

THE EXHIBITION OF A MUD-BRICK MONUMENTAL COMPLEX IN A STRATIFIED MOUND: THE CASE OF 4TH MILLENNIUM ARSLANTEPE (MALATYA)

BİR HÖYÜKTE ANITSAL KERPIÇ YAPI TOPLULUĞUNUN SERGİLENMESİ: 4. BİNYIL ARSLANTEPE (MALATYA) ÖRNEĞİ

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ABSTRACT

After a short review of the main problems concerning site and monument conservation in regions characterised by a prevailing mud-brick architecture, such as Anatolia and the Near East, the paper tries to emphasise the deep links existing between conservation aims and the needs – more and more felt by the archaeologists today – for exhibiting the preserved monuments, and, even more, showing what they tell us of the history of humankind, sharing our sometimes too specialised knowledge with a vast public.

In this perspective the paper presents a long studied project, which is finally being realised, for protecting and exhibiting a large and well preserved mud-brick architectural complex, the very early “palatial” buildings of the 4th millennium BC at Arslantepe, Malatya. The main purpose is not only to protect and illustrate this extraordinary architecture, its plan, functions and wall decorations, but, most of all, to make people conscious of what these buildings and the materials found in them may represent for the understanding of the formation process of an early State society, i.e. the rise of bureaucracy, centralised politics and political economy, organised war, etc., in other words the bases of modern society.

For all these reasons the project has been characterised by two main purposes: one has been not to disturb in any way the structures and the underlying archaeological levels as well as to create a correct perception of the monument as it was; the other purpose has been to give rise to a correct and effective communication with the public by cooperating with a semiotic scientist (co-author of this paper) who has worked side by side with the archaeologists trying first to understand and then to properly transmit the most important historical and anthropological results achieved in the site.

ÖZET

Bu makalede Anadolu ve Yakın Doğu gibi kerpiç mimarinin egemen olduğu bölgelerde anıtların ve sitlerin temel koruma sorunları kısaca değerlendirildikten sonra, koruma hedefleri ile anıtların sergilenmesi arasındaki güçlü ilişki üzerinde durulacaktır. Arkeologların günümüzde giderek daha fazla gereksinimini hissettiği sergileme yaklaşımı, anıtların insanlığın tarihsel sürecinin tanığı olarak bize neler anlattığının gösterilmesini ve artık çok uzmanlaşmış olan bilgi dağarcığımızın toplumla paylaşılabilmesini kapsamaktadır.

Makalede bu bakış açısı ile, Malatya Arslantepe’de bulunan, 4. binyıla tarihlenen ve iyi korunmuş durumda açığa çıkartılan bir erken “saray” yapısı olan kerpiç yapı topluluğunun korunması ve sergilenmesi amacıyla uzun süreli bir çalışmayla hazırlanan ve artık gerçekleştirilmekte olan projesi tanıtılacaktır. Bu projede ana amaç yalnızca bu sıra dışı mimarinin planının, işlevinin ve duvar bezemelerinin korunması ve sergilenmesi değil, bu yapıların içerindeki buluntularıyla birlikte bürokrasinin doğuşu, merkezi yönetim ve politik ekonomi, örgütlü savaş gibi erken devlet toplumunun, diğer bir deyişle modern toplumun temelini nasıl temsil ettiği konusunda ziyaretçiyi bilinçlendirmektedir.

Tüm bu nedenlerle proje iki ana amaç çerçevesinde tanımlanmıştır. Bunlardan biri, yapı kalıntılarına hiçbir şekilde zarar vermeden arkeolojik tabakaların vurgulanması, ancak bununla birlikte anıtın doğru bir biçimde bir bütünlük içinde algılanmasının sağlanmasıdır. Diğer amaç, toplumla doğru ve etkili bir iletişimin sağlanması için bir göstergibilim uzmanı (bu makalenin ortak yazarı) ile işbirliği yapılmasıdır. Söz konusu uzman arkeologlarla yan yana çalışmış, önce konuyu anlamaya çalışmış, ardından arkeolojik alandan elde edilen en önemli tarihsel ve antropolojik sonuçları toplumun doğru anlayabileceği bir biçime dönüştürmüştür.

PROJECT FOR THE CONSERVATION AND EXHIBITION OF THE FOURTH MILLENNIUM PALACE COMPLEX AT ARSLANTEPE

Marcella FRANGIPANE

PROTECTING AND DISPLAYING THE PRE-HISTORIC SITES IN ANATOLIA AND THE NEAR EAST: PROBLEMS AND PROSPECTS

Advances in archaeological research over the past few decades have fuelled the need to share the new knowledge increasingly being acquired about crucial phenomena in the history of humanity with a wider public than archaeologists alone. The constant theoretical and methodological developments in the prehistoric disciplines in particular, that have shifted the focus of interest towards more ambitious aims than producing a chronological and stratigraphic reconstruction of the sequence of events and successive ages, have also driven the purpose of field research beyond the mere knowledge and understanding of the characteristics of a single site or area under investigation. The ambition of archaeologists today is to make specific sites or areas more than mere

tesserae in the mosaic of the history of an age (or several ages in the case of a tell) and also use them as emblematic cases for reconstructing historical phenomena and processes ranging further afield. In other words, excavating and researching a site have often become a means of understanding crucially important social, economic and political dynamics in the history of human societies.

