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## The Role of Itinerant Peddlers in Exchanges between Sedentary and Nomadic People in the Ancient Near East on Ethnographic Studies among Qashqai Tribe of Fars, Iran

<https://doi.org/10.34739/his.2024.13.12>

**Abstract:** *Complex nomadic communities have been nurtured for centuries in the Near East with extensive economic and social interactions with sedentary people in agricultural villages as well as with urban centers. The role of the exchange and trade can still be observed today in the dealings of seminomads with itinerant peddlers. Itinerant peddlers (or Pilevar), also known as Tawaf, visited black tents for exchange of goods. In the present study, by adopting an ethnographic approach (face-to-face interview) among the Qashqai nomads of Dashtak in Kazeroun County, we studied the mechanisms of trade, commerce, and exchange of goods and reviewed the role and performance of itinerants in relation to sedentary people and nomads in Qashqai tribe. In this way, we intended to determine the relationship between dynamic and static communities and explore the mechanisms of trade in prehistoric times. According to archaeological evidence and ethnographic research among the nomads of Dashtak in Kazeroun, it can be stated that the itinerant peddlers have played an important role in transactions, exchanges, and trade between nomadic tribes and sedentary people. Such exchanges and transactions between nomads and itinerant peddlers were realized from prehistoric times up to now through barter of goods with goods. Studies and the initial reports from southwest Iran show that itinerant peddlers played a major role in transactions, exchanges, and trade between nomadic and sedentary people.*

**Key words:** Iran, Fars, Ethnographic Studies, Exchange, Qashqai Tribe, Itinerant Peddlers, Nomads

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## Introduction

Neolithic obsidian exchange network in the Near East has long been the subject of research on the nature of long-distance trade.<sup>1</sup> The description and interpretation of prehistoric exchange networks have been the focus of several recent archaeological studies.<sup>2</sup> There are two reasons for this renewed interest: higher awareness of the importance of exchange for the preservation and change of cultural systems, and the growing ability of archaeologists to distinguish between local and non-local artifacts with the help of various physical and chemical techniques. Archaeologists have to look at trade or exchange as an important independent variable to understand cultural processes, which is the main goal of contemporary archaeology.

Exchange and trade are one of the most important areas of an economic system that have played major roles in the development of societies. Exchange and trade are a function of resources and the way to have access to them in order to produce.<sup>3</sup> The trade must be satisfactory to all parties to the transaction because it occurs “between two parties”.<sup>4</sup> The terms “trade” and “exchange” are employed interchangeably.<sup>5</sup>

In a practical definition, exchange is a system that promotes the transfer of goods and services among people or communities. The word trade, however, is mostly used in more coherent and formal economic relations and it is a component of exchange that is considered mostly intercultural.<sup>6</sup> There are indications of the exchange of valuable objects such as obsidian, seashells, and the like in the Late Paleolithic period; however, the significant transformation of trade and commerce can be traced back to the Neolithic period in Iran because the analysis of imported objects in Paleolithic and Epipaleolithic sites is difficult due to their non-sedentary nature. The emergence of pastoral communities, which supplied dairy products, meat, and leather to farmers, should be considered as the main motive for trade.<sup>7</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Renfrew, Dixon & Cann, 1966; see also: Pourfaraj (2015), Valipour (2004), and Klejn, Wright & Renfrew (1970) have studied the methods of exchange and trade among Neolithic societies as well as the nature of prehistoric trade exchanges. In 1973, Beale investigated trade in Iran and Mesopotamia and considered the dichotomy of Mesopotamia’s poverty in mineral resources and the richness of Iran in this respect as a reason for trade ties between the two regions. In this regard, the study of Potts (1993) on the patterns of trade in the 3rd millennium BC Mesopotamia and Iran mentioned the role of Iran as a mediator in Mesopotamian trade with Hindus. Lamberg-Karlovsky (1972) discussed the political impact of trade in territories and specifically addressed the role of commodities in trade, and Schortman (Kipp & Schortman, 1989) surveyed trade mechanisms in bilateral Indus-Mesopotamia ties; Meyer *et al.*, 2019.

<sup>2</sup> Wilmsen, 1972; Earle & Ericson, 1977; Sabloff & Lamberg-Karlovsky, 1975.

<sup>3</sup> Pourfaraj, 2015: 234.

<sup>4</sup> Renfrew, 1969: 151.

<sup>5</sup> On the definitions, see Dogan & Michailidou, 2008: 19-20.

<sup>6</sup> Pourfaraj, 2015: 235.

<sup>7</sup> Pourfaraj, 2015: 241-242.

