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Original Research Article

A Comparative Study of Stone Lions in two Regions of Ardal and Bazoft in Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari*

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Abstract

The stone lion (Bardshir) is one of the cultural symbols of the Bakhtiari tribe, and as a sign of courage, they are placed on the graves of young people, athletes, and great and famous people. These statues were built in the Zagros mountains and outside this domain in a vast area called Bakhtiari, which today includes several provinces, over several centuries. These statues, which have been made from the past to the present, with different forms and modes, are decorated with motifs that originate from the cultural, social, and religious history of the people of these regions.

With the aim of knowing the periods of the stone lion, this article attempts to investigate the similarities and differences between the stone lions in Ardal and Bazoft regions in terms of the form and carved motifs and examine the concepts which these forms and motifs represent.

The present research used the descriptive-analytical method and employed the comparative approach. Library and field studies were conducted to evaluate and compare the stone lions of these regions. The results of the investigations show that the forms and motifs of stone lions are different in every family and clan. Also, the results show that the stone lions in Ardal region are older than the stone lions in Bazoft region, and the carved motifs on them are more detailed. Repetition of motifs carved on stone lions shows that a specific pattern dominates the decoration of stone lions. Also, the theme of these motifs and the forms of stone lions reflect the spirit of Bakhtiari people and their cultural and religious values.

Keywords: *Bakhtiari clan, Stone lion, Form, Motifs.*

Introduction

A stone lion was made in the Bakhtiari areas in the center, west, and south of Iran to be used as a tombstone.

The necessity of this research is that today this art has been forgotten and many of these works have been lost with time or are rapidly being destroyed.

The stone lions, which were made by unknown artists, are the last sculptures that have widely been made in the Zagros region over several centuries, and they have high values in terms of form and motif, which reflect the culture, tradition, and beliefs of the tribal people. The two regions of Ardal and Bazoft in Chaharmahal province and Bakhtiari, which is

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in the northern part of the Bakhtiari region, have some of the oldest cemeteries, which have been used continuously from the Safavid period to the end of the Pahlavi period. For this reason, they are of particular importance in the recognition of stone lions.

Due to the vastness of the Bakhtiari land, it was not possible to study all the stone lions. For this reason, two special places in the north of Bakhtiari, which are very old and have similar relationships and cultural areas, have been comprehensively studied. The purpose of this research is to identify and compare stone lions in these two regions in terms of form and motif. Therefore, the following questions have been addressed:

- What motifs are used on the studied stone lions and how are these motifs interpreted in the social and cultural atmosphere of the regions?
- What are the similarities and differences between the stone lions of the two regions of Ardal and Bazoft in terms of forms and motifs?
- What is the effect of the deceased people's social statuses on the forms and motifs of the stone lions? Are the stone lions used for women as well?

Descriptive and comparative investigation of statues and their figures and analysis of components can clarify the special characteristics and the existence of differences and commonalities of stone lions in both regions of Ardal and Bazoft. At first, the division of stone lions was done based on time group and the stone lions of Ardal and Bazoft regions were separately examined and analyzed in terms of morphology, and then a comparative study of the stone lions in two regions was conducted, which shows their similarities and differences, and the conclusion is presented at the end.

Research Method

The present research is developmental in terms of purpose and the type of research is descriptive-analytical in terms of method. To gather the data, field (field visits to stone lions, photography, interviews)

and library studies were carried out.

The written sources of this research include books, dissertations, research plans, and articles. In the analysis of the samples, first, each case was described and then the selected samples were analyzed in detail in terms of motifs and forms. Then the results and findings of the research were presented. To carry out this research, there were limitations, among them, the lack of a specific certificate for the statues, the destruction or theft of samples near urban areas, and the lack of available written sources.

