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Persia

An Archaeological Guide

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Foreword to the First Edition

There are said to be something like 250,000 archaeological sites in Iran; there are almost a thousand in the plain before Persepolis alone, and more are constantly being discovered all over the country. It is obvious that in a volume this size one cannot even mention more than a fraction of the sites by name, and the policy therefore has been to select those of greatest significance, or where there is still something for the visitor to see.

Most archaeological sites are mentioned in the work of that redoubtable explorer and archaeologist, Sir Aurel Stein, and more recently in the Bibliography compiled by Professor Louis Vanden Berghe who has himself contributed so much to Iranian archaeology.

Because of the size of the country and the extraordinary wealth of its monuments, the scope of this volume has been limited to covering early sites from the known beginnings of pre-historic settlements down to the effective and of Seljuq rule, in the first quarter of the thirteenth century A.D. Later monuments are described in other guides such as Nagel's *Iran* and Hachette's *The Middle East* and in these, of course, further monuments can be found.

I have endeavoured to include the latest possible information on all excavations currently in progress and to this end have received assistance from so many quarters that it is also impossible to name every individual here. I must, however, acknowledge publicly the courtesy shown by the Cultural Heritage Organization (particularly in Mashhad and Shiraz) I am indebted for assistance with transport to Mr. A. Hakemi, Director of the Archaeological Museum, Professor E. Negahban, Head of the Archaeological Department of the Tehran University, Mr. Kambakhsh Fard, Mr. Z. Rahmatian, Dr. M.Y. Kiyani and Mr. A.A. Sarfaraz, have especially added their help to that of the excavation Directors now active in Iran.

The Directors and staff of the archaeological missions permanently in Tehran have been more than generous with their time, information and material, in particular, Professor H. Luschey and Professor W. Kleiss of the German Archaeological Institute, who provided a number of original illustrations, Professor Roman Ghirshman, doyen of foreign archaeologists in Iran and for over thirty years Director of the French Archaeological Mission; Director, Mr. Jean Perrot,

and Mr. Audran Labrousse who drew the plan of Susa; Professor Giuseppe Tucci, President of IsMEO in Rome, and Dr. Maurizio Tosi, Director of the excavations in Sistan; and Dr. William Sumner of the American Institute of Iranian Studies, who has given valuable assistance with the bibliography.

Most of all, however, I am indebted to Mr. David Stronach, Director of the British Institute of Persian Studies, to whom I have constantly referred and without whose guidance and frequent collaboration I could never have undertaken this task. Together with Mr. Robert Hillenbrand, a Fellow of the B.I.P.S., and Dr. Klaus Schippmann, Mr. Stronach has read the entire manuscript.

Other members of the British Institute have also assisted in many ways, particularly Mr. Antony Hutt, former Assistant Director, whose researches into early minarets in Iran have enabled me to include some hitherto unpublished material which he has kindly made available to me, and Dr. Georgina Hermann, Joint Editor of *Iran*, for further information on bas-relief.

The late Professor Arthur Upham Pope before his death in 1969 generously gave me permission to make use of material from his *Persian Architecture*, while Professor Richard Frye, who succeeded him as Director of the Asia Institute in Shiraz, has allowed me to use his genealogical table and informative historical maps.

Professor Robert H. Dyson, Jr., Professor Edith Porada and Professor Louis Vanden Berghe are among the many others whose names are mentioned in the text and who have so kindly allowed me to use much of their published material.

The final responsibility for any errors, of course, remains entirely my own.

Foreword to the Second Edition

Less than eighteen months had elapsed since the publication of the Guide, when I was asked to prepare a revised second edition, but even in that short period, tremendous changes had taken place in Iran. Hotel accommodation, air and land communications throughout the country had been greatly expanded, entirely new roads often superseding old ones; continuing developments in existing archaeological excavations, and many newly discovered sites have in some cases completely changed existing theories.

Some sections such as Siraf, Ganj Darreh and Chogha Mish have been rewritten, others, such as Susa and Persepolis, expanded, while entirely new excavations at Shahdad, Sagzabad and elsewhere, appear in the appendix and are indicated in the text by an asterisk*. Many new plans and photographs will, I hope, make this edition even more useful to the visitor interested in archaeology. However, with the rapid progress being made in Iran it is almost certain that even further changes will have taken place by the time this is in the reader's hands, and I cannot urge too strongly that routes and accommodation should be checked in Tehran before leaving for any extended journey.

So much archaeological work has taken place in Iran that there are inevitably some sites of little visual impact omitted from the Guide and my apologies are due to those whose work has not been mentioned.

In 1974, the Archaeological Service of Iran was reorganized into four separate departments and the official title of these are as follows:

The Iranian Centre for Archaeological Research.

The National Centre for Research on Anthropology and Folklore.

General Administration for the Protection of Monuments and Sites.

General Direction of Museums.

For the sake of brevity in the text, the first-named is generally referred to as the Iranian Archaeological Service.

The Archaeological Museum in Tehran completely reorganized when the structural alterations were completed, and the whole of the original Museum building was devoted to pre-Islamic material. Islamic exhibits were displayed in

the newer building next door.

With very few exceptions I visited every site personally, often several times, and in preparing this new edition I am happy to acknowledge the ungrudging and invaluable assistance and co-operation given me by the archaeological institutes and directors of excavations both in Tehran and abroad, and by many fellow enthusiasts who have kindly brought changed travel conditions to my attention. However, be warned that extensive town planning throughout Iran has been resulted in constant alterations both in street plans and even names.

As elsewhere in the world, prices are rising rapidly and though I have updated (to 1974) those quoted in the text they should be taken only as a guide.

Tehran, 1975.

Foreword to the Third Edition

This new, authorized revised edition of what has proved to be a very useful and popular guide to this country's archaeological treasure house, comes after a lapse of twenty-five years during which the Guide was unfortunately illegally published.

Thanks to the new Iranian publishers and their cooperation with the authorities of various Ministries, it has been brought up-to-date as far as possible, considering the enormous changes and progress in all aspects of Iran's archaeology and infrastructure. I have had to leave the task of substituting new street names, hotels, prices and routes to sites, as well as the latest available information regarding ongoing work, to the publisher themselves.

It is always a good idea to check with the appropriate authorities, Tourist Information, etc., before setting off on an organized tour. You will also find that many museums, including Tehran's prestigious Archaeological Museum, have undergone considerable improvements.

In my original forewords I acknowledged with gratitude, the immense help given me by the authorities at that time as well as the many international archaeological teams working here.

A subscription to *IRAN*, the annual publication of the British Institute of Persian Studies (in Tehran and London), will help keep readers informed of the work of both Iranian and international archaeologists, while similar publications are available from other foreign institutes.

If you are a newcomer to Iran, I envy you the immense delight of exploring this wonderful country and hope this Guide will help to enhance your pleasure.

SYLVIA A. MATHESON

April 2000