The role of exchange and trade can be distinguished even today in the transactions of seminomads with itinerant peddlers,<sup>8</sup> which has been in the form of barter of goods with goods from the past to the present, itinerant peddlers (or *Pilevar*), also known as Tawaf, move toward the black tents to do exchange. In addition to buying and selling goods, the itinerant peddlers trading with the Qashqai tribe purchased livestock, practiced forward sale, and of course moneylending.<sup>9</sup> The Qashqai tribe occupies vast areas of Fars Province stretching from east to west (Neyriz County to Kohgiluyeh and Boyer-Ahmad Province, its capital is Yasuj) and from north to south (Abadeh County to the Persian Gulf) [Fig. 1]. During the year, the Qashqai tribe commutes to Kishlak and Yaylak to enjoy good weather and have access to suitable pastures [Figs. 2-3].<sup>10</sup> Every year, non-Qashqai itinerants begin their tour among the nomads. Some of the peddlers come from the cities with typical urban behavior, profession, quality, and range of goods (e.g. textiles, metal tools, teapots), and others are from surrounding villages and present chickens, eggs, and seasonal produce.<sup>11</sup> Barth also points out that the villagers usually provide the goods the nomads need on credit in winter and spring seasons (over the entire period of their stay), receiving market goods such as cheese, butter, skins, and rugs in exchange for the goods they sell when it comes to balancing.<sup>12</sup> Early reports of nomadic trade in wool, leather, and meat indicate that tribal elites have long played important roles as intermediaries, brokers, and facilitators of nomadic and sedentary trade.<sup>13</sup>

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<sup>8</sup> Barth's (1961) research was one of the first studies conducted in Iran on the economy of nomadic communities, which examined the nomads of southern Iran and described the Baseri tribe as a trading partner of villagers. The second study was that of Beck (1991), which surveyed the connections and exchanges of the Qashqai tribe with sedentary communities. Studies on transhumance in different regions of Iran, including Fars, have been conducted by Iranian and non-Iranian researchers (Varjavand, 1965; Zagarell, 1975; 2006; Bates & Lees, 1977; Pullar, 1990; Amanollahi Baharvand, 1999; Safinejad, 2006; Alizadeh, 2008; Talaei, Noorollahi & Firoozmandi, 2014). Marvucheche's (1976) archaeological survey of northern Baluchistan in 1976 was among the first ethnoarchaeological studies in Iran. In the 1970s, another ethnoarchaeological study was performed by Hole (2004) in Dehloran on contemporary pastoral nomads in western Iran. The most systematic and coherent study was done by Alizadeh in the southern region and Southwestern Iran to evaluate the role of nomadic pastoralists, especially the Qashqai tribe, in the development of mixed communities (Alizadeh, 1992; Haghghi & Mazaheri, 2014: 63). In addition, Scholz (2001) conducted a general survey on nomads in 2001 and considered them as an integral part of society and life through assessment of their economy, migration, and impact.

<sup>9</sup> Kiani, 1992: 80.

<sup>10</sup> Naderpour, 1999: 9.

<sup>11</sup> Beck, 1991: 35.

<sup>12</sup> Barth, 1961: 99.

<sup>13</sup> Bradburd, 1997: 904.



Fig. 1. Fars Province, Iran, 1 – Yasuj, 2 – Abadeh, 3 – Neyriz (source: google maps, elaboration by K. Maksymiuk)



Fig. 2. The Qashqai Nomads (photo courtesy of Iran On Adventure Team, source: <https://iranonadventure.com/>)



Fig. 3. The Qashqai Nomads (photo courtesy of Iran On Adventure Team, source: <https://iranonadventure.com/>)

In the present study, through ethnographic research among the Qashqai tribe of Dashtak (Kazeroun County), we try to study the mechanisms of trade, commerce and exchanged goods, as well as the role and function of itinerant peddlers in relation to sedentary people and nomads from prehistoric times to the present day. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following questions. What role have itinerant peddlers or Pilevar played in trade and commerce in prehistoric times? What is the reason for the prevalence of itinerant peddlers in the Qashqai tribe, why is this clan dependent on this group and what goods do itinerant peddlers exchange with the nomads? Based on what evidence can we comment on the presence or absence of trade relations and exchanges in the Neolithic period, as well as regarding the type and mode of extra-regional exchanges and trade in that period?