Literature Review

Very few studies have been done in the field of Bakhtiari stone lions, but none of them have investigated the relief motifs and the form of stone lions in the Bakhtiari clan and have only mentioned their existential philosophy, which is described below. Tanavoli (2009), in the book *Tombstones*, examined the stone lions of Isfahan and Bakhtiari, Armenian, and the ones on Azarbaijani tombstones and Qajar graves. Safinejad (2001), in the book "Lorhayeh Iran", had a brief look at the stone lions of Izeh (Shahsavar cemetery and its 55 stone lions). Afshar Sistani (2003), in his book "Tourism and Cultural Heritage of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari Province", mentioned the use of lions on the graves of youths. Hajatpour (2005), in the book "From Lali to Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari", discussed the philosophy of the stone lion and the stone lions of the Lali cemetery. Madadi (2007), in the book "Symbol in Bakhtiari Culture", discussed the topic of the stone lion with Figures. Sahrashkaf (2009), in the book "Bardshir", mentioned the stone lion and its motifs in Bakhtiari. Heydari Noroozi (Hodayun Bakhtiari) (2010), in the book "Selected from the history of Iran," wrote an article about the philosophy and function of stone lions. Ghanbari Adivi (2011), in the book "Inquiry into Bakhtiari culture and art", presented an article entitled "Stone lion art in Bakhtiari culture".

The stone lion of Ghahrood, attributed to the athlete

Shokrallah Ghahroodi, was examined in a study called "Survey of Iran's tombstones" (Pourkarim, 1963). Zamani (2009), conducted a study on the protection of stone lions in the historical cemeteries of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari province, by evaluating the conditions of the cemeteries that contain stone lions, investigated the stones used, their damages, and sources.

The Importance of the Lion's Symbol in the Ancient Culture of Iran

The lion's motif in most ancient cultures has been a symbol of power and a manifestation of royalty. It has also been considered a representative of the Lion God. The courage and warlikeness, power, and greatness of this animal have given it a religious aspect. As in many religious scenes, it is a sign of belief in the superior and magical power of that animal. The lion is known as the king of the forest because of its strength and courage. This animal has been a symbol of the rule of kings and nobles, which is seen in their emblems to protect power and the throne. It means fire, sun, victory, summer, bravery, loyalty, king of animals, kingship, courage, pride, care, power, and warrior (Gertrude, 1991, 140). In the third millennium BC, in the culture of Shoush and Halil Roud in Jiroft, the motif of a lion can be identified that is related to the sun. Lions were the symbolic guardians of shrines, palaces, and tombs, and it was thought that their ferocity would ward off harmful effects (Taheri, 2011, 13; Jahangirian, 2013). In connection to bravery, pride, care, power, and warriorship, the symbol of the lion is related to Mehr-Mithraism creed (Javadi, 1401, interview). The symbolic role of the lion was used by the government from the Achaemenid era to the end of the Sassanid era, and with the same concepts, it came to Iran after Islam and was used politically and religiously in all Iranian periods after Islam, especially in the Safavid and Qajar periods (Mohammadi Milasi, 2013, 276-285).

Division Based on Time

For a stone lion to be placed on a person's grave, it should have qualities such as dignity and manliness, religiosity and courage, fighting, and horsemanship. The lions should match their popularity and fame. The presence of stone lions in different eras in the Bakhtiari clan shows the spirit of courage, bravery, and fighting spirit of the people of this clan who have always stood and resisted foreigners and enemy aggression. Accordingly, stone lions are also in a state of roaring, rising and attacking, firmness and roaring.

In Table 1, the division of stone lions was done based on the history and the field study. According to historical records, stone lions are divided into three time periods, older, old, and modern. The condition of the stone lion in Bakhtiari is diverse and different. Some of the available stone lions are standing straight, semi-erect, attacking, and roaring.

Stone Lion, Ardal Region (Absardeh Village)

Ardal city with an altitude of 1850 meters above sea level in the western part of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari province leads from the north to Kiyar and Farsan cities, from the east to Borujen city, and from the west to Izeh city (Khuzestan). Ardal is one of the most important regions of Chaharmahal and Bakhtiari province, both in terms of age and historical background, which was the center of Bakhtiari government in the past, and people from various Bakhtiari tribes and other cities migrated to Ardal during the Qajar era.

Stone tools from the Paleolithic period and the beginning of the Neolithic period, discovered in the region's ancient caves ten to eleven thousand years ago, are among the oldest works identified in this city. The archaeological excavations that were carried out in the years 87 to 89 solar years in this city and the works obtained from different historical periods show the antiquity of human habitation in different periods in this region. Absardeh cemetery,

Table 1. Classification (group-time) of stone lions based on historical records. Source: Ghanbari Adivi, 2011.

