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ARCHAEOLOGY I. PRE-MEDIAN

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i. Pre-Median: History and Method of Research

1. *The sequence of events*. The history of archeological research in Iran may be divided into two periods, before and after the Second World War. The early period can in turn be subdivided into a first phase of mainly French activity (ca. 1884-1931), and a second phase in which archaeology in Iran became a multinational affair (1931-40). The modern period can be subdivided into what might best be called the "quiet phase" (1940-57) and the "explosive phase" (1958-78).

Of course an interest in the antiquities of Iran predates 1884 and the beginnings of systematic archeological exploration. As early as the 17th century, a number of European travelers reported with surprise on the remarkable ancient monuments to be seen throughout the countryside. The first scientific and scholarly attempt to deal with one such monument, however, was Rawlinson's recording of the Bīsotūn (Behistun) inscription (1836-41). While hardly a prehistoric project, that effort, which resulted in the decipherment of Old Persian, Elamite, and Akkadian cuneiform, led to a quickening of interest in ancient western Asia and in the history and prehistory of Iran. The next effort of note is the work of Flandin and Coste, who, between 1843 and 1854, recorded numerous standing monuments and sites in both words and drawings. At the same time, the first actual excavations were undertaken by Loftus, who recovered Achaemenid remains

on the *Apadāna* mound at Susa (1851-53).

A. The *Early Period*. The *First Phase*, from the start of systematic excavations at Susa in 1884 until roughly 1931, has been identified as the "French monopoly," and in fact, efforts were made to keep other foreign missions out of the country. Early French excavations concentrated on Susa, under the direction of M. Dieulafoy from 1884 to 1886, J. J. de Morgan from 1897 to 1912, and Comte R. de Mecquenem from 1912 to 1939, with an interruption in fieldwork during the First World War. The main prehistoric results from Susa came from the explorations of the Acropole mound. The basic cultural sequence established there for Khuzistan (Ḵūzestān) provided the chronological and cultural yardstick against which archeologists measured the prehistoric cultures discovered on the plateau for some time.

This strictly prehistoric sequence (in terms of Iran) was topped by deep deposits that covered the history of Elam from about 2300 B.C. to well into the first millennium. Numerous finds from these strata at Susa either were Mesopotamian objects, usually out of context at Susa, which could at least be securely dated in terms of Mesopotamian history (e.g., the Law Code of Hammurapi, the Victory Stele of Narim Sin), or were locally made objects that betrayed Mesopotamian influences and thus were good chronological markers within the sequence. Such clear, strong, and comparatively well-dated links to the cultures of Mesopotamia were rare in most of the archeological remains from the plateau, and the Susa sequence assumed a particular importance in establishing the prehistoric chronology of Iran.

Outside of Susa the French undertook small excavations at Tepe Duvaisyah, Djaffarabad (Jaʿfarābād), and Mūsyān (and surrounding mounds) in Khuzistan all of which yielded painted pottery that could be related to the Susa sequence. Under de Morgan the French Mission expanded its efforts into regions beyond Khuzistan, with striking results. From 1899 to 1902 and again in 1909 he undertook surveys and soundings at various sites in Gurgan (Jorǰān) and, most notably, in the Tawalesh (Ṭawāleš) region of eastern Azarbaijan, where a sequence of Bronze Age cemeteries was discovered. This preliminary work on the plateau indicated that there was much profitable work to be done in the highlands.

The *Second Phase* of the Early Period in Iranian archaeology begins in 1931 with the end of the "French monopoly." Two non-French expeditions had actually predated this phase, for A. Stein conducted a survey in Seistan (Sīstān)

