CHAPTER 3: SETTLEMENT, BURIAL AND SUBSISTENCE PATTERNS IN IRON AGE OF GILAN
Chapter 3: Settlement, Burial and Subsistence Patterns in Iron Age of Gilan

Research conducted on the Iron Age of Gilan provides much evidence of the cemeteries of this period belonging to the region. Of course, much information can be retrieved about the culture of those eras related to buried corpses and few cases of animals. This is due to a great diversity of methods of burial practices and funerary traditions.

In this chapter, the expression of features of Iron Age Gilan is considered. However, the findings of archaeological excavations and surveys sites in Gilan are not completely reviewed in this chapter. In this chapter, attempts were made to classify the work done on cemeteries of the period and the implications of the findings. Finally, the economic, social, religious and economic patterns in the Iron Age of the region will be determined and explained.

Perhaps the first question here is that regarding the present discoveries and findings, how much of the economic, social, religious and subsistence structures of that period can be explained and determined? And the second question, how can the determination and explanation of these patterns help to explain the role of animals in Iron Age of Gilan? To answer these questions, it can be said that since the expression of the characteristics of the economic, social, religious, and subsistence features of the Iron Age in Gilan rely on the findings of archeological excavations. As it was mentioned earlier, these explorations and analyses had some weaknesses and shortcomings. Therefore, complete archaeological reconstructions of the sites and culture will not be achieved. But at least, the current situation can be indicated correctly by these categorizations and descriptions.
To answer the second question, it can be said that although the proper understanding of the status and the role of animals is concerned with identifying the biological patterns of Iron Age Gilan in this research, but since it is not possible to identify the role of animals in that period without the determination and explanation of style, structure, the burial practices and the structure of other remnants of the period. Therefore, the expression of these matters seems to be crucial. In addition, regarding the fact that animals are an integral part of the whole identity of the Iron Age and the determination and interpretation of the characteristics of every aspect of an archaeological culture is usually desirable as per the scientific method. Therefore, the present section is concerned with the overall aspects and patterns of the Iron Age of Gilan. The analysis of the role and stature of animals will be discussed later on. However, a proper understanding of the culture of the Iron Age people of Gilan is considered first.

In this chapter, only the results and conclusions of previous archaeological studies will be discussed as to the exploration of areas of Gilan. In addition, sets of comparisons, interpretations, descriptions, and summaries and the views of the author will be discussed in the course of this chapter. Some of these classifications and categorizations have been provided for the first time in the history of archeology of Gilan, and hence it can be said that this chapter forms an integral part of this thesis.

As was mentioned earlier, thousands of large and small sites remain from the Iron Age in Gilan. So far, hundreds of them have been studied and explored. Of these explorations of the Iron Age, the following can be mentioned: Marlik, Kalouraz, Jamshid Abad, Halime Jan, Shahran, Ghale Kouti Kohpas, Lasulokan, Ghas Abad, Boye, Vaske, Maryan, Tandevin and Toul, that seem more significant given the size and volume of discoveries connected to them and considering the huge finds achieved from these sites. Of course, some of the aforementioned sites were perhaps not very
rich in terms of faunal remains and animal motifs, poorer than other sites like Joboun or Asb Sera. However, the finds at these sites are nonetheless important from the architectural point of view.

The ideal research methodology for better understanding of the economic, social, religious and subsistence patterns of Iron Age of Gilan remains an important issue. It is proposed here that more desirable results will be achieved by highlighting issues including settlement and burial patterns, which cover almost all subsets including the structure of graves and the discovered artifacts and other objects. Therefore, the settlement and burial patterns will be discovered first followed by economic and subsistence patterns of Iron Age of Gilan.

**3.1 Iron Age Settlement Patterns in Gilan**

The Iron Age is a past period of human history in which man had to be familiar with construction practices and lived in constructed shelters. But this does not mean that all people and all places in that era had achieved building technology at the same rate, or in some cases, despite being familiar with the technology to build constructions, they have relied on natural shelters. Despite the spread of this technology, several communities were limited in or ignorant of its use.

Despite numerous architectural works in different historical periods and in most parts of Iran, the works in the north of Iran (Gilan district) cannot be comparable to the rest of the country. In Gilan, the remnants of villages and towns not only have not been reported from the Neolithic and chalcolithic, but even the remnants are very low and negligible compared to other architecture and habitation sites despite the abundance of works relating to the cemeteries in the Iron Age. It is worth mentioning that the broad architectural works of the Iron Age seem to be less in all parts of Iran in comparison to
the periods before the Iron Age (i.e. the Bronze Age) and after (the Achaemenid and Parthian dynasties), perhaps due to the specific subsistence characteristics of these periods. However, the characteristically large and fortified Iron Age settlements seen in the rest of Iran, although scattered, are conspicuous in their scarcity in Gilan province. The most important discoveries of the Iron Age habitation in Gilan will be mentioned below that title of them include: Pila Ghale, Ganj Par and Jalaliyeh in Kalouraz, kafarestan, Motalla Kooh, Ghale Kouti and Toul (Map No. 3.1). After that, the reasons for the shortage of constructed housing during this period in Gilan will be discussed in details.

3.1.1 Settlement Remnants in Pila Ghale:

The site is located in the middle of the valley called Goharrood between the Nesfi village and Kiya Abad village in Roudbar city in Gilan at an altitude of approximately 400 meters above MSL equal to (N 36° 51’ 10") & (E 49° 30’ 17"). It is containing traces of Iron Age settlement.
Pila Ghale, located 500 meters from Marlik looks barren compared to the adjacent lands and has a conical form which is around 30 meters taller than the surrounding lands (Fig. 3.1), a discovery had been conducted in 1961 and 1962 in this site by a group of Iranian archaeologists. Through the exploration, the architectural remnants and settlements have been discovered from the Iron Age to the Islamic period in this site.

In the explorations conducted on the southern slopes of the sites, thick walls of stone and mud mortar were revealed. The walls have been completely burned and showed that the structure had been destroyed by fire. Further excavations revealed three layers of structures superimposed upon each other. A battlement castle with strong facilities with multiple rooms and hallways were discovered on the peak of the site. The foundation of the building was of broken stones and the walls were constructed with the use of large blocks and almost no bricks were used there. The rooms were roofed by wooden beams since half of these fell down in the fires that destroyed the site, and remain as coal and ash deposits on the floor.

A total of 17 archaeological layers were found in Pila Ghale by a tentative step trench excavation, in which the most important were the eighth to thirteenth layers, contemporary to the Marlik graves in terms of architectural remnants and settlement of region people in Iron Age. (Negahban 1997: 250)
3.1.2 Settlement Remnants at Ganj Par in Kalouraz:

The Kalouraz village is located two kilometers from the west bank of Sefidrood and one kilometer to the west from Rostam Abad Town in Roudbar city in Gilan. Kafarkosh and Ganjpar sites are areas of Kalouraz village in which a set of cemeteries belonging to the Iron Age are located. These cemeteries were excavated and explored several times in 1965, 1968, 1969 and 1991 by a group of Iranian archaeologists. The reports of the aforementioned excavations indicate the existence of the settlements and the remains of houses in the area along cemeteries of the Iron Age at least in two cases.

Ali Hakemi has reported an exploration of Kalouraz site, which is located near the excavated Iron Age graves of Ganjpar in Kalouraz, where he has discovered the settlement and architecture of this period. He stated that the building had a foundation of stone and a wooden roof since pieces of wood were found on the collapsed floor. (Hakemi 1968: 2-3)

Furthermore, Abdul Hossein Shahidzadeh has discovered the architectural works consisting of five chambers during excavation of the cemetery site of Kalouraz in which only the foundation of the building with a mix of river stone and mortar was evident. Regarding the absence of remnants of the walls and the roof in the discovered building, he has concluded that with regard to the use of wooden construction material in the walls and ceiling, these weak materials have been corroded over time as only the foundation of the building, which was made of stone, now remains. (Shahidzadeh 1968: 7)
3.1.3 Settlement Remnants at Jalaliyeh Site in Kalouraz:

There is a historical site in the eastern lands of Kalouraz village and west of Rostam Abad town called Jalaliyeh or Kalouraz site. The Site with an area of 8600 square meters is one of the few sites with alternating layers of historical settlement in Gilan and in the Roudbar region. The height of the surrounding farmland is 26 meters and the site itself rises to 253 meters from the mean MSL.

Explorations of this particular site have been conducted by a joint committee of Iran and Japan in 2002 with the partnership of the present writer in 2005 and 2006.

Gabriel Nokande and Hamid Fahimi, Members of the board of supervisors of the Iran and Japan committee who have published a report of the excavations carried out in the sites, mentioned that "Architectural remnants indicate that river rocks have been used in the constructions although they exploited adobe and brick in the overall structure of buildings as well as the broken pieces of yellow green bricks from brick baking oven indicate brick making in the vicinity ". (Nokande & Fahimi 2003: 41 - 42)

According to the opinion of the above specialists, the findings of pottery and architectural evidence indicated three cultural periods- the Iron Age, Parthian era and Sassanid era in this site. However, according to the carbon-14 tests done in Nagoya University of Japan on 4 samples from the site, the oldest layers go back to 7th and 8th centuries BC.

Mohammad Reza Khalatbari, the explorer of Jalaliyeh Site in 2005 and 2006, has reported that five layers and three cultural contexts have been excavated and observed in Jalaliyeh site, architectural remnants forming the chief evidence. He discovered
river stone walls, stratified adobe bricks of 35 in 35 in 7 cm dimensions, boiling furnace, burned floor and two ventilators. In a general conclusion he declares that there are three civilizations in Jalaliyeh Site including:

The First civilization belonged to the early centuries of the first millennium BC (Iron Age II), the second civilization belonged to the Achaemenid era, and the third civilization belonged to the Parthian period. He believed that the use of site facilities is unknown in the Median and Seleucid periods. He also believes that the formation of the large Kalouraz cemetery (Ganjpar and Kafarkosh) took place as a result of the settlement of the Site. There was a period of abandonment of the site during the Median period. However, the use of brick facilities in this site shows the settlement of the site during the Achaemenid period. In the following Seleucid period, the facilities of the site had been utilised by the establishment of a stone fortress. In addition, he refers to the works of the Islamic era in the area as well which were not as significant. (Khalatbari 2007)

3.1.4 Settlement Remnants in Kafarestan Site:

Kafarestan is an ancient site located in rural lands of Yesn village from Dailaman district and Pir Koh in Siahkal city in the South East of Gilan. The site is 10 km far from Pir Koh Village Center, 30 kilometers far from the center of Dailaman and it is 76 kilometers away from Siahkal city center. It is of 1497 meters height above MSL. Kafarestan site includes cemeteries and architecture from Iron Age. Excavation and exploration of this site started in 2010 in which architectural and the cemetery works were discovered in points known as Gard Koule, Zar galou, Ghasam Zamin, Nasko Chal, and Arbo Chal. The architecture under the remnants of the cemetery was in fact more ancient.
Stone has been used in building walls and the foundations in residential architecture of Kafarestan. Wood was the main fuel. These houses were all near each other and one can say that they had dense structure and organization. According to local explorer’s comment, Kafarestan architectural structures belong to the Iron Age II and 3. (Jahani 2010: 215)

3.1.5 Settlement Remnants in Motalla Kooh Site:

Another area located in the South East of Gilan where the pre Islamic architecture can be seen is a site known as “Motalla Kooh” in Motalla Kooh Village in Amlash Township in Gilan province (N 36° 52′ 40″) & (E 50° 07′ 39″), it is of 1362 m (MSL) and it is 67 km away from the center of Rankoh district.

Architectural features in Motalla Kooh include two groups: First, regular and structured architectural features from the southern and eastern side of the site including walls, basement, and underground stoves and so on including a stone and mortar wall of 3 meters length, 1 meter width and 40 cm height. In addition, a river stone and mortar wall was discovered which is one meter long and ninety centimeters wide. Clay ovens can be observed in these architectural locations. Furthermore, the effects of charcoal smoke and smoky pieces of pottery are a testament indicates that these places have been settled once.

