Issues in the Development of the Early Upper Paleolithic, and a "Transitional" Industry from the Zagros Region


Paleolithic scholars talk of transitions in terms of looking for punctuated or gradual; punctuated looks for disimilar patterns while gradual looks for patterns that share connections with ancestral and succeeding patterns—in terms of the early medieval landscape this could be phrased in terms of the settlement pattern question of whether continuity or not

punctuated change is not discontinuity though, it is just rapid change incorporated to maintain continuity

"Dichotomizing the MP and UP, and recognizing "transitions" between these two monolithic entities, essentially forces one to place "transitional" assemblages into one or the other techno-tradition."

studies such as these may tell us less about "transitions" between culture but rather provide more information on what transitions look like and how they can take place...on the one hand all periods are transitory periods even if the transition is violent and abrupt. Rather than categorize the nature of the transition it may be more fruitful to define what changes occurred and ask why they occurred in this manner

what exactly do we mean by transitional? What are the alternatives?

Questions about transitions that remain unresolved:

1. how to determine punctuated v. gradual (most discourse focused on latter)
2. what combinations equal a transition
3. if a transition has a single origin point or can have multiple trajectories as a result of environment and situation this then becomes a question of is it a single transition or multiple transitions and gets back to defining what is the definition of the transition

if transitional technologies (whether tool, landscape, or ideological) have multiple trajectories due to situational factors (and I believe they do) then the better question to ask is what end products remain the same and what aspects are variable and to what extent followed by asking why this is the case)