### **Research Method**

The research method of the present study is descriptive-analytical to investigate the role of itinerant peddlers relative to nomads and sedentary people in prehistoric times, which was conducted using an ethnoarchaeology approach along with ethnographic methods (face-to-face interview) among the people of Qashqai tribe in Fars. The process adopted in the interpretation of these data is based on the “etic” approach, namely objective observation of the researcher and interpretation based on the language of science and mental imagery, as well as the “emic” approach, namely participatory observation, interview with nomadic people of Dashtak in Kazeroun and experiencing the dynamic background of this community. In this research, the necessary information about exchange and trade among prehistoric sites of the Near East has been collected based on the research and excavations, as well as according to the ethnographic studies on nomads of Dashtak-e-Davan in Kazeroun County. We discuss the importance and role of itinerant peddlers in communication between sedentary people with nomads and the exchanged goods to establish a connection between dynamic and static communities and to explore the mechanisms of trade in prehistoric times to explain the ambiguities in this regard. The population of the present study includes 10 nomads from Dashtak (Kazeroun), including 6 men and 4 women. The age range of interviewees is 43-69 years.

### **Exchanges and Iranian Plateau in the Ancient Near East**

The exchange of different items has taken place in all human societies; hence, barter is primarily an economic behavior aimed at ensuring the provision of needed or valuable goods that are not available and produced by supply groups. Exchange is also a way to establish and maintain social relations, according to which exchange networks can also be social exchange media (experiences, values, ideas, etc.) or tools for

political relations. The study of exchange dynamics can scrutinize social interaction between communities, too.<sup>14</sup> Most anthropologists and archaeologists acknowledge that there was no commerce and, of course, professional trade in ancient times, or that primitive and prehistoric societies were largely unfamiliar with this concept.<sup>15</sup> In the Paleolithic period, people usually used only the resources available in their nearby areas. They seldom exchanged with other groups, and the extent of trade was limited. Also in this period, the use of bitumen as well as its trade and exchange was mainly restricted to settlements close to oil spills.<sup>16</sup>

In the Neolithic period, trade grew between Middle Eastern settlements and the Mediterranean region. Commerce grows when people search for resources that are not found near the place they live. Obsidian could be an additional commodity traded between central Anatolia and southern Levant through intermediaries during the early exchanges between southern Levant and eastern Anatolia and later during the Neolithic period before Pottery B [Fig. 4].<sup>17</sup> In the Neolithic period, obsidian was supplied from central Anatolia, Lapis-lazuli from Afghanistan, and seashells from the Persian Gulf, indicating extensive contact through trade and other channels.<sup>18</sup> Another well-known commercial commodity is hematite, a red mineral that is used as a cosmetic, and merchants traveled by donkey or boat along rivers and beaches as well as by land to obtain it. As a rare material for the Near East, obsidian is the main factor of inter-regional ties of Central Anatolia among the Neolithic cultures of Syria, Levant, and Cyprus. Thus, obsidian was not an ordinary stone, but a symbol of the differentiation of social status.<sup>19</sup> Consequently, Anatolia and its obsidian deposits are the main subjects for examining Neolithic interactions.<sup>20</sup> The traditional view has explained the mechanisms of obsidian exchange using the down-the-line model, searching for a decrease in the quantity of obsidian from the source of origin, transported either by hunters using temporary campsites or itinerant craftsmen. In contrast, preferential exchange with neighboring communities was prevalent during the PPNB, with the interaction of distant nodes or big villages through a few intermediary steps, with the preferential attachment of hubs that had access to larger quantities of obsidian.<sup>21</sup>

Regarding distribution, the presence of raw or manufactured materials from a known source constitutes indirect evidence of trade. However, it should be borne in mind that trade is only one of various distribution mechanisms.<sup>22</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Ortega, *et al.*, 2014: 2.

<sup>15</sup> Kipp & Schortman, 1989: 372.

<sup>16</sup> Connan & Van de Velde, 2010.

<sup>17</sup> Gil Fuensanta & Mederos Martín, 2019: 53.

<sup>18</sup> Hole, 2004.

<sup>19</sup> Güngördü, 2010: 73.

<sup>20</sup> Chataigner, Poidevin & Arnaud, 1998: 518.

<sup>21</sup> Gil Fuensanta & Mederos Martín, 2019: 58.

<sup>22</sup> Dogan & Michailidou, 2008: 22.

