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## Environmental and Cultural Factors Influencing Parthian Archaeological Site Distribution in the Sarfirouzabad Plain of Kermanshah, Northwest of Iran

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### ABSTRACT

Sarfirouzabad district, located in the Kermanshah province, is an eastward extension of Mahidasht Plain, one of the archaeologically well-known regions of the Central Zagros flanks. The area is surrounded by parallel mountain chains of Sefid on the north and Nessar on the south, the main water source of which is Ab-i Marik River flowing in the middle of the valley westward. The region has various environs such as alluvial deposits, steppe, wooden and barren foothills. The first archaeological survey of the region carried out in 2009, exploring 339 sites ranging from Paleolithic to the Islamic periods. 97 of the investigated sites were assigned to the Parthian period, one of the historical periods of ancient Iran. The study aimed to analyze spatial distribution patterns of the Parthian sites of the region as well as the nature and relationship between natural and cultural factors influencing on that distribution, using GIS technology. The results show that the distribution of the Parthian sites on the Sarfirouzabad district were influenced by a combination of natural and cultural factors and we can realize two kinds of patterns in their distributions over the region.

### KEYWORDS

Central Zagros; Sarfirouzabad; Parthian Sites; GIS Technology; Spatial Distributions

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