

EXCAVATIONS AT CHOGHA MISH

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The plain of Khuzestan in southwestern Iran constitutes a geographical extension of the Mesopotamian plain, and cultural developments in this ancient land of Elam proceeded largely in step with those in Sumer. At the time when Nippur first was emerging as a city, around 3000 B.C., Chogha Mish was a flourishing town covering 64 acres not

Excavation at Choga Mish



far from the foot of the steep scarps leading up to the Iranian plateau. But while Nippur went on to prosper as a city for more than 3000 years, Chogha Mish rapidly declined and was abandoned within a few centuries. Hence we have here an opportunity to ascertain the nature of town life during the period when civilization was emerging without having to excavate deeply beneath massive levels of later settlements. We also have an opportunity to study the ebb and flow of cultural relations between the emerging civilizations of the plains and their less advanced highland counterparts.

Professor Delougaz, assisted by Professor Helene Kantor, first carried out test excavations at Chogha Mish for six weeks in 1961. They returned for a much longer and more intensive season in 1963, exposing more than eighty feet of superimposed house-floors and occupational debris. This finding suggests that the site had been occupied for more than 2000 years before its inexplicable abandonment, and that it may hold invaluable clues to a crucial period in the development of Mesopotamian civilization.