in 1915-16, and E. Herzfeld made a remarkable trip of discovery through western Iran in 1925-26. Extensive excavations sponsored by numerous institutions, mainly in the United States, however, began only in the early 1930s. Three expeditions focused attention on Gurgan and the northeast corner of the plateau. F. Wulsin's excavations at Tureng Tepe for the University Museum in Philadelphia, E. F. Schmidt's work at Tepe Hissar for the same institution, and the Swedish expedition under T. S. Arne to Shah Tepe in Gurgan all revealed an early 5th- and 3rd-millennium B.C. painted pottery culture underlying 3rd- and early 2nd-millennium plain gray wares. G. Langsdorf excavated at Bākūn near Persepolis in 1932 for the Oriental Institute of Chicago and discovered yet another corpus of painted pottery that had cultural connections with prehistoric Susa. Schmidt's work at Cheshmeh (Češma) ʿAlī (Ray) in 1934-36 demonstrated that the painted pottery of early Hissar and Gurgan extended west at least as far as the Tehran area. Stein surveyed (and sounded selected sites) in Baluchistan and Fārs in 1932-34, while Schmidt carried out the first aerial survey in the Zagros mountains in 1935-36, and did some excavation in Luristan (Lorestān) in 1934-35 and 1937-38. The latter effort revealed materials of both Bronze and Iron Age date and was inspired by the chance discovery and clandestine excavation of the famous (or infamous) Luristan Bronzes, which first began to appear in the European art market shortly before 1930.

Meanwhile the French expanded their active role. Excavations continued at Susa, and new ventures were made onto the Plateau. The search for the source of the Luristan Bronzes led G. Contenau and R. Ghirshman to excavate at Tepe Giyan near Nehāvand in 1931-32; the sequence of prehistoric painted pottery phases they discovered remained, until recently, the type sequence of cultures for central western Iran from the 4th (possibly even 5th) to the 1st millennium B.C. Work by Ghirshman at Siyalk in 1933-37 revealed yet another 5th- through early 3rd-millennium pottery sequence, in part related to the materials from Tepe Hissar, and two Iron Age cemeteries. In Khuzistan Le Breton worked at the important prehistoric sites of Bendebal and Djowi and reopened the excavations at Djaffarabad. His subsequent detailed and masterful analysis of these materials and those excavated earlier in Khuzistan (published in *Iraq* 19, 1957), provided until recently the definitive exposition of the Khuzistan sequence.

B. The *Modern Period*. The *Quiet Phase*: Following the hiatus during the Second World War archeological activity in Iran resumed gradually over the period of

a decade after 1945. The French Mission returned to Susa under the direction of R. Ghirshman in 1946, though from 1951 to 1962 Ghirshman's main concern was the excavation of the monumental Elamite site of Tchoga (Čoḡā) Zanbīl. On the plateau, meanwhile, M. Rād and ʿA. Ḥākemī led an expedition on behalf of the Archeological Service of Iran to Hasanlu (Ḥasanlū), south of Lake Urmia, where Stein's brief excavation in 1936 had revealed Bronze Age painted pottery and Iron Age graves.

B. Brown of Manchester University, England, dug at Geoy Tepe near Urmia for a fortnight in 1948 and established a preliminary ceramic sequence for western Azarbaijan from the late 4th to the 1st millennium. The first investigation of the important remains from Paleolithic Iran came with C. Coon's explorations on behalf of the University Museum, Philadelphia, in 1949-51. Soundings at more than one cave yielded Mousterian or middle Paleolithic materials, and extensive excavations at Belt and Hotu caves in the cliffs of the Caspian foreshore in Māzandarān produced well-stratified evidence for terminal Paleolithic/early Holocene occupations. The site of Khurvin (Ḵorvīn), west of Tehran, already much damaged by pot hunters and antiquity dealers, was tested in 1950 by Rād and Ḥākemī and shown to consist primarily of graves now dated to the first two phases of the Iron Age (1450-800 B.C.). L. Vanden Berghe's careful work at the same cemetery in 1954 confirmed these results, and his extensive surveys in Fārs (1951-53) and Laristan (Lārestān) (1957) began to bring some order and method into the archaeology of those important provinces. Small soundings at several sites in Fārs, most notably Toll-i Shogha (Tall-e Šaḡā) and Toll-i Taimuran (Tall-e Taymūrān), made possible the construction of a preliminary ceramic sequence for Fārs which could be linked with Siyalk, Giyan, and Susa. A Japanese expedition under the direction of N. Egami and Masuda conducted further excavations at Bakun in 1956. In that same year, R. Dyson initiated a major excavation under the sponsorship of the University Museum, Philadelphia, with a preliminary sounding at Hasanlu in Azarbaijan. The *Explosive Phase*: The increase in activity in Iranian archaeology which began toward the end of the 1950s is so remarkable that it can only be described as an intellectual and scholarly explosion. More fieldwork was done by more scholars between 1958 and 1978 than had been undertaken in all the years between 1884 and 1958. Indeed, the record is so full of activity that, even if we confine discussion only to substantial excavations and surveys and to those projects which produced truly significant results, a narrative presentation is prohibited in the space available for this article. (See L. Vanden Berghe, *Archéologie de l'Iran ancien*,

