

A total of 176 historical relics belonging to the Safavid and Seleucid dynasties were seized in Yazd province from smugglers.

The crescent

By Allama Mohammad Iqbal

The sun's boat is broken and drowned in the Nile
But a piece is floating about on the water of Nile.

The twilight's pure blood drips into the sky's basin
Has the lancet of Nature drawn the sun's blood?

Has the sky stolen the earring of the evening's bride?
Or has the fragile cord in the Nile's waters strolling?

Your caravan is afoot without the help of bell's call
The human ear cannot hear your footsteps' sound.

You show the spectacle of rise and fall to the eyes
Where is your home? To which country are you going?

O star-like planet take me with you!
The prick of longing's thorn keeps me restless.

I am seeking light; I am weary in this habitation
I am the restless child in the existence's school.

The cloud on the mountain

Elevation bestows the sky's nearness to my abode
I am the mountain's cloud, my skirt sprinkles roses

Now the wilderness and the rose garden are my abode
City and wilderness are mine, ocean is mine, forest is mine.



If I want to return to some valley for the night
The mountain's verdure is my carpet of velvet.

Nature has taught me to be a pearl spreader
To chant the camel song for the camel of the beloved of mercy.

To be the comforter of the dispirited farmer's heart
To be the elegance of the assembly of the garden's trees.

I spread out over the face of the earth like the locks
I get arranged and adorned by the breeze.

I tantalize the expecting eye from a distance
As I pass silently over some habitation.

As I approach strolling towards a brook's bank
I endow the brook with earrings of whirlpools.

I am the hope of the freshly grown field's verdure
I am the ocean's offspring; I am nourished by the sun.

I gave ocean's tumult to the mountain spring
I charmed the birds into thrilling chants.

I pronounced 'Rise' standing by the verdure's head
I conferred the taste for smile to the rose-bud.

By my benevolence farmers' huts on the mountain side
Are converted into bed chambers of the opulent.

Ganj Par

Lower Paleolithic site



In the last two decades, there have been important Lower Paleolithic discoveries in regions such as the Levant, the Caucasus and Pakistan, pushing the evidence for the earliest hominid occupation in the region dating back to about 1 to 2 million years ago. In terms of Lower Paleolithic occupation, Iran is one of the least-known regions in West Asia with only a handful of evidence, Cis-soas reported.

This evidence includes core-chopper assemblages from gravel deposits along Ladiz, Mashkid and Kashafroud rivers in eastern Iran and isolated finds of both core-chopper and Acheulian industries from the west and north-western parts of the Zagros region.

The evidence for the Acheulian industry in Iran consists of a few examples of bifaces as isolated finds or in association with chopping tool industries from the Zagros region.

Two of these bifaces are single finds from Quri Goll northeast of Lake Orumieh and Gakia in Kermanshah.

Two others are surface assemblages from Amar Merdeg in the Mehran Plain and Pal Barik at Holailan. Of these, Holailan bifaces are doubtful and seem to be Levallois cores.

Against such a background, a recent discovery of an Acheulian occurrence with a rich lithic assemblage in northern Iran provides us with an opportunity to examine the strongest evidence

for Lower Paleolithic occupation so far discovered in Iran.

Location

During the second phase of joint Iranian-Japanese archeological excavation in September 2002 at the historical site of Jalalieh in the western edge of Rostamabad Plain, two of the authors



had the opportunity to carry out a brief survey of the surrounding area.

While examining the surface of Mound Jalalieh, Fereydoun Biglari, an Iranian archeologist who participated in the excavation, found a chert flake, prompting him to have a

closer examination of the area.

In an almost flat open area located just to the south of the mound, a lithic scatter was found. This yielded a Lower Paleolithic assemblage characterized by the presence of large cutting tools in association with cores and other debitage. The site, called Ganj Par, is located on the western edge of the fluvial plain of Rostamabad at an elevation of about 235 meters above sea-level. It gives one a commanding view of the deep dissected valley of Kaluzar River that flows into Sefidroud Valley, Sefidroud, which flows in an almost north-south direction till it reaches the Caspian Sea, is about 2 km to the east of the site.

The geomorphology of Rostamabad region has been briefly described by Macomoka. He distinguished five terraces in the western part of the plain. These terraces are between 150-800 meters above sea-level.

Ganj Par lithic scatter is located at altitudes between 225-235 meters above sea-level, higher than terrace IV, and may have been reworked from deposits of older terraces.

