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Original Research Article

A Comparative Study of the Menhir of the Shaharyeri Historical Site Located in Meshginshahr of Ardabil Province and the Saint-Sernin Aveyron in the South of France

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Abstract

Problem statement: The physical similarity between the Menhirs from the Iron Age II (586–1000 BC) in the Shaharyeri historical site in Meshginshahr, Ardabil province, and Saint-Sernin Aveyron in the south of France is a significant issue that has not been addressed thus far. This research seeks to study the similarities between these Menhirs, which originated from similar burial rituals commonly held in these two areas.

Research objective: The main objective is to study the physical similarity between the two Menhirs at the historical sites of Shaharyeri and Saint-Sernin Aveyron. The sub-goal is to compare the similarities and differences between these Menhirs, recognize their nature, and study the culture and burial ritual of the ancient Turks (Ushaghalari School) in the west of Iran. Therefore, this study draws the researchers' attention to the other aspects of art.

Research method: This study employed the comparative-historical method. All documents were collected through library research and Shaharyeri's pictures were compiled by the authors through field research.

Conclusion: The results of this study show that the similarities between Shaharyeri and Saint-Sernin Aveyron's Menhirs are due to the Bicameral Mind, or the evolution of neural structures underlying human perception. So, the human mind evolved through mental inspiration and attained a common mental consciousness, and these same thoughts and awareness have led to the emergence of similar artistic works across the world. Despite quite a distance, these artworks have similarities in general and differences in details.

Keywords: *The Menhir, The Shaharyeri, The Saint-Sernin Aveyron, The Early Humans, Ushaghalari School.*

Introduction

In some parts of Iran, Menhirs or the same humanoid stones have been seen in large dimensions in groups. One of the most important examples of these stone buildings in Iran, which is more than the type of simple Menhirs, is located on the slopes of Mount

Sabalan in Azerbaijan. In the meantime, the urban area in Meshginshahr, which includes tombs, Steles, and castles belonging to the Iron Age II (586-5000 BC), has been highly regarded by archaeologists and researchers. But the existence of similar works, including Shaharyeri's Menhirs in Iran and other parts of the world has attracted the attention of many researchers. In this regard, the studies on the

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appearance of these Menhirs in the form of stone, height, stature, face shape, eyes, and mouth and, the presence of female gender among them have been highly considered. However, comprehensive studies have not yet been conducted on the Menhirs in Iran compared to the Menhirs abroad.

As for the example of Menhirs outside of Iran, one of the critical areas in terms of the existence of these Menhirs is the statues and Menhirs of the Saint-Sernin Aveyron located in the south of France, which is one of the most important Sculpture- Steles complexes in Europe. The main focus of this research is the similarity in the appearance characteristics between Shaharyeri and Saint-Sernin Aveyron's Menhirs, despite quite a distance from each other. The similarity between the Menhirs of these two areas reinforces this hypothesis that the same concepts common in the two areas have led to the similarity in appearance despite the great distance between these Menhirs.

Therefore, this study's main question is as follows: What are the physical characteristics of the Menhirs in the two civilizations, and how they are performed? The sub-questions are as follows: What are the visual similarities? How can the connection between these Menhirs be interpreted? What thoughts and beliefs were behind the construction of these Menhirs, and why the builders of these Menhirs have paid more attention to some features?

This study aims to investigate the similarities between the two ancient sites of Shaharyeri and Saint-Sernin Aveyron's Menhirs and the sub-objective of the comparative study of these Menhirs is to try to answer the research questions. At the same time, it examines and recognizes the intellectual background of the culture of human burial in western Iran. The main subject of this study is the existence of similarities between the Menhirs in the world's geographical areas, which has provided the need for research and study in this regard.

Finally, this study examines the forms and images used in the Menhirs of the two ancient sites of Shaharyeri and Saint-Sernin Aveyron and identifies their similarities and differences. According to the findings of this study, in the context of the studied Menhirs, these works of art have

been influenced by important cultural events in the Iron Age II. Therefore, this study tried to investigate the implicit aspect of the Menhirs in the historical areas of Shaharyeri and Saint-Sernin Aveyron, which indicates that the Menhirs in each civilization have similar visual characteristics demonstrating almost the same burial ritual in different parts of the world.