Leiden, 1959, and *Bibliographie analytique de l'archéologie de l'Iran ancien*, Leiden, 1979.) Therefore, events are summarized in two tables. Table 4 presents the record of sites excavated by region and excavator, and Table 5 lists important surface surveys by decade. These tables reveal some interesting trends over the past twenty plus years.

(a) *Greater international involvement*. Before the war the Americans were the only real rivals of the French; after 1958 we find expeditions from Great Britain, Japan, Italy, West Germany, Denmark, Belgium, Canada, and Austria as well as from France and the United States. The American presence remained strong, with some fifteen excavation projects and numerous surveys; and the French continued as important contributors to the discipline, with a particularly vital and diversified effort in Khuzistan after Perrot became Director of the French Mission in 1968. In part these changed proportions of nations represented is a reflection of the founding early in the period of German, British, Italian, and American institutes in Tehran.

(b) *Increased Iranian participation in fieldwork and research*. While there had been essentially no Iranian excavations before the war, and, at least in terms of prehistory, only a limited amount of Iranian research in the decade after 1945, Table 4 lists no fewer than eight important Iranian-sponsored and staffed expeditions and Table 5 reveals a significant Iranian contribution to survey work. Were we here considering the archaeology of periods later than the Median, the Iranian contribution would be still greater proportionately. This increased Iranian participation is a reflection of three events: first, the maturation of the Iranian Archeological Service, founded under the tutelage of the French before the war but staffed entirely by Iranians by 1960; second, the development of a strong program in archaeology at the University of Tehran under the direction of ʿE. Negahbān; and third, the foundation of the Iranian Center for Archeological Research within the Archeological Service in the early seventies directed by F. Bāḡerzāda.

(c) *Rapid change in the 1960s*. Table 4 shows no fewer than 45 excavations beginning in the 1960s. The fewer number of excavations beginning in the 1970s is balanced by the marked increase in surveys during that decade, in part a reflection of changing intellectual priorities within the discipline and of increasing costs of excavation (see below).

(d) *Continued focus on Khuzistan*. Twelve excavations (19 per cent of the total) and a massive amount of survey in that province (which was the site of most

excavations in the early period as well) mean that we now have more data from the flood plains of the Karkha (Karḵa) and Kārūn rivers than from any other region of Iran. Considerable interest is also shown in Azarbaijan (eleven sites excavated; seventeen percent) and, particularly, in the central-western Zagros (eighteen sites; twenty-eight percent). Fourteen of the surveys listed in Table 5 focus on these two areas of the Zagros. If the work in Fārs is added to that in Khuzistan, the central-western Zagros, and Azarbaijan, forty-eight sites or seventy-five percent of all excavations are concentrated on the west of the plateau; eastern Iran remains a comparatively neglected part of the country.