Various schools of thought have confronted each other during the past fifty years in the field of prehistoric and proto-historic research to address epoch-making issues such as the beginnings of agriculture and the first sedentary societies, the emergence of specialised work and social stratification, and the birth of the city and the state. And all this has created deep-seated links with areas of scholarship which were in the past exclusive preserve of the anthropological disciplines in the strict sense of the term, borrowing theories and approaches from them.

Today, however, with more research being done and with the use of ever more sophisticated investigating tools and methods, archaeology – and prehistoric archaeology in particular – is now in a position to reverse this relationship, providing cultural and social anthropology with primary data and situations to enable them to study the real roots of the processes being investigated, and consequently to gain a clearer understanding of the dynamics of the formation and changes in different types of society and of the different relations between individuals and groups in the course of history. It is archaeology which can tell the origins of so many of the phenomena underlying our own civilisation today. If asked the right questions, archaeology, often better than other disciplines, can recount that history of the “anonymous” people which is sometimes ignored by History with a capital H. And this is thanks to the fact that its sources are the material remains of daily life, fragments, residual objects, parts of a whole that has completely disappeared. In and by themselves these fragments have no intrinsic significance for us but are all components in a ‘system’ – difficult or extremely difficult to recreate – which the art of association and combination, as in every other investigation based on clues and prima facie evidence, gradually makes legible, restoring meaning to the individual material ‘signs’, enabling them to reveal worlds that have long since disappeared.

It is, in my opinion, this more or less conscious perception by archaeologists of the possibility to recount a new history by displaying the tangible signs left behind by the passage of time, which have been found, analysed and interpreted, that has stimulated the desire in recent years to display prehistoric, and at all events pre-Classical and “pre-monumental”, sites that have been unearthed and studied. In other words, it is no longer a question of returning a monument *in se* for public enjoyment, as was the case in the past with great Greek, Roman or Byzantine sites, illustrating them and explaining them to varying degrees, but of using a site to talk about what had happened there, even though it is no longer visible to the eye, recomposing for public benefit the fragments of those events that the site has made it possible to reconstruct. In other words, the public is not only invited to see and understand what they can see, but, jointly with the archaeologists, to imagine the things that they can no longer see.

We must not, of course, underestimate the importance of the pressure brought about by the authorities in all or many of the countries with a wealth of archaeological remains, to exploit the fieldwork – which is very costly – for the purposes of attracting tourism, as a means of ensuring a return on their considerable financial commitment. Neither should we underestimate the desire of the archaeologists themselves to exploit the media to publicise their efforts and commitment in terms of energy and financing, perhaps hoping that this may attract further funding. I similarly acknowledge the importance of the keenness to conserve and restore archaeological sites, which this approach has impressed on the work of researchers.

But in our case conservation has also been directed at recovering and offering evidence varying in importance and magnitude, and not only monumental architecture, but often things that are not particularly striking to the eye. And this is an innovative and extremely interesting operation.

It has led to the widespread development throughout the whole of Turkey of new types of operation for the conservation/restoration of prehistoric sites, and for displaying them as open-air museums. These projects reflect a different way of doing archaeology, sometimes perhaps exceeding the original intentions.

Before moving on to present the project that we have been implementing in Arslantepe I would like to make one final important remark on something that strongly conditions virtually all conservation work, as well as exhibition work, in Anatolia and in the Near East more generally: the widespread presence of mud bricks as the construction material used in the majority of pre- and proto-historic architectures. This extremely fragile material, which is sensitive to all forms of water penetration and humidity, however slight, renders all attempts at conservation extremely complex and difficult, often imposing somehow invasive forms of protection for the monuments being conserved and the environment in which they stand. The many studies, trials and conferences on this issue, as we all know, have failed to produce any certain results and standards, with the result that every archaeologist who has faced the problem of preserving mud brick architectures in the Near East have each adopted their own solutions, creating a jungle of widely differing procedures.

Many of these measures have included either the construction of new sections of walls on the ancient ones, or the replastering of the original walls, in order both to protect the underlying structures and to “reconstruct” the monuments or sites making them more easily legible. But these solutions have failed, in my opinion, to satisfactorily achieve both the first and the second aim. As far as conservation is concerned, the new mud brick walls or the new plasterwork, if traditional materials are used, as they should be, also need to be protected or they will be damaged in the same way as the ancient structures, eventually leading to the deterioration and sometimes the destruction of the underlying original architectural parts which, of necessity, are structurally attached to them. As for exhibiting ancient sites, this type of operation often conceals the original architecture, mainly or exclusively revealing the reconstructed parts, and even though these may be extremely faithful to the original, they deprive visitors of a direct sensorial experience of what they are looking at – an experience that I personally believe to be another important form of knowledge.

