

THE APPEARANCE OF MAN IN IRAN

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Scattered nomadic bands of Paleolithic people must have reached Iran in search of food and shelter about one million years ago. These bands must have ground the environmental conditions favorable and by ca. 200,000 years ago had spread into Western, northeastern, and southeastern Iran.

Scant pieces of chopped stones is the only evidence to date of the presence of the Paleolithic man in Iran; therefore, the species of these early inhabitants of Iran is unknown, though it is warranted to attribute this stone industry to *Homo erectus*.

Archeological evidence for the middle Paleolithic Period (between ca. 100.000-35000 years ago) is richer and the skeletons found with the chipped industry of this period belong to the Neanderthal Species Except for a few scattered sites in the central plateau and northwestern Iran, the mid altitude of the Zagros mountains in western Iran with suitable environment seems to have Been the most populated region in this period.

Unlike their contemporary Neanderthal communities in the Levant, who lived both in caves and open sites, the Zagros groups lived only in caves; this, of course, can be the accident of discovery. Warwasi, khar, Bistun, and Yafteh are among the most famous caves in Zagros piedmont in western Iran where the Neanderthal flourished. From shanider cave in the northern Zagros, there seems to be evidence of burial customs and rites.

As in Europe and the Levant, the processes that led to the displacement of the Neanderthal by the *homo sapiens* are not well understood. But we do know that by the upper Paleolithic period (ca. 35009-18000 years ago), the Neanderthal disappeared in Iran and was replaced by the homo sapiens. The following Mesolithic. Period (18000-10000 B.C) witnessed The retrieval of the last Ice Age glaciers. The gradual increase in the temperatures and the development of mild climate in the northern hemisphere had attending environmental and demographic consequences that forever changed the course of human history.