(e) *Changing chronological focus*. While there is an overall balance of interest in all periods of history, a comparison with sites excavated before 1958 reveals three shifts. First, there is a noticeable increase in research on the Paleolithic period: four important excavations and six surveys have either an exclusive or a strong Paleolithic focus. Second, there is a noticeable concern with the Neolithic period, during which Iran played an important role in the earliest development of agricultural subsistence systems in the Near East. Twelve excavations have produced significant evidence for the study of the Food Producing Revolution. Third, the Iron Age (ca. 1450-550 B.C.) has received considerable attention, with eighteen excavated sites producing important new data. All three of these critical prehistoric time ranges had been practically ignored before the Second World War. These changing emphases can be attributed to at least two causes: the sheer increase in the number of scholars active in the field, with a comparable increase in the number of sites that could be excavated; and altered interests within archaeology as a scholarly pursuit (see below).

2. *Method, Theory, and Content*. As in Mesopotamia, the first archeologists in Iran were motivated by the search for antiquities, and the early explanatory theories and methods of excavation suited these simple, treasure-hunting goals. Unfortunately, whereas archeologists working in Mesopotamia began to progress beyond such motivations and concepts in the 1930s, archaeology in Iran remained relatively archaic in its methods and theory, if not in its goals, until after the Second World War.

To be sure, archeologists working in Iran in the thirties were confronted by massive problems. The country itself is as large as the United States east of the Mississippi river. Only a handful of archeologists were active in the field, and few sites were, or could be, dug. Nonetheless, two early archeologists in Iran, J.

J. de Morgan and R. Pumpelly, had some rather advanced, even modern, ideas about archeological method and theory. De Morgan was perhaps the first Near Eastern archeologist to argue that an archeological expedition should be interested in more than just human and artifactual remains. Archeologists, he suggested, should investigate not only the human past, but also its natural setting; a proper archeological research strategy, therefore, should be concerned with all components of the environment—geology, climate, geography, plants, and animals—as well as with architecture and objects. In this modern attitude de Morgan was matched by Pumpelly, who, when he decided in 1903 to investigate the site of Anau in what is now Soviet Turkmenistan (Iranian in the wider sense of the term), stated that his goals were not just to excavate a site, but to study the ecology, human and natural, of an entire oasis.

Unfortunately, both de Morgan (in this regard) and Pumpelly were so far ahead of their times that their goals and epistemology did not find favor among their colleagues. It was not until after the *Quiet Phase* of the late 1950s that these same aims were reintroduced and accepted by most prehistorians working in Iran.

One of the main difficulties for early archeologists in Iran was coming to grips with the phenomenon of prehistory as opposed to the well-documented high civilizations of Assyria, Babylon, Sumer, Elam, and Achaemenid Iran. The methods of analysis and the very philosophical frameworks that had been developed for the study of ancient literate civilizations were not suitable to the study and analysis of prehistoric cultures. There were no archeologists specifically trained in prehistoric research working in Iran until after 1945. Scholars who had spent their student and early digging days studying ancient languages and history, and who had as their prime concern the recovery of artifacts that would provide data for art history and ancient history, were not familiar with the analytical techniques useful for the study of prehistoric time ranges. Such techniques were being developed in the early decades of this century in Europe and North America, but those traditions had little influence in Iran.

One specific problem was that early Iranian archeologists were unaware of the time depth of prehistory in Iraq and Iran. As late as 1950 it was argued that the dates for the Ubaid period could not extend back much beyond 4000 B.C. and that the origins of agriculture in the area dated to about 5000 B.C. We now know that the Ubaid period may have begun in southern Mesopotamia and

Khuzistan as early as 6000 B.C. and that the Food Producing Revolution was underway in the Zagros mountains by the 9th millennium B.C., if not earlier. In part, earlier misconceptions resulted from the excavation methods being used. Without any fine-grained stratification, and without good evidence for the spatial relationships of objects within a single horizontal context, it remained impossible for excavators to appreciate the time scales with which they dealt or to use the excavated materials (the only evidence in a prehistoric site) to reconstruct ancient patterns of life.