In other cases, the solution adopted is to rebury the original remains and rebuild the structures elsewhere, or even on the same spot. In this case, conservation does not present particular problems, but the displaying of archaeological remains is heavily affected for the same reasons I have just mentioned above.

A different type of solution that has been increasingly adopted in recent years, is to cover the sites with a protective roof.

Here again, many different solutions – certainly not easy – have been proposed. While the features of the sites often vary very widely and therefore need specific choices to take account of their distinctiveness, I nevertheless feel that there are a number of general rules and requirements which should be complied with in all projects. These include: a) the effectiveness of the covering to protect and conserve the structures, b) the need to avoid destroying the underlying archaeological levels, where these exist, c) considering the aesthetic impact and the compatibility of the construction with the site and the landscape, which is naturally a much more problematic and subjective judgement matter. In addition to these general objectives, there are other more specific ones

relating to the typology of the individual sites, the nature of the remains to be protected and the purposes of the museum/exhibition projects.

THE ARSLANTEPE CASE: THE PROJECT FOR A ROOFING INSTALLATION OVER THE FOURTH MILLENNIUM BC PALACE

In addition to all the general considerations I have just made, which apply both to Arslantepe and the majority of the other prehistoric and protohistoric sites in the Near East, I should like now to address the specific problems we raised when we began to think about the “permanent” museum/conservation project for the vast monumental fourth millennium BC public area (Fig. 1).

These were technical problems, and issues having to do with what we might call ‘communication’ (the capacity to represent the essence of what it is intended to communicate, and the effectiveness of doing so).

Technical Issues

As for the technical problems, the initial difficulties stemmed from the fact that this is a vast and monumental area in which the buildings have been preserved up to a height of 2-2,5 m (which is not very common with sites of such antiquity), with much of the original white plaster still in place, and with extraordinarily interesting figurative paintings that are being beautifully preserved on some of the walls. These paintings, which were unearthed as a result of many years of restoration work by our mission’s team, have been consolidated and monitored every year in order to maintain them *in situ*. A copy of some of them has been conversely made in the Malatya Museum. These features made it obvious that in this case there was absolutely no question of protecting the walls by covering them with fresh plaster, quite apart from the general considerations that I have just mentioned and which made me personally believe it is a solution that should never be adopted under any circumstances. Even the practice of rebuilding new sections of the wall on top of the ancient walls in order to protect them, quite apart from the controversial character of this procedure that I mentioned earlier, would have been even less sensible in our case considering the high level of integrity of the conserved walls and the original plasterwork, which could therefore not be plastered over to render the front of the wall uniform, while the new parts could certainly not

imitate the old effectively. The walls of the Arslantepe palace complex, furthermore, are between 1 and 1,20 m thick, making it impossible to envisage any form of chemical consolidation which would be unable to adequately penetrate throughout the whole thickness, creating more problems they might solve.

From when they were first discovered these structures immediately appeared as being unique in terms of their monumentality, state of preservation and their historical value, and we covered them with provisional roofing which we had to remove every year, so long as we were working in the bordering areas or expanding the excavation of the palace complex, and then replace again for the winter. In this way we discovered that the roofing and the protection against the water, while maintaining a circulation of air was the ideal solution for preserving these monuments. And they have indeed been kept in almost perfect condition for more than 20 years, during the long period taken to bring them to light on such a vast surface area and under more than 10 m of stratified archaeological levels from the 3rd and 2nd millennia BC, despite the rudimentary roofing we had built at the end of every excavation season. The problems only arose when there was water seepage or when small holes were made in the metal roofing as a result of removing and then replacing the nails. On the painted parts we provided a double layer of protection to obviate these risks.

The protection afforded by the roofing was always accompanied by annual checkups and maintenance work on the masonry where we discovered cracks or erosion. This maintenance work, which is quite easy, and must be performed at all times using traditional materials, that is to say mud mixed with fine chaff, is at any rate essential for the conservation of mud-brick structures, even if they are protected by roofing.

Once we were sure that the best way of protecting and preserving these walls was to cover them with a roof to prevent even the tiniest amounts of water from seeping in and to ensure that air could circulate freely, and having ascertained that the wall paintings could also be kept in excellent condition by simply repeating, from time to time, a coat of highly diluted Paraloid, we set about thinking in terms of building a permanent cover which would not only be more effective and secure than the provisional ones

in order to protect the buildings, but would also have made it possible for the site to be presented to the general public. This also met another need that we had been toying with for a long time, to share with a broader public the results of the research which was changing the conventional ideas about the history of the first stratified and centralised societies, namely, the state societies.

But before examining the issues linked to the pursuit of the purposes of exhibiting the palace complex and the site as a whole, I would like to continue reviewing the technical problems which we had to address when this decision had been taken.

The first problem was the fact that the Arslantepe palace complex had not only emerged from underneath a long sequence of levels belonging to subsequent periods, but also rested on an equally long sequence of underlying archaeological strata, which we did not want to interfere with. For, even though our team will almost certainly never excavate them, since we have decided to preserve the extraordinary and unique fourth millennium buildings found in that area, the underlying levels had to be protected at all events if someone, one day, might take a different decision.