Research background

Studies in urban areas can be divided into two categories: First, the studies that have been done before have led to the exploration and identification of the ancient area of Meshginshahr by archaeologists such as Charles Burney and his colleagues. According to these studies, this site was registered on the list of national monuments in 2002 with the number 6162 (Burney, 1979, 155). From 2003 to 2005, during three seasons of archaeological excavations under the supervision of Hejebri Nobari, this area was studied, and based on this, an article entitled "Analysis and Investigation of Effective Geographical and Socio-Cultural Variables on the Formation and Development of Shaharyeri" was published (Hejebri Nobari, Khanali, Anil, Mousavi Kouhpar & Hajizade Bastani, 2019). Also, he and his colleagues, in an article entitled "Archaeological Analysis and Investigations on Shaharyeri in Ardabil Province," analyzed the archeology of this ancient site (Hejebri Nobari, Khanali, Anil & Mousavi Kouhpar, 2021). Khanali's thesis with the subject of "An Analysis of Cultural Relations between Northwest Iran and the Caucasus Based on a Case Study of Man-Made Menhirs Obtained from Archaeological Studies at the Shrine Site of Shaharyeri in Ardabil Province" has also studied human eruptions at this ancient site (Khanali, 2019). There have been many studies on Saint-Sernin Aveyron's Menhirs, for example, an article entitled "F. Niel. Dolmens and Menhirs" by Guillaumont, who studied the sculptures and Menhirs of this area (Guillaumont, 1960). We can also refer to D'iana's studies entitled "Les statues-menhirs du Sul de la France" (D'iana, 1998). Also, in other studies such as "The three statues-menhirs of Ardaliès (Saint-

Izaire, Aveyron),” this issue has been addressed by Soutou (Soutou, 1973).

Studies that have been conducted on this ancient site in recent years refer to the research of Alizadeh and his colleagues entitled “Archaeological Surveys in East Azerbaijan: North of Namin, Ardebil Province (Alizadeh, Rezalo, Hajizade & Afkhmi, 2018), and Dan & Cesaretti’s studies entitled “The Mouthless People: Some Remarks on the Shaharyeri Statue-Stela Complex” are among these studies (Dan & Cesaretti, 2020). This study is a general re-evaluation of the ancient site of Shaharyeri and points out that the most prominent feature of this ancient site is the presence of more than five hundred Statue-Steles. Moreover, Hejebri Nobari and his colleagues in an article entitled “Archaeological Analysis and Investigations on Shaharyeri in Ardabil Province” re-examined this ancient site and expressed its features from an archaeological point of view (Hejebri Nobari, Khanali, Yilmaz & Mosavi Kohpar, 2020). In most of the mentioned studies, these two areas have been mentioned. However, none of the above research, comparative studies, or studies of the similarities and differences between these two areas and the burial ritual have been conducted. This article intends to deal with the similarities and differences between the Menhirs according to the burial rites in both areas.

The theoretical framework

• Menhirs

Menhirs are huge and long rocks that were buried vertically in the soil in ancient times, in such a way that most of them are out of the ground (Steimer, 2020). In European languages, it is called “Menhir,” which is a combination of Bertoni’s two words, “Men,” meaning stone, and “Hir,” meaning long, and its translation is “long stone” (Shaw & Jameson, 2008). The word “megalith” also refers to these erected stones, which means a large stone that forms a prehistoric monument (for example, Menhir) or part of it (e.g. a stone circle or chamber tomb) (Handwerk, 2019). Thus, megalithic art is the art that in prehistoric Europe was painted or engraved on megaliths and is completely abstract and rarely depicts objects as real (Twohig, 1981). The shapes

of the Menhirs are usually irregular and rectangular, the diameter of which often decreases gradually upwards (Díaz-Guardamino, 2021). Thus, Stele, or memorial stones (Karami, 2006), are a type of Menhir found in archaeological sites around the world. Menhirs in Iran are mostly simply raised stones and were seen in the foothills of Sabalan Mountain in Azerbaijan (Ghaem Maghami, 1970). At first glance, it seems that this widespread culture of Stele-making has a certain homogeneity. But studies show significant regional diversity (Asgari, 2018). These Menhirs are made of light gray volcanic rock (Khanali, 2019). The shape of the stone, height, stature, face shape, eyes and mouth, and the presence of female gender among these Menhirs have been studied (Ezatollahi Nejad, 2008). Because of the presence of human motifs on the stones, residents have given it the name of Ushaghalari School (i.e., school children)” (Mohammadi, 2003). Both areas have similar menhirs.

• Ancient Turkic ritual in burial

The art of stone carving in ancient Iran was considered by rulers and kings to express power, and it was a memory that next generations, by looking at them, recounted past events like visual pages without a narrator (Mehrvand, 2016). The lithographic ritual among the Turks, which was created fifty-six thousand years ago in the region of Asia and with a brief look at the Angiography Atlas of the Proto-Turk tribes, spread through the migration of Turkic tribes along the Kipchak plain in Europe and Altai. The oldest specimens were discovered in Azerbaijan and Turkey, and have been studied in a coordinated system based on the new theory and different aspects of ethnography, mythology, and ancient Turkish history as important documents (Aghasi Oglu, 2019). Since the arrangement of the Menhirs of the Shaharyeri was in the form of a school, the name of Ushaghalari School has become popular related to them. The relationship between the arrangements of these Menhirs seems certainly based on the beliefs of primitive tribes, which has led to the study of this method of arrangement of these Menhir formations.

