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Archaeology and History of Nowshahr, Iran

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Archaeology and History of Nowshahr, Iran


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Abstract

Archeological survey of all counties in Mazandaran Province was carried out under the master plan of drawing an archeological map of this province. In this setting, coastal areas of the city of Nowshahr were reviewed for the first time, with a focus on the mountainous area of Kojur district which was studied in order to complete the previous research conducted there. A book entitled *Archaeology and History of Nowshahr* jointly authored by Seyed Mehdi Mousavi Kouhpar and Shahin Aryamanesh was published in 2021. In this book, the authors have investigated all aspects of the Parthian kingdom and goes beyond the political history of the Parthians to familiarize the readers with the archaeology, history, culture, religion, art, and society of the Parthians.

Keywords: Caspian Sea Region; Nowshahr; Archeological Survey.



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Introduction

Nearly 130 years have passed since the first archaeological studies were carried in Mazandaran by Jean-Jacques de Morgan; however, those seemed to be beyond archaeological assessments. Hence, he published those assessments and studies in the frame of geographical, linguistic, ethnological, archeological, and geological studies in French. After De Morgan, some archaeological surveys were conducted in Mazandaran, with some parts of this province being studied in each step. But, the lack of comprehensive studies in Mazandaran Province indicated this requirement for clarifying the status of archeological environments. The first step of archaeological survey in Kojur district, Nowshahr County began in 2000 and continued in later years, during 2004 and then in 2008. The archeological investigation of all counties in Mazandaran Province was based on the master plan of drawing an archeological map of the province, and under this milieu, the coastal areas of Nowshahr were reviewed for the first time, including the mountainous area of Kojur to complete the previous research on this area.

The book *Archaeology and History of Nowshahr* includes 4 chapters. The first chapter examines the geography and history of Mazandaran province, including the city of Nowshahr. The second chapter reviews the archaeological activities that have been done so far in Mazandaran. The third chapter is the main part of the book that reviews the relics and sites identified during the archeological survey of Nowshahr. The last chapter includes a discussion and conclusion, the list of sites, maps, and diagrams related to the sites.

Let's take a glimpse of the first chapter, which reviews the geography and history of Mazandaran and Nowshahr. Padishkhwārgar is the oldest name used for the northern slopes of Alborz Mountain. This term has been recorded in various forms as seen in ancient inscriptions and written records. Padishkhwārgar was used as the name for a large mountainous area of Alborz from the Achaemenid era until the Sasanian period (Hejazi Konari, 1993: 35). Gaubaruva, spearman of Darius the Great, in Darius inscription in Naqsh-e Rostam is from Pātišūvariš (Kent, 1954: 211; Hassan-doust, 2020: 155). A place called Pātišūvariš is also mentioned in the Bīsotūn Inscription (Mashkour, 1966: 101), which undoubtedly means Padishkhwārgar. Probably, Padishkhwārgar is the Bundahišn variation of its name. Patušarra apparently was the region mentioned in Middle Persian as Padišxwār (in the vicinity of Damavānd: Herzfeld, 1968: 194, 317-18).

Tabarestan, Tapurestan, or Tapuran are multiple names used for a part of land between the Alborz Mountains and Mazandaran Sea. Taprstan is exactly the same as the Tapurstān of coins (Markwart, 1994: 245).

The second chapter is "Review of Archeological Activities in Mazandaran" in which, the authors examine archeological activities in this province. French mining engineer and geologist, Jean-Jacques de Morgan (1857-1924) carried out the first archeological studies in Mazandaran. He traveled all over Iran from 1889 to 1891 (Early 20th century) and did archeological investigation on the southern shores of the Caspian Sea in the margin of the Pardameh River in Lar Valley of Larijan area, Mazandaran Province. The achievement of the exploration in Pardameh included some tools that he attributed to

the Paleolithic (Vahdati Nasab & Aryamanesh, 1995: 69). Later, Carleton Coon conducted an investigation and exploration in Mazandaran. He began his activities in Kamarband Cave and revealed four cultural horizons that started from the Epipaleolithic period and mixed with remnants of the Neolithic and Iron Age (Coon, 1951).

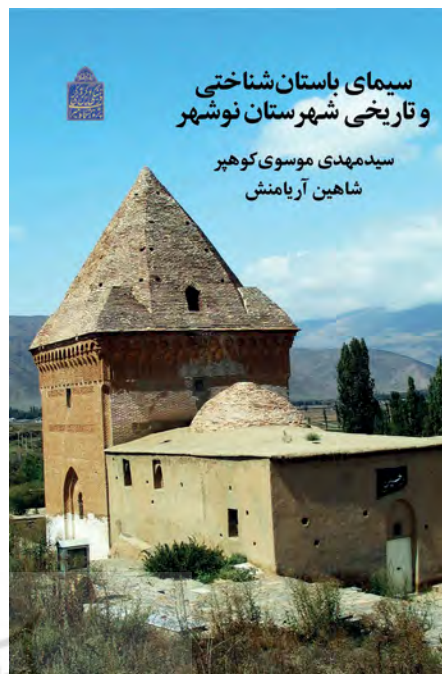
The third chapter is "Examining and Identifying Buildings and Sites." The current Nowshahr was a part of ancient Royan City that included the current Nur, Nowshahr, and Chalus counties. These areas were under the rule of Baduspanids. Nowshahr County was divided into two mountainous and plain areas, which were known as mountain and plain areas of Kojur. This chapter introduces and examines the relics and sites identified in these two areas.

The fourth chapter includes the conclusion. The archeological survey of Nowshahr County was done within two steps and under the two research plans. In the first survey done in 2000, 61 relics were identified. The second survey was done within the master plan of an archeological map prepared for Mazandaran County in 2008, through which, 115 ancient relics and sites were recorded. The main purpose of implementing these two projects was to introduce and identify the distribution of ancient sites and relics in this area.

According to the evidence obtained from the Paleolithic environment of Bandpey in Nowshahr, the history of human presence there goes back to about 50000-40000 years ago. Also, the evidence obtained from the ancient area of Kharabeh Shahr or Ancient Royan introduces the ancient deployments in this place as the most outstanding place identified in Kojur, beginning from the fifth millennium BC until the late Islamic periods. It is worth noting that most of the identified relics in the Royan area belong to the middle Islamic era.

Conclusion

This is a valuable book that has examined and analyzed the sites found in Nowshahr located in Mazandaran Province on the shores of the Caspian Sea, and opened a new window to the archeology of the Caspian Sea's basin.



Archaeology and History of Nowshahr, Seyed Mehdi Mousavi Kouhpar & Shahin Aryamanesh, Tehran, Research Institute of Cultural Heritage & Tourism, 2021, 302 pp, ISBN 978-600-8977-20-9

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