The second series of technical problems had to do, besides the vastness of the area to be protected, with the numerous terraces and topographic levels on which the buildings stood, with the already mentioned fragility of the structures (all of them built of mud bricks and plastered with mud), and with the harsh winter climate in the Malatya plain where heavy snowfalls are frequent. This meant that the roofing had to be very solid, though at the same time built without foundations to avoid damaging the underlying levels, it could not rest on the walls which were too fragile and yet had to enable all the rooms to be totally visible, it had to be adjusted to the many differences in altitude and be aesthetically "light" in order not to disturb a proper fruition of the buildings.

After conducting various experiments and tests across the years¹, Italian mission designed a project of roofing that would be able to take account of all these problems and at the same time, and primarily, respect the spirit and the characteristics of the architectural complex that it was designed to cover².

The Characteristics of the Roofing at Arslantepe

The project³ comprises a very solid metal structure with vertical posts resting on a kind of narrow metal bridges passing around the walls (Fig. 2f) and fixed to the ground on both sides of the wall on small reinforced concrete bases, built directly on the spot in order to adhere to the irregular surface of the ground (Fig. 2a-d). This made it possible to avoid sinking holes or damaging the underlying archaeological layers. The metal bridges were then linked by horizontal iron beams suspended on the top of the walls, and therefore mostly invisible, which, together with the roofing beams, link all the parts of the structure, making it stable. In this way, and with the help of steel tie-rods, the structure does not rock, even though there are no foundations. The vertical pillars holding up the roof all run along the walls, leaving the rooms free, but they do not rest directly on the walls, rather on the metal bridges (Fig. 2d) which unload the weight onto the ground in two points instead of one; the overall weight of the structure, which is quite imposing in order to meet the need to withstand the weight of the snow, is therefore better distributed. And this is particularly important also considering the variable and irregular solidity of the ground below.

The roofing at Arslantepe was conceived of, not as an anonymous single covering of the excavation area, but as the reconstitution of a series of roofs related to the individual buildings, with different heights depending upon the ground height of the terraces (Figs. 3-4). This has made it possible to overcome the problem of the varying altitudes, and also to enable the visitor immediately to see from outside (i.e. from above) the arrangement of the buildings in the monumental complex, while at the same time giving the perception of the volume of every building inside the complex. The roofing is therefore composed of modules, which can be added or removed, making it flexible and susceptible to future extensions, that will probably be needed as the excavations continue.

Even though there was no intention to reconstruct anything, the idea was that every building would have its own roof cover, and the mud brick walls would be protected, as occurs in reality with all contemporary mud brick buildings, by the fact that they had their own roof. And so without intending to reconstruct the original roofs in any way whatsoever,

the actual roofing has been made of wooden boards (Fig. 5 a-b), covered on the outside by a multilayer insulating material (Fig. 4a), and all the metal structures in the roofing are also timber clad (Figs. 5c, 6); this gives the visitor the perception of the colours, materials and the characteristics of the traditional roofs, which, also in the case of our buildings, must have been supported by wooden beams, as indicated clearly from the findings in the excavation (Fig. 7). The great heights of the roofs create the sense of monumentality which the buildings must have had in ancient times and refer to the fact that they must have been very high even though in some instances they probably had two storeys.

The last carefully studied aspect of the project was the lighting of the protected area. For the roof is opaque, and this is good because it affords better protection against light and the sun to the plasterwork and above all to the painted parts. But this open-air museum had to be illuminated by a natural light. And so we thought of making provision for light to enter not only from the open sides all around the complex from where the air also enters, but also from those points inside the palace which, according to our reconstruction, would have been open in those days: in other words, the large central courtyard and the middle section of the access corridor (Fig. 1a-b). These parts have therefore been covered with special shatterproof glass (Fig. 8), allowing the light to enter inside the buildings in the points where we think the daylight must have originally entered. We are thinking of installing light white canvases inside corresponding with these glass points, to suggest the way in which the open areas in traditional buildings are often covered – such as in the large courtyards in the *bazaars* – and may even have been covered in ancient times.

The spirit underlying the design and the construction of the roofing of the huge palace complex at Arslantepe was therefore not merely to generically protect an archaeological area but rather to preserve a homogeneous architectural complex and return it to the public, restoring spaces, volumes, colours and light, and recreating an atmosphere as close as possible to the original.