Category	Time	Attributes
First Division	Safavid to Qajar era	A big body, standing, short, round and curved, stout and awesome, instead of mane and wool, a necklace or collar was used
Second batch	50 -200 years ago	They were different from the old examples in terms of height and size. The standing and tendency of the body to move forward increased and more Figures were used on these stones. They used more swords, weapons, and combat elements.
The third category	Two decades ago until now	This group had the most real form of animals and is in a state of roaring. They have visible mane, tail, claws, and teeth

located in Absardeh village, belongs to the Safavid period to the Qajar period, and this work has been registered as one of the national works of Iran with the registration number 5986 (*Encyclopedia of History of Architecture of Iranshahr*, 2014).

According to the claim of the people of this village, there were twenty-five stone lions in the Absardeh cemetery, and currently, there are eleven stone lions in the village cemetery, and one of them is broken. These lions are in the category of older lions, and the dimensions of the largest lion are about 1.5 meters high from its head, 1.2 meters long, and 0.5 meters wide. These lions are made using stone extracted from local mines, and the material of their stone lions is often lime. Except for a small stone lion that is standing on the grave of a teenager, the rest of the lions are made in a half-standing state, some with open mouths and roaring and the rest with closed mouths.

The Morphology of the Stone Lion in Ardal Area

Head: The head is mostly placed upwards and its largeness is emphasized, in most cases, it is in line with the body, in rare cases, it is slightly curved from the body and stretched upwards (*Fig.1*).

Eyes: The eyes are located on both sides of the head in all sculptures (*Fig. 2*).

Mouth: It is open and the teeth are placed together and visible on the front and sides of the teeth. Shavaliieh considers revealing the teeth in the symbol of the lion

as a “sign of creative power” (*Chevalier & Alain, 2006, 218*). There is a lot of emphasis on drawing teeth in stone lions for two reasons: the first is to express the details of the face, and the second reason is to emphasize the power and animal puissance (*Fig. 3*).

Ears: In the stone lion of Ardal, the ears are prominent and shown in the shape of a circle and a heart, which expresses an aspect of the hearing of the dead in the other world (*Fig.4*).

Collar: The collar of lions is simple and in some cases, it is evident in the form of a necklace. In old examples of stone lions, there is a collar instead of a lion’s mane, which also shows that the lion is tame and under the command of the deceased (*Fig.5*).

Hands and feet: In most of the stone lions of this region, the hands and feet are joined together and the claws are marked. In the stone lion installed in the tomb of the teenager, the claws have not been identified, and in a few of these stone lions, the hands and feet are separated. The hands and feet of some lions have sunk into the soil over time. The claws are indicated by the lines corresponding to the fingers, but the nails are not sharply defined (*Fig. 6*).

Tail and testicles: in stone lions in Ardal region, the tails of all lions are placed on the waist from the right side, which is shorter in some and longer in others. The rounded shape of the tip of the tail is also specified. Some of the tails are straight, but most of them are bent. This way of performing the tail is very suitable for showing the gender and masculinity of



Fig. 1. Head form in the stone lion of Airdal region, Absardeh village cemetery. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 2. Eye form in the stone lion of Airdal region, Absardeh village cemetery. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 3. The form of the mouth in the stone lion of Airdal region, Absardeh village cemetery. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 4. The form of the ear in the stone lion of the region Airdal, Absardeh village cemetery. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 5. The form of the collar in the stone lion of Airdal region, Absardeh village cemetery. Source: Authors archive.



the lion while portraying the tail completely (Fig.7).
Belly and pollen: Stone lions of the region are made

with flat bellies and pollen. In some lions, there is a slight curvature in the belly of the lion, and the underbelly of stone lions is empty. The pollen of lions is flat, the information of the deceased has written on them, and in some of them, seals and rosaries or maces and horses are engraved. In some lions, the writings on their backs have worn off over time. In most lions, the spine is developed in the back (Fig. 8).

The stone lions of Airdal region are installed on a stone slab to maintain stability and have the necessary resistance and were placed next to the grave. Reasons such as the climate of the region, rainfall, damages caused by humans, the passage of time, and the type of stones have caused the wear and discoloration of the stone lions of this region.

Stone Lion Motifs in Airdal Region

On the stone lions in Airdal region, there are symbols of sword, dagger, axe, satur, mace, gun, gun powder container, seal and rosary, horse and rider, a man with mace in hand, shield, and comb. It should be noted that the motif mentioned as the comb may have been the motif of the roller coaster, but due to the lack of reliable sources about this motif and based on consultation with famous people, this motif is known as a one-sided comb, which was for men and shows their discipline.

Different motifs are used on the sides of stone lions. Some lions have fewer motifs (swords or guns). On the side of some stone lions from (Figs. 9 - 12) there are more inscriptions. The designs of some lions have been worn and faded over time.