• The Menhirs of Casket-shaped

The engraved works on the tombs show a rich culture

in different parts of the vast land of Iran, which were carved with signs of life, several species, and the general idea of truth (Chari, 2009). In the meantime, anthropomorphic Menhirs are part of the carvings at the heart of the tombs, which have a remarkable diversity in face painting, sculpture, chronology, and geographical diversity. Therefore, the study of the form and role of these works from the perspective of archeology and art history can be discussed (Pourrostan, 2016). These types of tombs are placed side by side in a set, but in simpler examples, they are located a distance from the tombs. Some of the specimens in Meshginshahr are much smaller in size than the known specimens, which may have been for immature people, but their carvings are not much different from other examples (Hessari & Ali Yari, 2012). The Menhirs of the historical city of Shaharyeri, located in Meshginshahr, Ardabil province, are in the shape of caskets (Fig. 1).

These Menhirs are shaped like caskets, with different heights of 70 to 360 cm, and are mostly carved in human form. Human carvings on stones are in the form of people with their hands on their chests and usually without mouths. However, only one sculpted statue of a woman with a mouth has been found.

• Menhirs of the historical site of Shaharyeri

One of the most significant sites indicating the Iron Age developments in the northwest of Iran is the ancient site of Shaharyeri in Meshginshahr in Ardabil province, which was identified during the Charles Burney studies and during three periods of archaeological excavations in 2003, 2004, and 2005, under the supervision of Hejebri Nobari, to identify the Iron Age cultures of the northeastern area of northwestern Iran (Hejbari Nobari et al., 2021), including the ancient city of Shaharyeri and the Ushaghalari School. This site is referred to in Charles Burney's report as "Arjagh Castle" (Burney et al., 1979), which derives its name from a village 6 km away (Ingraham & Summers, 1979). This ancient site, with an area of over 400 hectares on rocky ridges, is located 1.5 km east of the village of Pirazmian. Shaharyeri Cemetery contains 280 ancient carved tombstones that are estimated to be more than 8000 years old (Khanali, 2019). This site consists of an area of 2200 square



Fig. 1. The Menhirs of Caskets shape in Meshginshahr. Source: Tripadvisor, 2019. meters, a space with 7 corridors with a length of 15 to 25 meters, and a width of 1 to 3 meters (Hejbari Nobari et al., 2021), (Fig. 2).

Around the Shaharyeri's human-like Menhirs are placed vows, including pottery and ornaments (ibid., 279). This fact strengthens the hypothesis of the ritual nature of this place and shows the religion of the primitive people at this ancient site.

• Menhirs of the historical site of Saint-Sernin Aveyron

At the Fenaille museum in Rodez, France, a room that has gathered sculptures and Menhirs has exhibited 17 original sculptures. This collection brings together a large part of the first sculptures identified by archaeologists in the late nineteenth century (Fenaille museum, 2021). This sculpture is in the shape of a person's whole body, in which four faces are depicted (Fig. 3).

Lady Saint-Sernin is one of the statues of Menhir Aveyron and is part of a collection of sculptures with human dimensions that were first carved 5,000 years ago during the Copper Age (Handwerk, 2019). They also have the distinction of being the first known representations of real life in the form of life-size men and women statues (Soutou, 1973). This type of Menhir is a type of carved standing stone that was created in the later Neolithic period in Europe and is found mainly in the south and west of France (Rodríguez, Garcia & Rufo, 2010). Another Menhir that belonged to the historical area of Saint-Sernin Aveyron is a statue with a strange but symmetrical appearance. The remarkable point in this sculpture and the previous sculpture is that the small heads are bigger than the bodies (Fig. 4).



Fig .2. The Shaharyeri's Humanoid Menhirs. Source: Tripadvisor, 2019.



Fig .3. The famous Lady Saint-Sernin. Source: Fenaille museum, 2021.

In another Monhir from this collection, the shape of the fingers, the presence of a dress that looks ritualistic, and the small face that is lost in the whole space of this masonry are very noticeable. The presence of upright tombstones attached to the face shape may be related to

the engraved patterns on the garment or indicate a type of necklace that surrounds the head (Fig. 5).

This collection consists of standing rocks that are arranged irregularly or in irregular rows. Researchers believe that it has an anthropomorphic shape. However, this collection of Menhirs has been transferred to the Fenaille museum in Rodez to protect them from natural damage.

Research methods

This article follows the comparative-historical method. All documents provided by the library collection and Shaharyeri's pictures were compiled by the authors as field research. The statistical basis of this research is the study of the Menhirs of the historical sites of Shaharyeri located in Meshginshahr and Saint-Sernin Aveyron located in the south of France. What is important in these issues is the study of issues related to the Ushaghalari School, which in this essay has raised this issue from a new point of view.