The Exhibition Project

This philosophy has enabled us, besides conserving and protecting the monuments, to recompose

a place, and is linked to the idea underlying the exhibition project itself: to present Arslantepe, and in particular the crucial phase in which the site was the protagonist in the primary process of formation of the first centralised societies, as an emblematic case to illustrate not only the history of this site and the events that took place there, but the general processes that these events revealed, and which have changed the history of humanity; founding processes of great interest to all those who wish to acquire an understanding of their own past and to catch its links with the present. The beginning of the economic and political control exerted over the population by emerging elites, the development of a sophisticated administrative system and the birth of bureaucracy, the origin of control over the labour force, the rise of stratified societies, the emergence of the need to use organised force – perhaps the origins of war as we conceive of it today –, are all epoch-making phenomena which changed the face of human societies. And the public buildings complex of the end of fourth millennium at Arslantepe, thanks to the abundance of materials found in situ on the floors, which have been now thoroughly studied by archaeologists and specialists, can recount exhaustively these processes and phenomena (Frangipane 1997a, b; 2003, 2004, 2007, 2010 in press). This is essentially what drove us to wish to show the site to a broader public: it was our awareness that in our possession we had acquired information and knowledge of fundamental historical and anthropological importance, which therefore had to be shared with others.

By displaying the whole palace complex we are able to tell the story of these processes and the challenge we faced was how to enable the public to share in this extraordinary experience through direct contact with the very place in which these things occurred, enabling the place to “speak” to them itself. This also meant that we had to prepare the public, at least in part, to know how what they are being told was originally discovered and understood, thus becoming aware of the many uncertainties and obscure points that form an integral part of all scientific truth in general, and not only in archaeology. Arslantepe, in our intention, was then to become an opportunity to disseminate

the sense and the importance of our discipline, the perception of both its limitations and extraordinary potential, involving the public in the desire to know and understand facts, phenomena and processes of profound relevance to them.

It is therefore necessary not only to enable them to understand the monuments and its architecture, spaces and functions, but also to find out information about the objects and materials that have been found there, recovered and analysed, and are no longer in their place. Many of these remains can be viewed at the Malatya Museum, restored and recomposed, though now out of context, while others are no longer visible – and to a certain extent they have never been tangible because their sense and meaning has emerged from the results of archaeological and laboratory analyses conducted on them (I refer, for instance, to evidence such as botanical remains, wear traces on tools, palaeo-environmental data, etc.). A link must therefore be traced between the visit of the site and that of the Archaeological Museum in the town. But knowledge of all these ‘fragments of the past’, of their associations and spatial and functional relations, of the clues they reveal regarding the activities and relations between individuals and groups, must be acquired before in the physical place in which those archaeological materials originally existed, and where they were brought to light.

This is an arduous task and we plan to undertake it by both using the traditional explanatory panels, which are carefully being studied for this very purpose and will be distributed in the visiting route, and – we hope – implementing interactive systems of communication⁴.

For this very purpose the team of La Sapienza University of Rome has established a cooperation agreement with Semiotics experts from Palermo University, who are working to help us in building an effective communications system, consistent with the purposes we have set ourselves. This cooperation, that was already successfully tested at the 2004 Arslantepe exhibition at Trajan’s Markets in Rome, is now in progress and some of the aspects of this work will be shortly presented below by my colleague Dario Mangano.

THE COMMUNICATION PROJECT: ARSLANTEPE AS AN EXPERIMENTING SITE

Dario MANGANO

MUSEALIZATION

The process of turning an archaeological site into a museum, making it visitable to the wide public, presents many critical aspects. Some have to do with practical issues, common to any open air museum (the need to protect the finds, to make people visit the site without risks, but also the need to attract people and to give a good answer to their expectations in terms of information's completeness and depth), some others concern specific issues of the individual excavations and therefore need specific solutions. At Arslantepe such specific aspects had to do with: a) the characteristics of what was to be exposed, i.e. an articulated palatial complex, that keep together in a relatively small space a number of areas dedicated to different practices (places of cult, spaces for conservation and redistribution of food, common spaces etc.); b) the presence of a still active excavation, and then, on the one hand, the need to host visitors in an environment where professionals and workers are operating, and on the other hand the chance to integrate in the visiting route, year after year, new finds; c) the nature and quantity of information to be transmitted, in the absence of the most important finds (such as the famous Arslantepe's swords) that for security reasons are obviously kept in the Malatya museum. The last is a very critical point since the archaeological mission of University of Rome "La Sapienza" during its fifty year excavation has produced a huge amount of data and very detailed reconstructions of the life at this site. The main goal of the musealization project has been not only to provide a complete and reliable information, but also to communicate it in an effective way to specialists, amateurs of archaeology, and simple tourists.

In order to structure the communication project, both in theory and in practice, a 'semiotic' approach has been followed. From a Semiotic point of view, creating a museum doesn't have simply to do with displaying finds and spaces trying to reconstruct their appearance and function, as if it was enough to show and reconstruct them as they were to make

people understand their value. The value of an artefact, as well as that of an architecture, is never given *a priori*, it is always constructed by the way it is shown, suggested, in other words communicated. In particular, the key concept on which Semioticians have focused is one of "experience". Making a museum means not only giving information to the visitors but also, and above all, making the knowledge they acquire relevant for them. Only by involving the visitors, both cognitively and emotionally, in the construction of their knowledge the visit to a Museum may become effective (Mangano 2008; Pezzini 2006). Space, for example, should not be considered as a mere theatre of the events that took place inside it thousands years ago, but an active presence that can still stimulate sensations and feelings. What we need then is to enable space (as well as objects, paintings etc.) to produce meanings again, giving back sense to its articulation (Greimas 1990). The visiting route in this way becomes a transformative path for the visitor, who not only changes his knowledge of the past, but also, in a deeper perspective, perceives substantial links with it and transforms his or her approach to the present. In order to achieve such a goal it becomes indispensable to think the information to be given, the media that convey it and the spaces where it is transmitted all together as a single meaningful structure.