The search for antiquities—especially portable antiquities that could be removed to museums—encouraged excavating in order to move a maximum amount of earth with the funds and time available. This approach to field work was best exemplified by the excavations at Susa under de Morgan and de Mecquenem (the latter originally trained as a mining engineer). After systematically removing the upper levels of the whole Acropole mound at Susa, de Morgan decided to probe the lower prehistoric levels with his famous "Deep Trench" on the west side of the mound. This trench, measuring 25 by 90 m, eventually reached virgin soil in an area 20 by 80 m at a depth of over 30 m. The sides of the trench were stepped in 5 m units to provide shovel platforms. Hundreds of workmen stood on each step, shoveling the earth into mining cars set on rails, so that it could be carted away. The five-meter deep step also provided the basic vertical unit to which objects recovered were assigned; in de Morgan's words, "A general excavation was therefore called for without taking into account the natural levels, which are imperceptible and which it would be childish to try to distinguish."

Three main difficulties arise from such massive earthmoving methods of digging (it can hardly be called excavation). First, any details of the vertical relationships among objects are lost, and the chronological ordering of materials becomes dependent on typological constructs supported only in the grossest way by stratigraphy. Second, much architecture is lost, and with it, the horizontal relationships among objects. The separation of sun-dried mud-brick walls and pavements from the decayed brick matrix in which they rest is a complicated task requiring much patience, time, and money. De Morgan could hardly afford the effort, since he wanted to limit expenditures at Susa to 2.25 gold francs for each cubic meter of earth removed. Third, the emphasis on objects of museum quality dictates for the most part that only intact or virtually intact pieces are recovered and recorded. Thousands of sherds and fragments of other artifacts tend to go unrecorded and usually even

unrecovered, for they move rapidly to the dump on the shovels of the workmen.

It has been argued that much improvement on all fronts was effected during the thirties. It is true that some progress was made, but there is little evidence that the discipline managed to reach even contemporary Near Eastern standards of excavation and analysis. In Mesopotamia, Syria, and Palestine several excavators had begun to struggle with the complications of stratification in large Near Eastern sites as early as the 1920s, and, for the time, good excavation techniques were fairly common in the thirties. In Iran, at Hissar, Shah Tepe, Tureng Tepe, and Giyan, however, excavation failed to meet even the standards of architectural recovery and stratification then commonplace at such sites as Tepe Gawra and in the Diyala region in Mesopotamia. Giyan yielded almost no coherent building remains. The work at Hissar was only marginally better, although the final chronological organization of the ceramics recovered was based almost entirely on typology. The excavations at Siyalk and Bākūn were something of an exception to this pattern, but nevertheless failed to match the quality of work being done elsewhere in the Near East. Nowhere east of Suez did the standards of fieldwork reflect what was achieved in the 1930s in Great Britain and on parts of the European continent.

Conceptual frameworks likewise showed minimal progress. D. McCown's *Comparative Stratigraphy of Early Iran*, published in 1942, represents an effort to synthesize overall patterns in Iranian archaeology based on the new materials excavated in the 1930s. Two epistemological principles seem to be central. First, ceramics are themselves treated as "cultures," with the materials divided into the Red and Buff Ware Cultures. The entire discussion is couched in these terms, with almost no consideration given to the underlying social, economic, or political dynamics. As in the prehistoric sections of Ghirshman's *Iran*, one is left with the strong impression that the artifacts themselves are viewed as the dynamic element. What is clearly lacking is a conceptual mechanism whereby the archeologist can turn the material remains of the past into real people and real cultural history. Second, there is still a marked tendency for Iranian archeologists to view events on the plateau and in Khuzistan almost exclusively in terms of development in Mesopotamia. Although a legitimate exercise, the resort to Mesopotamian sequences in order to provide comparative dates for Iranian materials too often led to assumptions about Mesopotamian cultural and historical influences in Iran

that are not warranted by the evidence. As a result, few scholars saw Iranian prehistory as a subject in its own right, and little attention was given to the construction of internal, strictly local cultural history.

For the *Modern Period* it is probably premature to attempt any detailed analysis of developments in archeological theory, method, or content within Iranian prehistory. Much has been excavated; almost nothing has been published. So at best one can observe some general trends and directions within the field. These trends, however, are instructive, for they mark radical departures from the past and no doubt will much influence developments of the near future (particularly since fieldwork has been temporarily interrupted by current political and social events in modern Iran).

