

Geopark National and Geopart of Sharbazher



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Geographical and natural location of the Sharbazher District

The Sharbazher District is one of the natural, historical, and cultural districts of Sulaymaniyah Governorate in the Kurdistan Region of Iraq, which is very rich in terms of archaeological, geological, plant, and wildlife diversity. This diversity of the natural environment has caused the area to prosper since the Stone Age and contains many archaeological sites such as caves, ancient cities, castles, bridges, and ancient cemeteries.

Sharbazher in the Sassanian Period

Sharbazher in the Sassanid period was very prosperous, and Sassanid archaeological remains of settlements, castles and large pithoi have been found in most of the villages of Sharbazher. Some of them are now preserved in the Slemani Museum, especially the large pithoi, some of which were used as burials and some as warehouses for storing grains. The name of the mountain Warraz which is meaning in the Sassanian and old Kurdish meaning boar. During the Sassanian period, this name was used for strong people, for instance the most famous Sassanian military leader was called Sharwarraz, which meaning the boar of the city/country.

Historical and cultural chronology of human life in Sharbazher

We highlight the most important historical stages of human life in the Sharbazher district and also introduce some of the prominent monuments of the region. Some of the villages in the Sharbazher district have been used as shelters for humans during the Stone Ages, especially during the Paleolithic and Mesolithic Ages. Sharbazher is the homeland of the ancient people of Lullubu. Sharbazher was called the Zamua region in cuneiform texts three thousand years ago and sometimes called Mazamua. The oldest known people in the Zagros Mountains, who were contemporaries of the Sumerians in the Mesopotamian plains, were the ancient Lullubu people. These ancient people were formed as a result of the increase in the number of people in the agricultural villages of the Neolithic. They are mentioned in Mesopotamian cuneiform texts for three thousand years, from the third millennium BC to the first millennium BC, as defenders of their land against military invasions by the Sumerians, Akkadians, and Assyrians. The Humboldt Trench in Mount Aziru was mentioned in the world's oldest historical record, in the Sumerian King List.



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Reference

Sharbazher, Headquarters of the Kurdish Baban Princedom

Baban was a Kurdish princedom during the Ottoman period. It had an important administrative, economic, and political position. Mawat town was first became the capital of the princedom.



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The Lullubu people built a capital on Mount Azmar (Ancient Aziru) near the source of the springs and waters of the modern village of Khamza. The name Khamazi remained unchanged for four thousand six hundred years and is now called Khamza. In the Sumerian King List historical record of the Sumerian kings, which is also the oldest historical record in the world, the Sumerians refer to the history of all their kings and empires, pointing out that King Khatanish, king of the Khamazi kingdom from Sharbazher, attacked the Sumerian city of Kish in southern Mesopotamia. Later in the 23rd century BC Naramsin, king of the Akkadians, invaded this region and mentioned the battles in this region in his Victory Stele.



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Arrakdi, the new capital of the Lullubies

Arrakdi was located in the province of Zamua in the Sharbazher district. The Assyrian king, Ashurnasrpal II in 882 B.C. invaded Sharbazher and refers to the capital of the ancient Lullubu people in Sharbazher, the name of their capital city was Arrakdi, near Mount Lara, now called Lare Mountain. The cuneiform records also record the names of a number of Lullubu cities, some of which were religious and economic centers such as Paranzi, now called Parazan, Bara, Dagara, and Uze.

Sharbazher district, the center of the trade caravans

The valleys and plains of Sharbazher are surrounded by a series of mountain ranges like a natural fortification wall. The presence of several gorges and mountain passes between these mountain ranges proves that the region was open to the depths of the Zagros Mountains and Iranian plains. During the Sassanid and Islamic periods, trade caravans went in several stages. The third and fourth stages fell into Sharbazher district. The discovery of a cuneiform text at Sitak on the slopes of Mount Azmr in Sharbazher proves that the area was an important economic base of the Lullubu people in the seventh century BC. It was an important economic base of the Lullubu people, and the text mentions a contract for the sale of a vineyard and a number of witnesses. During the Sassanid and Islamic periods, trade caravans went in several stages. The third and fourth stages fell into Sharbazher. They were called Sitak (i.e. 3rd Tak) and Chwarta (4th Tak).

The Castles and the Bridges

There are a large number of archaeological and cultural castles and bridges in Sharbazher, some of which were built by the Lullubu people dating back between four and three thousand years ago. The bridges mostly date back to the Baban princedom.

The Cemeteries and the Shrines

In most of the villages of the Sharbazher district there are old cemeteries dating back to the medieval periods and the later Kurdish princedom of Baban. The cemetery of the Baban princes and the ancient cemeteries containing hundreds and thousands of graves prove that Sharbazher was an important and prosperous base in the Middle Ages.

Manuscripts and Archives of Sharbazher

The Baban library in the capital city of Qalachualan in Sharbazher in the 18th century contained more than 6,000 books. When the Babanian prince Ibrahim Pasha built the new capital city of Sulaymaniyah, the library was moved to the Grand Mosque of Sulaymaniyah. Unfortunately during the British occupation after WWI the library was burnt by British officers and only around 40 manuscript survived. Several authors, scholars, and poets have left behind manuscripts in Kurdish, Persian, Turkish, and Arabic languages. The Ottoman administrative archive also dealt with Sharbazher with more than 300 telegraph letters.

People and Culture of Sharbazher

The Sharbazher dialect has its own characteristics in the Kurdish language. Many folk stories about nature, plants, animals, monsters, biblical stories and love stories have survived orally in Sharbazher. The People of Sharbazher are an intellectual population engaged in agriculture and livestock breeding. In each village there is a poet and sometimes more than 10 poets. The people love literature a lot, and this is related to the nature, landscape, long history and diverse culture of these people.



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Social Beliefs

Although, the population in Sharbazher district is currently 100 percent Kurdish Sunni Muslims, in the past there were Zoroastrians and Christians. There are many graves and shrines in Sharbazher, each with a story and legend behind it. People visit them to seek love, healing, and sightseeing. This presents an important part of the richness of social beliefs. Some of these shrines have a long history, for instance the temple shrine of the goddess Lady of the province of Zamua in the 8th century BC, now called an Islamic Sufi shrine, with the same architectural remains, Khirizinda cemetery linked with the good man, the friend of Moses in the Quran and Bible. The castle of Qalate is linked with a folk story of the love of a prince and a princess on the sides of the Kanarwe river which they crossed during the flood of the spring season for a date.

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