

The Results of the Systematic Archaeological Survey of Sistan (Iran)

Authors : Reza Mehrafarin, Nafiseh Mirshekari

Abstract : The Sistan plain has always been a site for the settlement of various human societies, thanks to its favorable environmental conditions, such as abundant water from the Hirmand River and fertile sedimentary soil. Consequently, there was a need for a systematic archaeological investigation in the area. The survey had multiple objectives, with the most significant ones being the creation of an archaeological map and the identification and documentation of all ancient sites to establish their records and chronology. The survey was carried out in two phases, with each phase covering half of the area. The research method involved fieldwork, with two teams of professional archaeologists conducting a comprehensive survey of each of the 22 areas in Sistan. Once an area was identified, various recording, scientific, and field operations were executed to study the site. In the first phase (2007), an intensive field survey focused on the residential area of Sistan, including its northern and eastern regions. This phase resulted in the identification of 808 sites in eleven selected areas. In the second phase (2009), the desert area of Sistan, or its southern half, was surveyed, leading to the identification of approximately 853 sites. Overall, these surveys resulted in the identification of 1661 sites in Sistan. Among these sites, approximately 899 belong to the Bronze Age (late 4th millennium BCE to early 2nd millennium BCE). Of these sites, around 501 date back to the historical period, while nearly 590 sites pertain to the Islamic period. The archaeological investigations of both phases revealed that Sistan has consistently possessed fertile soil, abundant water, and a skilled workforce, making it capable of becoming Iran's granary and the center of the East once again if these conditions are restored.

Keywords : sistan, field surveys, archaeology, archaeological map

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