

**Professional scientific sessions for art, architecture and urban planning Thursday evenings**

**Held in: Conference hall of Herampey Consulting Engineers**

**Date: 27.06.2019**

**Title: Hand carved architecture in Iran.**

**Speakers and panel members: Mrs. M. Ashrafi and Mr. A. Keivanlou.**

Beginning her speech Mrs. Ashrafi said that intends to present the results of her studies during the last years regarding the hand carved architecture. The first part will be about the typology and the second part will be about the geographic dispersion.

Mrs. Ashrafi explained that today we speak and know more about hand graved architecture. My personal experience began about 18 years ago when I was ordered to prepare a proposal about the Meimand hand carved village and because I didn't know anything about it, I decided to have visit in loco. It was a new world and at that time it wasn't even world registered. Continuing my research I knew cases like Hilevard near Kandovan village, that thank to our activity has been world registered. As I mentioned at the beginning I tried to focus my studies on the typology of hand carved architecture.

Continuing her speech she talked about the etymology of the word hand carved in Persian, explaining that it was the best term to express the idea of this kind of architecture.

Talking about foreign case Mrs. Ashrafi talked about the village of Metra in Italy that once was depopulated and actually has been world registered by a university professor called Pietra Lariano.

Mrs. Ashrafi explained the process of world registration that first goes to the UNESCO office of the country that passes the demand to the local office of ICOMOS. There are two years the in Iran has been the hand carved architecture branch in ICOMOS that intends to present the result of its activities in a global scale.

Mrs. Ashrafi talked about the case of Meimand village. First it won in 2006 the award of Greek cultural heritage and UNESCO after Marina Mercury. The award was given because of protection works and right management from cultural landscape view. In the case of Meimand we realised that is a winter station for the local people that spend their time and activity in three phases of time. She expressed regret that regarding this case the western world is not informed as it should be.

Continuing her speech explained the historic process that characterized the construction or creation of hand carved structures. Some of them were inspired by the nature and some others by the way animals used to build their nests. During their studies they have realised that there were

many material and also spiritual reasons that pushed and encouraged the people to select hand carved structures as a protected living space.

Concluding her speech Mrs. Ashrafi presented some contemporary architectural works that were inspired by hand carved architectural structures.

The second speaker was Mr. Keivanlou. He explained how he was involved in the studies and researches of hand carved architecture and structures in Iran from 2004 and how continued his works in order to identify and present hand carved structures in Iran and their geographical position.

Mr. Keivanlou presented the detailed map of hand carved structures in Iran, saying that the most famous are the village of Kandovan and the village of Meimand. In the case of Kandovan unfortunately the huge flow of tourists and the lack of a coordinated programs and strategies of protection and maintenance have caused considerable damages to the genuine form of the village, meanwhile in the case of Meimand thank to the vigilance and programmed works headed by Mrs. Ashrafi, every attempt to deviate the right course of the developments have been avoided. He added also that at this moment their group have identified about 250 hand carved structures that include also mines with different sizes belonging to different eras. In general the mentioned structures have been carved for living, services, ceremonies, cemeteries, refuges...

Continuing his speech Mr. Keivanlou presented the existent types of hand carved structures used for various purposes. Some of these structures are still used by the local population.

The living structures can be composed by single structures or as villages. The structures that were used for services included water storages, water mills, pools, qanats, water channels, baths. The structures dedicated to ceremonies were often mosques, churches, temples or meeting rooms for religious purposes. The refuge structures included underground cities, caves, underground refuges or vigilance points for military and defence purposes.

For each case Mr. Keivanlou mentioned existing cases like the village of Meimand and Kandovan, the Hashtdan fortress, the village of Qorveh in Qazvin province, the farhad balcony in the city of Maku.

During his speech Mr. Keivanlou presented hand carved structures in various regions of Iran, that were mostly unknown to the presents, but showed how this type of structures were spread in different parts of Iranian territory.

Talking about religious structures Mr. keivanlou presented two mosques in Cheraqil in Eastern Azerbaijan region and one of them is still active. He also presented the mosque of Mazar in Khorasan Razavi region, that is still active.

In the works that Mr. Keivanlou presented royal roads like the Tanghe Balaqi in Fars region or Fazel old road in Khorasan Razavi were the most interesting structures.

He presented also various mine that were created or renewed in various eras like the mines of Aslan, Majd Abad, Galoubadamak.

At the end of his speech Mr. Keivanlou talked about structures that have been used as refuges by the local population like the underground city of Dejmandeh in Zanjan province, the caves complex in Kordestan region.