It is worth noting that the sword pattern on the stone lions in Airdal region is curved and single-edged, and no text is engraved on the swords. A gun, which can be a symbol of warfare or hunting, is placed on the side of some lions (Sharifinia, Sarikhani, Dolatyari & Baemi, 2014, 20). The motif of the horse on the stone lions is a story of horsemanship in which the horse is associated with a fighting man in wars. The use of motifs of cold war tools such as mace, knife, and



Fig. 6. The form of hands and feet in the stone lion of Ardal region, Absardeh village cemetery. Source: Authors archive.



Fig 7. The form of the tail in the stone lion, Ardal region, Absardeh village cemetery, authors, summer 2017.



Fig. 8. The form of the belly and pollen in the stone lion of Ardal region, Absardeh village cemetery. Source: Authors archive.

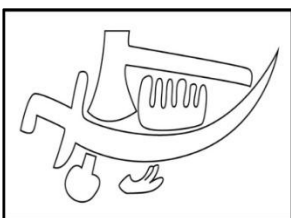


Fig. 9. the motif of the Axe, sword, and comb on the left side of the stone lion, Ardal region, Absardeh village. Source: Authors archive.

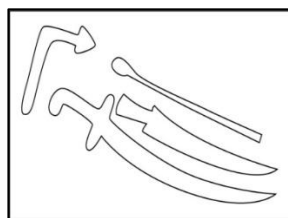


Fig. 10. The motif of a dagger, sword, and mace on the left side of a stone lion in Ardal region, Absardeh village. Source: Archives authors.

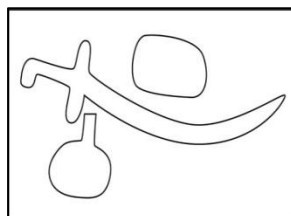


Fig. 11. the motif of the seal, sword, and gunpowder container inscription on the left side of a stone lion in Ardal region, Absardeh village. Source: Authors archive.

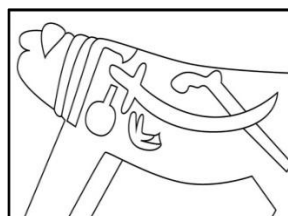


Fig. 12. the motif of the Sword, gun, gun powder container, and stirrup on the left side of the stone lion, Ardal region, Absardeh village. Source: Authors archive.

dagger, which fits with the fighting and militancy spirit of a person in the past, has also been common on stone lions. It should be noted that mace has been a symbol of power and superiority in Bakhtiari culture. The use of different weapons and tools on each stone lion tells about the skills and abilities of the deceased person. It has been tried to express the merit and competence of fighting, riding, hunting, and sometimes some other characteristics of a person by tapping these motifs on the stone lion.

Engraved seals, rosaries, and water bowls for ablution on stone lions are a sign of a person's religiosity. One of the research voids in this research is the lack of information about deceased people (Fig. 13). Unfortunately, the only signs that express the famous and special characteristics of deceased people are the stone lions installed on their graves and no information about these people has been transmitted to our generation, which shows the failure to preserve the name and character of the

great men of the land. However, it is not possible to validate the author's impressions of the engravings on the stone lions.

Stone Lion of Bazoft Area

Bazoft area is located on the way to Dashtak city after Doab Samsami area. Bazoft, with its pristine nature and long historical background, is one of the important points of Bakhtiari land. This part is adjacent to Khuzestan and has an area of 1,274 square kilometers, and geographically, it leads to Lorestan province and Kohrang city from the north, Ardal city and Dashtak region from the south and east, and Khuzestan province from the west.

This area has been one of the important centers of migration of Bakhtiari tribes and their paths. The historical background of the Bazoft region dates back to ancient Iran. The discovery of historical monuments such as inscriptions and stone reliefs and ancient coins tells about the antiquity of this region. Bazoft was a part of the Ilyma civilization that ruled over areas of Khuzestan and Bakhtiari during the Parthian period. The existence of historical cemeteries, stone lions, historical bridges, and bardgories are among the oldest stone monuments of the province and belong to the Achaemenid period until the end of the Sasanian rule.

The stone lions in Bazoft region are located in two villages of Hossein Abad and Baghchendar. Hossein Abad Cemetery and Baghchendar Cemetery belong to the Qajar Period and the Elimai Period - Qajar Period, respectively, which have been registered as national works of Iran with the registration numbers 19802 and 19487.

