INTRODUCTION

This research is an ethnographic study of varsho (German Silver) in the city of Dezful, Khuzestan province. From July 2013 to July 2013, three varsho-saze were interviewed to gather historical data, to compare how varsho had been made and used in the city Dezful, Khuzestan and values surrounding varsho in Dezful context, and depict any possible transitions of varsho from a cultural material into cultural heritage.

OBJECTIVES

- To understand the history and production of varsho in Dezful.
- To document the varsho-making processes and tools.
- To analyze the socio-cultural significance of varsho in Dezful.

METHODS

An ethnographic observation method was used to provide systematic description of varsho's production processes. The cases of varsho were selected according to the typology of varsho-manufacturing processes and the current status of this occupation, the typology of varsho-making places, and the socio-cultural setting of the research. The interviews were conducted with three varsho-saze in Dezful, Khuzestan. The participant-observation method was used to document varsho-making processes and tools. The current status of the occupation was identified through participant-observation and document analysis.

QUESTIONED ASKED DURING INTERVIEWS

How long had the varsho-saz been working in their trade? Were they still making varsho? How did they learn the technique? What were the materials used? Why did they specialize in making varsho? What were the motivations for making varsho? How did they market their varsho? What were the innovations in the production of varsho? What were the challenges faced in the production of varsho? How did varsho-sazi respond to these challenges? What were the economic considerations in the production of varsho? What were the social and cultural implications of varsho-sazi?

ECONOMIC FINDINGS

At the entrance to the bazaar, I asked a local if he could direct me to the varsho-sazi corner. He replied, “just follow the path past Chadaghshahr Square (Surmehr Square), and then follow the path past the old palace.” While walking along the street, I noticed the boards in front of the houses of local varsho-saze. Above each board, there was a written name and address of the varsho-sazi. I knocked on the door of the varsho-sazi and greeted him. I explained that I was interested in learning about his craft and his perspective on the production of varsho.

First Varsho-Saz

Just behind the Blacksmith bazaar, next to bazar kouhand, square, was Abdol Rahman Gol, a varsho-sazi. In his shop, there was a narrow workshop with a few tools and raw materials. He explained that he had been making varsho for over 30 years and that he was the only one left in the area who was still making it.

Second Varsho-Saz

We had a short discussion with Gol while we were preparing to leave. We asked him to explain more about the production process of varsho. He explained that the process involved melting down the scrap metal and casting it into shapes. The shapes were then polished and finished by hand. He showed us a few pieces of varsho that he had recently made.

Third Varsho-Saz

The third varsho-sazi was busy boiling a steel kettle (Figure 67). He explained that he had been making varsho for over 40 years and that he was the only one left in the area who was still making it. He showed us a few pieces of varsho that he had recently made.

MANUFACTURING / DIFFERENT TYPES OF ANVILS AND HAMMERS

First Varsho-Saz

To begin the process, Gol explained, “we need to melt down the metal. We do this by heating it up to a red hot temperature.” He poured the metal into a crucible and heated it up on a gas stove. He then explained, “once the metal is melted, we need to pour it into a mold.” He showed us a mold that he had made and explained how it worked.

Second Varsho-Saz

Gol explained that the mold was made of a special alloy that had been used for centuries. He showed us the mold and explained how it worked.

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Cultural Heritage

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Historical Context

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Conclusion

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