

### *THE IRANIAN PREHISTORIC PROJECT*

The 1961/62 operations of the Oriental Institute's Prehistoric Project were conducted jointly with Rice University of Houston. The director, Dr. Frank Hole, now of the Department of Anthropology at Rice, had been a member of the 1959/60 Institute project at Kermanshah in Iran, and his joint Rice-Oriental Institute survey and test excavations grew out of problems which appeared during the course of that earlier season. Much new territory along the flanks of the Zagros mountains, from Khuzestan to the Urmia plain near Tabriz, was surveyed for late prehistoric caves and early village sites. Several short test excavations were undertaken, particularly one at the small mound of Ali Kosh in lowland Khuzestan. The mound contained four levels of occupation which span phases of cultural activity from the end of the food-collecting (or "paleolithic") stage into a well developed aspect of village-farming community life. It is even possible that Ali Kosh may provide details concerning the present gap in knowledge of cultural historical developments between the phases of Karim Shahr and Jarmo type. Further, the prehistoric environment about Ali Kosh appears to have been much less arid than we were at first prepared to believe, and this fact raises several theoretical problems regarding the over-all locale of the environmental zone within which effective farming communities originated. Hole plans further work at Ali Kosh in 1963.

The director of the Prehistoric Project was invited to participate at a UNESCO-World Meteorological Association conference on climatic change in Rome in September 1961, and in December 1961 acted as president of the section on the stone and bronze age developments in Asia at the Centenary Conference of the Archaeological



*"Venus" or "mother goddess" or "fertility idol" from early village-farming community at Sarab, near Kermanshah, Iran*

Survey of India at New Delhi, at the invitation of the Government of India. The trip to India also allowed a separate week's archeological tour in both Pakistan and western India.

The next large-scale field operations of the Project will be undertaken in 1963/64, with an advance reconnaissance party going out briefly in the fall of 1962. An enlarged team of natural sciences collaborators is planned, along with the means for further prehistoric archeological excavation. The central problem of the Project remains that of reclaiming understandings of the cultural and natural history of the world's earliest food-producing communities.

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