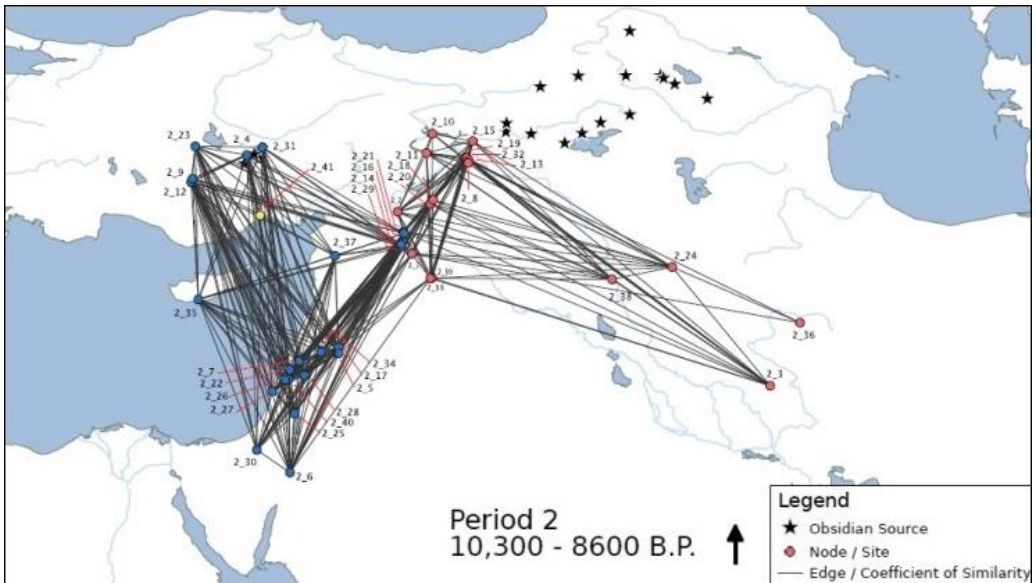


Fig. 4. Obsidian exchange network (after Batist, 2014: 94, Fig. 7.5)

We may conclude that in harsh topographical conditions, such as in Anatolia, two trade models can be distinguished as probable in prehistory. 1). Exchange in gathering places. Given what has been said about Göbekli Tepe, it should be noted that some gathering places in Anatolia were used by the nomads until the late 1960s. 2). Exchanges made by itinerant vendors and craftsmen (whether repairmen or specialists).

In addition to individuals who exchanged their products within their village or in nearby villages, until the recent past, some peddlars bartered professionally. The pedlar usually used donkeys or mules, even carts when possible. Other itinerant craftsmen, such as horseshoe-makers, often accepted goods rather than money. For thousands of years, distance was no barrier to the procurement of necessities. Language, ethnic origin, units of measurement, technical differences, and lack of pack animals were no obstacles either. These differences and constraints made things difficult but did not impede them completely.<sup>23</sup>

We can say that communities located in the highlands of Iran were on the path of accelerated innovation from the last centuries of the 6th millennium BC to the 2nd and 3rd centuries of the 4th millennium BC. These changes were related to the emergence of new technologies for working on materials as well as the development of complex forms of social and economic institutions. The most obvious innovation was the introduction of metal as a new material used in this period, which is also reflected in the term chalcolithic. But most importantly, we can see the reorganization of social structure that is reflected in architectural findings and can be reconstructed by archae-

<sup>23</sup> Dogan & Michailidou, 2008: 27.



ological evidence such as growing population, increasing differentiation of agricultural products and handicrafts, the introduction of new materials, exploitation of "byproducts" and an emergent network of telecommunications. These processes culminated around 3400 BC, beginning with the collapse of complex early polities and the subsequent appearance of early urban communities in the Proto-Elamite period or early Bronze Age in the late 4th millennium BC.<sup>24</sup>

Southern Iran societies underwent major social, economic, and political transformations in the 5th and 4th millennia BC. Gradual population growth led to the development of settlement hierarchy, enhanced skills in handicraft activities and technologies, and led to the adoption of sealing techniques and basic execution methods. This long stage of transformation culminated with the emergence of the first settlements in Iranian highlands and long-term interactions with neighboring communities.<sup>25</sup> For example, Tal-e Bakun A provides extensive evidence of metallurgy, interregional trade, the production of specialized handicrafts (especially pottery), strategic architecture, segregation of activities, and the use of pottery and seals.<sup>26</sup>

Precious materials are good index fossils of long and medium-distance exchange. The circulation of the materials used to manufacture objects of prestige plays an essential role in the networks of medium and long-distance trade in the societies of the Near East during the Bronze Age. We can see that these objects are made of precious materials which all are foreign to Mesopotamia. Typologies and iconographies testify to intercultural relations between Iran, Pakistan, India, Mesopotamia, and Syria.<sup>27</sup> We can cite the presence of the so-called classic Harappan and etched carnelian beads characteristic from Harappan Civilization (Harappa, Mohenjo-daro, Chanhu-daro) on a few necklaces associated with lapis lazuli beads carved in the typically Mesopotamian melon form which were discovered at sites like Susa (Iran), Ur (Iraq) and Mari (Syria).<sup>28</sup>

Some scholars suggested that long-distance trade was managed in the 3rd millennium BCE directly by intermediaries (high officials, merchants) dispatched by the civilizations of the "Core" (Egypt, Syria, Mesopotamia) into the territories of the "Periphery" (eastern Iran, Afghanistan, eastern Arabia), and that it continued in this fashion throughout the history of the Ancient Orient.<sup>29</sup> Such scholars suggested that the high-value goods (lapis lazuli, chlorite, calcite, metals) coming from eastern Iran and Central Asia were directly exchanged against the products of Mesopotamia and

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<sup>24</sup> Helwing, 2013: 80; see also Alexander & Violet 2012.