The second group of architectural features of Motalla Kooh is very simple and basic unlike the first architectural group (Fig.3.2). The foundation and walls of this group were built by the use of small cobble stones as dry-constructions. Two walls discovered here, in which a lot of ash and soot were found, indicate fires at that time. It seems that the architecture of the second group is related to the oldest settlement in the Motalla Kooh area. (Jahani 2010: 469 - 468)
3.1.6 Settlement Remnants in Toul-e Gilan:

Unlike sites listed above (like Pila Ghale and Kalouraz) located in Roudbar region in the southern part of Gilan, Toul site is located in Talesh region in the northwestern part of Gilan. The site is located in a green mountainous area where it is considered and called a migration region for ranchers and pastoralists. In a report by Reza Sadr Kabir, deputy delegation of exploration team of Toul site in 2004, it is written that The residential architecture is also specified consists of two groups of architecture with varied materials besides discovering 33 human graves and one animal grave that contained objects, pottery, and bronze and iron objects.

In Toul site in Gilan, The explorer does not directly point out architectural proof but merely mentions the properties of graves and destroyed cemeteries and concludes that the location and further building on graves during the Iron Age was the main cause of the destruction and he stated: "the damage of graves in the lower layers when it is tangential to the top layer of the walls of residential architecture Indicates that the material used in architecture of the graves has been again used in the walls of
residential houses as the lack of skeleton is the reason to this claim" (Sadr Kabir 2004: 18)

He believes that the architectural phase was formed after the burials since architectural establishments were located on top of the graves. And even pottery utensils of these layers were different from those inside the graves although he believes that the architecture and settlement in this place in the cemetery periods was related to the Iron Age.

Apart from the aforementioned sites and areas which are significant from the perspective of discovering the settlement and the establishment of the Iron Age, settlement and housing remnants can be observed in some other areas and sites such as Ghale Kouti Kohpas. However, it can generally be said that the remnants of settlements of those eras in the area are very few and minor compared to the huge cemetery remnants from the Iron Age of Gilan.

3.1.7 Reasons for the Lack of Housing Remnants in Iron Age Gilan:

The discovery of architectural works in only a few small sites indicates particular features of the Iron Age of Gilan. The author is of the opinion that the above fact is rooted in two factors such as weakness and lack of detailed archaeological activities and native features of Iron Age of Gilan.

Despite the initial impression of some of archaeologists about remnants of Iron Age architecture in Gilan, some examples of the aforementioned explorations leading to the discovery of the remains of Iron Age architecture shows that it is possible to observe some remnants of the settlements and residences of that era through a little
scrutiny and exploration in the region. Therefore, it cannot be claimed that the Iron Age settlements of Gilan were only perishable houses, cottages, chambers and fences that do not survive in the archaeological record. But in some cases, the discovered thick walls and stone architectural artifacts can indicate that these people who achieved such huge advances in art and cemetery construction must at least have attempted to make strong settlements as well although there was no need to have robust construction for all houses. Overall, subsistence and local features have required that most of the houses have to be built by the available styles and even portable materials.

Therefore, the following reasons can be mentioned for the lack of settlements in Iron Age of Gilan:

1. Generally, the average area of sites in most parts of Iran appears to be negligible compared with the massive Iron Age cemeteries. However, though the area of settlements is so less than the other periods before and after Iron Age, this shortcoming is not the same everywhere in Iran. The availability of such sites in Gilan is much lower than the rest of Iran. The Iron Age settlements or housings possess the highest number of discovered sites in most of the central, northern west and Eastern regions. Many of these points more or less have a dry environment compared to the northern slopes of Alborz and western slopes of Zagros Mountains. The Western regions (Zagros Mountains) placed in second rank which is more humid and green than the central parts but it is drier than the north of Iran. Finally, the third rank goes for Gilan and Mazandaran provinces (Alborz Mountains) which are more humid and green than other parts of the country.

We can conclude here that there is a direct relationship between climate, natural resources, especially forests and vast meadows and types of housing and settlement in
damp areas, and observe that the number of settlements and strong constructions is less wherever the climate is wetter and greener, but the frequency and extent of the cemeteries is higher.

2. In Iron Age Gilan, subsistence and economic characteristics based on farming and nomadic life had little need to build strong buildings. Therefore, Iron Age peoples of the region preferred to have houses that were simple and easy to construct, and some part of which could be transported in seasonal movements and migrations.

3. The natural resources of Gilan, where wood is abundant, favour the constructions of wooden buildings and naturally, construction of wooden houses did not have enough strength and stability or resistance against the fairly humid nature of the region to survive to the present day. The availability of wood as building material in other parts was not the same as Gilan province (excluding Mazandaran region which has more or less similar features) and thus the wooden construction is proportionally less there.

4. The provenance of stone and concrete architecture in the Iron Age of Gilan is related to the areas and the places where there is abundant stone, where even graves with stone architecture are plentiful. These stone constructions belong to areas that were governed by the central Government. It can be assumed therefore that the rest of the common people of that era did not feel it necessary to build strong buildings.

5. Methodologically weak or incomplete archeological excavations of the region are likely to be a major factor for the identification of Iron Age non-residential premises in Gilan because a large percentage of the archaeological projects in Gilan had no laboratory facilities and expertise related to the identification of architectural remains.
The people of the Iron Age of Gilan had shown extraordinary progress and skills to build their own graves and objects. In some cases, architecture of graves is so great and wonderful that the graves evoke an almost domestic or household environment and objects have been made by a great skill and finesse in which it seems to be impossible to create by the use of the present modern tools and facilities. It is here that their inability to build stronger and sturdier houses seems illogical. These people with such a degree of knowledge to make these artistic objects and such a large and wonderful the graves surely must have the ability to build stronger and larger houses, unless the other factors mentioned above were the main causes of these shortcomings. In short, these factors can be considered a combination of subsistence, nomadic life, beliefs and geographical features.

3.2 Burial Patterns in Significant Sites in Iron Age of Gilan:

Burial customs include the culture related to the structure of the graves, the direction and condition of bodies, Kind of bodies including human or animal bodies individually or collectively, how objects are placed in the graves and some other cases in which the review and study of these issues, particularly in archeology of the Iron Age is very important. It is doubly important to study Iron Age burial customs of Gilan since much of the archaeological remains of this period in the region are included. In fact, it can be said that doing research regardless of these burial properties of the period will be incomplete.

In this section, the Iron Age burial practices in Gilan are generally reviewed and classified. The burial of animal remains and animal subjects, however, will be discussed independently in the next chapter. Generally, Iron Age cemeteries were distributed in three cultural and geographical divisions of Gilan- including the south
central highlands, the eastern highlands and the mountains of northwestern Gilan. The first domain that is discussed here is the Iron Age burial customs in significant cemeteries located in the south-central highlands known as cultural domain of Roudbar (Sefidrood). Later on, cemeteries located in the highlands of East Gilan known as the cultural domain of Dailaman and Amlash (Polrood) will be discussed. Finally, cemeteries located in the northwestern mountains of Gilan known as historical and cultural domain of Tavalesh (Shafarood and Karganrood) (Map No. 3.2).

Though some features of these domains are common compared to the overall culture of the Iron Age in Gilan, but these domains, each has some special features which will be discussed later on.

3.2.1 The Cultural Domain of Roudbar (Sefidrood):

This domain covers the south-central highlands of Roudbar in Gilan. The main geographical factor separating this domain from the others mountainous parts of Gilan is the large Sefidrood River along with other minor rivers leading into it. Sefidrood has two main branches called the Ghezel Ozan and Shahrood. Ghezel Ozan originates
from far regions in Kurdistan province located in the west of Iran as after passing through provinces such as Azarbaijan, Zanjan and Qazvin, reaches Gilan while Shahrood originates from the northern Alborz Mountains and reaches Amarlu region in Roudbar city of Gilan province after crossing Alamut region in Qazvin province. It crosses the Ghezel Ozan River in Manjil region and then composes Sefidrood. So, a part of Shahrood domain and the whole part of Sefidrood will be studied and discussed here which matches the political geography of Roudbar city and Gilan province.

Cultural and historical domain of Roudbar (Sefidrood) is of high importance in archeology of Gilan especially in prehistoric periods. The largest and most important archeological sites including sites of Gilan Iron Age such as cemeteries and settlements have been found in this domain. A number of Iron Age sites such as Marlik Kalouraz, Jamshid Abad, Shahran, Halima Jan, Estalkh Jan, Joboun, Shimam, Sandas, Nave, Chereh, Vatel and Rashi have been excavated and studied. However, many of such sites have not been excavated archaeologically yet like Shirkooh, Dogamian, Loye, Sorkhan, Darestan, Karmak, Khalvash, Kharchak, Vieh and Khoramkoh (Khare Po). Here and in the following, the burial customs in the significant sites of Iron Age of this domain known Marlik, Kalouraz, Jamshid Abad and Shahran will be discussed in details.

3.2.1.1 Burial Customs in Marlik:

A beautiful valley called Goharrood is located in the east bank of Sefidrood near Roudbar city and in the lands between "Nesfi" and "Kiyabad Takht" villages. There are five historical sites in this valley known as Marlik (Cheragh Ali Tepe), Pila Ghale, Zeinab Bijar, Dor Bijar and Jazemkol. Two sites among these worth mentioning are Marlik and Pila Ghale have been explored from 1961 to 1962 by a scientific team
from Tehran University headed by Dr. Negahban. Marlik (Cheragh Ali Tepe) located at 425 meters above MSL and equal to (N 36° 54’ 5/4") & (E 49° 33’ 26/4”).

A significant number of golden, silver and bronze cups, mosaic, porcelain and crockery have been found in the Marlik excavations. Some of these discovered cups are unique in the excavations all over the world, like a cup known as “Marlik Cup” made of pure gold. Various ceramic objects, different golden and silver objects, cylindrical beads, stone and glass beads, stone tools made of flint, obsidian and human and animal figurines made of clay and bronze and hundreds of other objects- within a total of 53 graves- have been discovered from Marlik.

**Discovered Graves:** The graves of Marlik can be divided into four groups:

The first group includes the large tombs, which seem to belong to both men and women. Tombs number 52, 26, 44, 25, 47, and 29 are of the large tombs belonging to men. For example, in the tomb No. 52, all types of pottery dishes, bronze objects, statues, golden buttons, bronze daggers, bronze swords and a golden cups engraved with the image of the winged bull indicate the wealth and power of the dead body in the tomb.

Tombs number 45, 50, and 14 are identified as the large tombs belonging to women's. The contents of these tombs belonging to women include golden jewelry, gold cups, utensils; figurines, some weapons, and personal tools and equipment.

The Second Group Including the Average Tetrahedral Tombs: These tombs were of both men and women or perhaps a common burial of both. The average tombs of this group are graves number 3, 12, 13, 1 and 42 each contains unique dishes; figurines, tools and implements of war and weapons belong to commanders or male hunters. In addition, some other average rectangular tombs of this group such as 10, 15 and 23
contain all types of dishes, glassware, jewelry and ornaments, tools, equipment and arms which belonged to the Queens or the Princesses. Of course, another common tomb of men and women in this group No. 21 contains only a ceramic plate which is decorated with dense designs.

The Third Group Including the Small Tombs: These tombs were irregular in shape and belonged to both women and men. These tombs number 18, 27 and 2 are of small tombs which probably belonged to a commander, a farmer and a male ruler, which contains instruments such as dishes, arms, agricultural tools and sculptures. However, tombs number 32, 36, 24 and 19 all belong to the young queens and princesses contains more decorative objects and jewelry. Tombs number 33, 5 and 16 are of other small tombs belonging to men or women which contain such items as jewelry and arm ornaments. The other group of small tombs discovered in Marlik like tomb number 40 contains grindstone, tomb number 6 contains a lot of bells and tomb number 41 contains bronze spindles. Furthermore, tomb number 8 contains cylindrical beads with cuneiform inscriptions most likely related to the artists’ and craftsmen’s tombs of both sexes.

The Fourth Group Including the Horse Tombs: In Marlik excavation, three tombs including tombs number 49, 51 and 53 were found in which each tomb was adjacent to tombs number 44, 50 and 52 respectively and possibly these were the tomb of the commanders’ special horses. Two of them were of two great commanders or warriors, while the third tomb belonging to a rich Queen contains a bronze mouthpiece, horse teeth, bronze rings, neck bones of a horse and related items (Negahban 1999: 68).