These lions are old and their body shape is flat and angular. Their dimensions are about 1.2 meters high from the highest point of the lion, about 1 meter long and 50 centimeters wide. The number of lions in these two villages was eight, and one of the stone lions of Baghchendar village was stolen, and three stone lions remained in this village. In Hossein



Fig. 13. the motif of the horse, man, seal, and rosary on the back of a stone lion, Ardal region, Absardeh village. Source: Authors archive.

Abad village, there are four stone lions.

Morphology of Bazoft Area Limestone

The stone lions in Bazoft region have a flat and smooth body shape and have not been subject to much natural erosion.

These lions are about 100-200 years old and belong to the category of old stone lions. One of the stone lions in Baghchendar village is standing, and the rest of the lions are half-raised. In the following, the body of these stone lions will be examined in more detail.

Head: Although most of the lion's awe is in its head, in old stone lions, the lion's head is made round and elongated, more like the human head (Figs. 14 & 15).

Mouth: As mentioned, the mouth and teeth are the symbols of the power, awe, and glory of the lion as a hunting animal. In the stone lion of Bazoft region, the mouth of the lion is open, and in the stone lion of Hossein Abad village, fangs are carved to show it more ghastly. The lion's tongue is also shown in the stone lion of Baghchendar village.

Ear: In the stone lion of Bazoft region, it is worked in two forms: raised semicircle and raised triangle (Fig. 16).

Collar: In the stone lion of the Bazoft region, the collar of the lions is simple and in some cases, it is made in the form of a necklace (Fig. 17).

Hands and feet: The hands and feet of stone lions in



Fig. 14. The form of the head of stone lion of Bazoft area, Hossein Abad village cemetery. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 15. The form of the mouth in the stone lion of Bazoft area, Hossein Abad village, authors, summer 2017.



Fig. 16. The form of the ear in the stone lion of Bazoft area, Hossein Abad village cemetery. Source: Authors archive.



Fig. 17. Collar form in the stone lion of Bazoft area, Hosseinabad village cemetery and Baghchendar. Source: Authors archive.

the Bazoft area are stuck together. The hands and feet of some lions are buried in the soil. The claws are indicated by the lines of the fingers, but the nails are not sharply defined. In some stone lions, the hands and feet are connected, furthermore, their lines are not defined (Fig.18).

Belly and pollen: In the stone lion of Bazoft region, the belly has been observed as flat and curved. Their backs are straight and along the head and texts are written on them. In these stone lions, the spine of the lion is not shown (Fig. 19).

Tail and the testicles: In the stone lions of the Bazoft region, the tail is bent and marked by showing the roundness of its tip. The testes of rock lions are marked as male gender (Fig.20).



Fig. 18. The form of hands and feet in the Stone lion in Bazoft area, Hosseinabad village cemetery and Baghchendar. Source: Authors archive.

Bazoft Region Stone Lion Sculptures

The motifs are very simple and the sides of these lions are relatively sparse. Below is the image of these motifs in the stone lions of the Bazoft area. The emblems of war tools, including spears, swords, daggers, whips, and guns, have expressed the abilities of the deceased person, his bravery,



Fig. 19. The form of the belly and pollen in the stone lion of Bazoft region. Source: Archives authors.



Fig. 20. The form of the tail and testicles in the stone lion of Bazoft region. Source: Authors archive.

fighting, and military spirit (Fig. 21-22).

A Comparison of Stone lions in Ardal and Bazoft Regions

The people of Ardal and Bazoft regions are both of Bakhtiari descent, but the history of Ardal region is older than Bazoft region. Historically and culturally, this region has richer support. The spirit of the people of this region according to the circumstances of life as well as the mountainous location has been a struggler and warrior, and religiously, the people of Ardal region are Muslim and Shiite. The economy of these people was based on agriculture and animal husbandry. The people of Bazoft region were often nomadic and lived a tribal life. During the last century, these people have settled in one place and formed villages in Bazoft region. Their occupation has often been animal husbandry. The stone lion of Ardal region is older than the stone lion of Bazoft region. The shape of the body of the stone lion of Ardal region is closer to the

real shape of the lion's body and it is curved and more noticeable in its physical form, while the stone lion of the Bazoft area has a smooth and flat form. In terms of size, the stone lion in Ardal region is bigger than the stone lion in Bazoft region. It has been discussed in more detail in the stone lion of Ardal region. The patterns engraved on the stone lions in Ardal region are more diverse and the number of carved patterns on the side of the lion in Ardal region is more than the stone lions of Bazoft region. In the Bazoft area, only text is written on the back of the lions, while on the back of the stone lions in the Ardal area, there are signs of seals, rosaries, bowls, horses, and maces. Tables 2 & 3 show a comparison of the figures and the engraved motifs on the bodies of stone lions in Ardal and Bazoft regions.