<sup>25</sup> Petrie, 2013: 121.

<sup>26</sup> Petrie, 2013: 127.

<sup>27</sup> Potts, 1994; Casanova, 2014.

<sup>28</sup> Caubet, 1994; Aruz, 2003; Aruz, Benze & Evans, 2008;.

<sup>29</sup> Sabloff & Lamberg-Karlovsky, 1975; Rowlands, Mogens & Kristiansen, 1987; Norel, 2009: 87-88; Warburton, 2003a: 118-120.

Syria (grain, meat, dried fish, textiles, wood, leather, etc.<sup>30</sup> Recent research on the Iranian Plateau flatly contradicts this hypothesis of relations between the so-called “Core” and “Periphery”. The Iranian Plateau was at the crossroads of exchanges and was an incredibly active spot. The inhabitants of the Iranian Plateau participated in the first age of middle and long-distance trade. There is no question that during the 3rd and 2nd millennia BCE, Mesopotamia imported gold, lapis lazuli, carnelian, silver, copper, and vessels of chlorite. Lapis lazuli came from Afghanistan, silver from Anatolia and the Aegean, carnelian from the Indus Valley in Pakistan and from Gujarat in India, and chlorite from eastern Iran.<sup>31</sup> We should remember that Mesopotamia is poor in terms of mineral resources, but the Iranian highland is rich in mineral resources. This duality caused trade between these two regions to play an important role in reinforcing and maintaining the first civilizations of the Tigris and Euphrates valleys.<sup>32</sup>

For centuries, the Near East has fostered complex nomadic communities that have had extensive economic and social interactions with sedentary agricultural villages and urban centers. This interaction is attributed to ecological and geographical factors that forced autonomous, interdependent, and interrelated communities to share resources found in their region. This partnership created a platform for social, economic, and political interactions. Bilateral economic dependence and the coexistence of nomads with sedentary farmers at certain times of the year is an important reason for this high level of interaction.<sup>33</sup> Due to their specialized and limited economy, nomads are more interested in exchanging than sedentary people (either exchanging their products or through intermediaries in long-distance exchanges). However, self-sufficient agricultural villages are not a permanent and efficient market for nomads; on the other hand, nomads are not able to exchange among themselves due to different lifestyles as well as the undiversified mode of economic production. For example, a small group of people from Tal-e Bakun A, known as intermediaries overseeing the resources and industrial production, could easily procure raw materials from remote areas and exchange finished goods in other regions through their nomadic relatives. In this way, they benefited not only from the support of nomads but also from the continuous flow of valuable information they needed for their intraregional or extra-regional exchange, namely a business that included goods and materials such as wool, pottery, stoneware, rocks, tools, ornaments, and possibly dairy products.<sup>34</sup>

It can be stated that nomadic/semi-nomadic herders are known as important factors of exchange among ancient trading centers throughout East and West Asia.<sup>35</sup> Since

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<sup>30</sup> Kohl, 1975; 1978; Crawford, 2004.

<sup>31</sup> Warburton, 2003b; Casanova, 2019: 301.

<sup>32</sup> Beale, 1973: 133.

<sup>33</sup> Alizadeh, 2004: 60.

<sup>34</sup> Alizadeh, 2004: 172-173.

<sup>35</sup> Frachetti, *et al.*, 2017: 2-3.

nearly 12,000 years ago, animal husbandry of any type and degree of mobility has become an integral part of human society as well as the economy of Near East societies from the beginning of the domestication of ungulates.<sup>36</sup> Archaeological and anthropological evidence in Iran shows that for more than 4,500 years, seasonal pastoralists have used highland pastures in summer and returned to lower altitudes when the ecological conditions are favorable in the cold months of the year. In historical times, this mountain corridor geographically overlaps with the Highland Silk Road communication and trade zone where many populations facilitated intercontinental trade caravans and local interactions from ancient times up to the early modern period.<sup>37</sup>