Fifty three graves have been discovered in Marlik excavations differing in size, shape, quality and quantity. General burial methods indicate that a dead body would either be placed on the bottom of the tomb, or on a long and large stone slab placed on the
bottom of the tomb. Generally, the body is placed resting on its side in the tomb. The found evidences generally show the corpse buried in formal dress with decorative buttons and other ornaments in the tomb. In the women’s tombs, one can especially find earrings, rings, necklace, bangles, and decorative pins, while weapons such as sword, dagger, a spearhead, arrows, maces and other martial instruments such greaves, helmets, metal and martial belts, wrist protectors, and sometimes the precious ornaments may be found in men’s tombs, mostly under the feet or on top of the skeleton.

**Discovered Objects:** In Marlik were found some objects which are made with materials of pottery, metal, stone, glass, shell and plaster. The figurines and dishes were made by clay and metal. These products are in the form of a variety of objects, for example warlike objects include; swords, daggers, arrows, axes, etc, and decorative objects include; bangles, bracelets, wristbands, earrings, etc. Here just classification of discoveries of figurines and metal dishes are presented.

Figurines: The discovered figures in Marlik can be classified into three categories of artifacts: Human or anthropomorphic figures, clay figurines of animals and metal figurines of animals.

The first group; Human figurines: human statues or figurines have been discovered only in 3 tombs in Marlik. About 6 pieces of clay sculpture and a golden bust have been discovered in tombs No. 36. Overall, most of the human statues that were found in the cemetery of rulers in Marlik had been discovered in this tomb too.

The second group; Clay figurines of Animals: Clay sculptures of animals have been found in eleven tombs of the 53 discovered tombs in excavations in Marlik. Their number was different in each one of these tombs. Of 34 animals clay sculpture
discovered in excavations in Marlik, about 32 pieces had been carved and hollowed. Of these carved statues, about 27 pieces have a long and open tube like a spout. The liquid in these containers can be easily poured through these spouts, indicating that the figurines were used as containers of some sort.

The third group; Metal Figures of Animals: 96 golden and bronze animal statues have been discovered in Marlik cemetery or around the Goharrood valley. Most of the metal statues have been recovered from tomb No. 36 (twenty pieces) and tomb No. 52 (twenty-seven pieces). (Negahban 1989: 50)

Metal Dishes: the metal dishes have been recovered from the 22 discovered tombs. The number of tombs is about the half of all 53 discovered tombs in Marlik. Of course, their number varied from tomb to tomb, ranging between 1 to 6 dishes. Furthermore, all the tombs were seen to yield at least one variety of metal containers. For example, four gold cups have been attained in tomb No. 36 and 5 bronze cups have been achieved from tomb number 5. From tomb number 45, a gold dish, 1 bronze container and 3 silver plates have been found. Metal dishes discovered in Marlik excavations can be divided into three major groups including: golden dishes, silver dishes and bronze dishes. Each of these groups can further be divided into several sub-categories in terms of decorating techniques:

The first group; Gold Dishes: it can be divided into three sub-classes or sub-categories: The first category consists of a set of golden vessels that are entirely plain. The cup number 1 and the dish number 2 are of this type of vessels. The second category includes gold vessels with embedded carving and designs like the three small golden cups. Third category of golden vessels includes containers decorated with drawings of animals. The groups of golden dishes are the most beautiful dishes discovered in the cemetery of Marlik kings.
The second group; Silver Dishes: It can be divided into three sub-categories: The first category is simple containers with no special decorations. Dishes No. 16 and 17 are of this type. The second category is silver dishes such as dishes number 19 and 20 which are decorated with simple, clear and bright designs. The third category is just related to one dish with elegant ornamental designs.

The third group; Bronze Dishes: this group is divided into two sub-categories: First category is generally those very large bronze pots with handles. The second category includes decorative dishes with mythological designs comparable to the Gold cups of Marlik.

In Marlik excavations, many ceramic dishes and eight glass-mosaic dishes and imitation ceramics have been discovered.

3.2.1.2 Burial Customs in Kalouraz:

Kalouraz is the name of a village in the central part of Roudbar city in Gilan. The village is located about 2 miles away from west of Sefidrood and Rasht-Qazvin asphalt road near the town of Rostam Abad in a relatively low valley from east to west.
The remnants of pre-Islamic cemeteries had been discovered in its mountainous slopes, in areas known as Kafarkosh, Ganj Par and Daghdaghan. In addition, architectural remains from that era had been discovered in the grounds of the aforementioned cemetery and also in a site known as Jalaliyeh in Kalouraz site as well which will be discussed latter on under the Iron Age settlements.

The aforementioned cemeteries generally called Kalouraz are located at an altitude of 400 meters above MSL. They have been excavated and studied by the Iranian delegation in 1967, 1968, 1969 and 1991 in several stages. Overall, regarding the quantity and quality of artifacts, this site can be considered as one of the most significant sites of the Iron Age of Gilan. The discoveries and explorations of Kalouraz have been conducted in different periods at least by four separate boards. The published reports of the Boards especially in the first two rounds of the excavations, under the supervision of Ali Hakemi and Abdul Hossein Shahidzadh, are very incomplete and short.

**Graves:** The information about the structure, the condition of the graves and the direction of burials seem to be more complete in the excavations in 1991. In this year, 11 trenches were excavated and 18 graves found in the process, which are divided into three groups regarding the shape and architecture as the following:

The first group; Simple Cavity Graves: These graves have no architectural structures and are formed only by digging the ground. Of the 18 graves, 11 graves or 66% are of this type. All of these are located at a depth of 65 to 180 cm. Of the eleven graves, four graves belong to women.

The second group; Stacked Stone Graves: These graves like hole-dug graves were created by digging the ground. After the funeral and the filling of the grave with dirt,
the graves were covered by piles of rocks. They are known as rocky ridge graves. Such type of graves composes 43 percent of total discovered graves.

The third group; Vacuolar Graves: two vacuolar graves have been also found in the aforementioned excavations.

Burial is done with the body resting on the left shoulder or right shoulder and feet are bent or straight in a supine posture. Overall, 10 women and 12 men had been buried both on left and right shoulders in a supine position with bent legs and feet in these graves. The anthropological study of the skeletons indicates a burial on the left shoulder with bent legs.

Burial was carried out both in mass graves (3 graves) and in individual graves (15 graves). Most of the burials had an east-west orientation. Only 3 graves of the 18 had north-south orientation. (Khalatbari 1991: 67)

**Material evidence:** Objects found in the graves were mostly earthenware, bronze objects, iron, Shell and agate necklaces, etc. Some of these objects are important from the viewpoint of religious beliefs and had daily usage, while some others were used for hunting and warfare and some were decorative tools. Ceramics found along with the dead bodies included jugs, bowls, platter, burial containers, cups, milk serving jars and dishes. Bronze objects, iron, stone beads and plants seeds have been found along with corpses in the discovered graves. The bronze objects included daggers, arrow heads, figurines, bangles, earrings, necklaces and bells.

But the greatest and the most complete information of the Kalouraz cemetery sites are related to the metal objects of the excavation in 1968 and 1969, divided into the following groups- metal cups and containers, figurines, weapons, decorative items, horse saddles and decorative instruments.
The first group; Metal Containers and Cups: A number of containers and cups made of gold, silver and bronze had been discovered in Kalouraz region in Gilan which belonged to the first half of the first millennium BC.

The second group; Metal figurines: A number of figures or metal sculptures of animals such as cows and deer were seen in a wide range of shapes and styles. This difference is a result of evolution that has been established in the art of sculpture for several centuries.

The third group; War Weapons: Daggers, arrows, darts, mace, axes and other metal weapons have been found in abundance in Kalouraz excavations. Most decorations were done on hilt of daggers and swords. Sometimes the sword or dagger handles and their circular caps had been covered in gold or silver and sometimes in stone or bone. In addition, both sides of the handle had been firmed with a stick or bone by strong nails. Arrows that were found in these excavations differ in size and shape since there was much change in their shape from the beginning of the first millennium to the fifth century BC. But, such a change in an area in such a short time is very important and remarkable. Darts had been made in different sizes like arrows. Axe was another weapon of the tribes residing in the region discovered in various sizes from different tombs. The wooden handles were sometimes decorated with reliefs. Further examples of axes with long blades of a trapezoid shape had been found especially in this region. The maces from Kalouraz are six-flanged or knobbed, decorated with animal forms in different sizes.

The fourth group; Decorative Fixtures: Metal ornaments of gold, silver and sometimes bronze, including numerous necklaces, earrings, hair bands, bracelets, pins and mirrors, plaques and buttons, have been found at Kalouraz.
Different necklaces made of gold or silver or bronze spines with various pendants, in which they are often strung with agate beads, blue stone, glass paste and white stones. Of course, there were necklaces that are only made of gold discovered in the excavations in Kalouraz. The beads hanging between circular or rectangular cross-broken plates attached and hung together. The designs are usually sun and star motifs and geometric shapes decorated on circular plates with reliefs. A silver necklace was found in 1969 at Kalouraz was unique in its kind, made of pear-shaped and square pendants and decorated with a symmetrical triangle with gold stocks that show a high level of craftsmanship. In addition, carved beads in the form of a cone or two connected lattice or pyramid shapes were made of multiple gold bars attached to each other.

Earrings discovered at the site were in the form of simple rings. In addition, a number of gold hair bands had been discovered. Some gold, silver and bronze bracelets were found in some of the tombs. The aforementioned bracelets were often simple and some of them were decorated with carved reliefs. Furthermore, two ends of these bracelets were often in the form of snake heads. Some of the pins recovered in these excavations were engraved with lines and geometric shapes.

Mirrors and other cosmetic and decorative fixtures were found in the Kalouraz tombs along with cosmetic cases, thin sticks and comb ornaments. The Mirrors were often circular with rectangular handles. There were some designs on the handles that engraved by geometric lines and shapes. The other decorative devices which were found in some of the tombs were a significant number of carved designed buttons, small gold plaques special for dress decoration as rectangular, cross or butterfly designs.
The fifth group; Decorative Horse Saddles and Tools: Over the past few years and recent excavations at Kalouraz site, a number of ancient horse tombs were discovered which draw attention to the Scythian style of burial. This burial was found in another place apart from the other graves at Kalouraz, and the number and type of objects discovered at Kalouraz were much greater.

The horses had been buried individually or collectively in a separate location with a certain distance from his/her owners’ graves. Items that were found near the animal's skeleton were often made of bronze, and gold and silver ornaments were less common.

The discovered objects from the horse burial included different reins of bronze and iron and circular bronze plates that were sewn onto leather as well as headbands and parts of saddles and necklaces made of bronze or silver with stone or shell buttons. The mouthpieces of silver with bronze pins were discovered for the first time in this region. Furthermore, a large number of bronze bells of different size and shape were found (Hakemi 1968: 8).

Studies and research done on the cemetery sites in next season of excavation (1991) indicate Decorative objects include decorative beads, necklace, bracelet, both in the graves of women and men in the graves existed, but war objects such as daggers, arrow heads, are found only in men's graves.

3.2.1.3 Burial Customs in Jamshid Abad:

Kararood or Jamshid Abad village is of the central district of Durbar city in Gilan province located in the western side of about 1500 meters in a position near Sefidrood and altitude of 293 m above MSL. The GPS is (N 36°56’15/7”) & (E 49°30’31”). The
ancient cemetery of Jamshid Abad is covers an area of 6 acres approximately and is located within a residential context.

Successful explorations had been conducted in Jamshid Abad cemetery in 2000 and 2005. The present author was part of the teams that carried out the two excavations, and was also head of the delegation in 2005 that has provided a full report of the findings. The excavations of Jamshid Abad cemetery confirms the presence of the most prestigious cemeteries related to the Iron Age in this part of Gilan.

**Discovered Graves:** in the first season excavation, were discovered 7 graves. five graves were simple chambered graves and the other two had a number of stone slabs covering them (stacked stone graves). The cemetery had a row of dry constructed wall. All graves were discovered at a depth of 1 to 3 meters about 270 cm above ground level like that of the average mass graves, but in the second season, all nine discovered graves were simple chambered graves. This type of grave is almost identical to the finds of 1990 indicating that it is the oldest form of burial of the Iron Age in the area, according to the different finds and the explorers’ opinions.

