

8. Fossil scallop shell
Pa Sangar, Khoramabad, Lurestan
Upper Paleolithic Period



Kurdistan, Sefid-Āb in Kāshān, and Eshkaft-e Gāvi and Boof Caves in Fārs. Artifacts from some of these sites are on display in the Museum.

Epipaleolithic

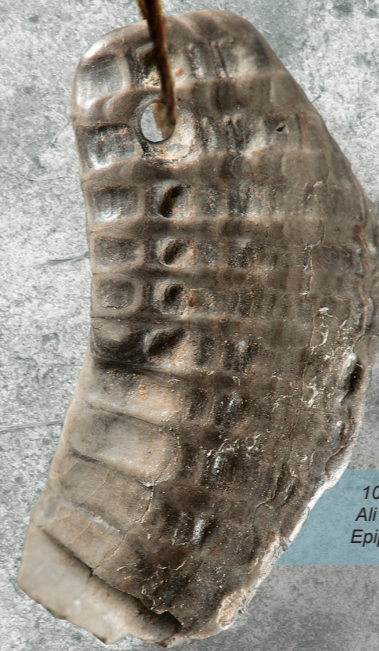
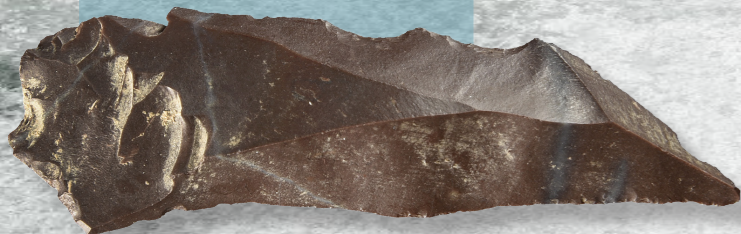
The next period—called the Epipaleolithic (meaning terminal Paleolithic)—is characterized by composite tools, tools for processing plant foods, and the means of storing food stuffs. The Epipaleolithic period begins around 20,000 years ago and goes on until to the end of the Ice Age, about 12,000 years ago. Examples of

tools and ornaments of this period from Ali Tappeh and Komishān caves in Māzandarān, Pā Sangar Rockshelter in Lurestān and a number of other sites are on display in the Museum hall.

9. Natural pigment (ochre)
Ali Tappeh Cave, Mazandaran
Epipaleolithic Period



Denticulated blade
Ghar-e Khar Cave, Bisotun, Kermanshah
Upper Paleolithic Period



10. Shell ornament
Ali Tappeh Cave, Mazandaran
Epipaleolithic Period

Cover: Reconstruction of an onager hunting scene showing a group of Neanderthals gathered around a carcass. This reconstruction is on the basis of archaeological finds from Qaleh Bozi caves, Isfahan. Artist: Erfan Soltani

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Early Humans in Iran

on the Basis of
National Museum of
Iran Collections



In the long span of the Paleolithic period, humans lived in small bands with a sedentary lifestyle, making a living mainly from hunting wild animals and gathering wild plants. This period is characterized by the use of chipped stone tools and later antler and bone tools and the appearance of personal ornaments, art objects and cave art. The Paleolithic period is sub-divided into: Lower Paleolithic (ca. 3,300,000 – 250,000 years ago), Middle Paleolithic (ca. 250,000 – 40,000 years ago), Upper Paleolithic (ca. 40,000 - 20,000 years ago), followed by Epipaleolithic (ca. 20,000 – 12,000 years ago).

The most ancient artifacts in the Museum are stone tools dating to the Lower Paleolithic period. These tools belong to times when early humans lived by means of hunting, scavenging, gathering and foraging, and used stone tools for cutting animal flesh, making wooden tools, and other implements and objects. Remains from this period—mostly stone tools—have been discovered at archaeological sites such as Kashafrud in Khorāsān, Lādiz in Sistān and Baluchistān, Shiwa-too in Kurdistān, Ganj Par in Gilān, all open-air sites, and Darband Cave, also in Gilān.

Lower Paleolithic

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1. Core-chopper
Kashafrud, Abravan, Khorasan
Lower Paleolithic Period

2. Biface (tri-hedral)
Amar Merdeg, Mehran, Ilam,
Lower Paleolithic Period

Middle Paleolithic

In the Middle Paleolithic period bands of humans subsisted through actively hunting and gathering plant foods. During this period Neanderthals and early anatomically modern

4. Middle Paleolithic
cave site of Qaleh Bozi,
Mobarakeh, Isfahan

humans were roaming in western Asia. Representative stone tools of this period made from flint and other rock types, and animal bones, some with cut marks, are on display in the Museum. These remains come from caves or open-air sites in the Zagros Mountains and the Iranian Plateau. Important stone tools of this period include points and side-scrapers used for butchering hunted game and processing animal hides as well as other tasks. Examples of stone tools of this period from caves and rockshelters and open-air sites in the Zagros region (Bisotun, Hawra-

3. Levallois core
West of Harsin, Kermanshah
Middle Paleolithic Period

man, Lurestān, Arsanjān, Qaleh Bozi) and central Iran (Mirak, Niāsar, Parvadeh, Ziviyeh) are on display in the museum. One of the oldest human fossil remains from Iran, discovered in a small cave called Wezmeh near Kermanshah in the west-central Zagros, is on display. This is a human premolar tooth representing a late juvenile individual, who may have been the prey of carnivores such as hyenas and wolves whose remains are abundant in the Wezmeh Cave. A human radius (forearm) fragment from a Neanderthal has been discovered in Bisotun cave is located in the same region of the west-central Zagros.

Upper Paleolithic

The Upper Paleolithic period, which began around 40,000 years ago and came to a close about 20,000 years ago, coincides with the arrival of anatomically modern humans (also known as Homo sapiens sapiens) in Iran. In this period, making stone tools such as blades and bladelets expanded. Personal ornaments like pendants made from shell, animal teeth, and a reddish-black iron mineral (hematite) appeared in this period, of which some examples from Yafteh cave are on display. Red ochre was also used quite abundantly. Among important sites dating to this period are Yāfteh and Kaldar caves in Lurestān, Warwāsi, Malāverd and Ghār-e Khar Cave in Kermānshāh, Kenacheh in

5. Pointed bladelet (Arjeneh point)
Yafteh Cave, Khoramabad, Lurestan
Upper Paleolithic

6. Hematite pendant
Yafteh Cave, Khoramabad, Lurestan
Upper Paleolithic Period

7. Artist's reconstruction of Upper Paleolithic daily life at Yafteh Cave about 35000 years ago.