### **Qashqai nomads**

Archaeology has not managed to shed light on various aspects of the lifestyle of prehistoric nomadic communities in the Near East. Therefore, the study of modern Near Eastern nomads with the help of ethnographic data is important to understand several socioeconomic and environmental variables involved in the historical development of ancient Near Eastern nomads. Despite the struggles of the central Iranian government during the second half of the twentieth century to forcibly resettle the nomads, southwestern Iran is still the main center of the nomads, especially the Qashqai tribe. Until recently, these tribes were not only active and free in their movement and migration but also significantly influenced the political life of sedentary communities throughout their written history.<sup>38</sup>

In a transaction system that can be called an intermediary exchange, intermediaries or traders linked producers and consumers, traveling from one village to another and offering their goods to the people. In this type of exchange, a relationship was established between the customers' needs and satisfaction with producers' goods. Intermediaries were present in many parts of Iran as itinerant peddlers. These people were called itinerant peddlers (*Pilevar*) among the Qashqai tribe of Fars and were known as *Charchi* (*Charkhchi*) among the residents of Azerbaijani villages.<sup>39</sup> As mentioned, an ethnographic study was conducted among Qashqai nomads on the outskirts of Kazeroun County (Dashtak-e-Davan) to understand the relationship between itinerant peddlers with seminomadic and nomadic Qashqai tribe and to collect information regarding the mechanisms of exchanges between them. For this purpose, a questionnaire containing 18 questions was prepared, and the necessary information for the study was collected by several times visiting the seminomadic Qashqai tribe [Tab. 1].

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<sup>36</sup> Abdi, 2015: 1.

<sup>37</sup> Abdi, 2015: 4-5.

<sup>38</sup> Alizadeh, 2004: 60-61.

<sup>39</sup> Pourfaraj, 2015: 247.

Tab. 1. Ethnographic study questionnaire of interactions between Itinerant peddlers and Qashqai nomads- Qashqai nomads of Dashtak in Kazeroun

Number	Responder's characteristics		Questionnaire details, date, and place of interview		
	First Name:	Last Name:	First Name:	Last Name:	Date of Interview:
	Interview Date:		Location:	Age:	
1	Why intermediaries are called itinerant peddlers or Pilevar by nomads?				
2	In what seasons do itinerant peddlers visit black tents most?				
3	What goods did the itinerant peddlers mostly sell to nomadic people?				
4	Are the goods sold to the nomadic people consumer goods or do they include supplies, tools, or other goods?				
5	What goods or services the itinerant peddlers receive from nomadic people in exchange for the goods sold?				
6	Is the exchange between itinerant peddlers and the nomadic people a relationship based on mutual consent or is it more an exchange for the profit of itinerant peddlers?				
7	Are the nomadic tribes satisfied with the exchange with itinerant peddlers or do they exchange out of necessity?				
8	What is the reason for the presence of itinerant peddlers in the tribe and the dependence of the Qashqai tribe on this group?				
9	Are nomads still dependent on itinerant peddlers for their livelihood as they were in the past?				
10	How and by whom are the needs of nomads provided in addition to itinerant peddlers?				
11	How do distribution systems or cooperatives help nomads?				
12	Are the nomads familiar with economic principles when trading with itinerant peddlers or do they exchange with them only because of mutual trust developed over the years?				
13	What items do itinerant peddlers usually prefer to purchase from nomads? For what reasons?				
14	In which nomadic tribes of the country is the role of itinerant peddlers more significant for exchange and why?				
15	Are those who come to the tribe as itinerant peddlers known to the tribe or not?				
16	What items do itinerant peddlers usually purchase from nomads in forward and why?				
17	In what seasons do itinerant peddlers forward purchase goods from nomads?				
18	Are itinerant peddlers residents of villages or cities? (If living in cities, from which cities do they usually visit seminomads for the exchange of goods?)				
Additional information:					

Concerning the transactions, exchanges, and negotiations among nomads and seminomads, it can be said that these exchanges were in the form of barter of goods with goods from ancient times and in the prehistoric period and that the transactions between nomadic people with the shopkeepers of villages and cities en route have become popular among black tents with the emergence of itinerant peddlers or pilevar called Tawaf. It is noteworthy that the exchange of goods is almost different among Iranian nomads.<sup>40</sup> In general, it can be stated that this type of exchange between intermediaries and nomads is still conventional today among residents of the Zagros Mountains such as Qashqai tribes of Fars, Bakhtiari as well as nomadic tribes of

<sup>40</sup> Bradburd, 1997: 897.

Kurdistan, and is practiced in almost the same way. These itinerants played the role of supermarkets, supplying the nomads with consumer goods and in return receiving a series of merchandise from the nomads.