Another point that characterises the Arslantepe open air museum project is that we decided to develop, besides the transmission of the complex and wide ranging information, and indeed because of it, a parallel discourse about how discoveries have been done, thematizing the process of constructing history. This approach has a double purpose: fascinating and making people think. Fascinating because deducting a story from a few elements has the charm of solving a mystery. Making people think because we want to make clear that every reconstruction, despite its accuracy and reliability, is always an hypothesis. The visitor is not offered an absolute truth, but, exactly as happens to the archaeologist, with a series of clues which can lead to

diverse hypotheses. In this way the visitor is further stimulated to participate himself in this fascinating process of historical reconstruction, as if it were an intriguing detective inquiry.

ARSLANTEPE'S IDENTITY

The first step in constructing Arslantepe's identity has been the creation of a logo to help distinguishing this site from the others present in Turkey and creating its own brand image (Floch 1995). The inspiration for the logo came from one of the seal designs impressed on the *cretulae* found at Arslantepe: two lions that make visible the meaning of the word Arslan in Turkish (Fig. 9).

However, a logo is just the top of the iceberg of a communication project. According to Semiotics, in order to create a stable, effective identity, it is important to define a brand philosophy to be followed in all communication products (Marrone 2007). Such philosophy has been individuated in the idea of presenting archaeological discoveries not only as windows that open on the past but also as an instrument to read present and future. Understanding how the first form of "salary" appeared, how working tasks were differentiated creating classes, how the need for weapons came out, make us think about our contemporary world in a different and more thorough way. According to such considerations we have planned to realize advertising using not only pictures of finds and ancient objects as it is usually done, but also of present day, evocating the topics Arslantepe helps to illuminate. Mass production, the control of labour-force, war, state administration and the origin and nature of bureaucracy are the key themes which we shall try to stress putting together past and present, known and unknown (Fig. 10). The 'origins of power' may become the "title" of the exhibition that summarizes what has to be expected from the visit.

EXPLANATORY PANELS AND VISITING ROUTE

Information will be given using several different media. First of all, traditional explanatory panels placed along the visiting route will convey meanings using traditional communication strategies. Written in three languages (English, Turkish and Italian), they will be richly illustrated in order to show the

finds, including the objects that are kept in Malatya's museum, as well as the reconstruction of places and activities. The positioning of such panels follows a narrative sequence which has to gradually "construct" the visitor as a competent observer able to correctly interpret what he or she is observing. Therefore each panel doesn't simply come together with the finds to explain them but tries to anticipate information, putting the visitor in the condition to correctly interpret the findings once he or she come into contact with them. For this purpose, three principal informative areas have been planned: one at the beginning of the visit, immediately after the entrance to the site, in order to introduce the broader historical context in which the facts narrated in the palace have to be included; the second before the actual entrance to the palace, in order to tell the story of its birth, general characteristics and historical significance; and the third in a wide internal courtyard which is the heart of the palace's activity. The latter will show the way of functioning of the main and various activities performed in the public buildings and the procedures of their archaeological reconstruction.

However, what we mentioned till now doesn't guarantee the full satisfaction of visitors. Even if the panels are complete and clear in order to maximise users' experience, the user himself needs to be disposed to get those meanings. Structuring an exhibiting route in a semiotically correct way means providing not only a competence (knowledge about a past culture), but, before this, *the willing* to get it. Willingness is not something that can be given for granted or assumed as a prerequisite of the visitor, a good museum needs to take care also of this aspect, stimulating people curiosity (*wanting to know*). The ideal visitor, as the perfect reader of a book, doesn't exist in nature, he or she is always being constructed by the text itself (museum and book are considered texts in a semiotic perspective because both of them produce meanings) (Marrone 2001). In order to acquire such a goal, Arslantepe's communication should be extended over the limits of the tepe, to the streets that lead to it, where some panels might be positioned to stimulate in the visitor those questions to which he will find an answer visiting the site. Again, we plan to put together past and present in the visual of the panels, introducing the themes with whom the exhibition will deal (Fig. 11-13).