Discovery of lithic assemblages

During three visits to the site in 2002-3, more than 100 artifacts were collected in an area of about 0.5 hectare. Almost half of the assemblage is made from limestone. Of other pieces,

large proportions are made from silicified sandstone and volcanic rocks such as tuff, andesite and basalt. There are also some cherts and other rock types.

The assemblage is composed of high frequencies of core-choppers, along with heavy-duty scrapers, bifaces (hand-axes, cleavers, and a trihedral pick), cores and flakes.

Bifaces are generally thick and crudely made and some of them have a form intermediate between chopper and biface. The collection lacks spheroid and polyhedron.

Lithic assemblages similar to Ganj Par are unknown from Lower Paleolithic sites of Iran and its neighboring regions. But there are some similarities between Ganj Par and those known from the early Acheulian assemblages from Ubaidiya in the Levant and East African sites such as Olduvai Gorge, Upper Bed II and Konso-Gardula. The Ganj Par evidence suggests that migrating Acheulian groups probably made their way into the northern Alborz foothills along the Caspian shores. However, the possibility of a southern arrival from the Zagros Mountain Range and the Central Plateau of Iran cannot be excluded, as the narrow Sefidroud Valley provides a major route from the northwestern part of the Iranian plateau to the western Caspian lowland.

Kashan dome to be nominated for world registration

Iranica Desk

Efforts are underway to nominate the dome of Aqa Bozorg Mosque in Kashan, Isfahan province, for registration on UNESCO's World Heritage List.

Belonging to Qajar era, it is the largest brick-made dome in Iran with eight pillars and two layers.

Mehran Sarmadian, the head of Kashan's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Department, also said the mosque is among the most unique in Iran, IRNA reported.

He said the beautiful design and exceptional architecture of the edifice, including its dome and balcony, have helped make the mosque one of the most important Islamic-Iranian building.

Sarmadia said the traditional method was employed to renovate the mosque.

The mosque has been registered on National Heritage List in 1951.

Mohammad Hamidnejad wrote in his book, Tourism Attractions of Kashan, that Aqa Bozorg Mosque was built by Mohammad Taqi Khanban during 1871-81 for performing prayers.

Later, religious classes were held there by his son-in-law Molla Mehdi Naraghi, known as Agha Bozorg.



Aqa Bozorg Mosque is one of the best architectural works compatible with the warm and dry climate of the surrounding desert.

The mosque has a two-storey building that looms over the highly beautiful courtyard.

Upon entering the mosque, one views the beautiful dome next to two minarets. There are chambers in the four corners of the courtyard where classes on Islamic subjects are held. The two floors are connected through two stairways. Verses of Holy Qur'an are written on the walls' plasterwork.

Erbil to host Iranian handicraft expo

Iranica Desk



The Iranian Carpets and Handicrafts Exhibition will be held in Iraq's Kurdish city of Erbil during Feb. 12-15, said the deputy head of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari's Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Department for handicraft affairs.

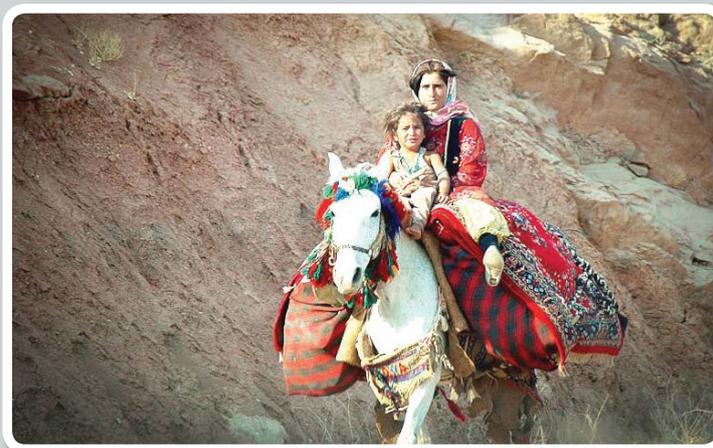
Mehrdad Raeesi added that Persian rugs and handicrafts produced by artists from Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province will be showcased in an area of 3,000 square meters.

Raeesi added that Erbil has recently become a major customer of Iranian handwoven carpets.

The exhibition is expected to increase trade between the two countries and boost Iran's non-oil exports.

Some of the well-known handicrafts and souvenirs of Chaharmahal-Bakhtiari province include the Chalshotori carpet, tribal carpets, felt, giveh (a traditional footwear), saddlebags, jajim (a two-sided flatwoven rug), kilim (a coarse carpet), satchels, tablecloths and salt dispenser.

PICTURE OF THE DAY



Nomads of Majin in Darreh-Shahr, Ilam province

ABBAS AZIZPOUR/Isna.ir