AN EARLY VILLAGE SITE

AT ZAWI CHEMI SHANIDAR

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An Early Village Site
At Zawi Chemi Shanidar

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The early village site at Zawi Chemi Shanidar, located in Shanidar Valley in the Zagros Mountains of northern Iraq, dates from the ninth millennium B.C., a time when such open settlements were being established in favored locations in Southwestern Asia. During this early Post-Pleistocene period important cultural changes were taking place in the region, and the Zawi Chemi village site reflects these new subsistence strategies and technological processes. Plant food was processed in sizable amounts on the basis of abundant milling equipment, and a study of the animal bones suggests that sheep were being kept by the end of the Zawi Chemi occupation, although hunting was still important. The rich Zawi Chemi cultural inventory represents both terminal Palaeolithic and early Neolithic traditions. It was in fact a period of much experimentation, and what most characterizes Zawi Chemi material culture is the variety of the tools and the technological and even artistic innovations present in it.

This report is a study of the site of Zawi Chemi Shanidar with an emphasis on the early Zawi Chemi village, although a later occupation dating after the sixth century A.D. is also discussed. The culture of Zawi Chemi village is fully described and interpreted; its relationships to both local and regional environmental settings discussed; comparisons are made with roughly contemporary sites in Southwestern Asia (e.g. Karim Shahir and Natufian); and finally there is a cultural and ecological overview.
FOREWORD

Many persons have contributed to this study of the site of Zawi Chemi Shanidar, and I wish to thank them here at the beginning of this report. First, I wish to thank the State Organization of Antiquities of Iraq who made all the official arrangements necessary for our work at Shanidar. Furthermore, I wish to personally thank the following government representatives who were with us during the 1956-1957 and 1960 seasons when the excavations at Zawi Chemi Shanidar took place: Sabri Shukri, Tariq Madhloom, and Ibrahim el Zayri. I also wish to mention and to thank my three colleagues and friends, George Maranjian, Philip E. L. Smith, and Jacques Bordaz, each of whom spent some time in excavation at the site. In addition, I must thank Arlette Leroi-Gourhan for her important palynological study (Appendix III); Isabella Milling Drew for her study of metallurgy from Layer A at Zawi Chemi Shanidar (Appendix II); and Nancy M. Waggoner for her valuable assistance in the identification of a coin found in Layer A at the site (Appendix I).

Lastly, I want to thank my husband, Ralph S. Solecki, who originally located the site of Zawi Chemi Shanidar, and who has encouraged and aided me throughout the preparation of this report.

The investigations at Zawi Chemi Shanidar as part of the larger Shanidar project were financed under grants from the Smithsonian Institution, the American Philosophical Society, the Wenner-Gren Foundation for Anthropological Research, Columbia University, and the National Science Foundation.
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