

EXCAVATIONS AT KARATAŞ - SEMAYÜK 1964

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The second season of the Bryn Mawr College excavations at Karataş - Semayük near Elmalı lasted from August 19 to November 5, 1964. The purposes of this campaign were the further clearance of the Early Bronze Age cemetery and the first investigation of the habitation site to the north of the cemetery.

The cemetery

A new area of about 35x35 m. was cleared to the west of the field dug in 1963. The total count of tombs now stands at 137. The tombs are invariably contained in pithoi (large, stump-based, lug-handled) or jars (large to medium size, flat-based, loop-handled) which are set at an incline with their rims facing east (figs. 1 and 2). Children are buried in small jars, adults in large pithoi (height to 2 m., diameter of shoulder to 1.30 m., fig. 3) or jars which often serve as family graves for successive burials. The number of skeletons found in such large pithoi ranges from one to eight. The final burials are recognizable as contractions, whereas the bones of the earlier occupants of family graves are found in disorder near the base of the pithoi.

The pithoi were closed with stone slabs or pottery bowls, sometimes with inverted bases of incomplete jars. Over these lids, stone piles protected the graves. The tomb-markers (tall stones or wooden posts?) are now lost because of the erosion of the original surface of the field.

The tomb-gifts consisted of small jugs and jars inside the pithoi or (more rarely) among the blocking-stones outside. Bronzer or copper pins are not uncommon; other copper finds are bracelets,

rings, and a simple disc-ornament. One toggle-pin, found on the skull of a young adult, was 15.4 cm. long. There are no metal weapons, but one tomb contained a stone mace-head. Flat marble idols with disc-shaped heads and spade-shaped bodies were rare in the western part of the cemetery.

The most characteristic local pottery types from the tombs are red-polished jugs, pitchers and jars ornamented in bands and chevrons of dull white paint (fig. 4). These are a typical product of the Elmalı plain. Black-polished ware with white painted designs is rare, as are incised dark jars which resemble pottery from the Pisidian area. With very few exceptions, the pottery is handmade. The characteristic one-handled jar with tall rim, which occurs from central Anatolia to the Cycladic islands and the coasts of Attica (in Early Helladic II), is found in handmade and wheelmade specimens at Karataş (fig. 5, wheelmade example).

The date of the graves is tentatively set as Early Bronze II to Early Bronze IIIa. The latest type of Early Bronze Age wares are not found in the cemetery. The characteristics of the Karataş graves will help to explain the nature of the largely destroyed cemeteries at Yortan and in the general area from Balıkesir to Burdur.

The settlement : a. Pits west of the cemetery

The western border of the cemetery is formed by a large number of domestic pits, silos which were found empty except for some discarded Early Bronze II pottery of types earlier than those current

in the graves. Some of the graves were dug over abandoned pits.

These pits or bothroi must have belonged to the Early Bronze Age village at a stage before the cemetery moved in this direction. No houses were found in conjunction with the pits, but the surface is denuded and walls may have disappeared. The pottery from pits is mostly dark burnished and has a considerable amount of grooved, fluted or applied relief ornament (figs. 6 and 7). Relief strips of applied clay also occur on some of the burial pithoi and on jars from the mound, which proves continuity in pottery techniques. There was no red-polished ware in these bothroi. Two-handled domestic jars are of buff fabrics.

The settlement : b. The house on the hill. (figs. 8 and 9)

The small mound c. 150 m. to the north of the cemetery proved to contain a single house set in a complex of courtyard and fortification enclosures. Originally a rectangular house of 10.75x7.20 m. had been built of mudbrick, the walls 80 cm. in thickness. Wooden posts along the walls and elsewhere in the floor of the house probably supported an intermediate floorlevel. The basement contained a large number of round storage-pits for cereals and other commodities, some stored in jars.

The house had an outer doorway to the northwest, and a doorway in the northeast which led to the courtyard. This court was planned with the house. It was entered from the northwest via an outer doorway north of the husedoor, and enclosed by an oval mudbrick wall of 50 cm. thickness which ran around the house to the north, east and south sides. This wall was attached to the southwest corner of the house. Sixteen buttresses or spur-walls projected from the inner face of the courtyard wall, making niches for storage purposes. Benches were fitted in these niches on the north side. The court-

yard was also used for storage of property and not for the shelter of animals, since the fill was remarkably clean and free of bones and horns. Walls, floors, and benches were coated with a light-colored plaster.

The complex was fortified in two stages. First, a pisé reinforcement of 1.20 m. width was added to the outside of the courtyard wall and finished in plaster. Next, an embankment of 2-3 m. width was added to this. We have cleaned this only on part of the south side. Ramps climb along this embankment to entrances on the east and west side of the complex.

In spite of these precautionary measures, the complex was plundered and burnt. The pottery left after the disaster shows that the destruction dates to the end of the Troy I period. Some of the pottery, e. g. a jar from a storage pit in the house, is relief-decorated. A drum-shaped jar has parallels in late Troy I (type D 28). A small number of terracotta stamp-seals (fig. 10 a, b) was found in the burnt level. No metal remained, all metal objects having presumably been removed by the plunderers. A stone hammer lay in a corner.