Most of discovered graves in Jamshid Abad had a single body, but some graves were seen with the corpses of two dead men or women. A condition which is almost common in Jamshid Abad graves is the burial of corpses as flank burials (resting on their sides) and bent feet.

As far as the other features of the culture of Jamshid Abad graves are concerned, there is an uncertainty concerning the objects near the bodies of infants and children. These cases can be observed in the third grave in seventh trench and first grave in tenth trench, of course also there is no grave good seems to belong to a woman in the second grave in seventh trench. (Fallahian 2009: 134)
n the both seasons of excavations, except one, a supine position and a right flank position burial and two disturbed cases, the position of the body were usually resting on the left side. Of course, all the flank buried bodies have bent feet and are arranged in a fetal position.

**Discovered objects:** whole artifacts are including three section as follow:

The first group is Earthenware (pottery); The color of ceramics discovered was very variable and mostly includes red pottery especially light red (47.5%) of the total pottery artifacts, 36% for gray pottery especially light gray and 7 pottery pieces were classified in light brown, dark brown, red or orange colors.

Most of earthenware includes narrow mouth jugs and wide mouth dishes. These special containers and containers with tube beak and a dish called Shir Mak are the significant Iron Age pottery found at the site. In terms of design, apart from some carved lines including two or three parallel circular lines on the body or opening of the clay dish, other designed cases has not been observed.

In the first time excavation, 42 pieces of ceramic objects had been found as the 78% of the total amount of discovered objects. On average, 6 pottery artifacts have been found in each of the Jamshid Abad graves. Among them, the discovery of the two types of pottery including a series of narrow-mouthed urns sometimes with different colors and the wide mouth containers in various forms were considered as the most discovered artifacts.

The narrow-mouthed urns were 31% of the discovered artifacts and loose mouth pottery containers were 40.5% of the total artifacts. However, two ceramic figurines
(goddess of fertility), two long tube containers, 5 dale edge containers and a triplet cup container were the significant discovered artifacts.

The second group is metal objects; in the first season of excavation, 16 bronze objects had been found. They included 4 pairs and 22 percent of the discovered objects were of metal. The discovered objects mostly include weapons such as swords and knives and arrow heads, with some non-martial objects including rings, neck pendants, earrings and hair band, and two awls or needles.

In the second season, metal objects had been discovered that also all are made of bronze including three groups of weapons (swords and knives) jewellery (bracelets, rings and barrette) and tools with specific applications (awl).

The third group include; stone, plaster and bone objects: such objects include a drill (gimlet) made of bones and a few decorative pieces made of plaster and stone have been found.
Regarding the different contents of Jamshid Abad different graves, while all objects belong to Iron Age I, this issue can be studied and analyzed only in terms of class and union differences of the buried corpses (Fallahian 2003: 218).

3.2.1.4 Burial Customs in the Cemeteries of Shahran (Lame Zamin):

Shahran villages located in a valley called Shahran Valley in the east bank of the Sefidrood in Rahmat Abad district in Roudbar city. The GPS: (N 36° 56’18/3”) & (E 49° 32’ 55/8”).

For the first time in 1969, excavations in the sites in Shahran had been conducted under the supervision of Abdul Hossein Shahidzadh. But, the extensive excavations and discoveries had been conducted by Japanese delegation headed by an archaeologist known as Shinji Fukai from 1976 to 1978 in Halima Jan sites in Shahran. The report was released generally entitled Halima Jan. (Fukai 1978)

Exploration in Shahran happened in Paein Mahale, and Emamzade Mohtasham, and Lame Zamin sites respectively.

Thirteen graves were discovered in the first excavation at shahran (Lame zamin site) by the Japanese team in an area of several hundred square meters, all of which were of vacuolar type. But in the second excavation in 1978, the foreign explorers had discovered twelve graves in an area of two hundreds square meters of land. In this excavation, graves have been discovered were of a simple vacuolar and stone heap vacuolar graves. Some of these graves were elliptic which actually belonged to adults. The other type was a rectangular vacuolar grave mostly belonging to children. The discovered objects and artifacts from adults’ graves was mostly black and gray pottery. Generally, the objects discovered in Lame Zamin graves mostly include gray
and red pottery in the form of rounded bottom pottery (needing a tripod to stand) with large covers like a large funnel and large lavers as well as other objects such as humanoid pottery figurines. It is worth noting that the metal objects discovered in the graves in Lame Zamin of Shahran were just of copper. (Fukai Matsutani, 1982: 82)

In 1989, an archeological excavation was carried out by an Iranian explorer in the ancient region of Shahran once again. Although it was not clear exactly which site of Shahran this excavation was conducted in, but according to reports in the first and second trenches, seven graves were found in total, all disturbed. The first trench includes three graves. Few objects were discovered in the first grave of the first trench, including some arrows, a clay pot and a bronze dagger. However, ceramic figures of two women, two knives and a bronze bracelet were found in the third grave of the first trench which seemed a little more pristine. Four graves were discovered in the second trench in which apart from one grave, the rest had been already robbed by illegal treasure hunters. An almost damaged skeleton with an east-west burial with two gray ceramic bowls and two bronze bangles rings were discovered in the third grave of this trench as well. (Khalatbari 1991)

Generally, three graves have been discovered during the excavations in Shahran. The first type was of chambered graves discovered in the low-lying neighboring area at Shahran. The second type was crypt graves mostly found from high neighboring areas in Shahran. The third type was stone cavity graves mostly have been discovered at the Lame Zamin site in Shahran (Fig 3.5).
The discovered artifacts from the crypt graves include tools and implements of war like long swords, a spear and a dagger made of iron. It is worth mentioning that all skeletons at the excavated crypt graves of Shahran as well were destroyed due to the limestone sediment of the site and the grave level.

### 3.2.2 The Cultural Domain of Dailaman and Amlash (Polrood):

This domain includes the mountainous parts of Siahkal, Langrood, Amlash and Roodsar cities in east of Gilan province that covers the watershed and river catchment areas of Polrood. However, some parts of Polrood in Dailaman and Pir Koh of Siahkal city are called Chakrood. But basically, Chakrood is one of the major branches of Polrood and it is one of the main artery routes between Dailaman, Amlash and Eshkevart of Roodsar formed in the sides of this river. The important point is that the dialects of people living in the accessible areas of the river are almost similar.

Two important parts of this domain are Dailaman and Amlash where some reports and analysis express as independent archaeological cultures. But basically, these two parts
do not have much difference in the classifications of historical culture. However; variety and diversity of objects and graves can be observed in all the cemeteries of this region.

This domain contains the remains of many residential areas, particularly the Iron Age cemetery of Gilan. Some of these sites include: Ghale Kouti Kohpas, Lasulokan, Khosro Khani, Pir Koh, Zar Chal, Bon Zamin, Ghias Abad, Ghale Kouti Komoni, Miarkashe, Lashkastan, Sanjed Dare, Tomajan, Boye, Omam, Marbo, Shirchak, Motalla Kooh, Dehrood, Naft Khani Dimajankash and Ghale Gardan had been explored archeologically. However, many of these sites have not been explored in this domain such as Mian Lange Asiabar, Plasen Gilarkash, Kalak, Shahjan, Nagharehkol-e Mosa Klayeh, Golak, Malakoot, Pasgor-e Chakal, Lisinsar-e Sharmdasht, Lima, Diarjan Tomajan Tepe. Here and later on, burial customs in four significant sites namely Ghale Kouti Kohpas, Lasulokan, Ghias Abad and Gardanesar-e Boye will be discussed.

3.2.2.1 Burial Customs in the Cemeteries of Ghale Kouti:

Ghale Kouti Kohpas: This is one of the main areas of Iron Age in the central part of Dailaman. The cemetery consists of four separate and interconnected sites at a distance of about 1500 meters northwest of Kohps village and 2000 meters away from the central part of Dailaman. The altitude varies between 1600 to 1700 meters above open MSL and GPS is equal: (N 36˚ 54’ 26”) & (E 49˚ 57’ 00”).

The first excavation of Ghale Kouti carried out by Japanese group at during 1960 to 1965, and the second excavation carried out by Iranian group in 2008. The first excavation, totally, 25 graves were identified and explored by the archeological team from University of Tokyo in Ghale Kouti. Overall dimension of the grave in this site is
smaller than the other graves. It seems that the space was being saved to dig other such tombs in the area. Some of the graves are only half a meter wide.

In the 2008 excavations, sixteen 2 by 2 boreholes were drilled in total. No trace has been discovered in eight of these. The remaining 8 graves were disturbed or had scattered objects, especially of pottery sherds. In order to determine the limitations of the site, the excavation and discovery of the graves had been stopped as soon as reaching the upper level of the graves.

**The features of Discovered graves:** There are three types of Graves Structure in Ghale Kouti as follow:

The first group is enclosure grave: There are wall in each side of grave. Stone walls are usually made of large blocks of stone. In some of them, instead of using mud mortar, gravel have been used in between the cracks as cement but some of them are made by stone and Mud mortar material. Usually, large flat stones had been placed on top of a grave. The walls of these tombs are so ordered that it resembles brickwork at first glance (Fig 3.6).

The second group is Simple Vacuolar Graves: pebbles had been used in these graves to build the floor and no stone has been used in the walls. They directly formed by the excavation of the ground. The number of vacuolar graves is more than the other types of graves in Ghale Kouti. These graves have been devoted to adults too.
The third group is Crock Graves: These graves of Ghale Kouti include wide mouthed pots known as crocks, in which the bodies of dead children had been placed. (Egami et al, 1965: 4)

**Discovered objects:** Pottery has been found in almost all the graves. In all phases of excavation in the site, dark brown, dark red and gray potteries were found in most cases with a sleek body. The pottery had made of clay and sand particles in some cases. The discovered plates, bowls, jars, pitchers and cups are the most common varieties of pottery found in Ghale Kouti Kohpas. Tube containers with and without handles, painted and simple, open mouth and close mouthed and even containers with a lid have been found from this site (Egami & Ikeda 1963: 2).

Most metal objects from the Ghale Kouti include bronze artifacts and Iron is rarely found in this site. Generally, it can be said that metal objects have a low percentage in this site. Tools and implements of war such as swords, knives, daggers, spearheads, arrow and axe are the bronze artifacts discovered commonly from these graves in this area. Furthermore, bronze deer figures, mirrors and bronze rings, had been discovered from this site as well.

Have not been discovered any perfect earthen objects in excavation at 2008 and all of them were form pottery pieces have been found. However, a spoon and a spear of bronze and necklaces, beads, and cylinder seals made of stone and gypsum are found (Aslani 2008: 55).

**3.2.2.2 Burial Customs in the Cemeteries of Lasulokan:**

Lasulokan or lesolekan is another significant Iron Age cemetry in Dailaman. It is located in the (N 36° 52’ 57") & (E 49° 55’ 31") and at an altitude of 1669 meter above
open MSL. In 1960, Lasulokan had been excavated by Japanese investigators for the first time. Seven graves have been discovered in the area during the archaeological excavations.

**The Structure of the Graves:** Lasulokan graves are two types as fallow: of circle or Honeycomb and vacuolar types. The first type is circle or Honeycomb graves were about 3 to 6 meters dimensions. The arrangement of the stones on the graves was erratic and sometimes regular. In one of these graves, human teeth along with bones of an antelope and other animals have been found.

The second type is vacuolar types; this type of discovered graves in Lasulokan was simply a hole in which two human skeletons without skulls had been deposited. In the same kind of graves, jaw and bone of animals like horse is also discovered.

**The Discovered Objects:** Many objects like polished black and gray pottery in the form of bowls and wide mouthed jars had been discovered during the aforementioned excavations. In addition, bronze bracelets, bronze rings, a bronze earring, glass beads, stone beads, agate beads and bronze earrings are some of the discovered objects in the excavations of Lasulokan. Volcanic ash, pumice and flint were of other tools and objects found from the Lasulokan graves. The explorer of the site has related the discovered objects to the late second millennium and the beginning of the first millennium BC. (Egami 1965:15)

**3.2.2.3 Burial customs in Ghias Abad:**

Ghias Abad or Gheis Abad is a cemetery of the Iron Age located in the north face of Chakrood River (one of the main branches of Polrood) along the Marbo road to Garmvar in the southern lands belonging to Marbo village of Rankoh district in Amlash city in Gilan province. The Marbo village and this site are about 70 km away.
from its center (Shabkhosalat) while, the distance of this site and city of Dailaman is very low about 7 km. In 1961, this cemetery and other sites like Omam, Pir Koh, and Bon Zamin (Fig 3.7) had been excavated by Iranian archaeologists.