• Detailed description of the Menhir body

This study attempts to analyze the meaning and role of the historical sites of Shaharyeri and Saint-Sernin Aveyron.

- Face form

The method of the primitive tribes in depicting the faces of the icons is simple, geometric, and far removed from naturalism. Primitive societies believed that they could trap the spirits of their ancestors in the statues they erected and use their supernatural power to ward off evil and improve their quality of life (Marzban, 2010). They believed that all natural phenomena have souls and that by making human bodies, their souls can be invited to their bodies and their magical properties can be used. The general form of the face is horseshoe-like in the Shaharyeri's Menhirs. In other words, "the circumference of the face shown by the hair turned into a hand is 21 cm long in the form of an -shaped" (Khanali, 2019). The shape of the eyes is round and prominent in large size. In some rock formations, small holes have been made in the eyes instead of the pupils. The nose forms are very simple, often very long, and attached to the hair. The hair on both sides of the face is pulled in the



Fig. 4. Discovered Menhir in Saint-Sernin Aveyron. Source: Mourey, 2020.



Fig. 5. Discovered Menhir in Saint-Sernin Aveyron. Source: Mourey, 2020.

direction of the nose. Most of the Menhirs are beardless, but as illustrated in Fig. 6, the face of the beard is embossed in the form of grooves. (Fig. 6).

No mouth can be seen on the face parts of this historical site. Only one of the ridges has a mouth that is linearly carved in a stone that is thought to be female because it has a pin in its hair. The form of most elevations is often similar to each other. But there are differences in some features. Interestingly, several faces are on the rock known as the “Lady Saint-Sernin.” However, the predominant shape of the faces of the Shaharyeri’s Menhirs is horseshoe-like, and the shape of the face, including the eyes, nose, and hair, is divided into two groups around the face. (Fig. 7).

It is noteworthy that the small shape of the face compared to the body of the **statues is preserved**, and little emphasis has been placed on the details of the face. They are often without a nose, either in the form of a sharp point attached to the forehead and generally attached to the hair or in the form of a small cylinder that is far from the eyes.

- Hands

Primitive man used the hand as a tool and weapon. In the ancient peoples’ doctrinal and religious philosophy, the category is a sign of respect and reverence for a superior force. It is a concept and a sign of a covenant that has been transferred during historical periods (Mobini, 2020). In the Shaharyeri’s Menhirs, the hands are marked either separately on either side of the face, or at the end of the hair, which is divided into five parts with shallow grooves, which seem to have created the shape of the fingers. The shape of the fingers is not known in the samples where the hands are marked separately. But, in the samples where the hands are stretched along the hair, the shape of the fingers is separated. The arms are mostly short and have a dramatic shape and are located above the torso. In some of the Shaharyeri’s Menhirs, the hands are inclined inwards and the order of the dimensions is not observed (Fig. 8).

In the Saint-Sernin Aveyron’s Menhirs, the hands are seen separately vertically on both sides of the statue’s body. A noteworthy point in these sculptures is the emphasis on the position of the hands. In some of the



Fig. 6. The face on the Shaharyeri's Menhirs. Source: Tripadvisor, 2019.



Fig. 7. The face of the Saint-Sernin Aveyron's Menhir. Source: Mourey, 2020.

Menhirs, the hands are engraved vertically, and in others, horizontally. This difference in the position of the hands can be related to a specific concept (Fig. 9).

- Belts and weapons

As a symbol of the kingdom, weapons played an important role in maintaining power among the primitive tribes. It is essential to have ornaments on weapons such as daggers and swords. Decorations in the shape of flowers and plants were often used for ornamental and religious purposes. Menhirs have been identified in two types: armed and unarmed, and weapons in the form of swords and daggers have also been different. They are seen in two groups of straight and whip swords

and are hung from the belt, and the type of weapon can be distinguished by its size and length. The grips of the weapons are also V-shaped and U-shaped. The way to hold these weapons is that, in some cases, the lower arm is right and in the middle, it is in the middle of both hands (Fig. 10).

Engraved belts on hoists are mostly decorated with geometric patterns. Thus, through shallow grooves on the belt, geometric patterns are engraved, which are seen in the form of horizontal and vertical lines, resembling the petals of intersecting and cross-lines. Decorated belts in Parthian and later Sassanid paintings were more mature and delicate (Mehrvand, 2016). The Saint-Sernin Aveyron's Menhirs are unarmed. In the following, the details of the Menhirs of the historical sites of Shaharyeri and Saint-Sernin Aveyron are described in separate tables. In addition to the descriptions of the form and images, linear analysis is also provided to obtain a more accurate design of the details of the figures (Tables 1 & 2).

Examination of the details of Shaharyeri's Menhirs shows the tendency to simplify and abstract human forms and related items in these stone structures. The Horseshoe-Like the face and nose, they are often seen as a teardrop or a quadrangular cylinder between the two eyes. Their faces look like humans, and they have mysterious smiles and dazzling looks. The presence of daggers and swords is evidence of a tool for war. They all have eyes and noses, but only one of them has a mouth.