In many ways V. G. Childe's book, *The Most Ancient East*, first published in 1928 and rewritten as *New Light on the Most Ancient East* in 1934, contains in the chapter titled "From the Tigris to the Indus" the first systematic effort by a prehistorian to place Iranian prehistory into a larger context and to interpret it as a whole. Childe himself never worked in the East, but as a European prehistorian he was convinced that he could not make sense of his own materials until he understood the influence of the East. Childe's efforts to construct explanatory models for the Neolithic Revolution and the origins of agriculture in the Near East, including Iran, both informed and inspired Robert Braidwood, an archeologist working in the Near East (Syria) in the 1930s. After the Second World War Braidwood returned to the field convinced that a systematic program of excavation backed by collaborative research among archeologists and natural scientists would shed much light on the critical economic and social developments of the late Paleolithic and Neolithic. He worked first in Iraqi Kurdistan, an area that was part of the larger Iranian scene in prehistoric times, and then later (1959-60) in the Kirmanshah (Kermānšāh) region (at the sites of Warwasi, Āsīāb, Sarāb, and Sīāhbīd).

D. Garrod's work in Iraqi Kurdistan before the Second World War suggested that Iran was an important region in Paleolithic times, and Coon's preliminary explorations in the *Quiet Phase* paved the way for further work in Iran proper. Following Braidwood's expedition, which was interested in the Paleolithic as the background to the Neolithic Revolution, scholars such as McBurney, Hole, Speth, and Smith came to Iran specifically to work on Paleolithic problems. Their organized effort was enriched by a number of chance discoveries of Paleolithic materials. More important was the very considerable increase of interest in, and work on, the Neolithic period following Braidwood's

pioneering efforts. It was clear by then that peoples in western Iran and the Zagros highlands had played a critical role in the development of early food production, and, since that turning point in human history was a popular topic worldwide among prehistorians of the late fifties and sixties, much attention was directed to Iran. Excavations at Guran (Gūrān), Ganj Dareh (Ganǰ-dara), ʿAli Kosh (Koš), Abdul Hossein (ʿAbd-al-Ḥosayn), Sarāb, and Hajji (Ḥājī) Fīrūz were all conducted with the specific goal of finding new evidence relevant to the study of the Neolithic.

With this new work came new conceptual frameworks and models of interpretation that for the first time provided sensible methods of sorting out and dealing with Iranian prehistory. Excavated data was now treated more in terms of what it revealed about human patterns of adaptation to natural and social circumstances in Iran, and less as material useful for constructing comparative stratigraphies or for displaying the radiating influences of developments in the Tigris and Euphrates valleys. Archeologists in Iran began to consider dynamic social explanations for their data; some real people, still only dimly perceived, began to come into focus behind the flints and potsherds. Real people had always been behind the archeological remains from historic periods—Elamites, Babylonians, Iranians—but now they were visible in prehistory as well.

Similarly, new field methods and dynamic explanatory mechanisms animated intensive efforts to study the rise of urban civilization and the state in Khuzistan during the 4th and early 3rd millennia B.C. The anthropologist R. Adams did a preliminary survey of Khuzistan in 1960-61 that dealt mainly with problems of early urbanism. His survey work was extended by F. Hole, H. Wright, R. Wenke, R. Shacht, G. Johnson, and P. de Miroshedji. Excavations at Choga Mish (Čoḡā Mīš), Farukhabad (Farroḵābād), and Susa also addressed these issues. W. Sumner's work at Malyan in Fārs and his survey of that region was an effort to study systematically the development of urbanism in what is clearly a transplanted or secondary mode. The increased emphasis on survey (Table 5) was itself an expression of a new conceptual framework—in this case one concerned with the spatial relationships among sites as expressed in settlement patterns. In this sense work in Khuzistan paralleled certain developments in the highlands of the plateau: archeologists such as R. Dyson, W. Kleiss, L. Levine, C. Goff, T. C. Young, and L. Vanden Berghe began to turn away from the old research models that focused on the excavation of a single site and to address their problems in terms of whole regions. A secondary