The importance of the cemetery is of two things: first, it is one of many historical objects of Amlash civilization explored and sold illegally and reached European museums consequently (Satoodeh 1972: 52). Second, in the only scientific excavation in this site, the findings illustrate unique aspects of the culture of the Iron Age burials though in small scale, including the deposition of two halves of a large turtle shell beside a dead body.

**The Structure of the Graves:** In 1972 excavations, the first trench at a depth of 130 cm had flooded. Three large enclosure graves were discovered without flooding which were of square shape of 350 cm length and width. These graves had four rows of stone walls with large, irregular flat stones. Large boulders had been placed on top of the graves as well. The mud and lime mortar was used in the cracks and gaps between stone walls. Another architectural feature of these cyst graves is that a row of circular short stone walls had been built around them. According to the explorer of the site, they were symptoms of the graves and cemetery. In other words, they indicated the range of the cemetery (Kambakhsh Fard 1994: 21). The burial of corpses in the graves was in supine position, with open legs and hands on the chest.
One of the discovered graves in Ghias Abadi that is identified by number 9 had huge flat stones on the sides and on the top like previous graves, but it could be surmised that this grave was empty, judging from the collapse of the grave roof into the grave. Most likely wooden materials was used in the roof, and had fallen into the graves by the time of excavation.

**Grave Goods:** pottery in full color, glossy black, gray, buff or brown color had been found from the cemetery. All of the pottery was generally black with black edges. Weapons and hunting equipment such as daggers and bronze swords with button handles mostly made of bronze and less commonly of iron had been discovered there. Three special cases of the remnants of one of the graves in this site include: First, four bronze daggers had been buried in the four corners. Second, a relatively large turtle shell was located near the corpse, split with an axe. Third, some remains of animal bones as meat (feeding) for the dead were found in the pottery dishes.

**3.2.2.4 Burial Customs in Boye:**

In terms of political subdivisions, Boye village is located in Samam rural district in Rankoh region in Amlash city of Gilan province. Boye is located in the political divisions of Amlash city, but archeologically, has been considered in the cultural domain of Dailaman and Amlash.

At the present time, eight number of historical sites and sites have been recorded in this village as ancient national heritages including Kote Sar, Ahsan Kola, Gardaneh Sar A and B, Talasar, Khonen Sar, Zarneshin and Cheshmeh Sar. Site of Gardaneh Sar with GPS equal (N 36° 51’34/4”) & (E 50° 06’ 20”), and at an altitude of 1478 meter above open MSL were excavated three times. The first program had been in 1961. This exploration (1961) had been intitiated in two cemeteries of Boye village
where trenches were dug in $10 \times 10$ meter dimensions. Although most of the sites had been excavated illegally, however, some anxious graves with large stones (Dolmen and Manhir) had been found of the first millennium BC at the foot of the mountain range (Moghaddam 1961). The second program as emergency excavation had been conducted in an area known as Gardaneh Sar in December 1996. The team successfully excavated and discovered 23 experimental bores and some graves and many funerary objects (Sadr kabir 1996). The third phase of exploration in Boye had been carried out as an emergency case in 2006 in Gardaneh Sar again. It is stated that during this excavation, eight trenches sometimes in $3 \times 3$ meters dimension were drilled in 2006 in the site where 46 graves were identified and a very large number of objects made of pottery, bronze, gold, and decorative stones had been found (Aslani 2008).

**The Structure of the Graves:** During the conducted excavations in Boye, four types of the graves including enclosure graves, Simple vacuolar graves, stone stack graves and crock graves.

The first type are enclosure Graves; These types of graves have been found more than others in the Boye cemetery as 36 graves had been of the cyst type out of total 46 graves discovered in the explorations in the site in 2006. The graves are usually of cubic dimensions and their walls made of large stones with and without carving. These stones had been used as dry-stratigraphic and with mud mortar in some cases. The graves are of that type of graves that were known Megalithic graves in the phase of the excavations in this site.

The second type is Simple Vacuolar Graves: such graves have been created in accordance to size and shape of deceased person without using certain materials in the walls and in the roof. In the third chapter of explorations, seven simple vacuolar
graves had been discovered together in this site. However, more of them had been discovered in the second phase of excavations. The content of these graves appears to contain the other poorer graves full of the gray and black pottery objects. The important point is that five of the seven discovered simple vacuolar graves had no corpses in the third phase of excavations. This situation means a grave without a dead body had been observed in the nineteenth bore in the second stage of explorations of the site.

The third type is Stone Stack Graves: The only difference between the graves, such graves using a simple hole in a rock on the ridge above the grave. Three of these graves which have only a difference compared to simple vacuolar graves means using some stones on the top of the grave had been discovered in the third stage of excavations.

Many of the features of these graves such as quality and quantity of buried objects are like simple vacuolar graves and had a lot of richness in general.

The fourth type is Crock Graves: a crock grave had been discovered in the second phase of exploration in the 8th bore of Gardaneh Sar in Boye excavations, at a depth of 120 cm surrounded by 6 large stone blocks. This crock grave contained human infant bones inside. Thus, it can be said that crock burials were used for children and infants in Boye.

Aside from the crock graves, flooring had been done at first in construction of all the Boye graves as studies suggest that the graves had one floor belonging only to one historical period that is the first Iron Age. These graves had no particular orientation, using all compass directions to align the bodies. The subsidiary directions viz. southwest, northeast and main directions mean northern and southern had mostly been observed. Burial situation was both supine and flexed to right and to left respectively.
The Discovered Objects: Most of the pottery had been discovered in the second stage of the conducted excavations in Gardaneh Sar. However, other works such as bronze, iron, stone and plaster objects had been found in the site as well. The found pottery from the site in can be divided into three groups of red, gray and red-brown clay pottery.

First group of red pottery includes:

1. A small clay jug, 2. A large container like a pot, 3. A large platter (fruit platter),

The second set of gray dishes had a large number but less than red pottery. The gray artifacts had a special form with a convex body, short bases and two handles on the side of the neck. Moreover, the surface of a number of gray potteries had different lines indicating the smooth surface.

The third group of the pottery had red color and brown engobe include dishes with pipe shaped outlets.

In the Boye excavations, metal objects made of respectively bronze and iron had been discovered. Bronze artifacts include various blades of dagger, dirk, and knife and several arrows and spears in two different types; one of which is a spearhead with a tube handle and the other straps or wooden handle. In addition to the above mentioned objects, some bronze objects such as bracelets, rings, pins, and beads were found there. Four numbers of iron daggers or swords with a relatively maximum and minimum length of 44 cm and 34.7 cm mostly bent and damaged were found. Furthermore, nine spearheads of iron have been discovered in the excavations as well.
In the third phase of Boye excavations, different objects ranging from pottery, small bronze jewelry and accessories such as rings, bracelets, beads, stone and glass, bronze weapons including swords and arrows and a piece of gold wire had been discovered. Approximately, eight pottery had been found from the grave including earthenware with stud outlets, long necked containers, and gray pottery with short openings in the neck having a rounded body with a cylindrical shape, ceramic cups, pottery base bearing (fruit platters), both handmade and wheel-made ceramics were of the common forms had been found there (Fig 3.8). The discovered clay pottery in this phase can be divided into four groups regarding decorations including decorative, added, distraught, highlights of different types of geometric shapes. The geometric decorative elements such as the horizontal lines, parallel patterns, and crescent can be observed in the finds. The overall results of surveys conducted around the graves and the found objects from borehole of Boye indicated the culture belonged to the early period of Iron Age.

3.2.3 The Cultural Domain of Tavalesh (Shafarood and Karganrood):

This domain covers sites located in the northwestern mountains of the Talesh range in Gilan. In contrast, the two previous domains of Gilan (Sefidrood and Polrood) were
not only based on a large river basin, but several major rivers roughly with the same width and the same size are present in the region. The largest rivers include Karganrood Shafarood namely. However, all these rivers have originated in the mountains of a geological point of Gilan known as Tavalesh. They have created almost an independent domain from a historical and linguistic point of view.

Regarding the present discussion of the Iron Age, a lot of sites have been identified in this domain among which Chilakhaneh, Khajeh Davood, Hassan Zamini, Vaske, Mianrood, Maryan, Aghevlar, Asb Sara, Tandevin and Toul have been studied to name a few. However, many more of these sites like this Hassan Dirmani 5, Dizgah 1, Sobatan, Sheikh Murad, Larzeh and Kolneh are of the sites and cemeteries of the Iron Age in the region that no archaeological discovery had been conducted in them. Regarding all evidences and discoveries from the sites and cemeteries, it can be said that the characteristics of their discovered Iron Age objects have a local features despite coherence with the Iron Age of Gilan and the surrounding regions and in some ways. Above all, the iron of this domain seems to be newer compared to the other areas of Gilan like Amlash, Roudbar and Dailaman. Here and later on, the pattern of burials in the significant cemeteries of this domain namely Vaske, Maryan, Tandevin and Toul will be discussed and classified.

3.2.3.1 Burial Customs in Vaske:

Site of Vaske located in the at Vaske village in Rezvanshahr Township in the Gilan province. The site is 40 KM away from the Rezvanshahr city in the Talesh Mountains on the shores of Shafarood River. The site GPS is; (N 37˚ 32’ & E 48˚ 50’), and at an altitude of about 1000 meters above open MSL. The excavation in Vaske cemetery had been conducted in two phases during 1992 and 1994 years by which a total of seven tombs have been discovered.
**The feature of the Graves and burieds:** In this section forms the graves, Direction of Burial and burials situation can be explained as follows:

The discovered graves in Vaske are four types;

The first type is enclosure graves: two number of this kind of grave had been found in these excavations in Vaske which was generally used to bury many people. The largest cyst grave in Vaske was of $125 \times 120 \times 520$ cm dimensions and the smallest one was of $125 \times 120 \times 200$ cm dimensions. It is considered that these graves belonged to the ruling class or the commanders and their troops; because regardless of the objects discovered in the graves which included hunting equipment, several graves are located in that cemetery that are of simple vacuolar graves belonging to the middle class and poor people as proved in the primary excavation.

The second type is vacuolar graves: three vacuolar graves had been discovered in the excavations of Vaske cemetery in which the smallest vacuolar grave was of $150 \times 75 \times 130$ cm dimensions and the largest one was of $90 \times 100 \times 210$ cm dimension. It is believed that these graves belonged to the poor and middle class people as the architectural layer of the graves and the discovered objects point to this hypothesis.

The third discovered graves are stone stacked grave: Two number of this type grave had been identified in the Vaske cemetery at a depth of 170-150 cm. It is believed that these graves belonged to the poor and middle class people as the other examples of such graves are known in many archaeological sites in Gilan.
The four kind of grave is crypt grave, that one of this type grave had been discovered in vaske Cemetery (Fig No. 3.9)

The Direction of Burial: Sixteen skeletons had been explored in the Vaske cemetery in which the direction of burial including 87.5 % of the discovered skeleton is exactly in the east-west and only two of the skeletons located in the northeast-southwest directions having a ratio of about 12.5 percent. Therefore, as it can be seen that the fundamental emphasis was on east-west burial in almost all the cases.

Burial Conditions: Burial conditions are inconsistent in the discoveries of the cemetery of Vaske, but generally, they were rested on the left shoulder with bent legs or on the right shoulder with bent legs or supine with legs straight or bent legs. Of the sixteen discovered skeletons, 15 skeletons were on the left shoulder and bent legged (flexed) condition (31.12 percent) and 2 skeletons were on the right shoulder with bent legs (12%) and 5 skeletons were supine with legs straight (12/31 percent). The burial condition of five skeletons which have been damaged and anxious in the lower layer of the graves had been identified as well.