According to the present study and interviews with Qashqai nomads, itinerant peddlers often visited the nomads and seminomads for exchange in spring and summer. The itinerant peddlers provided consumer goods, tools, and equipment needed by the nomads, including rice, flour, fruits and vegetables, nuts, grape syrup, and tea, as well as tools such as pickaxe, hatchet, axe, bread baking utensils and vessels. The itinerant peddlers also provided decorative items such as plastic bracelets, armbands, and the like, and even toys for nomadic children. In return for goods provided to nomads, the itinerant peddlers received commodities such as oil, kashk, wool, kilims, jajim as well as durable goods, and cash was rarely used in transactions. Moreover, according to the present research, it was found that the exchanges between itinerant peddlers and nomads have been a relationship based on the consent of both parties to the transaction who benefited from this exchange. According to conversations with nomads, they emphasized the fairness of itinerant peddlers in the exchange, although the itinerant peddlers gained good profit from their transactions with the nomads. Because communication and access to cities and markets were more difficult in the past, the itinerant peddlers made more profit from the exchange; however, there was fair trading in the past and the itinerant peddlers made little benefit from the goods they sold. Contrary to some ethnographic reports about the nomads, the lack of fairness on the part of the itinerant peddlers has been mentioned.

The requirements of nomadic people have to be provided in some way or other and on the other hand, these people cannot come to cities for small purchases; therefore, they have to buy the necessary items from itinerant peddlers. Overall, it can be said that because itinerant peddlers and nomads were dependent on each other for the exchange of goods and given that the nomads have not access to cities for the provision of needed items, itinerant peddlers were highly popular in the Qashqai tribe in the past and the nomads were dependent on them. However, it can be generally stated that the interdependence of nomads and itinerant peddlers is a two-way relationship. Given that itinerant peddlers and the urban population need goods produced by nomads and also considering the requirement of nomads for goods offered by itinerant peddlers, a two-way relationship and dependence has been developed between nomads and itinerant peddlers. However, due to extensive communication, further conveniences, and facilitation of the transportation system, nomads are less dependent on itinerant peddlers, although dealing with itinerant peddlers is still common. At times, itinerant peddlers forward purchased goods from the nomads, including oil, kashk, wool, and kilims, and in some cases, they forward purchased goats and sheep from the nomads and received them in April and May [Figs. 2-4]. Some itinerant peddlers offered consumer goods such as rice, sugar, and tea to the nomads at the time of forward purchase, and in return

took oil, kashk, raw or woven wool at the time of kishlak. Moreover, according to ethnographic studies among the tribes, it can be said that in addition to buying and selling goods, Itinerant peddlers trade livestock, do forward purchases, and practice usury. In this way, in unfavorable seasons of the year when the nomads are in urgent need of money to provide fodder for their livestock, the itinerant peddlers gain a lot of money by purchasing their sheep at a reasonable price.<sup>41</sup>

Concerning the assistance the cooperative companies provide for nomads and seminomads, the interviewees emphasized that in the past, cooperatives greatly helped the nomads. These companies delivered oil, sugar, sugar lump, tea, flour, rice, and detergents at subsidized rates to nomads and helped provide consumables for the nomads. In return for receiving goods at sponsored state rates, the nomads delivered meat according to fixed rates of the government and did not distribute it in a free market. However, after the transfer of these companies to the private sector, the goods (except for flour and sometimes barley) are distributed to nomads at free market prices. Besides, regarding the degree of recognition and familiarity of tribes with itinerant peddlers, interviewees often acknowledged that the itinerant peddlers were usually acquainted with nomads. For this reason, when the itinerant peddlers are present in the tribe for trade, they are invited to stay the night with families, and in return, the itinerant peddlers are hosts to nomadic people when the latter go to the city or the village. Itinerant peddlers who were often in contact with nomads to provide their goods usually came toward seminomads from large surrounding cities or villages and made exchanges. At Yaylak, they visited nomads from cities such as Semirom, Shahreza, Yazd, Abadeh, and Isfahan, and at Kishlak from Kazeroun, Shiraz, Firoozabad, Borazjan, and Nouravad. Moreover, regarding the question of goods the itinerant peddlers were more interested in buying, they often acknowledged that the itinerant peddlers would like to purchase oil and kashk because of the need of the urban population for these commodities given that the consumption of vegetable oil was not popular among people in the past.

