

# Introduction of Historical Tourist Potential of Ardabil County Case Study: Shahryeri

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## Abstract

Due to its pristine nature, Ardabil County has one of the most famous destinations for nature tourists. Pleasant weather along with these natural charms, the temptation to travel and re-engage in this lively lane in the minds of every traveller. Nevertheless, the characteristics of Ardabil are not all in its unique nature. The existence of countless ancient artifacts belonging to the past centuries and various historical periods in the province, on the other, reveals the attractions of Ardebil's tourism. And from the longstanding civilian establishment in this area, it is from Iran. Works, with a few exceptions, are often overshadowed by the neglect and disregard of the instructors, the identity and the past, and the reason for their existence. Even to better introduce the well-known works, it is not necessary to continue to observe mysteries of the history of Ardabil. One of these mysteries can be found amongst the wonders of the ancient area of "Shahryeri" in the city of Meshkinshahr, the vast archaeological area is considered by historians and scholars as the most important historical site of the prehistory in the northwest of Iran and one of the most interesting and most important historical points of the country.

**Keywords:** Shahryeri Ancient Site, Historical and Cultural Attractions, Tourism

## INTRODUCTION

Ardabil county originates in the Safavid dynasty, but the historical attraction of this province does not return until the Safavid era. Ardabil county is 5000 years old and has many ancient and historical works. Look at the status of the cultural heritage in the Ardabil county shows that many of these works are in ruins.

"Shahryeri" is located in Ardabil county and Meshkinshahr. Some archaeologists estimate the life of Shahryeri for up to 9,000 years. This area is located at the end of the Meshkinshahr plain, 65 km northwest of the Ardabil and 35 km east of Meshkinshahr, 2 km north of Pirasmian village and is located in the Meshkinshahr district and The whole effort of the Cultural Heritage Organization to introduce it is only the installation of a signboard on the main road of Ardabil-Meshkin, and natural disasters such as storms, colds and looters of ancient artifacts make it more and more deaths every day. Due to the rough nature of the area, one hundred yards from forty centimetres to two meters of the periosteum is constantly eroded, and perhaps a few years later, there is no effect on them. This ancient area consists of a large castle with a stone wall of local landmarks for holding religious ceremonies and ancient graves. The concrete wall draped away from the castle indicates that some protective measures have been taken, but if the budget has not been allocated for completion, the semi-finished project has been abandoned (Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization of Ardabil county, 2015).

The Shahryeri was first discovered thirty-five years ago by the British Archeology Board headed by Charles Barny, and he believed that the life of some of the works reaches the third millennium BC or Iron Age.

The evidence shows that this region is residential, at least since the sixth millennium BC. Preliminary excavations in some parts of Ardabil, especially in the northern and eastern parts of it. This land is one of the most important centers of the culture of "Magallic Ticks", which is likely to be the ethnic nature of the Azerbaijani "Magaliteek", which has been influenced by the ethnic origin of the

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Cassians and Hurids. The images of the rocky figures obtained in this area are similar to the images of the temples and the heads of the people that are on the horizontals of the Ildir or Iqdir horseshoes in northeastern Turkey near the border between Iran and Armenia. The discovery of works such as copper swords, various knives, beam and bayonets, a ring for archery and copper shaker in Ardabil county, which is a simpler combination of the combination of bronze objects obtained from Lorestan, proves the assumption of life during the Bronze Age.

Shahryeri, which is the most extensive historical district of Ardebil province and one of the most important prehistoric areas of the northwest of the country, was registered in the year 2002 by the number 6162 (Mehr News Agency, 2010).

Though later exploration in this area was conducted to explore further and discover its ancient works, so far no action has been taken to protect the rock, but only a few pillars without a mast have been accumulated on the corner of the enclosure.

In this article, we try to explore the tourism potential of this region to attract tourists.