development of this approach was the realization that it was premature to attempt the construction of prehistoric cultural sequences for the whole of Iran (or even for the whole of western Iran). Instead, by the seventies research had begun to concentrate on the development of strictly local sequences, sometimes confined to a single valley within the Zagros mountains (e.g. the Kangāvar valley sequence). In time this approach revealed that even the lowlands of the southwest could not be treated as a unit: clear sequential distinctions developed between Susians and Deh Luran (Deh Lorān). Not all of these methodological innovations—research directed at problem-solving, the search for local sequences, regional interpretations of sites—were the direct result of increased interest in the rise of the state and the growth of urbanism, but those interests were certainly a significant spur.

Most recently there has been a growing realization among Iranian prehistorians, that, while the Neolithic and Early Urban periods are exciting, fashionable, and worthy of study, the long Chalcolithic period that separates them is possibly of equal importance. How did people move from the origins of agriculture to the beginnings of city life? What pressures and historical trends within the Chalcolithic (6th-5th millennia B.C.) led to the rise of literate civilization? These are critical questions, but apparently it has been difficult for prehistorians to construct useful explanatory models for the Chalcolithic. As Table 4 shows, much attention has been directed to Chalcolithic sites, and the publication of these data will undoubtedly advance explanatory frameworks for this critical time range.

Archeologists working on Iron Age materials—the other end of the prehistoric spectrum in Iran—have equaled both the quantities of data recovered and, at least in part, the development of field techniques and conceptual frameworks for earlier time ranges. Much of this effort has been inspired by Dyson (another anthropologist) and his work at Ḥasanlū. Approaches to the Iron Age have always followed lines more familiar to historians than to prehistorians, for there is a considerable body of relevant textual material primarily from Assyria and Babylonia. Traditionally, scholars have asked when and from where did the Iranians enter onto the Iranian plateau, or, what is the ethnological and political background of the Median/Achaemenid empire? While the approach to such questions remains, as it should, essentially historical, scholars working on the Iron Age have profited much from developments in method and theory among archeologists dealing with more strictly prehistoric situations. One result of such epistemological influence is

that economic and social patterns within the Iron Age are now considered as worthy of study as ethno-political issues.

In all this activity one period has remained relatively neglected: the Middle and Later Bronze Age (2500-1400 B.C.). Outside of Khuzistan, only two significant sites for this time range have been excavated—Tureng and Godin Tepes. In both cases the main motivation for excavation was the establishment of a regional cultural sequence in depth, without which no further analysis could be attempted. It appears that this important period has been, and continues to be neglected because it yields few beautiful objects and is too dimly lit by textual evidence to inspire those scholars with an historical orientation, while it presents the prehistorian with none of the exciting problems contained in the concept of the Neolithic or Urban Revolutions. As a result no dynamic explanatory models, or even any very clear idea of what explanations are needed, have been developed to animate research on the Bronze Age, and those archeologists dealing with this time range remain perhaps the most traditional of all scholars working in Iranian archaeology.

Perhaps the most pervasive trend in Iranian archaeology over the last two decades has been the gradual realization that we should attempt to understand Iranian prehistory for its own sake. As a result, Mesopotamian relations and cultural connections are increasingly seen as a secondary issue. Such connections are of vital importance in understanding prehistoric events on the Iranian plateau and in Khuzistan, but Iranian prehistory is no longer viewed as a study undertaken primarily to illuminate ancient Mesopotamia. At the same time, discoveries about the prehistory of Iran can and should be incorporated on their own merits into our efforts at understanding the prehistory of the Near East as a whole and prehistoric people around the world. Although these two developments might seem contradictory—on the one hand the growth of a kind of archeological nationalism and independence, and on the other, the realization that Iranian prehistory is only part of an international picture—they are the natural and compatible developments which result from the maturation of any academic discipline.

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Given in the text.