## Conclusions

The study of today's nomadic people of the Near East with the help of ethnographic data is important to understand multiple socioeconomic and environmental variables involved in the historical development of ancient Near East nomads. For centuries, the Near East has cultivated complex nomadic societies with extensive economic and social interaction with sedentary agricultural villages and urban centers. Before commenting on the commercial exchange of prehistoric communities, the structure of these communities should be reviewed and studied, namely the stage and process of

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<sup>41</sup> Kiani, 1992: 80-81.

cultural-social complexities as well as their level of exchanges and transactions based on these capacities. For example, the structure of a Neolithic society with an economy based on hunting and food gathering is different from that of a Bronze or Iron Age society having various cultural- social, and economic-political institutions. According to Morton Fried,<sup>42</sup> the Neolithic communities had no strata and their economy was necessarily administered in the form of barter and exchange of goods with goods. The exchange system of commodities in these societies involves negotiation between friends or relatives with mutual exchange within the groups forming primary societies. Therefore, the exchange of materials in prehistoric times cannot be simply called commerce because part of these materials have been displaced as a result of exchanges that have not had an economic aspect, including ritual exchanges, gifts, clemency, or other viewpoints.

In the discussion of exchange mechanisms, it is believed that professional trading may seem impossible for many prehistoric communities, and bilateral exchanges in which the required goods are bartered indicate bilateral exchange with the consent of both parties and thereby the itinerant peddlers emerge whose income and livelihood is a function of their intermediary role in the exchange of goods. This group of intermediaries swapped the products and goods produced by sedentary people, and since the nomads were not able to commute continuously to procure their requirements, the intermediaries enjoyed a special place in meeting the needs of nomads. It should be noted that various factors affect the role of itinerant peddlers and intermediaries in the economic-social activities of nomadic communities, including adverse weather conditions, long distances between nomadic regions to villages, lack of proper communication paths, absence of goods distribution system, and so forth. Due to their specialized and unilateral economy, the nomads are more interested in exchange through intermediaries. For instance, this group traded salt and fish of coastal areas with cereals, fruits, and vegetables of other areas; garden products of a region with crops of other regions; fabrics, shoes, and urban goods with wool, leather, and handicrafts produced by rural and nomadic tribes. In addition, the itinerant peddlers gain income through droving (buying and selling livestock) and forward purchase<sup>43</sup>. The Near East has developed complex communities of nomads, establishing extensive economic and social interaction through itinerant peddlers with sedentary agricultural villages and urban centers. Such exchanges and transactions between nomads and itinerant peddlers were realized from prehistoric times up to now through barter of goods with goods. Studies and the initial reports from southwest Iran show that

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<sup>42</sup> Fried, 1967: 80.

<sup>43</sup> Forward purchase of products by offering cash, which includes livestock and agricultural products at a certain price. In this type of transaction, which is also called *Salmkari*, the itinerant peddlers buy the products that the seminomads will produce within a few months in advance, and give them a prepayment for it, receiving pledges that the goods will be delivered at prices lower than market price.

itinerant peddlers played a major role in transactions, exchanges, and trade between nomadic and sedentary people. In return for supplying the items needed by nomads such as textiles, metal tools, rice, nuts, and the like, the itinerant peddlers receive other goods including wool, leather, meat, oil, and jajim from nomads, and thus cash is rarely used in such transactions. For example, early reports from southwestern Iran about the trade of hides, wool, and meat by nomads and itinerants indicate the effective role of the latter in trade. Based on the research conducted among the nomads of Dashtak-e-Davan in Kazeroun city, there are four groups of itinerant peddlers: 1) Those providing Vegetables, fruits and nuts, 2) Itinerant presenting basic consumer goods such as sugar, sugar lump, rice, and tea, 3) Those providing tools and equipment such as utensils, axes, hatchets, shovels, pickaxes and faces (to fleece sheep), 4) Itinerant engaged in buying and selling livestock known as herders.

Finally, regarding the relationship between nomads and itinerant peddlers, according to our ethnographic study and popular reports, it should be noted that contrary to allegations that itinerant peddlers are not fair towards nomads, the seminomads stressed the impartiality of itinerant peddlers in trade and acknowledged that the exchanges between the two groups were based on mutual consent and that both parties to the transaction benefited from the exchange. Likewise, in selling and buying goods, Itinerant peddlers were fair in their dealings, which can account for their sustainable relationship over a long period.

### **Acknowledgments**

In the end, we should express our gratitude to the nomadic people of Dashtak-e-Davan in Kazerun, as well as Piralo, Abbasi, Ajdari, Bahadori, Amiri, and Amini families who patiently and honestly cooperated with us in conducting the present study.

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**To cite this article:** Rezaei, M.H., Kalantari, F., Maksymiuk, K. (2024). The Role of Itinerant Peddlers in Exchanges between Sedentary and Nomadic People in the Ancient Near East on Ethnographic Studies among Qashqai Tribe of Fars, Iran. *Historia i Świat*, 13, 191–209. <https://doi.org/10.34739/his.2024.13.12>



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