Conclusion

The motif of the lion in most ancient cultures has been a symbol of power and a manifestation of royalty. Comparison and analysis of the stone lions of two regions of Ardal (Absardeh village) and Bazoft (Baghchendar and Hossein Abad villages) show that there is a close relationship between the stone lions of the two regions and the authors concluded that the stone lions of two regions have close connections and similarities. The stone lions of the two regions have close connections and similarities in terms of form (figure), motif (figuration), and meaning, although in some cases they also include distinctions, and the similarity is rooted in nature, history, beliefs, and common lifestyle, in general, this similarity is repeated in all the stone lions of Bakhtiari regions.

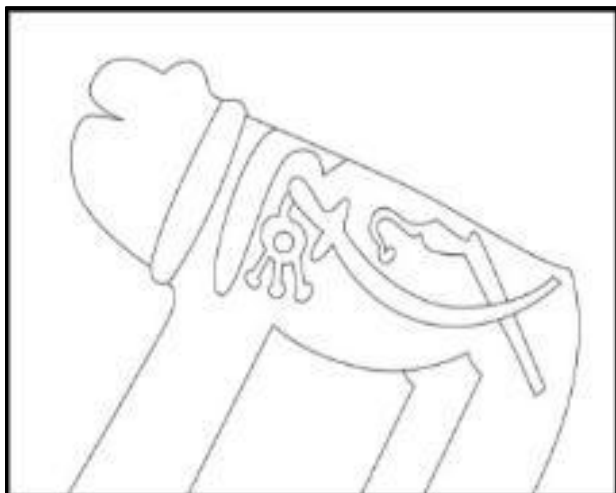


Fig. 21. The motif of the sword, whip, and gunpowder container on the left side of a stone lion in Bazoft area, Baghchendar village. Source: Authors archive.

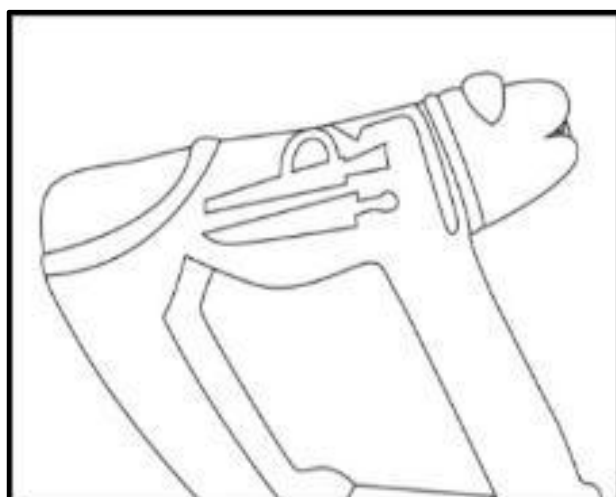


Fig. 22. The motif of the spear, weapon, dagger, and stirrup on the right side of the stone lion in Bazoft area, Baghchendar village. Source: Authors archive.



Also, after examining and analyzing the stone lions of two regions of Ardal and Bazoft, in addition to many structural similarities (form and motif), which is due to adherence to traditional principles and methods of Bakhtiari, on the other hand, each of them has independent personalities, which are due to experience and construction method (technique) of the artist is stone- carving and local and tribal characteristics.

In this research after the general review of the stone lions in the Bakhtiari region, the stone lions in Ardal and Bazoft were specifically investigated. The stone

lions of Ardal region were located in Absardeh village and in Bazoft region located in Baghchendar and Hossein Abad villages. The general conclusion of the investigation of the stone lions of these areas can be expressed as follows:





Endnote

- 1.The form and motifs of stone lions are different in every family and tribe. The difference in the motif is due to the social position of the clan and the individual in the tribe, and the difference in form is due to the style and technique of the stonemason.
- 2.The stone lion of the Ardal region is older and larger in appearance, and its rounded and curved shape is more than the stone lion of the Bazoft region. The stone lion of the Bazoft region has a flat body shape. Face components in the stone lion of Ardal region have been given more attention.