The features of Discovered objects: From Vaske three kinds of objects include pottery, metal objects, Stone objects are found as follows:

The Pottery: Most of discovered potteries are bowls as 71 pieces of the total number of 153 discovered pottery include the bowls having a ratio about 46.6 percent. After that,
52 pieces of jars (34 percent) and 28 cups (18%) and 13 small bowls (8.4 %), and finally 2 glasses (1.3 percent) can be placed in the next ranks.

The discovered pottery is typically wheel-made with sand used as fixing material but the hand-made items are less common. To cover the surface of the containers, they were placed in a slip that made their surface smooth and uniform. Handmade dishes are mostly thick with rugged bodies and without required delicacy as their fabric had been damaged due to the intrusion of moisture inside the grave over time. The discovered pottery typically has no design, but some rare cases have been seen having slightly distressed decorative zigzag lines across the body, especially in their neck.

The Metal Objects: bronze and Iron are materials of all metallic objects in Vaske. A significant number of bangles had been discovered in the excavations in Vaske cemetery. They are generally open rings at both ends without any decoration, but in some rare cases, there is a simple ring with decorations and added cuts. However, there are some bangles having fundamental decorations in the open ends such as carved circles or zigzag lines, engraving decorations. The most prominent ones having two snake heads at each end specifically designed with elegance and simplicity, full of taste and art and creativity.

Diversity of metal objects in the cemetery site is so vast that all the graves are found to yield metal objects such as tools and equipment for hunting and combat, spears, swords, dagger, axe, pick and scissors and so on. Daggers have a special place among the artifacts of iron, and generally have a sharp and narrow double edged blade with a bulge in the middle of the blade from the beginning to the tip of the blade.

The Stone Objects: Many stone tools had been discovered among the artifacts. In addition to the functional aspect, they were very elegant and appropriate in terms of
form and design. Knife sharpeners are the significant examples of stone tools. Most of them are made of soapstone formed in different sizes and shapes. Some stone artifacts had a transparent and smooth surface as they had been used for a long time, having a hole in the upper part to be hung by a twisted copper ring. They were used to carry the stone while farming and hunting. Regardless of sharpeners, some stone spindles and flat and conical beads had been discovered near the skeleton. It is assumed that these stone bolts had been used as buttons on clothing. However, some decorative beads made of agate, glass, pulp, glass paste; quartz and oyster stone had been discovered as well have been used as string necklaces and anklets.

It is believed that the cemetery is related to the later periods of Iron Age (end of the first half of the first millennium BC) regarding some factors such as the architecture of graves (enclosure graves), extensive use of metal and ceramic artifacts with broad rounded edges and decorative distressed zigzag. (Khalatbari 2004: 47)

3.2.3.2 Burial Customs in Maryan (Aghevlar) and Tandevin:

Maryan Village (Aghevlar) is located in the rural district of south Karganrood from the central part of Talesh Township in Gilan. Maryan is the eastern part of the village and Aghevlar is the western part of that. However, many local residents prefer to use the name Maryan since that is more authentic. Essentially, segregating Maryan and Aghevlar cemeteries is not an easy job. GPS of Maryan (Aghevlar) is (N 37° 51’&) & (E 48° 40’), and at an altitude of approximately 1100 meters from open MSL. Tandevin is a small village away from the aforementioned village in an area entirely covered with a range of meadows and apples orchards, hazelnut and walnut plantations. These villages are predominantly seasonally occupied in summer since the weather is very cold and snowy in winter but cool and pleasant in summer.
The history of exploration of these sites goes back to the first excavations in Gilan by a French delegation in 1901 (Demorgan 1905). Later stages of explorations had been conducted during several occasions by an Iranian delegation in 1999 to 2003 in Maryan and Tandevin areas (Khalatbari 2004).

**The Features of the graves:**

In 1901 excavations conducted by the French researchers took place in Aghevlar, where some graves of Dolmens type had been discovered. These Dolmens were often rectangular and had been built with small and large stone walls. Moreover, some rocks had been used as caps on these Dolmens. Jacques De morgan is of the opinion that these graves date back to the Bronze and Iron periods. Some of these Dolmens rose to 1.5 meter height. In general, four types of graves had been found from the aforementioned excavations including:

1. Enclosure stone graves,
2. Vacuolar graves,
3. Stone stack graves,
4. Megalithic graves (Fig. 3.10).

The Direction of Burial: In excavations in Maryan and Tandevin cemeteries, about thirty graves had been discovered, some of which were intended for the burial of more than one person. For example, grave No. 3 had two burials, grave No. 20 had three burials, grave No. 21 had of three burials and grave No. 26 included two burials. About 135 skeletons had been discovered in exploring Maryan and Tandevin cemeteries buried in the east-west or northeast - southwest directions having 46
percent of the discovered skeletons. After that, 15 skeletons had been found in northeast - southwest direction comprising 43 percent and only 4 skeletons had been buried in the north-south having 11 percent of the total discovered skeletons. It is believed that the emphasis was generally on east-west and northeast-southwest burials. This had a direct relation with religious beliefs of the residents in the area.

The Condition of Burial: Burial methods are diverse in Tandevin and Maryan cemeteries but mostly resting on the right shoulder with bent legs or the left shoulder with bent legs and rarely on the left shoulder with straight legs or supine. About 23 skeletons out of 33 explored skeletons had been buried on the right shoulder with bent legs having about seventy percent. On the contrary, 9 skeletons had been buried on the left shoulder with bent legs comprising 27 percent of the discovered skeletons. Only one of the skeletons had been buried on the left shoulder with straight legs comprising only three percent of that.

It seems that the dead bodies were buried with their clothes in these graves. It has been observed in some cases that some bracelets placed near the hand or arm bones and earrings found around the ear and necklace around the neck and chest. But no trace of organic materials was observed there. However, the trace of warp and woof had been occasionally observed on the bone and fabric of decorative accessories such as bronze mirrors and buttons and daggers as well.

Multiple burials were customary in these cemeteries as well. For example, in the excavations in 2003, grave number 20 had three burials together at a time or grave number 21 had three burials of children or infants according to the characteristics of the discovered skeletons accompanied by a woman’s corpse. As there was no difference in terms of time span between the artifacts, it is assumed that the relationship between them was a child and mother relation buried near each other due
to the love for her children. This condition is similar to that of grave No. 26 which includes two burials of a man and a woman. Grave No. 27 is the only grave that gives evidence of burials at two different points of time since the two graves are quite different and formed on two separate floors having no burial relation with each other.

The Discovered Skeletons: Tandevin and Maryan Sigoor cemeteries include 34 skeletons. Preliminary studies indicate that most of the discovered skeletons were of Brachycephalic, while some were Dolichocephalic or Mesocephalic types. Nine skeletons belonging to men from the total of 34 discovered skeletons and 17 skeletons belonged to women. Eight skeletons’ gender was unknown due to their disintegrated condition. The age group varies from minimum 14 to maximum 55 years among men. Totally, the minimum age is 19.9 years, the maximum age is 35.7 years and the average is about 32.8 years. The status faces some changes in the women’s group in which the minimum age is 8 years and the maximum age is 65 years. Therefore, it can be considered that the average age of women is at least 27.2 years and the maximum age is 32.9 years. The average would be about thirty years. As a result one can observe that men have an average age far higher than that of women. The bodies of women compared with men are almost double, indicating that the lack of proper nutrition and the occurrence of premature deaths among women than men probably due to repeated physical conditions and obstetric and gynecological complications.

The Discovered objects:

The Pottery: Clay pottery is the most prominent artifact discovered in the Tandevin and Maryan archeological excavations. In terms of shape, they include: jars, bowls, cups, pitchers, Dizzi dishes, fat-burner lights and burial dishes and Askos. Studies done on ceramic works indicate that clay Jars constitute a significant number, viz. 95 pieces out of the 157 ceramics discovered or 60.5 percent of all the pottery. After that, 32 bowls, 9 cups and fat-burner lamps each, 4 tea pots and 1 burial dish.
Large number of pottery had been discovered in excavations of Tandevin Maryan cemeteries. They had no need for decoration due to their daily use. Only some of them have carved geometric and added decorative designs in the surface. Despite poor decorations, great art and creativity have been applied to them in terms of appearance as their shortcomings of design had been compensated by decorative nozzle and beautiful decorated handles.

Moreover, in the primary excavation of the site in 1901, it was reported that pottery bowls with incised designs such as vertical zigzag, plates, cups, bowls with drainage pipes, water containers, jars and bowls with conical bodies, were of the significant clay objects discovered in these sites.

The Metal Objects: A large number of bronze objects and tools had been discovered in the explorations in Tandevin and Maryan cemeteries respectively include: cups, daggers, horse harnesses, bangles, mirrors, buttons and head pins, arrows and so on. Only two bronze grails had been discovered from Maryan cemetery had received a severe oxidation due to water penetration in the grave and since it was not thick enough, the metal dish was severely corroded. One of the discovered cups exfoliated during the process of exploring quickly. There was no possibility of its restoration. It was not clear that the discovered grails were decorated or simple due to a thick layer of corrosion from the bottom. In terms of shape and form, the discovered grail was wide and with flat bottom and turn-out edge with an open outlet.

Some objects such as spears, swords and helmets had been discovered in excavations in Maryan cemetery entirely made of iron. A large number of tools and ornaments including earrings and a necklace of silver had been discovered in the excavations in Maryan cemetery. Of course, the war instruments including arrows, knives, axes and
spears made of bronze and iron had been discovered in the first step of exploration in Maryan.

The Stone and Glass Objects: Sharpener stones are interesting artifacts discovered from the stone works in Tandevin and Maryan sites. They are of various types of stone in different sizes. They have a smooth and transparent surface as they had been used for a long time. All these stones have a hole on top in which a loop of copper wire had been placed allowing them to be hung or carried for easy access. Unfortunately, these wires were destroyed or corroded, due to the thin wire and high humidity. In addition, a number of decorative beads made of mountain pearl and agate had been achieved in the graves. In Maryan a number of Glass bead (Agate) and Quartz, that were used for necklaces and decorations, were found, and Dan Kohl that were made of glass.

According to some views an important factor behind this is the lack of iron, the explorer of Tandevin and Maryan sites believed that Tandevin cemetery had been formed during 1250 to 1300 BC (Iron Age I). However, regarding the factors such as the grave structure, the abundant use of metal like bronze, iron, silver and comparable pottery and metal objects, he believed that Maryan (Aghevlar) cemetery is newer and belongs to later Iron Age period (Iron Age IV) (Khalatbari 2004). However, the explorer of the first phase of excavation at the site generally believes that the discovered objects, especially those objects found from the Dolmeni graves, were related to 1450 - 1000 BC period. (Demorgan 1905)

3.2.3.3 Burial Customs in Toul:

Toul of Gilan is a migrational village in the central part of Talesh city in Gilan. It is located at a distance of approximately 42 kilometers from the city center (Hashtpar)
in the West of Karganrood Valley in a high mountainous area. The population of this migrational village is about one hundred families in summer and only two households in winter.

At the entry to Toul village, there is a vast cemetery. Part of this belonged to the Islamic period, but the larger part belonged to the cemeteries of the Iron Age having no specific appearance, distorted and hidden in the margins of the region. The GPS of cemetery is (N 37°44′07″) & (E 48°36′25″) and an altitude of 1640 meters above mean MSL. The archaeological excavations in Toul cemetery during 2003 to 2004 by the Iranian team had led to the discovery of Iron Age graves with a large number of burial objects. (Khalatbari 2004)

**The Structure of Graves:**

47 graves had been identified and explored in the ancient site of Toul in Gilan. The discovered graves can be divided into three distinct types in terms of shape, form and building materials as follows:

The first type is enclosure Graves (four walls): Most of the excavated graves are enclosure stone graves comprising 41 graves out of 47 discovered graves having a proportion about 85%. These graves have four stone walls covered by limestone slabs in different sizes. Their gaps and cracks had been completely filled by rubble and cobble stones. The smallest of these graves was of 45 × 38 × 120 cm dimension and the largest one was of 62 × 90 × 260 cm dimension.