As far as the panels which will be used inside the site's visiting route are concerned, they have been designed in order to ensure a flexible reading experience using the verbal style and visual layout typical of newspapers (Fig. 14). The title, centred on the table as a headline, has the purpose to catch attention, while the lead (above or under it) sums up the focus of the story that the panel tells in the text. On the one hand the lead encourage people to read the full text, on the other hand it gives them the indispensable information to understand further panels and to follow the story also without reading the full text. Images, not only give important visual information (i.e. geographical positioning, migrations, etc.), but also show the finds that are now in the Malatya Museum.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES AT ARSLANTEPE

An innovative technological system based on the use of palm computers is also planned to be adopted in the Arslantepe's open air museum⁵: A device able to detect the position of the visitor within the tour and to display various contents according to the context being visited (Fig. 15). This system would not only make it possible to present a quantity of information much higher than that contained in the printed panels (the number and dimension of which is limited by the physical space and the necessity of not disturbing the visual perception of the monuments), but also to implement different type of media, as, for example, videos. If appropriate funds will be found, specific rooms of the palace will be accurately digi-

talised in 3D, rendered and animated, thus allowing not only to view the ancient buildings with a reality and richness in details until now unthinkable (Fig. 16), but also to visualise the reconstructed activities that took place in the buildings, avoiding the needs for the visitor to read long texts in the traditional panels during the visit. It will be possible to actually see, for example, the storage rooms and the withdrawal/redistribution of foodstuffs performed there, as well as the sophisticated bureaucratic recording system with the use of *cretulae* (Frangipane 2007). Thanks to the video, the complex series of operations that are at the base of the invention of accounting as we know it today, will become clear and enthralling.

Furthermore, through the possibility of recalling other subjects or information, for instance on the internet, those who wish, shall be able to go into more depth according to their interests and curiosity.

Each visitor will be able to build his own personal visit, by deciding which information he wants to obtain, as if he had at his side an expert archaeologist ready to answer to any of his questions. Furthermore, the flexibility of this technology allows a continuous updating of the contents present in the palm computer as new discoveries take place. A function that contributes to the involvement of the visitor with the activity of the archaeologist and stimulates its curiosity. In addition to this, some of the contents in this way developed will be adaptable to the web, allowing web navigators to preview the experience they will be able to go through once they visit Arslantepe.

NOTES

- ¹ Various studies and tests were performed by the architect Claudio Proserpi Porta from the Central Institute of Restoration, to whom we offer our thanks.
- ² The final project was the work of the architect Giuseppe Berucci, from the Italian Ministry of Cultural Heritage; the technical drawings and the static tests were the work of the engineer Davide Pini. To both of them go my warmest thanks.
- ³ The project was approved by the Protection Board of Sivas in 2007 and was made possible thanks to the financial support of the Malatya Valiliği, to whom we extend our sincere thanks. The work was commissioned to a local company in

2008 and began under the supervision of the Rölöve ve Anıtlar Müdürlüğü of Kayseri and with the oversight of the Italian mission, in 2009. The roofing is now almost complete and the whole project is scheduled to be finished during the course of 2010.

- ⁴ The methods, contents and technical possibilities have also been studied and designed for these tools, but substantial funding – which we do not have at present – is needed to put them at work.

- ⁵ We thank Prof. Giorgio Manzoni and his team from the University of Trieste for their help and technological advice.

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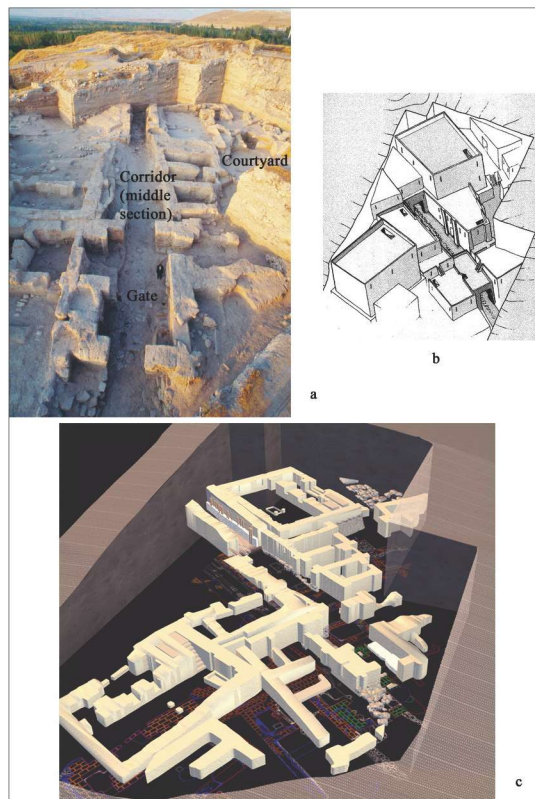


Fig. 1. Arslantepe, the 4th millennium palatial complex



Fig. 2. Arslantepe, Details of the metal structure sustaining the roof. a-c and e: basement system. d and f: metal 'bridges' supporting the vertical posts. g: simple vertical pole at the edge of the protected area



Fig. 3. Arslantepe, Horizontal metal structure of the roofing system



Fig. 4. Arslantepe, a: View of the roof on the 4th millennium palatial area from above; the different heights correspond to different building terraces. b: The roof under the snow in winter



Fig. 5. Arslantepe, a and b: the roof-covering wooden boards. c: lining the metal beams with wood.



Fig. 6. The Arslantepe roofing from the interior



Fig. 7. Arslantepe, ancient wooden beams collapsed from the roof in Temple B



Fig. 8. Arslantepe, The courtyard (a) and the middle section of the corridor (b) covered with glass.