The details of the Saint-Sernin Aveyron's Menhirs show the similarity of simplicity and abstraction with the Shaharyeri's Menhirs. The common form of a horseshoe-like face, a cylindrical nose, or a sharp point are the characteristics of these stones. But unlike the Shaharyeri's menhirs, these Menhirs have mouths of different shapes.

Comparison of the Details of the Menhirs of the Historical Site of Shaharyeri and Saint-Sernin Aveyron: The study of these similarities shows that the Menhirs of these two sites have the general shape of conical cylinders. Of course, the engraved design of these icons depends on the general shape of these stones.



Fig. 8. The shape of the hands on the Shaharyeri's Menhirs. Source: Tripadvisor, 2019.



Fig. 9. The shape of hands on the Saint-Sernin Aveyron's Menhir. Source: Mourey, 2020.



Fig. 10. Weapons on the Shaharyeri's Menhirs. Source: Tripadvisor, 2019.

Therefore, in some figures, the cylindrical composite form is accompanied by slight changes in size and dimensions. In general, the figures of the two regions have a horseshoe-like face, a cylindrical nose, a linear mouth, round eyes, cylindrical arms, and a rectangular belt. These physical similarities are more or less seen in most of the menhirs (Table 3).

The important point in Table 3 is the differences, the presence or absence of the details of the bodies of

Menhirs. One of these differences is the lack of weapons in the Menhirs of Saint-Sernin Aveyron and the absence of mouths and feet in most of Shaharyeri's Menhirs. Of course, it should be noted that only one Menhir has a mouth. The Menhirs of these two areas are different in terms of shapes (e.g. the shape of the nose, mouth, eyes, hands, and belt). However, in the general comparative analysis of the Menhirs of the two historical sites of Shaharyeri and Saint-Sernin Aveyron, the characteristics of these Menhirs in terms of dimensions, material, form, and type of tomb have been presented in Table 4.

In a comparative study of the general characteristics of these two sites, it is clear that the type of same material and the shape and form of these elevations bring their similarity closer to each other. These Menhirs are clearly different in size and type of tomb, indicating the burial rite's common thinking belongs to each area.



































Gender Comparison

• Existence of female gender among the Menhirs

The feminine element of the pin, obtained from the Shaharyeri's Menhirs, can be seen on the hair of some Menhirs in the horizontal lines shaped, which indicates that they are women, and it demonstrates that in the society of that time, there were women fighters with particular social status (Ezatollahi Nejad, 2009), (Fig. 11)

In the fifth millennium BC, motherhood was the basis of social organization, and it was women who organized productive activities (Alizadeh, 2014). Dr. Roman Ghirshman discussed **how**, in this primitive society, women were given heavy responsibilities. As a result, an imbalance was created between the duties of men and women, and women became superior to men (Ghirshman, 1957). Therefore, paying attention to women warriors and women guards in these Menhirs indicate their special position and a concept of power. The famous Lady Saint-Sernin, considered one of the most prominent Menhirs of this area, has a female gender but without weapons and battle clothes. Anthropologists such as Brian Morris believe that family patterns were a myth of the great hunter in the Stone Age. In this way, the primitive man left the cave, and his wife sat waiting for

Table 1. Details of the Shaharyeri's Menhirs. Source: Authors.

Menhir Body Components	Form	Figure	Linear Analysis		Description
			General Overview	Figure Drawn in Detail	
Face	Horseshoe- -Like 				Includes eyes, nose, and hair in two parts around the face, in some cases the fingers can be seen at the end of the hair.
Nose	Big Tears				In most Menhirs, the noses are attached to the foreheads, which are usually connected to the hair.
	Large Cylinder				
Mouth	Linear				Only one sample is available. The gender of the female speaker in the temple reflects the ritual beliefs.
Eyes	Nested Circles				The eyes consist of two overlapping circles.
	Hollow Circles				They were found only in one case
	Full Circles				They seem to appear due to erosion
Hands	Attached Cylinders				The hands are attached to the hair, which shows the fingers by creating grooves at the end.
	Separate Cylinders				The hands are separated by distances from the hair.
Foot				No Foot	
Belt	Elongated Rectangle with Geometric Patterns				Engraved belts on Menhirs are mostly decorated with geometric patterns.
Weapons	Sword				Long and elongated

him and took care of the children (Morris, 1994). Therefore, in primitive tribes, women had an important position. The place of this myth has also been suggested by great English anthropologists such as Lewis Henry Morgan. In ancient times, women had a high position in these societies (López,

2020). Will Durant has also written in this regard: in that period, the position of men in the family was superficial, while the role of women was fundamental (Durant, 2002). According to anthropologists, at that time, women were considered representatives of power.