## SHAHRYERI

Shahryar is an ancient site in the Ardabil county. The area of Shahryeri is 400 hectares which is located one kilometre to the north of the village of Pirazmian and near the Ghareh Souz river. This area includes 280 ancient stone mast is their antiquity is estimated to be more than 6 thousand years BC. The dating of these areas dates back to the Late Bronze Age, the Neolithic period, and the early and the Iron Cu. These stones are of varying heights of 70 to 360 cm, most of which are human-made. The designs of the people carved on the rocks are in the form of people with a chest and usually without a crater, and so far only seven pieces of this type of rocks-trestles have been found in the Kurdistan of Turkey and one piece in the Azerbaijani. Shahryeri is composed of three parts of the temple, Ghushatpay and Peak, and the rocky faces of this site face erosion and destruction, and on April 2011, a whirlwind destroyed part of the site (Sedghi-nezhad, 2014).



**Fig. 1: Shahryeri (2014)**

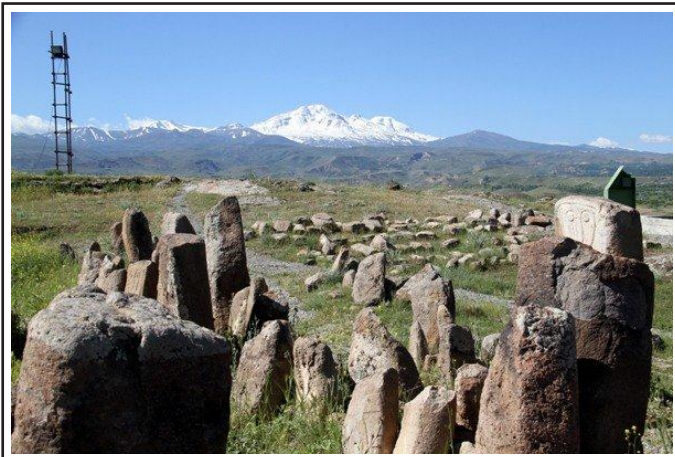
## SHAHRYERI CASTLE WITH THE IRON AGE

For the first time, about 10 years before the Islamic Revolution, Charles Bernie explored the site. In these explorations, several historical periods including the Copper-Stone Age, Iron Age 1, and Iron Age 2 have been identified, and remains of a fortress belonging to the Iron Age have been discovered.

From 2004 to 2006, three drilling seasons were conducted in this area. During the first drilling season that began in November 2004, the Iron Age graves were examined, which were previously destroyed by antique dealers and only the construction of graves was known.

During this period, the clocks discovered in the "Calc." The period was discovered and took the region back to 3500 years since the Iron Age. These pottery are similar to the clay of Dalma and Haji Firuz. Thus, for the first time, human settlement in the Ardabil county dates back to the Copper era. In the next chapter of the excavation in 2005, there were remnants of pottery, bronze, and human designs that archaeologists considered them as nests belonging to the temple. One of these two temples was located under the defensive wall of the castle. Archaeologists have concluded that they have turned their religion away from the religion of Urartu, which residents of the Shahryeri built on the temple of the castle, and accepted the god Urrudi (Khalidi).

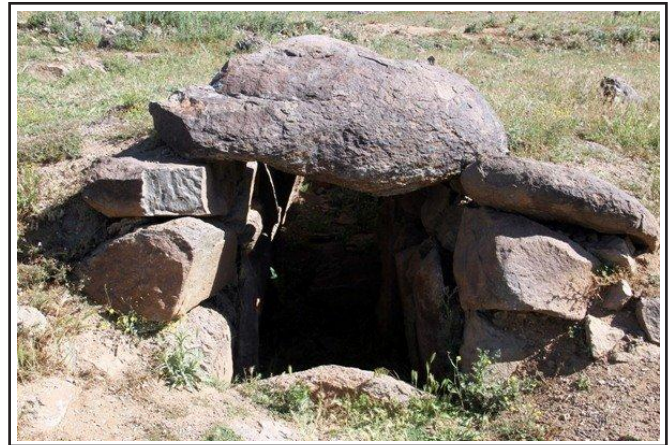
In the third chapter of the excavation, it became clear that during the Urartian period, the castle was burnt down and abandoned. The presence of ash in the layers of the castle soil represents the castle's fire. Thus, successive periods of human life have been sequenced from 7,000 to the Urartian period in the Shahryeri. During this period, a large number of pottery, golden objects such as pendants, ornamental buttons and golden and bronze plaques were discovered (Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization of Ardabil county, 2015).