The second type is Simple Vacuolar Graves: the second group of the discovered graves was simple vacuolar graves. These graves do not have a special architecture because these graves are built only with the digging of the ground.
In Toul excavations in Gilan, five simple vacuolar graves had been totally identified in the cemetery. Approximately, it comprises 10.6 % proportion of the total excavated graves. The vacuolar graves had been formed in various sizes. The smallest of graves was of $15 \times 100 \times 180$ cm dimension and the largest one was of $25 \times 85 \times 130$ cm dimension. Simple vacuolar graves had not regular dimensions and generally had oval or circular incomplete shapes having no mark to be identified. In some vacuolar graves, it is observed that only one or two pieces of stone had been placed in the graves after funeral as a symbolic burial. This feature is rare among the excavated graves.

The third kind is Megalithic Graves: Just one example of the Megalithic graves had been discovered in the excavations in Toul cemetery. Unfortunately, this grave had already been dug by unauthorized treasure hunters but the grave architecture and interior were not damaged too much. The grave was of $70 \times 80 \times 360$ cm dimensions. A woman's body had been discovered in this gigantic grave. This reflects the high political and social position of the women in that society of that time since building such graves was both time-consuming and expensive.

The Direction of Burial: Forty seven skeletons had been excavated and discovered in Toul cemetery in Gilan that can be divided into 3 groups in terms of direction of burials including: The skeletons that are buried in the east and west direction were more numerous than the other skeletons since 22 discovered skeletons had been buried in East and West direction having a ratio of 46.6 percent.

The second group of discovered skeletons refers to those that had been buried in the north and south direction including 18 skeletons. The group had a ratio about 38.3 percent.
The last group of the discovered skeletons consists of 7 individuals buried entirely in the North-South direction. The group had a ratio about 16.6 percent of the discovered skeletons only.

The Burial Condition: Burial condition at Toul cemetery of Gilan has its own diversity and difference. Generally, the dead bodies had been buried resting on the left shoulder or supine. Since many of the excavated graves are of Cyst graves and the interior of the grave was made out of soil, skeletons have been completely damaged over time due to water penetration into the graves. As a result, the only a few had survived and this caused some difficulty in determining the burial condition.

The first group of the discovered skeletons which has the highest number is the skeletons were usually buried supine with bent legs. The group includes 15 skeletons out of the discovered ones having a ratio about 31.9 percent. Only 5 of the skeletons were buried supine with straight legs among this group having a ratio about 10.6 percent.

The second group of discovered skeletons is those buried resting on the left shoulder with bent legs and no variety in terms of location of hands and feet. This group contains 10 skeletons, approximately 21.2 percent of the discovered ones. Moreover, only 4 skeletons had been discovered buried on the right shoulder with bent legs which are the lowest in the group since it contains only 8.5 percent of the discovered skeletons.

The last group of the excavated skeletons includes some cases with an unknown identity as they are completely damaged and only a part of them remains left in the grave due to the high humidity and water intrusion. The status of their burial is not
well understood. This group includes 13 cases contains 27.6 percent of the total discovered skeletons which is relatively a high ratio.

**The Discovered Objects:**

From the 47 explored graves in Toul cemetery in Gilan, a large number of objects and cultural material had been discovered mostly made of clay, bronze, iron, silver, glass paste, onyx, stone, and bone.

The discovered pottery in Toul site is generally dark gray, glossy black and red. They are a combination of sand, gravel, mica, and some plant material to strengthen it. The discovered pottery dishes are wheel-made pottery but some of the artifacts are handmade. The discovered pottery dishes of Toul have usually no decoration. But they are some cases having carved, distressed, or added designs on the neck, handle and body.

A number of tools and equipment made of bronze had been discovered in Toul site of Gilan, which are severely oxidized and have lost their strength. The best of bronze artifacts are some bangles having two open ends with circular or wide tape shapes. The outer hull of these bracelets has many drawn or zigzag designs generally below a deep layer of corrosion. Meanwhile, there are some artifacts with ornamental motifs as added designs having two symmetrical snake heads at each end which show rich art and creativity. Among the discovered objects, some bronze earrings and simple and slim rings had been found which have no design. Mirrors are the other bronze artifacts found. Six of them had been discovered in Toul cemetery excavations in Gilan. Mirrors are of a thin and flat plate with a circular form and a handle made of the metal itself or separately attached, sometimes with a wooden grip. The discovered mirrors generally have no decoration and design.
Some silver decorative items were found in Toul cemetery in Gilan but have been damaged by the humidity and the fragile nature of the objects. Among the artifacts found, a bangle was discovered. The outer surface is decorated with parallel lines and simple ornamentation with carved small circle designs in the two ends. In addition, a large number of decorative beads made of agate, glass paste, glass and bone and stone spindle in Toul cemetery, most likely having a religious or decorative aspect (Fig No. 3.11).

![Fig No. 3.11 Sample Grave and a number of findings in site of Toul (Khalatbari 2007)](image)

The most important artifact that had been discovered in the excavations of Toul is a bronze bracelet. The inner rim of this bracelet is decorated with Orartoe cuneiform. Regarding the conducted studies, the phrase “The Gift of Argishti the first son of Manva (Orartoe King), 766 to 789 BC” is written on this bracelet (Khalatbari 2007: 28). However, the discovery of Orartoe cuneiform inscriptions indicates that the residents of the region, more precisely ruling class or religious leaders had reached the stage of script and writing in Iron Age II in the eighth century BC.
3.2.4 Comparing Burial Patterns in the Three Lateral Domains of Iron Age in Gilan:

Gilan as a geographical, historical and cultural whole has its own certain features of Iron Age culture in Iran which was mentioned earlier in the first chapter of this thesis in “Statement of Problem”. Consequently, it was observed in the burial patterns in the third chapter of this thesis that the Iron Age of Gilan can be divided into three cultural domains including: the Roudbar domain (Sefidrood), the Dailaman and Amlash domain (Polrood), and the Tavalesh domain (Shafarood and Karganrood). Referring to the information in related reports of significant sites in these domains, the similarities and differences can be identified. Here, the characteristics of these domains can be summarized as follows:

The Cultural Domain of Roudbar (Sefidrood):

1. Generally, the oldest cemeteries related to Iron Age can be traced in the cultural domain of Roudbar in Gilan. In other words, the number of Iron Age sites in this domain is more than any other domain of Iron Age in Gilan. The significant Roudbar sites are namely Lame Zamin of Shahran, Kalouraz and Jamshid Abad which doubtless belong to the Iron Age.

2. It appears that there is a direct relation between the vacuolar graves and the chronology of Iron Age sites in Gilan. This means that the vacuolar graves usually belong to the earlier Iron Ages and large percentage of these graves in the cultural domain of Roudbar and the depth of these graves are distinct and significant than those of the graves of the Dailaman, Amlash and Tavalesh domains. The vacuolar graves are also frequent in Halima Jan, Jamshid Abad, Joboun and Shirkooh sites. Of
course, this type of burial can be observed in some other sites such as Ghale Kouti and Boye in Amlash and Dailaman domains as well, but their total number is less especially in Tavalesh domain.

3. Figurines of all kind such as animal or human, or combinations thereof (Griffon) have been discovered largely from the Iron Age cemeteries in this domain. The abundance of cattle figurines known as _zebu_ is considered as the characteristic of the Iron Age of this domain, while this feature is not totally seen or (like Eshkor Bala from Dailaman and Amlash domain) or has a lower frequency in the two other domains in Gilan. Considering the number of figurines, Marlik, Kalouraz and Halima Jan sites are exemplary.

4. More gold and silver objects had been discovered in the Iron Age cemeteries in the cultural domain of Roudbar than any other area till the present time. Overall, the richness and abundance of the Iron Age cemeteries in Roudbar domain is more than that of the two other domains, and even the average number of discovered objects is greater.

5. Large numbers of weapons, especially swords and other combat tools in this domain are more comparable to Dailaman, Tavalesh and Amlash domains. This is likely due to the occurrence of violence in the domain.

The Cultural Domain of Dailaman and Amlash (Polrood):

1. Megalithic graves, cyst graves are observed in this domain more than in the cultural domain of Roudbar. Generally, stone had been widely used in the construction of walls or in building most of the graves in the cemeteries in these regions. In this regard, Omam, Boye and Ghias Abad graves are exemplary.
2. Graves known as honeycomb have been recorded specifically from Bon Zamin and Lasulokan cemeteries locating in this domain.

3. The large number of figurines is less than the other two domains of Gilan as no effigy known as Zebu had been discovered from Komoni cemeteries so far. Furthermore, the large number of discovered containers with tube spout is less than the two other domains of Gilan.

4. Most of the Iron Age cemeteries of this domain assigned to the Iron Age II and 3 periods means they are in fact later. In most cases, other settlements had been established in or near these cemeteries in later Parthian and Sasanian dynasties and Islamic periods. In fact, life has been persisted after the Iron Age.

5. Considering the investigation in some sites of these regions including Ghias Abad, Ghale Kouti and Lasulokan sites, the discovered bodies are mostly of a racial type called brachycephalic (round heads).

The Cultural Domain of Tavalesh (Shafarood and Karganrood):

1. The Dolmen and Menhir graves, megalithic graves and cyst graves show a higher ratio in these regions even in comparison to Dailaman and Amlash domains. Megalithic graves of this domain especially in sites such as Chilakhaneh, Maryan and Aghevlar are so large and extensive that they can be considered as houses and settlements before or after the burial.

2. Shiny black pottery with ridges in this domain has a higher average than in the other two domains of Gilan. Animal and human figures and Rhytons are generally less.
Decorative objects including all types of beads and necklaces and bangles shows more frequent ratio. It means that the Iron Age peoples of these regions have lived in peace with more opportunity to create the decorative instruments.

3. Richness and abundance of such monuments and objects in the grave near Talesh sites had a lower average especially in comparison with the graves in Roudbar domain. Overall, the average of 4 objects (mostly pottery dishes) can be considered for the burial objects in these regions.

4. The depth of Iron Age graves in these regions is less than those of Roudbar regions mostly belonged to Iron Age II, 3 and 4 periods (newer periods of Iron Age). Conversely, the cemeteries of Roudbar and Dailaman and Amlash domains mostly have been established in fertile and pasture lands.

5. Specifically, the remains of strong houses, buildings and settlement have been discovered from none of the sites of Iron Age. Only an indication of settlement was found adjacent to cemetery layers in these sites.

**3.2.5 Conclusion of the Burial Patterns of the Iron Age in Gilan:**

The Iron Age is considered a new era due to the creation of new and varied forms of metal and ceramic objects, development and use of Gray earthenware with tube spouts, updating and expanding the use of iron, developing the tradition of burial settlements. Logically, it has more or less common features in most regions of the Plateau of Iran and its surrounding regions. But without a doubt, each of the sites and each of the regions have some different features. The study of each of these can be effective in restoring the culture of that era. However, the features of burial culture of the Iron Age in Gilan can generally be summarized as the following cases:
1. While the burial tradition of the Iron Age is still placed near the settlements in almost all sites of the central plateau of Iran such as “Sagz Abad” and “Gholi Dervish” sites in all regions of Gilan, the burials are usually moved into the non-conducive and steep, uninhabited lands in the cultural domains of Luristan, the West of Mazandaran and in a number of areas in the central part of Iran including silk, Khorvin and Ghaitaiyeh.

2. In Gilan Iron Age, horse burial was common in all the three cultural domains as its examples can be observed in some sites such as Marlik, Kalouraz and Shahran from Roudbar domain, Kafarkosh and Tomajan from Dailaman and Amlash domain and “Asb Sara” Maryan and Toul sites from Tavalesh domain. However, the burial sites of horses were relatively less common. But in any case, the percentage of horse burial tradition in Gilan is much higher than in the rest of Iran. Horses were buried in tombs buried near their owner with their saddles and harnesses in some sites including Marlik, Shahran, Kalouraz and Toul. However, horses have been seen in Tomajan site which were buried in separate graves as well.