Table 2. Details of the Saint-Sernin Aveyron’s Menhirs. Source: Authors.

















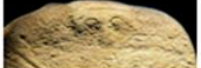

















Body Components of Mehnir	Form	Figure	Linear Analysis		Description
			General Overview	Figure Drawn in Detail	
Face	Horseshoe-Like 				The face includes eyes, a nose, and hair in two groups around it.
Nose	Small Sharp Tip				It is often without a nose. However, in some cases, the nose is a sharp point attached to the forehead and is generally attached to the hair.
Mouth	A Small Cylinder				The nose is in the form of a small cylinder far from the eyes.
	Linear				In some cases, it is mouthless but is often shown as multiple lines or a single line.
Eyes	Rectangular and Irregular				Their eyes consist of a rectangle that is uncoordinated.
	Prominent and Small Circles				Their eyes are round and small
Hands	Vertical Cylinders				Most Menhirs are without hands, but in hoists with hands, the hands are embossed on both sides of the body inwards. Also, in one example, the arms are hung in the center of the Stele.
	Horizontal Inclined Cylinder				
Foot	Vertical Cylinders				The legs are often cylindrical in the middle or sides of the statue.
Belt	A Rectangle with a groove in the middle				Belts are often simply engraved in a rectangular shape.
	Simple Rectangle				
Weapons			No Weapons		

Table 3. Differences between the Menhirs of the Historical Site of Shaharyeri and Saint-Sernin Aveyron. Source: Authors.

Saint-Sernin Aveyron	Shaharyeri	The Details of the Menhirs Body
Often in a conical shape	Often in a cylindrical shape	General Shape
A sharp point shape or a small cylinder	Tear shape or a large cylinder	Nose
Most statues have a linear mouth shape	Only one Menhir has a mouth, and the rest of the Menhirs do not have a mouth.	Mouth
Irregularly shaped rectangles or small, prominent circles	Circles nested, hollow or large	Eyes
A vertical cylinder or a horizontal cylinder inclined apart from the hair	Cylinders attached or separated from the hair vertically	Hands
Vertical cylinder	No foot	Foot
Rectangular shape and often with a groove in the middle	Rectangular shape with geometric patterns	Belt
No weapon	In the form of a dagger or sword	Weapons

Table 4. A comparative study of general characteristics in the Menhirs of the Historical Site of Shaharyeri and Saint-Sernin Aveyron. Source: Authors.

Saint-Sernin Aveyron	Shaharyeri	General Characteristics
100-200 CM	35-230 CM	Dimensions
Rock	Rock	Material
Rectangular or conical cubes	Rectangular or conical cubes	Form
Scattered and discrete graves	Large stone and hill tombs (Korgan)	Type of Tombs

In the Shaharyeri's Menhirs, only one female Menhirs can be seen, and it mostly refers to the aspect of masculinity and being a warrior. Whereas in the Saint-Sernin Aveyron's Menhirs, more emphasis is on the feminine aspect, and the cobblestones are unarmed and often dressed. In addition, in a statue of Saint-Sernin Aveyron, which was almost transformed, a necklace like this is shown. Behind it, grooves such as folds of clothes can be seen, which shows the femininity of this sculpture (Fig. 12). The presence of ornaments such as necklaces can be a characteristic of the importance of gender in these Menhirs. Examining the lithographs of these two historical regions, one can realize the delicacy of the Saint-Sernin Aveyron's Menhirs. Unlike the roughness and deforming elements of the Shaharyeri's Menhirs, the engraving of the elements of these sculptures has been associated with more subtlety, which can be more related to the importance of gender in these Menhirs.

A Comparative semantic study of the menhirs of the historical site of shaharyeri and saint-Sernin aveyron

The most important common feature among the Menhirs of the historical sites of Shaharyeri and Saint-Sernin Aveyron is the simplicity and stylization of the

motifs and the state expression in them that distinguish these Menhirs from other artworks. These Menhirs, which were a conceptual expression of specific beliefs and traditions, were probably part of a ritual-burial ceremony and a memorial service for the deceased. It is worth pondering why in the Shaharyeri cemetery there are Menhirs in the form of human motifs that are reminiscent of warriors or soldiers. The faces of these stones have eyes, noses, and hair, some of which have daggers, swords, and belts, and it raises the question in the mind of the audience: why are the parts of the face emphasized? The resemblance of these Menhirs to Saint-Sernin Aveyron's Menhirs is in their abstract form. Here are some critical points about using common visual elements in engraving these Menhirs. By examining the spread of the culture of Menhirs in different times and places, it is possible to find the same common point among human societies. According to it, the connection between these Menhirs is linked to the religious traditions and rituals of the area in which they were created.

In the Ushaghalari School, which was considered the ancient Turkic religion in burial, it refers to the ritual of respecting the deceased and believing in the afterlife by burying the dead, building tombs, and burial with utensils containing food and the necessities of living next



Fig. 11. Existence of gender in Shaharyeri's Menhirs. Source: Ibtehaj, 2004.