**Fig. 2: Shahryeri (2014)**

## GRAVES WITH A LENGTH OF SIX METERS

Another part of the archaeological studies of the area is the cemetery of this region. In this region, 132 graves were identified. Stone massive graves are in different shapes, and some are dug in the ground, and some large stones are arranged on the surface and have a grave shape. In the burial place that was buried inside the land, the burial is embryonic, and the means of people around it are buried, and the graves are six meters long and 1.5 to 2 meters wide. Compared to a sample of rock cemeteries in other areas, especially neighbouring countries, the miracle of civilisation in this region is exemplary. According to archaeologists similar to the graves in Talesh, the castle of Ahar, the Azerbaijani and of East Turkey have been observed. Fig. 3 shows an example of the old graveyard.



**Fig. 3: Shahryeri Cemetery (2014)**

## THE ROCK OF HEIGHTS, THE ABANDONED SCHOOL

The Shahryeri archaeological site stretches along the northern side of the well-known stones known as the Uchagharari School (school children) and has been one of the major settlements of the region since the late 2nd Millenium and early millennium BC.

This stone masonry, which is the most important part of the Shahryeri complex, was due to the neglect of the Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization after long exploration in the vicinity of wind, rain and snow until February of the vast majority The rock has been irreversibly destroyed due to the heavy snowfall.

This rock washed out during the third period of excavation, which consists of more than 300 stone rocks of different heights of 35 to 250 centimetres with human shapes and the carved forms on the rocks are similar and contain a human face (without mouth) hands and sword. The largest stone of the elevation is 3.250 meters high and is in the form of a rectangle that is located in the middle of the rest of the rock and is like a teacher standing in the middle school of the school.

In the greater part of this stone of the heights, the human form (male and female), which holds out its sword, is carved, which represents the best carving art in this period. The faces of these limestone rocks are eastward

and westward, facing up to nowadays a classroom of 3 to 4 large stone strikes in front and the rest in three or four rows in succession.

On the western side of the rock gathering, there is a cavernous cavity called “Qara Kohil” (black crypt). Near the cave to the north, a very large boulder appears. This boulder-shaped table is laid horizontally on the big rocks (Cultural Heritage, Handicrafts and Tourism Organization of Ardabil county, 2015). Fig. 4 shows the rocks of school diplomas.



**Fig. 4: Shahveri Masonry Stone**

## EXCELLENT MIRACLE OF THE SHAHRYERI WITH 537 STONE

Many of the pictures and photographs of the ancient area of the northwest of Pirazmiyan village are related neither to gates nor to the defensive wall. So that everyone in the area known as human noting with stones. Each with a mysterious smile and significant placement in a region called temple.

Archaeologists believe that the rocks of this region confirm the existence of enthalpy thinking in the same years, and among them, stellas, although seen in different regions. But they are shaped by the culture and civilisation of that region and each in the study of ancient history is considered a precious lot.

There are various remarks about the rocks of the pirazmiyan. Charles Bernie has introduced these steles as ornaments around graves.

Today, the explorations project other ideas, in the exploration of the year 2003, the dependence of the stone on the graves was discarded and the seven corridors in which the stone was erected were identified.

It can be said about the miracle of the area that a total of 537 stone were found in the temple that is not the same anywhere in the world. And only 30 in Turkey, for example, in Azerbaijan and Mongolia, although a number is high, individually. The construction of this complex was followed by thought and management and pursued a goal, with the corridor and main corridor right in front of Mount Sabalan. Fig. 5 shows an example of Shahryeri stones.

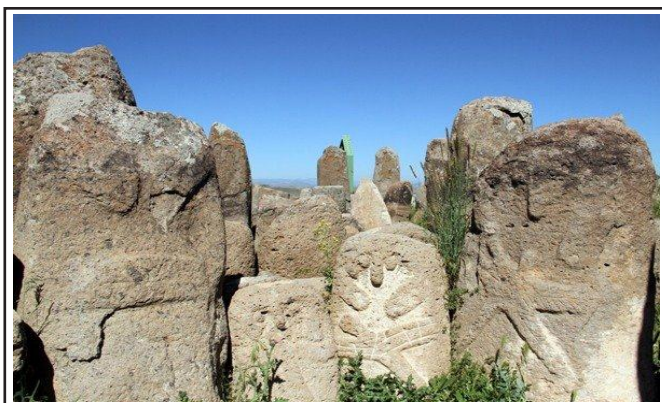


**Fig. 5: Shahryeri (2015)**

## THE REDEFINITION OF SOCIAL CLASSES IN ROCKS

The excavations show that the flooring of the corridors was done using a yellowish material, and the size of the rocks is quite different from each other so that it is one to 2.5 meters and right next to it is half a meter high. This difference in size somehow represents different social classes and gives each individual to a social class that has different stone sizes.

