



ĠĀR

ĠĀR (cave) (ĠĠĠ) and Stone Age cave dwellers in Iran. Caves and rock shelters were particularly attractive living places for the hunter gatherers of the early Paleolithic period and the geographic situation of the Iranian Plateau with its bordering mountain systems including the Zagros range on the west and the Alborz range on the north has meant that there were many cave sites which would have been suitable for early cave dwelling man. Although this multiplicity of cave habitats would seem to lend itself to the extended study of the early Stone Age hunting and gathering way of life, there has in fact been comparatively little scientific study of early cave man in Persia, possibly because of the stronger attraction to the archeologists of the rich Neolithic remains of prehistoric agricultural settlers found throughout the country.

There are, however, a few excavations which have produced material throwing light on the Paleolithic period in Persia. An early expedition by Jacques De Morgan in the Caspian area collected stone implements in a Pleistocene geographic context, while Henry Field observed Paleolithic implements among surface finds near Shiraz in Fārs province (Field, 1939, pp. 553-55). One of the most notable early excavations was carried out in the 1950s when an expedition under the direction of Carlton Coon worked at Ġār-e šekārčīān (Hunter's Cave) near Bisotūn, Tamtama Cave near Lake Urmia, Ġonīk Cave in southern Khorasan, and most importantly at Kamarband and Hūtū Caves on the Caspian shore (Coon, 1951, 1957).

In general the Zagros highlands have been subject to more Stone Age research and investigation than have the Alborz mountains and therefore a more



detailed picture of early cave dwelling life has been developed for the Zagros region where traces of cave dwellers from the Lower Paleolithic to the Middle Paleolithic, Upper Paleolithic, and Epipaleolithic periods have been found. Although other parts of Persia have been less investigated than the Zagros highlands, traces of cave dwellers have also been found at sites scattered throughout the Iranian Plateau and in the lowlands.

Lower Paleolithic (pebble tools? Acheulian 1,500,000-100,000 B.C.E.). Remains of the Lower Paleolithic period, characterized in its earlier phase by stone tools made on pebbles, cobbles, or heavy flakes, and in its later phase by bi-facial tools such as hand axes and cleavers, have been found in eastern Azarbaijan (Sadek-Kooros), in the Kašāfrūd basin of Khorasan (Ariai and Thibault), and at Lādīz on the Sarḥad plateau in Baluchistan (Hume). Archeological surveys have also found Lower Paleolithic remains at Pol-e Bārīk in Luristan (Mortensen), at Gakia Tepe in Kermānšāh (Braidwood), and at sites in Azarbaijan (Singer and Wymer).

Middle Paleolithic (Mousterian 100,000-40,000 B.C.E.). Much more in the way of remains from the Middle Paleolithic period, characterized by stone tools made on flakes with scrapers, notched pieces, borers and burins, have been found in various parts of Persia, especially in the Zagros highlands. Approximately twenty-two sites have produced material from this period, of which some of the most notable are Tamtama Cave near Lake Urmia (Coon, 1951), Ġār-e Koba near Kermānšāh (Smith), Ġār-e Ķar near the Bīsotūn inscription (Young and Smith), Hunters' Cave also near Bīsotūn (Coon), several sites near Ķorramābād including Konjī, Arjana and Qomrī Caves (Hole and Flannery), and the site of Hūmīān in Luristan (McBurney, 1970; Bewley). Some surface material of this period has also been found at Dašt-e Gol at Īva and on the Īda plain in northeastern Ķūzestān (Wright), at Key Ārām I cave in the Caspian lowland (McBurney, 1964), at Ķonīk Cave near Bīrjand in Khorasan (Coon, 1957), near Lādīz (Ladizian Culture) in Baluchistan (Hume), and on the Tehran and Kermān plains (Smith). Most of these sites are concentrated in the Zagros highlands in the provinces of Azarbaijan, Kurdistan, and Luristan, with only limited remains found in other parts of Persia.

Upper Paleolithic (Baradostian 40,000-15,000 B.C.E.). The Upper Paleolithic period is characterized by burins and scrapers on flakes and notched blades as well as picks, choppers, and grinding stones. Although one would expect there to be more material from the Upper Paleolithic as compared to the Middle Paleolithic period found throughout Persia, remains thus far found from the



Upper Paleolithic period are rather scant and restricted for the most part to the Zagros highlands. Limited material related to the beginning of agriculture and food production has been found at Ġār-e Warwasī near Kermānšāh (Smith), at Ġār-e Ķar near the Bīsotūn inscription (Young and Smith), and at Pā Sangar, Yāfta, and Arjana caves near Ķorramābād (Hole and Flannery).

Epipaleolithic (Zarzian 18,000-10,000 B.C.E.). Rather more remains from the Epipaleolithic period, characterized by microlithic stone tools with some geometric elements such as triangles, crescents, and trapezoids have been found in Persia, centered mainly in the Zagros highlands and the Caspian lowlands. Major sites include Mar-Ruz, Mar-Gurgalan Sarab, Dar Mar, and Ġār-e Gogel in the Holeyliān valley of Luristan (Young and Smith; Smith), Pā Sangar near Ķorramābād (Hole and Flannery), Ġār-e Ķar near Bīsotūn (Young and Smith), Ġār-e Warwasī near Kermānšāh (Smith), Dašt-e Gol at İva and on the İda Plain in northeastern Ķūzestān (Wright), Kūhbanān in Kermān province (Huckriede), and, most notably, the caves of Hütū, Kamarband (Coon 1957) and 'Alī Tappa I (McBurney) on the Caspian foreshore.

Hütū and Kamarband caves (Coon 1952, 1957). Both Hütū and Kamarband caves are located in a massive projecting cliff on the northern slope of the Alborz mountains at the southeastern corner of the Caspian Sea. Hütū Cave is rather large, with a northern wall about 30 m. long and a southern wall about 20 m. long. Several trenches (A,B,C, and D) cut at the site produced pottery sherds, stone implements and samples for C 14 determination. The excavator arranged the twenty-two samples for carbon analysis determination dates obtained from Hütū Cave into eight groups, each corresponding to a different culture which is separated from the others in the face of the trenches by soil changes. From the most recent to the earliest, these eight groups, with corresponding dates, are given in [Table 1](#).

In addition to these remains, traces of earlier periods were observed and only chance prevented Coon from also identifying the Upper Paleolithic period (Baradostian Culture) at Hütū Cave (Coon 1957; Smith 1986).

It is evident that although some information has been developed on the cave dwelling way of life in Stone Age Persia, much more survey, investigation, and excavation in ancient caves and other prehistoric sites is required to produce a detailed and comprehensive picture of development during this period.



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