Fig. 12. Existence of gender in the Saint-Sernin Aveyron's Menhirs. Source: Fenaillé museum, 2021.

to the deceased. In this ritual, the presence of a warrior made of stone raised on the dead's tomb was considered a kind of guard for the deceased. This shows that the use of carved stone as a guardian had its roots in ancient Iran. Each of the Menhirs discussed in this study has different dimensions that can be interpreted to express different social classes and are appropriate for each person belonging to a particular social class. The presence of the eye is one of the most potent signs known in many cultures and can be an indicator of good, bad, protection, wisdom, knowledge, and mystery (Gross, 2019). They can express insight, all-round knowledge, or a gateway

to the soul. Other characteristics that the eyes are usually associated with are intelligence, light, alertness, moral conscience, and truth (Sagiv, 2017). The existence of round eyes indicates their penetration and attractiveness. The similarity between the round eyes of the Shaharyeri and Saint-Sernin Aveyron's Menhirs is used by other cultures to confirm the guarding role of these stone rises. Some researchers believe that protruding eyes indicate the evolution of the eye shape over time, which is not very acceptable. In some popular beliefs, simple scarecrows (pieces of fabric and plastic attached to beams) are deferrals that protect the product from people with an evil eye (Gross, 2019). The belief that it exists in all primitive mirrors is also manifested in the Menhirs, which are a sign of guardianship and power. It is as if the presence of cobblestones protects the Menhirs from the power of the evil eye. A different number of eyes also has different meanings. One eye represents the sense of inhuman and divine science, superhuman (usually negative), two eyes represent the normal sense physically and spiritually, three eyes represent the sense of superhuman powers that can be benevolent or malicious, and several eyes represent the sense of star and darkness (Sagiv, 2017). The Shaharyeri's Menhirs have two eyes, but Saint-Sernin Aveyron's Menhirs have more than two eyes, indicating their superhuman strength. The presence of the hand in these Menhirs, which is often the most meaningful part of the human body, can mean strength and protection. In ancient religious beliefs, handicrafts made of gold, jewelry, and metals were primarily revered as talismans against evil (Huffman, 2014).

Also, hair sculpting is based on a religious belief. In ancient Greece, a man's long hair symbolized wealth and power, while a shaved head was suitable for an enslaved person (Zimmer, 2021). In this way, Shaharyeri's Menhirs with long hair, which are often attached to the hands, can be considered an expression of power in these figures. In addition, the presence of long, elongated hands on the Saint-Sernin Aveyron's Menhirs indicates strength and firmness. The absence of a mouth in most of the Menhirs of the historical sites of Shaharyeri and Saint-Sernin Aveyron is compensated for by a simple

and shallow line. Stylized sculpted drawings include a human-like face with round eyes, a forehead often attached to the nose, and hands protruding from behind, or dangling from a sword or dagger in the opposite direction, hung from a patterned belt. The abstract and meticulous minds of primitive man have engraved simple and unpretentious forms on these Menhirs. This simple image of the primitive tribes believed in the supernatural power of these elements engraved on the stones, which seems to have been part of the rituals and ceremonies of burial.

Due to the issue of distance and lack of communication between them, their similarities can be seen in people's beliefs in these two areas. This conforms to the theories of Yuval Noah Harari, a contemporary researcher, and anthropologist. Sometimes groups leave their homes to explore new lands as a result of natural disasters, bloody clashes, population pressure, or the initiative of an attractive leader, he writes in his book, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind*. These excursions were to spread the wise man everywhere (Noah Harari, 2018). This issue can be related to the dimension of distance and similarity to the conjecture of the migration of these people. The transmission of religions and beliefs, also due to the special situation of Iran in all historical periods, was a highway between East and West, and in this direction, cultural exchange used to take place (Mohammadifar, Mohammadian & Sharif Kazemi, 2016).

Morriss-Kay (2010) believed that creating images from the imagination, or the mind's eye, required a seminal evolutionary change in the neural structures underpinning perception; this change would have had a survival advantage in both tool-making and hunting. Analysis of early tool-making techniques suggests that creating 3D objects (sculptures and reliefs) involves their cognitive deconstruction into a series of surfaces, which could have been applied to early sculpture. The cognitive ability to create art may have originated in Africa, but the practice may have begun at different times in genetically and culturally distinct groups both within Africa and during global dispersal, leading to the regional variety seen in both ancient and recent art.