The rocks are identified in two types of armed and non-weapon, and the weapons are different, and there are plain and smooth swords. In some cases, the hands are distinct and some hair is turned away. Fig. 6 shows an example of the stone of the quarries.



**Fig. 6: Shahryeri (2015)**

## DISCOVER A PIECE OF POTTERY WITH THE ROLE OF AN ANIMAL

Along with the mentioned areas, what is astonished by archaeologists and takes the history of Ardabil county to the end of the Neolithic period is Ghasha Tapeh, Due to the two-hill aristocracy, this name is called over. Based on two sections of the layout that has been done, the region dates back to the late Neolithic period to the late Copper and Stone periods.

The pottery discovered in this region is engraved, and only one piece of pottery has been discovered with the role of the animal; the rest of the pottery is geometric, and the triangular role is most abundant. In terms of the form, the openings of the dishes with the opening in all three periods of history have the greatest number that expresses the type of livelihoods of the course.

A large amount of rocky and obsidian tools have been obtained from Ghosha Tapeh exploration, while bone excavations in the area indicate that the use of sheep and goats is very common.

## STONE CARVING THE MOST IMPORTANT FEATURE OF THE SHAHRYERI AREA

The stone tables have different types, and six more stone strands are located far distant from the accumulation of rocks of the heights, which is the parvin cluster. Another large rock mass is also north of the site, like the Arctic star, which monitors the area. In the way of rock placement, they have used extreme careful attention in terms of

mathematical sciences and geometry and astronomy. The carvings on these rocks are the most important and valuable features of these inscriptions. In other parts of Azerbaijan, there are also rock formations such as “Nasht Ban” Sarab, but none of them is carvings.

Several ancient stone graves and gurkanes of about 450 graves are located in this area, and an ancient cave and hill belonging to the Islamic era are also identified in this area. Fig. 7 shows a sample of carvings on the rocks.



**Fig. 7: Stone Carving (2015)**

## CONCLUSION

There is a lecture or congress in each country and an opportunity to redefine the works of the Shahryeri will be surprised, everyone. These emphases, which stem from the scientific study of the importance of this region, while part of Shahryeri has been repeatedly invaded by exploiters in recent years, and the way of storing rocks has changed from managerial perspective to another manager. It seems that although explorations are increasingly emphasized on the example of this region every year, there is still no consensus on the preservation of the Permian. In the latest statements by Cultural Heritage Directors of the province, delays in organizing not as a factor contributing to the demolition of stones, but with the goal of proper planning.

Restoration of ancient works requires a scientific process, and now it is also a reason to stop the layout of Pirazmiyan with a view to restoration of this collection. Due to financial constraints, operational measures are limited in the restoration of works. Despite the fact that after excavations in the area to study further and discover

its ancient works, but so far, no action has been taken to protect rock formations, and only a number of shields without being raised can be accumulated in the corner of this site. Along with grave concerns, archaeologists and scholars are now in the worst possible position. Maintaining and preserving one of the most valuable archaeological sites in the country suggests that the authorities, more than the concern to protect and restore the works of a few provinces, seek to register entries in the national list and cares more about the numbers exposed to destruction. While cultural heritage experts and structuralists warn that these stone works are uncovered in an open environment, and due to the characteristics of these rocks, when they are exposed to air, they change and become loose; therefore, gems Shahryeri are very vulnerable due to their particular gender. Although many people come to the Shahryeri to study and visit this area, it is not acceptable to protect the area, and especially the rock.

The people of the region have a deep attachment to these works, so far, several times because of the lack of or lack of sufficient security forces to protect the region, the profitable people have been demolishing or stealing

antiquities and parts of the collection. The region has the capacity to become one of the country's tourism poles. However, it seems that if the maintenance of this rock is the same as before, it will not remain for tourists in the next few years.

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