



THE MAHBOUBIAN COLLECTION

ART OF ANCIENT IRAN

Dr Benjamin Mahboubian's Excavations

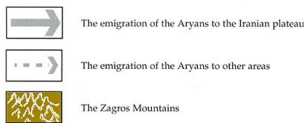


Some photographs of Dr. Mahboubian's excavations in the Luristan and Azarbaijan areas, c. 1930s.

When Dr Mahboubian was about 30, the French scientific and cultural mission ('La Mission Française a Sussa') was involved in archaeological excavations in the south-western region of Iran - Hamadan and Sussa. Keen to learn more about the art of ancient Iran, Dr Mahboubian was able to work for the team as their doctor, thanks to his knowledge of the French language.



From his youth, Dr Mahboubian loved Iran deeply and spent all his life researching its illustrious history. He knew that in the city of Hamadan and in the foothills of the Zagros Mountains were buried the remains of a great civilisation. Working with the French mission afforded him the opportunity to benefit from their knowledge and experience in scientific excavations. When in his early thirties, Dr Mahboubian decided to leave his medical practice and to engage in research into the history of Iranian art. He undertook to excavate anywhere in the country where there were chances of discovering remains of previous civilisations. He hoped, through his findings, to shed some light on the obscure areas of the history and art of Iran, particularly on the Achaemenid Empire.



The Achaemenid Empire, with territories identified in Old Persian script. They are named in the inscription of Xerxes at Persepolis (see p. 15).

During his active life, which lasted three-quarters of a century, Dr Mahboubian carried out more than one hundred excavations in various regions of Iran. The discovery of most of the archaeological sites in Iran were all fully or partially due to the untiring efforts of this archaeologist who loved Iran so deeply. These sights included the historic hills of Salmas and Hasanlu, the area around Lake Urmieh, Harsin and Piravand in Loristan, Biznijird hill in Hamadan, Ziwiye in Kurdistan, various areas in Ray, Varamin, Semnan, Nishapur, Gorgan, Gonbad Qabus, Qazvin and Sagizabad in central Iran, as well as other sites at Amanlu, Rahmatabad and Amlash in the Caspian Sea area. Dr Mahboubian passed away on 23rd September, 1968 in Tehran, the day after his 100th birthday.