It should be noted that a huge amount of scientific research leads to two basic conclusions about the human mind: First, the reason is that it is a product of evolution and is shaped by culture. These two views are not incompatible in the human mind. Evolutionary psychology documents many ways in which genetic adaptations govern the functioning of the human mind. But evolutionary psychology research only occasionally deals seriously with questions about human culture and intercultural differences. In contrast, cultural psychology documents how thinking and **behavior** are shaped by different cultural experiences (Schaller, Norenzayan, Heine, Yamagishi, & Kameda, 2011, 228). But in cultural-artistic research, the evolutionary processes of the mind in various parts of the world are rarely considered. Therefore, in a comparative study between the Menhirs of these two areas, the distance in location and the lack of relationship between them is due to the evolution of the same human mind in different parts of the world. This evolution is seen in the works of art, burial rites, and handicrafts of these two civilizations.

Also, according to the theories of contemporary anthropologist and psychologist Julian Jaynes, at which point? It is mentioned in the book titled, "The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind." He believed that human consciousness did not simultaneously come into being with humanity, but that this consciousness came into being after language and even after the rise and fall of many ancient civilizations. Early humans have gone through three main stages, the first of which is the cognitive revolution. It started about three thousand years ago and is still developing and expanding. Early humans, for example, heard voices from unknown sources, which gave direction to their behaviors. These voices were later interpreted as the voices of the king or the revelation of the gods. Human consciousness caused the disappearance of this bicameral mind. But still, there are certain manifestations of this kind of mind in contemporary man. Traces of this theory can be seen throughout human life and the creation of various gods and religions, and one of the main survivors of the bicameral mind era of the mind is the prophets and their religion. Therefore, religious rites and

rituals of prayer and supplication, after mental and heart inspirations, all show the same bicameral consciousness of the mind (Jaynes, 2021). In the section on the living dead in this book, the researcher refers to the ritual of burial and the burial of the dead. Funeral services for certain groups of the dead, as if they were still alive, are common in almost all ancient cultures (ibid., 160). Also, the basis of the similarity of prehistoric motifs has been the experience of a single human being in perceiving images, shadows, and anti-light images. In a way, in that period, this form of illustration was sufficient to meet the expressive needs of man. Thus, according to this view, the first illustrators' sources of inspiration and perception were anti-light images, shadows, and half-shadows, which are all inspired by nature and its elements (Rostam Beyki & Zavieh, 2012). Therefore, the similarity of the Menhirs of these two areas can be generalized to this theory. In the beginning, the purpose of making prehistoric human artifacts was simply to show generalities, and then, with the development of the range of thought and imagination, details have become important, and forms have changed from abstract to complexity and variety. According to this view, simple primitive forms of Menhirs in different areas can be justified. Of course, this issue has been evaluated from different perspectives. In the following section of this article, we can refer to the views of psychologists.

According to Jeans, the bicameral mind is not like any consciousness experienced today. Ancient humans did not have subjectivity of mind, and they were not aware of any consciousness of the world, but they had a kind of bicameral mind. Will, planning, and the power of initiative have been exercised absolutely without consciousness, and then "told" to the person in a language they were familiar with. This has sometimes been accompanied by a visual income from the image of a close or personal friend in power or a lord of sorts, which has sometimes been accompanied by only one voice. The person also obeyed its commands. In other words, the mind is divided into two parts. One part is the obedient and ignorant human being who acts automatically, and the second part is the "Gods" who come under the illusion of man and guide him in the

world. This part of the Bicameral Mind hypothesis of Jaynes can be attributed to the similarities between the Menhirs of the historical site of Shaharyeri and Saint-Sernin Aveyron. Thus, what can be seen in the study of burial Menhirs among early humans shows that these customs, burial rites, and similar ceremonies and sculptures in different parts of the world can be traced back to the evolution of the human mind, and the similarity of human handicrafts in these two regions is not related to their relationship with each other but originates from a mental evolution similar to humans.

Conclusion

In a comparative study of the Shaharyeri and Saint-Sernin Aveyron's Menhirs, it was observed that these simple and abstract stone carvings with various dimensions and shapes had similar human faces. Shaharyeri's Menhirs emphasis has been on the masculine aspect and Saint-Sernin Aveyron's Menhirs on the feminine aspect. However, it is important to note some commonalities between the Menhirs. These Menhirs have different genders. They have been engraved according to the different genders, their appearance, and their power. Despite their distance, these two areas have similar rituals and stone artifacts, which are affected by the bicameral mind of man and his evolution in different regions. Both areas have a similar appearance and lithographic ornaments show gender. These artworks are generally similar, and there is a slight difference in the details.

Along with developing mental skills and thought and its position, the similarity of works in different parts of the world becomes meaningful. These could point to the recorded memory of an intelligent man in ancient history, which has occurred in many parts of the world. Human history has discoveries, innovations, and inventions based on the revolution of the human mind, which is seen in the world's ancient civilizations. Therefore, stone artworks are globally affected by the possibilities, skills, and mental changes of human beings. Finally, it is concluded that the source of inspiration for Menhirs in these two areas originated from the human mind. Due to their lack of connection, it turns out that the source

of inspiration and the perception of the image have the same similarities.

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