Fig. 9. The proposed Arslantepe's logo

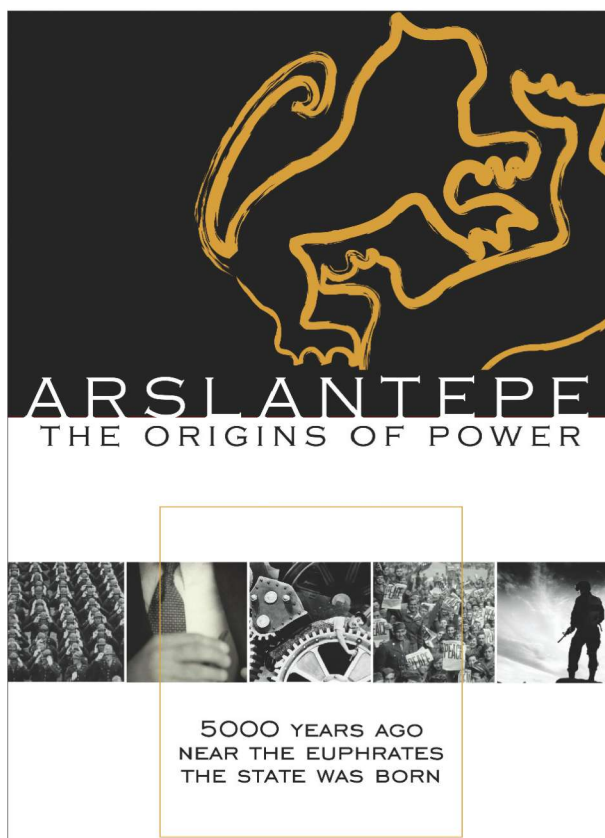


Fig. 10. The design of communication on Arslantepe in the simulation of an advertising poster (draft)



Fig. 11. An example of panel to be located in the street leading to the Arslantepe open air museum (draft)



Fig. 12. Another example of the panels that will decorate the street outside Arslantepe (draft)



Fig. 13. A third example of advertising panels to be located outside the Arslantepe open-air museum (draft)



Fig. 15. Simulation of the navigator hypothesised for an interactive guide at Arslantepe (draft by Sylphelabs, www.sylphelabs.com)

Scanning the great plain lands of Iraq and the Syrian steppes and the immense plateaus of Iran and Turkey, the eye sees many strange hills standing out against the surrounding landscape. Their regular shape and their unexpected sitting shows at once that these are not natural formations. They are the result of a very particular form of settlement, for which the soil was used to build houses, villages and cities. Sun-dried mud bricks became, and to this day remain, the basic raw material of the architecture in the Near East and in many other parts of the world. A new material that returns to the soil when the buildings are destroyed and collapse, creating huge deposits that then grow larger to form the "mounds". These mounds are pieces of history that the archaeologists sift through, layer by layer, level by level, putting the fragments of our past back together.

It was right here, in the Near East, that the world's first stable houses and villages emerged some 12,000 years ago, when people started to cultivate cereals and pulses, and rear sheep and goats, cattle and pigs. In this special part of the world, it was the establishment of a sedentary way of life that brought the city, the state, hierarchies and social classes into being. Over the course of several thousand years, these villages then became sumptuous cities with monumental buildings populated by individuals with different, and unequal, social roles.

Bizim burada bugünkü medeniyetimizin temelini oluşturan yapıyı tepelere yakın dağcı manzaralarında rastlamaktayız. Höyükler binlerce yıldır olguları ve değişimleri bize anlatan tarihinin kalıntılarının arasında sıkışık kaldığı oluşumlardır.

TARİH TEPELERİ
HISTORY'S MOUNDS

Artificial mounds populate the landscape in the Near East: pieces of history trapped in the rubble that tell the story of millennia of events and changes, on which what we are today is based.

COLLINE DI STORIA

Colline artificiali popolano i paesaggi del Vicino Oriente: pezzi di storia intrappolata tra le macerie che ci raccontano millenni di accadimenti e trasformazioni, su cui si fonda il nostro essere qui oggi.

Scanning the great plain lands of Iraq and the Syrian steppes and the immense plateaus of Iran and Turkey, the eye sees many strange hills standing out against the surrounding landscape. Their regular shape and their unexpected sitting shows at once that these are not natural formations. They are the result of a very particular form of settlement, for which the soil was used to build houses, villages and cities. Sun-dried mud bricks became, and to this day remain, the basic raw material of the architecture in the Near East and in many other parts of the world. A new material that returns to the soil when the buildings are destroyed and collapse, creating huge deposits that then grow larger to form the "mounds". These mounds are pieces of history that the archaeologists sift through, layer by layer, level by level, putting the fragments of our past back together.

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Fig. 14. An example of the explanatory panels designed for guiding the visitors inside the open-air museum (draft)



Fig. 16. Arslantepe, Preliminary 3D virtual reconstruction of Temple B (draft by Sylphelabs, www.sylphelabs.com)