of Queen Cleopatra.

The statement said the temple was thought to belong to Queen Berenice, wife of King Ptolemy III who ruled Egypt in the 3rd century BC.

Mohammed Abdel-Maqsood, the Egyptian archeologist who led the excavation team, said the discovery may be the first trace of the long-sought location of Alexandria's royal quarter.

The large number of statues depicting Bastet found in the ruins, he said, suggested that this may be the first Ptolemaic-era temple dedicated to the cat goddess to be discovered in Alexandria.

This would indicate that the worship of the ancient Egyptian cat goddess continued during the later, Greek-influenced, Ptolemaic period, he said.

Statues of other ancient Egyptian deities were also found in the ruins, he added.

Zahi Hawass, Egypt's chief archeologist, said the temple may have been used in later times as a quarry as evidenced by the large number of missing stone blocks.

Modern Alexandria was built squarely on top of the ruins of the classical-era city and many of its great temples, palaces and libraries remain undiscovered.

The temple was found in the Kom El-Dekkah neighborhood near the city's main train station and home to a Roman-era amphitheater and well preserved mosaics.

### Sherlock Holmes Britain's Attraction

Sherlock Holmes the movie has already made more than \$300 million at the box office worldwide and British tourism officials are hoping it means money for them too.

Britain's tourism board has been promoting films for the past 15 years, so they know just how lucrative a movie like "Sherlock Holmes" can be, CNN reported.

"To give you an example of a typical blockbuster film, it is normally seen by about 120 million people in the first three weeks of opening," British tourism official, Laurence Bash, told CNN.

"Even if a small percentage of those come to visit Britain as a result of this particular film, that's going to have a huge boost in some of those tourism attractions featured in our promotion."



As much of "Sherlock Holmes" is set in London, this means big business for museum officials and gift shop operators.

The Sherlock Holmes Museum at 221b Baker Street is the address where the fictional detective lived, according to the stories by Conan Doyle.

Nearby, a nine-foot statue of Holmes greets visitors at the Baker Street Underground station.

Inside the museum, visitors can check out Holmes' study, sit in his armchair by the fireside, examine his calabash pipe and observe his chemistry equipment.

About 70,000 visitors a year stop by the Victorian lodging house, though officials are expecting a spike of interest fueled by the new movie.

While thousands of tourists flock to visit the museum, many of its visitors are unaware that Sherlock Holmes was not a real person.

# Anahita Neglect Criticized



The ancient temple of Anahita in Kangavar, Kermanshah province, is poorly maintained, claimed a media report.

Iron beams and construction materials stored around the historical site threaten Anahita Temple, Mehr News Agency reported.

The report carried pictures showing concrete foundations that have not yet dried and construction materials stored around the ancient temple, which have outraged archeologists. They have voiced serious concerns over the issue.

The construction work at the site has begun, despite the fact that cultural heritage regulations forbid any construction around historical sites.

The building is believed to have been a temple dedicated to Anahita, the guardian angel of water, fertility, war and the patroness of women.

#### > Origin

On the road from Tehran to the city of Kermanshah, one passes through the valley of Asadabad before reaching the small town of Kangavar. There lie the ruins of a majestic historical site.

The site is known as Anahita Temple, which was built by Achaemenian Emperor Artaxerxes II (Artaxerxes II), 404 BC to 359 BC.

Kangavar was mentioned by Greek geographer Isidore of Charax in the first century AD, under the name of Konkobar in the ancient province of Egbatana; its name may be derived from the Avestan Kanha-vara (enclosure of Kanha).

The temple was built in honor of "Ardevisur Anahita," the female guardian angel of waters.

The architecture of this temple resembles those of palaces and temples built during the Achaemenian period, 550 BC to 330 BC, in western Iran. Large pieces of stone were cut and shaped into blocks of rock. They were placed on top of each other; their shape usually causes them to interlock to form a wall or platform by a mountaintop.

The Arab geographer Yaqout wrote of Kangavar in 1220 that the place was the haunt of bandits, locally called Qasr-i Shirin, 'Castle of Shirin' after Khosro's fa-



vorite wife, or Qasr Al-Lasus, the 'Robber Castle'. He wrote: "The Robber Castle is a very remarkable monument and there is a platform some 20 cubits above the ground and on it are vast portals, palaces and pavilions, remarkable for their solidity and their beauty."