Table 2. Comparison of the figure and components of the stone lion of Ardal and Bazoft regions. Source: Authors.

Row	Figure			Similarity	Difference
		Ardal	Bazoft		
1	Head			The stone lion's head is round and long in both areas.	In Ardal region, more attention has been paid to the details of the face, including cheeks, eyes, mouth, and teeth
2	Mouth and tooth			In both stone lions, the mouth is shown as open, and teeth are shown	
3	Ear			In both stone lions, the ears are raised.	The shape of the ears in Ardal stone lion looks more natural.
4	Collar			In both stone lions, a simple collar is used instead of a mane.	In Ardal stone lion, the collar shape is more round and annular.
5	Belly			The underbelly of both stone lions is empty.	Despite the curvature in the belly of every stone lion, in general, the belly of Ardal stone lion has a better volume and shape.
6	Pollen			The texts are written on the back and waist of both stone lions	In the stone lion of the Bazoft region, the area of the spinal cord has not been accomplished. In addition to the text, motifs are also used on the back of the Ardal stone lion
7	Tail and testicles			In both stone lions, the tail is wrapped around the waist from the right side. In both stone lions, the testicles are marked to indicate the male gender.	

Rest of Table 2.

Row	Figure			Similarity	Difference
		Ardal	Bazoft		
8	Hand and feet			Claws are shown in both stone lions.	In some Ardal stone lions, the hands and feet are separated. There are more details of the stone lion of Ardal region.
9	Line			The line is the same in both stone lions.	In the stone lion of Ardal, the inscriptions are raised and in the stone lion of Bazoft, the inscriptions are linear.

3-Due to the locality of the stone mines used in the stone lion of the mentioned areas, the stone lion of the Ardal region has a lighter color than the stone lion of the Bazoft region.

4-The motifs on the stone lions of the Ardal region have been more worn than the stone lion motifs of the Bazoft region. The reason for this can be attributed to the age of the stone lion of the Ardal region, the type of rocks, and the different weather conditions.

5. The patterns carved on the stone lion of the Ardal region are more diverse with more details and more numbers. On the stone lion sides of the Bazoft area, there are few motifs carved, and their repetition is more in lions.

6. In addition to motifs related to war weapons, seal, rosary, carpet, comb and mirror are also carved in the stone lion of the Ardal region, which shows the clan's more attention to cultural issues.

7. Due to the proximity of the cemetery to the road, the stone lion of the Bazoft area has been exposed to more human destruction.

8. Considering the symbolic meaning of the lion in Iranian culture and its connection with concepts such as warriorship and athlete, as well as the fact that stone lions are male in tombs, stone lions are placed on men's graves in both regions, and stone lions are not used on women's graves. It can be said that the lion is a masculine symbol. Or in other words, "This is the symbol of valor among the followers of the Mehr religion, and it can be seen on their graves in ancient cemeteries. Sometimes this symbol is used in the form of relief on the tombstones." (Javadi interview, 1401).

9. The stone lion collars in both areas are simple and the lions have no manes.

10. In both areas, the lions are in a half-raised state.

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Table 3 A comparison of stone lion motifs in Ardal and Bazoft regions. Source: authors.

Row	Figure	Figure		Similarity	Difference
		Ardal	Bazoft		
1	Horse and stirrup		-----	In the Ardal stone lion, a horse image is carved on the back of one of the lions, but in the Bazoft stone lion, no horse or stirrups have been observed.	
2	Sword			In both stone lions, the shape of the sword is carved in a curved and single edge without any text on it.	Does not have
3	Dagger			The motif of the dagger is engraved on the right side of both lions.	The handle of the dagger has been accomplished more on lions in the Ardal region.
4	Gun			The motif of the gun is in both areas of the stone lion.	The motif of the gun in Ardal's stone lion is simpler.
5	Gunpowder container			The motif of the gunpowder container carved on the Ardal and Bazoft stone lions is similar.	
6	Other weapons of war			The war tools carved on the Ardal stone lion are more diverse and detailed	
7	Axe		-----	There is no motif of the axe in the stone lion of the Bazoft region.	
8	Mace		-----	There is no motif of mace in the stone lion of the Bazoft area.	
9	Satur		-----	There is no motif of Satur in the stone lion of the Bazoft area.	

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