

## In Case You Missed

## Ancient Roman City Found in Libya

Italian archeologists have discovered the remains of an ancient Roman city submerged off the coast of Libya.

The remains of the city date back to 2nd century AD and were found by archeologists and experts from Sicily and the University Suor Orsola Benincasa of Naples, involved in the ArCoLibia archeology project, IANS reported.

The discovery took place on the Cape of Ras Eteen on the western side of Libya's Gulf of Bumbah, as archeologists



were searching the area for shipwrecks and the remains of ancient ports.

Archeologists instead found walls, streets and the remains of buildings and ancient tombs. After a careful analysis, the experts realized the area extended over a hectare.

Experts also said that the city could have been destroyed by a strong tsunami after an earthquake that struck the eastern coastal region of Cyrenaica in 365 AD.

According to a statement released by Sicilian authorities, the city flourished through the manufacture of imperial dye, a purple pigment used to color the clothing of the Roman elite.

The dye was very expensive in Roman times.

## German Cannibalism Discovered

Archeologists have found rare evidence of mass cannibalism during the Neolithic period in Europe at a site in southern Germany, according to archeology journal *Antiquity*.

The "intentionally mutilated" remains of some 500 humans were found at a 7,000-year-old early Neolithic site at Herxheim in Rheinland-Pfalz, indicating that ritual activities involving "mass cannibalism" may have taken place, *Malaysianews.net* wrote.

Scientists believe the consumption of people in Europe may only have taken place in times of extreme hunger, since farming had already begun to spread in this part of the world during the Neolithic period.

The Herxheim site has been explored several times since it was first excavated in 1996

## Prehistoric Waco Mammoth Site Opens

A site where dozens of prehistoric mammoths died in a landslide and flooding some 68,000 years ago has opened to the public in Waco, Texas.

The fossils were discovered in 1978 by two men hunting for snakes. They took one of the bones to a Baylor University museum official who identified it, triggering an archeological dig, AP reported.



Baylor and the city preserved the remains for two decades and, following a community fundraising effort, a permanent pavilion was built over the site, which opened to the public for the first time on Saturday.

Visitors can observe the mammoth remains from walkways above the dirt where the fossils remain encased.

Legislation is pending to make the site a national monument and part of the National Park Service.

## Sassanid Site Near Parishan Lake



A vast ancient site has been discovered by a local farmer southeast of Kazeroun in the southern Iranian province of Fars.

According to Mehr News Agency, the farmer of Qahron Jan Village near Kazeroun uncovered huge, intact pillars of an ancient castle while plowing the earth to expand his farm.

The results of preliminary studies conducted by non-

governmental institutes show that the castle belongs to Sassanid era.

Local residents blame Iran's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization (ICHHTO) for not taking any measures to safeguard the new findings.

Peiman Parhizgar, an environment activist, said the huge earthen jar, found in the walls of the castle, is 70 centimeters in diameter.

"Ancient Zoroastrians made these jars to place their

According to the story, in ancient times, a lonely person, who became too old to remember anything, was taken to this place and left to die.

## &gt; ICHHTO Criticized

Parhizgar criticized ICHHTO for not saving the region.

"Illegal wells have been dug by local communities and the looting of ancient valuable objects is a regular feature here," he said.

A member of a non-governmental cultural heritage institute, Mohsen Abbaspour, said the archeological findings of the region have not been registered on the National Heritage List yet.

Abbaspour stressed that the new findings have brought to light the remnants of a 1,000-year-old civilization, which be registered soon to prevent more damage.

Parishan Lake is surrounded by the Zagros Range and its distance from the mountains varies from 500 meters to 5 kilometers.

A number of small caves on Mount Famount face the lake.

## &gt; Response

The head of Cultural Heritage News Agency (CHTN), Hassan Mohseni, criticized the speedy coverage of these findings by Mehr News Agency.

"Giving detailed information about a newly-discovered ancient site is not professional and can lead to looting in the region," he said, adding that to prevent such events, ICHHTO has dispatched security guards to safeguard the site.