Shapes and carvings of the columns in temple are similar to those found in Persepolis and the Palace of Darius in Susa.

#### > Investigations

In the 19th century, various Europeans investigated the ruins. Ker Porter in 1818 found them to form the foundations of a single huge platform--a rectangular terrace 300

yards square, crowned with a colonnade.

Professor Jackson in 1906 found one very well-preserved retaining wall at the northwest corner of the enclosure, probably part of the foundation of a single building; it was 12 to 15 feet high and runs north to south for more than 70 feet.

According to classic historians, the temple of Anahita at Ecbatana was a vast palace, four-fifths of a mile in circumference, built of cedar or cypress. In all of it, not a single plank or column stood but was covered by plates of silver or gold. Every tile of the floors was made of silver and the whole building was apparently lined with bricks of silver and gold.

It was first plundered by Alexander in 335 BC, which



continued during the reigns of Antigonos (BC 325-301) and Seleucus Nicator (BC 312-280).

But when Antiochus the Great arrived at the city in 210 BC, he found columns covered with gold and silver tiles piled up in the temple, along with gold and silver bricks.

Archeological excavations also uncovered layers belonging to Sassanian dynasty.

Traveling further down the road toward Kermanshah would take the traveler to another ancient site known as Taq-e-Bostan. Here, several Taqs (arches) were carved with detailed inscriptions commemorating a major event

of Charax, that refers to a "temple of Artemis" (Parthian Stations 6).

References to Artemis in Iran are generally interpreted to be references to Anahita, and thus Isidore's "temple of Artemis" came to be understood as a reference to Anahita Temple.

It has been commonly believed that the site was a "columnar Roman Temple form", with the architectural emphasis being on the temenos.

Karim Pirnia, one of the proponents of this theory, believes that the construction belongs to the Parthian style of Iranian architecture that underwent renovations in the Sassanid period.

Warwick Ball considers the structure "one of the greatest works of Parthian architecture" which has an "eastern Roman Temple form", with the architectural emphasis being on the temenos.

As with Arthur Upham Pope (1965, 1971), Ball (2001) also agrees that the temple architecturally "recalls Achaemenid traditions". These and a number of other scholars continue to examine the site as being possibly attributed to Anahita.

In 1981, a report by an excavator of the site, Massoud Azarnoush, contended that the construction "did not have the necessary characteristics that could identify it as a temple". Ali Akbar Sarfaraz, former head of the archeology team of Tehran University, shares this opinion. The popular theory held by this group is that the ruin is of a late Sassanian palace.

A third group contends that the site was originally constructed during the Achaemenid rule and underwent several phases of construction. Of this group, one can mention archeologist S. Kambakhsh Fard.

#### > Dispute Over Date

Originally, 200 BC was proposed as the date of the site's construction. Under the Parthians, any observable western influence can just as well be a survival from the Hellenistic period, which is why the monument at Kangavar was once acceptably dated as an early Parthian work, while recent investigations proved it to be late Sassanian.

In this regard, Warwick Ball states: "Earlier studies favored a Seleucid date, with some suggesting an Achaemenid date for the platform. A date in the Parthian pe-



of the era.

The largest and latest Taq depicted the celebration of the coronation of Khosro Parviz. In the upper section of the Taq, Khosro's image is carved receiving his crown from the highest priest of the time under the protection of Anahita.

#### > Identity Disputed

Dispute exists among scholars on the identity of the main structure at the site.

Excavation first began in 1968, by which time the large structure with its great columns set on a high stone platform had been associated with a comment by Isidore

riod has since been more generally favored on stylistic grounds, but recent excavations found evidence of major Sassanian construction. However the colonnaded temenos is different in almost every respect to Sassanian architecture."

Probably, the temple underwent numerous major reconstruction periods, with perhaps a 2nd century AD date for the colonnaded temenos and major Sassanian reconstruction of the sanctuary building inside.

None of these disputes can hide the fact that Anahita Temple is of great historical significance and deserves to be maintained in a manner befitting an ancient monument.