3. The form of Iron Age tombs was not the same in Gilan. It includes various types such as vacuolar graves, cyst graves, huge stone graves, stack stone graves, honeycomb graves, crock graves, simple two-floor graves. Loosely, these graves can be divided into two basic categories:

In general, it seems that simple vacuolar graves are the most common ones in Gilan. However, this abundant number of graves is of Cyst graves and Megalithic graves in some of the domains such as Dailaman, Amlash and Tavalesh domains. But almost everywhere in Gilan, vacuolar graves had been discovered which belonged to the earliest periods of Iron Age and had been dug to a greater depth. All or part of the
graves were simple vacuolar graves in other sites such as Jamshid Abad, Kalouraz, Lame Zamin, Joboun, Lasulokan and many other Iron Age sites in Gilan. Examples of the Stack stone graves can be observed in Boye and Jamshid Abad cemeteries. (Stacked stone graves are those simple vacuolar graves but with a difference above the grave; a pieces of stone to mark it or for any other reasons).

Most of the works belonged to Megalithic graves in the cemeteries of Tavalesh domain such as Chilakhaneh, Asb Sara, Maryan, Tandevin, Vaske and Mianrood. However, the existence of Megalithic graves has also been reported in the cemeteries of some other domains in Gilan such as Shimam in Roudbar domain (Shahidzadh 1970) and Omam Cemetery in Amlash Dailaman domain (Moghadam 1962).

The cyst graves are found almost in all domains of Gilan. However, their abundance is relatively more than Tavalesh domain in particular sites such as Marlik, Jokin and Kalouraz in Roudbar domain and in sites such as Tomajan, Ghale Kouti Kohpas in Amlash and Dailaman domain. Such graves had been built with four walls on four sides of the grave either with dry stratigraphic or with mortar. The material to construct the walls of these graves was of natural rocks like Marlik graves, of carried stones like Boye graves and of bricks like Ghale Kouti Kohpas graves.

The rest of the Iron Age graves in Gilan had not been encompassing as most of them had exceptional applications. It can be said that Bon Zamin (Kambakhsh Fard 1994: 23) and Lasulokan sites (Egami 1965) have reported the sites with honeycomb graves. Khorgam Rood Cemetery in Dailaman and Shahjan Komoni (Mossavi 1995) are of the cemeteries with crock graves. In addition, some of the Boye graves are of crock grave types and some of the graves in Zardkam Shaft cemetery were simple two-floor graves. (Memar Zahedani 1965) and some of the graves in Shirchak cemetery of Amlash were of irregular graves.
4. In almost all Iron Age sites in Gilan, the deads had been buried on right shoulder or on left shoulder and bent legs with low and high curvature degrees. Only a small number of bodies had been buried supine (face up) in some cemeteries. A particular conclusion cannot be drawn on this relationship at the present time.

5. The graves had no specific direction in the Iron Age cemeteries in Gilan. The graves had been built in the four major and minor directions. Burials in different directions can be seen even in a single cemetery. Of course, the burial of corpses in east-west direction in Kalouraz cemetery or the burial of corpses in the Northeast and Southwest in Boye cemetery could possibly have a special meaning.

6. Less writing and script works had been found in the remnants of the Iron Age in Gilan than in the rest of Iran. However, three of these findings were related to all three cultural domains of Iron Age in Gilan. One of them was a cylindrical bead with carved cuneiform artifacts in Marlik site in Roudbar domain. Another one was a bronze bracelet with cuneiform lines in Toul site in Tavalesh domain found during the excavations. The third one was two bronze wide eyes with cuneiform lines found from Amlash region in unauthorized excavations.

7. Almost in all Iron Age cemeteries of Gilan, the tradition of burying objects as grave goods, near the dead bodies, was common. In most cases, these objects included: pottery, porcelain and metal objects, pottery and metal figures, metal weapons including daggers, spear, axes, swords, maces, ornaments made of stone, metal, etc. It seems that their richness and abundance was related to the degree of wealth or social position of the person. This means that more valuable objects are more show that the person has died was of a higher social standing. Since the present time, no site was as abundant and rich as Marlik site in Gilan. Even it can be said that the volume of gold
and silver objects, jewelry and artifacts from Marlik site are notable and unique compared to other Iron Age sites in Iran and in the world.

8. The gray pottery and tube porcelain which are of the characteristic of the Iron Age had been more or less achieved in the graves in all three domains of Iron Age in Gilan. Grey pottery and tube porcelain discovered in Gilan are indeed comparable to other objects discovered in other Iron Age sites in the north-east and north-west of Iran.

9. Placing food for the dead has been extensively discovered in Iron Age graves in Gilan. Perhaps, this is a consequence of fast decomposition of the foods since there is no evidence left behind. However, the reports of Dailaman and Lasulokan explorations show that vertebrate animal bones had been discovered in a container placed there as food for the dead body (Abyar 2000: 43).

10. Putting weapons and decorative objects (jewelry) in the graves of both men and women was common in the Iron Age sites of Gilan. However, the total percentage of weapons (sword, dagger, spear, mace, etc.) in the grave of men is more than that in the graves of women. On the contrary, the percentage of festive objects (rings, necklaces, earrings, pins, etc.) in the grave women is more than that of men. In some cases, it has been observed that the discovered graves had no burial object. For example, the seventh and tenth graves excavated at Jamshid Abad had no burial objects as these graves were of infants and children (Fallahian 2006: 47 - 62)

3.3 Subsistence and Economic Patterns in Iron Age of Gilan:

The subsistence and nutrition of the indigenous people of Gilan living in the Iron Age has not been directly mentioned in historical sources. Only, Plutarchos, the Greek historian died in the year 125 quoted: “Kadosian country (one of the ancient names of
Gilan) is a mountainous and impassable land. There is always a cloud-filled sky with no plant crops or fruit trees. The main sustenance of the inhabitants is mostly pear and wild apple.”(Pirnia 1991: 1128)

Although this source dates to a thousand years after the Iron Age, it may be extended to Iron Age and some time before it. However, it is here that the role of archeology in solving this problem is two-fold. Archaeologists have to discover the remaining bodies interred in the cemeteries and scrutinize general agricultural facts and cereal grains growing in that period and region carefully in order to answer the question by the help of experts and by the use of advanced methods.

The fact is that first, there are almost no historical written sources and secondly, archeology is faced with a major weakness as far as the subsistence and economic patterns of the region are concerned regarding the living condition of people of the Iron Age in Gilan. Of course, this weakness is due to the few remnants of the observable materials from that era. In some cases, it is due to poor performance of classical archeologists having worked so far in this region.

Palaeodiet can be understood from the remnants of food (animal bones, trace elements analyses of human bones and residue analyses of ceramics) left in the settlement and cemeteries of that time. However, these remnants have been reported very little due to the taphonomic bias on one hand and the lack of advanced equipment and scientific tools to identify them on the other. Few related reports are available from the 60s in Dailaman sites including Lasulokan region in which a committee had explored a set of bones of small vertebrates and mammals which were placed inside a container next to the corpse and concluded that first, is it possible to obtain these animals via hunting. Secondly, placing them next to the dead body was meant to feed the corpse in the afterlife. Thirdly, the way of feeding may also have been in their world before his
death in that era. In addition, the discovery of these sites, though minor, can suggest that hunting was the relative and part-time employment of those people in that time. Since there is currently no evidence to classify professions and jobs of that time, it cannot be said conclusively that hunting was a part of the profession of those people, but perhaps it might have been so.

Evidence of agricultural life which probably a common occupation of people in the Iron Age of Gilan is also detected from tools and equipment and objects as well as artifacts and botanical remains grains. Basically, the location of some settlements and cemeteries inside or along the fertile plains and large rivers especially in Roudbar cultural territory support the fact that the selection of these locations in the Iron Age was partly because they were conducive to agriculture and farming issues.

A Cattle figurine was found in Marlik site that had a plough mounted on its back (Fig No: 80). The combination of cattle and plough indicate a system of agriculture and grain production with the help of the animals (Negahban 1999: 427). It is interesting that this ploughing method is still not outdated in some countries such as in much of South Asia. However, the role of cow in ploughing is related to the role of animal which will be discussed in detail later on. But here, the intention is to emphasize that these findings significantly indicate that husbandry and agriculture were there independently or simultaneously in some parts of Gilan.

Direct evidences of farming life have been discovered and investigated in some regions of Gilan. The palaeobotanical study of Toul sites in Gilan indicated that “some Cucumis sp, Hordeum, Prunus sp and Trigonella have been discovered clinging to the wool fibers in (G: 1x-3) square and in stone splits rock and on the walls of the square. The presence of the above seeds indicates that the settlers were involved in livestock
as well as farming. On the other hand, the other discovered agricultural production tools in Toul of Gilan like hoe and sickle support the fact”. (Kaikani 2006: 206)

But what were the signs of pastoral life in the Iron Age of Gilan? The main reasons of the pastoral life are not merely derived from the archeological remnants of the region but from the location and the geography of almost all sites of the Iron Age for the majority of residents in the Iron Age of Gilan. It means that the overwhelming majority of the settlements and cemeteries of this period can be found in regions where they have maximum capability for animal husbandry rather than agriculture and hunting at the present time. These areas are already more susceptible to livestock rearing, while farming and hunting are more difficult. The Alborz sites were the place for ranchers both in the Iron Age and in the present time. However, agriculture has been followed in some parts of these regions and the central plains, but livestock plays the essential role in the economy of these regions. It is worth mentioning that the remnants of Iron Age can be detected both in the hot and cold regions almost the same. On the other hand, Iron Age remnants cannot be observed where mountain ranchers did not settle.

Apart from the location of Iron Age sites that indicate rational life based on animal husbandry, there are objects discovered from the Iron Age in Gilan that show the concepts or migration or nomadic life, according to some researchers and archeologists of the region. Meanwhile, the ceramic figures of mules from Marlik is more exemplary than any other cases in this regard (Fahimi 2002: 134)

Subsistence and economics are not completely two distinct categories. They influence each other. The evidence suggests that Iron Age inhabitants of Gilan had achieved high levels of economic development, since artistic industries or trade of precious metals were present as a very prosperous and striking part of Iran. This skill of making
artistic objects has been frequently cited by some of the famous Iranian and world archaeologists. Girshman, the French archeologist who spent many years in exploring some of the most important Iron Age areas such as Sialk and Gian, believed that “Iron Age sculptures have shown significant innovations and visualized plant and animal forms in their best way, especially the legacy of the Zebu that has influenced even the modern man (Ghirshman 1992: 31)

In the Iron Age of Gilan, some of the objects and artifacts represent native art and some of them actually represent the influence of the trade and cultural relations. In a general conclusion about regional economy and the high degree of artistic development of residents in that region, Dr. Negahban, the explorer of Marlik as one of the most important sites of Iron Age in Gilan wrote: “high quality and quantity and modern bronze sculptures in Marlik is the crucial reason indicating the flourishing metal industry especially bronze workshops which proves an active center and a manufacturing industrial zone of bronze artifacts in Alborz mountainous region during the late second millennium and early first millennium BC. An impressive number of sculptures like Marlik metal objects, but of smaller sizes, have been discovered from Talesh in Iran and the Caucasus and a part of Azerbaijan whose identity is related this development and civilization and its progress.

“Very similar appearance, manner of construction, industrial factors and artistic creation of sculptures discovered in Marlik and in this wide region suggest that the homogeneous and integrated civilization of Marlik was there in all the south-west coast of the Caspian Sea in the late second millennium and early first millennium BC.” He is of the opinion that a set of other bronze sculptures of Marlik that were found at Eslize are the result of the influence of the art of statuary of Luristan in southwest Iran through the trade and cultural exchanges. (Negahban 1999: 478 - 479)
Cultural and artistic characteristics of the Iron Age in Gilan confirm the fact that the construction of objects and type of dominant culture to a large extent derived from the indigenous cultures of the region and was based on technical and technological development of the region. But meanwhile, some exchanges and influence of surrounding areas are undeniable. For example, bronze bracelets produced in Toul in Gilan were considered as the gift of the Argishti King from Orartoe dynasty has certainly certified the economic, trade and cultural exchanges of that time.

However, regarding all the discoveries have been conducted in Gilan, it can be said that Iron Age inhabitants had survived through hunting, farming and animal husbandry methods as far as subsistence patterns are concerned. But obviously, the main revenue and income of those people was based on livestock and their main food was meat and dairy products from the animals they had kept. Livestock was the essence of the economy for the Iron Age inhabitants of Gilan, and farming and hunting methods came in the later stages of settlement. Reliance on livestock and pastoral life had played an important role in the way of people’s living, beliefs and houses in Iron Age of Gilan.