"It is simplistic thinking that such news items will help save ancient sites," he said.

The official stressed that the agency has provided enough information to looters and smugglers, and this is not professional.

Mohseni said his organization will pursue those involved in the publication of such nonprofessional news that endangers historical sites.



governmental institutes show that the castle belongs to Sassanid era.

Earlier, archeologists had found remains of a castle on mountains located near the lake. However the new discovery gives detailed information about the demarcation of the area and materials used in ancient structures.

## &gt; Significance

The remains of the castle and a large earthen jar found near Parishan Lake increase the lake's importance as an international wetland, which faced an environmental cri-

sis in recent years due to the negligence of officials.

Noting that the remains of the historical castle are an important archeological finding, Parhizgar said the castle is situated 200 meters from the Parisho Bend.

Due to its desirable weather and abundant water resources, Kazeroun was a center of civilization in ancient times.

"Many skeletons have been discovered in the region," Parhizgar said, adding that local residents attribute the skeletons to an old story told by their ancestors.

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## Burnt City Excavation Underway

The first phase of excavations near Burnt City is underway, Sistan-Baluchestan province.

Announcing this, an official working on the project, Ruhollah Shirazi, told CHTN that one of the historical areas located near Burnt City is Sadeq Hill that belongs to 3000 BC.

"Archeologists are demarcating the historical site in this season of excavation," he added.

Sadeq Hill was discovered during archeological excavations carried out in 2007-8.

"Archeologists are studying a pottery kiln belonging to Gunmetal era and collecting plant and animal remnants in the region," Shirazi said.

The 10-day project will continue till Dec. 16.

## &gt; Origins

Burnt City, a Bronze Age archeological treasure trove, was once one of the world's largest communities at the dawn of urban settlement.

The city, called Shahr-e-Sookhteh in Persian, sits on the banks of Helmand River along the Zahedan-Zabol Road

in the southeast province of Sistan-Baluchestan.

Covering an area of 151 hectares, the city was built around 3200 BC and abandoned over a millennium later in 2100 BC. The city experienced four stages of civilization and was burnt down three times. It took its eventual name because it was never rebuilt after the last fire.

The oldest known backgammon, dice and numerous metallurgical finds such as pieces of slag and crucible are among the city's excavated artifacts. The unearthed game of backgammon is made of 60 turquoise and agate pieces and has a rectangular ebony board.

A human skull bearing signs of surgery was also discovered there.

Another significant object found at the prehistoric site include an artificial eyeball.

In December 2006, archeologists discovered the world's earliest artificial eyeball in the city's necropolis, thought to have been worn by a female resident of Burnt City. The artificial eye is spherical with a diameter of just over 2.5 cm (1 inch).

## &gt; Social Revelations

Some paleoanthropologists believe mothers in Burnt City enjoyed social and financial prominence. Insignias, 5,000 years old, made of pebbles and belonging only to distinguished inhabitants, were found in the graves of some women.

Some believe the owners of these insignias used them to seal valuable documents. Others believe the seals indicate the owners' lofty status in society.

Paleopathological studies on 40 teeth unearthed in the Burnt City's cemetery show that the inhabitants used their teeth as a tool for making baskets and other handmade products.

The use of teeth as a tool in Burnt City is seen in both males and females of different ages. Evidence shows that weaving was more than a hobby in the prehistoric city. It was one of the most common professions that required a special skill.

Residents made a variety of products such as carpets, baskets and other household items.

The reasons for the unexpected rise and fall of Burnt City are still wrapped in mystery. What is strange about the city is its incongruity with other civilizations of

the time. It is as if the city just appeared out of nowhere. It could lend weight to the argument that an ancient civilization to the east of prehistoric Persia was in-



dependent of the civilization of ancient Mesopotamia.

Excavations in Burnt City also suggest that its inhabitants were a race of civilized people who were both farmers and craftsmen. No weapon has ever been discovered at the site, suggesting the peaceful nature of its residents and the tranquil conditions of their society.

Burnt City has been continually excavated since the 1970s by Iranian and Italian archeological teams and new discoveries have been periodically reported.