The oval complex was rebuilt once. A heavy, later enclosure wall was found at a higher level. To this stage of rebuilding also belonged a cistern of 7 m. depth. It had been abandoned at the final stage of the complex. A handmade, red-polished tankard (fig. 11) from the abandonment fill gives us a good correlation with early Troy II and Cilician Early Bronze III a for the final stage of habitation in this part of the mound.

In the coming season, the architecture of this complex will be analyzed further and a search will be made for village houses of less pretentious type, the dwelling places of the common men buried in the pithos-cemetery. The house on the hill, in a modest form, represents the

prosperity and architectural knowledge of a typical bey or ağa in the Early Bronze II period.

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Fig. 1. view of well - Presented pithos - graves, looking east



Fig. 2 : View of partially presented pithos - graves, looking west



Fig. 3 : Tomb No. 84 after removal of Cover - slab

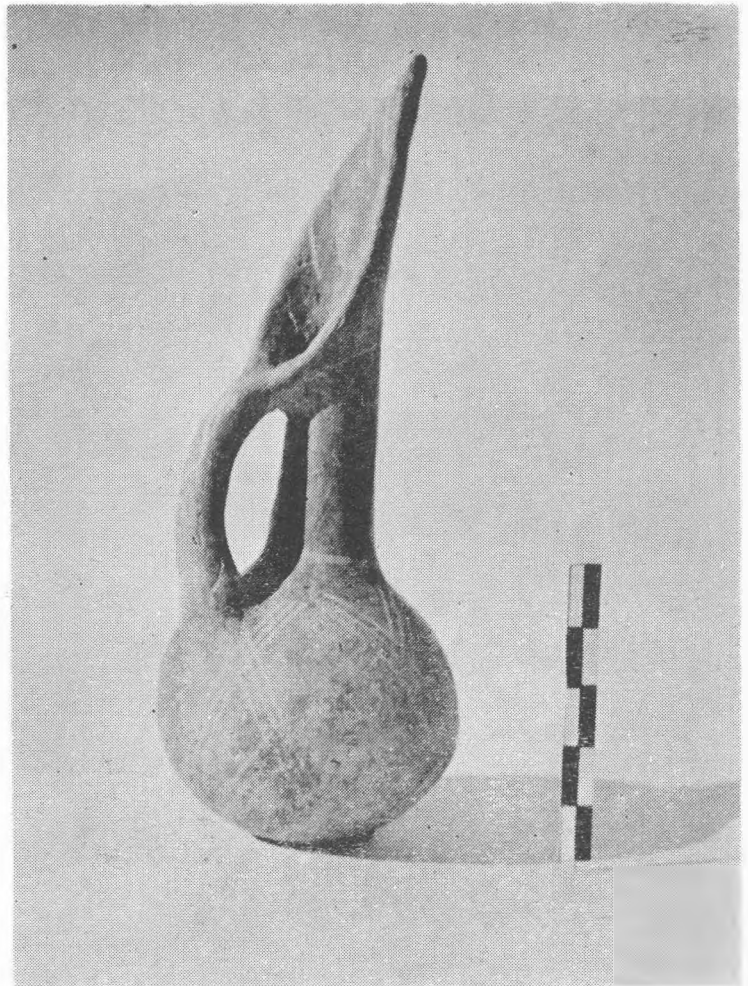


Fig. 4 : Red - Polished pitcher
with white paint, tomb No.
95



Fig. 5 : Wheelmade red - polished jug, from tomb No. 83



Fig. 6 : Black - polished grooved pitcher from domestic pit



Fig. 7 : Relief - decorated jar from Domestic pit

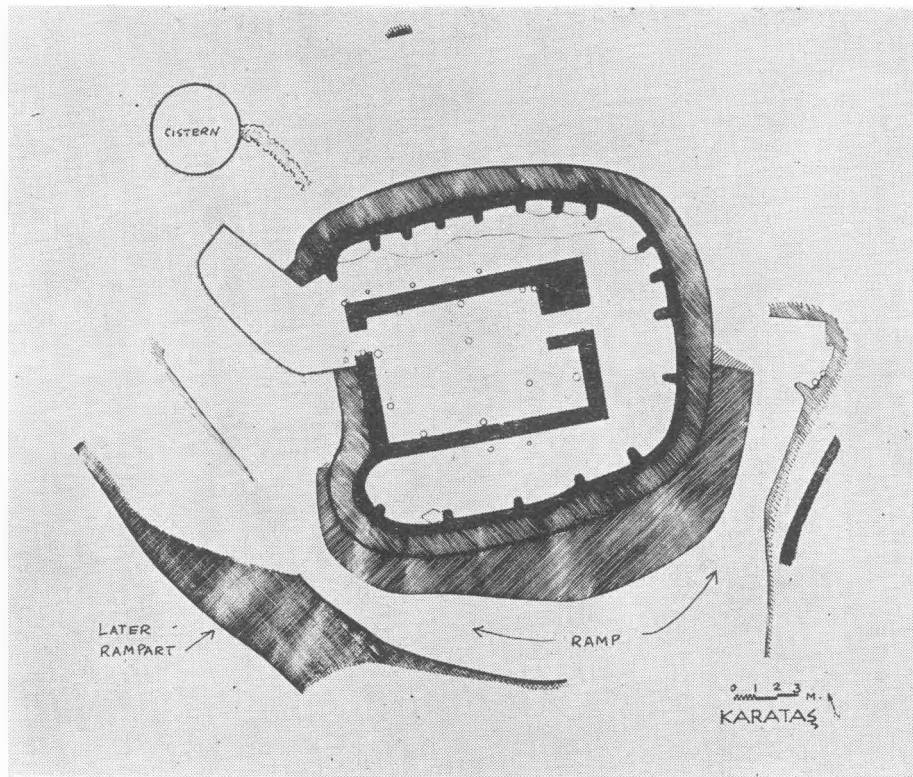


Fig. 8 : Plan of the house on the hill and enclosures

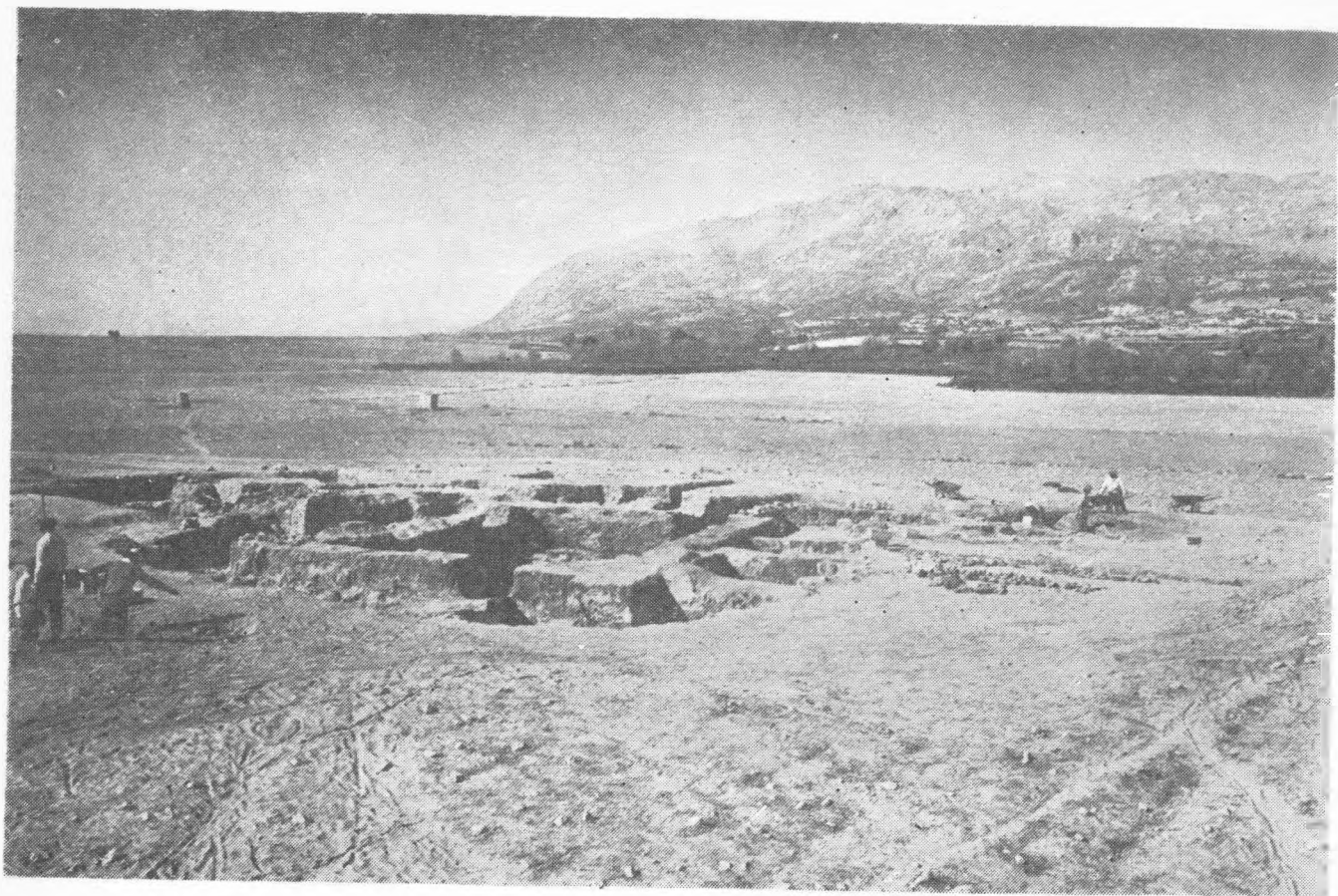


Fig. 9 : View of mound al southwest

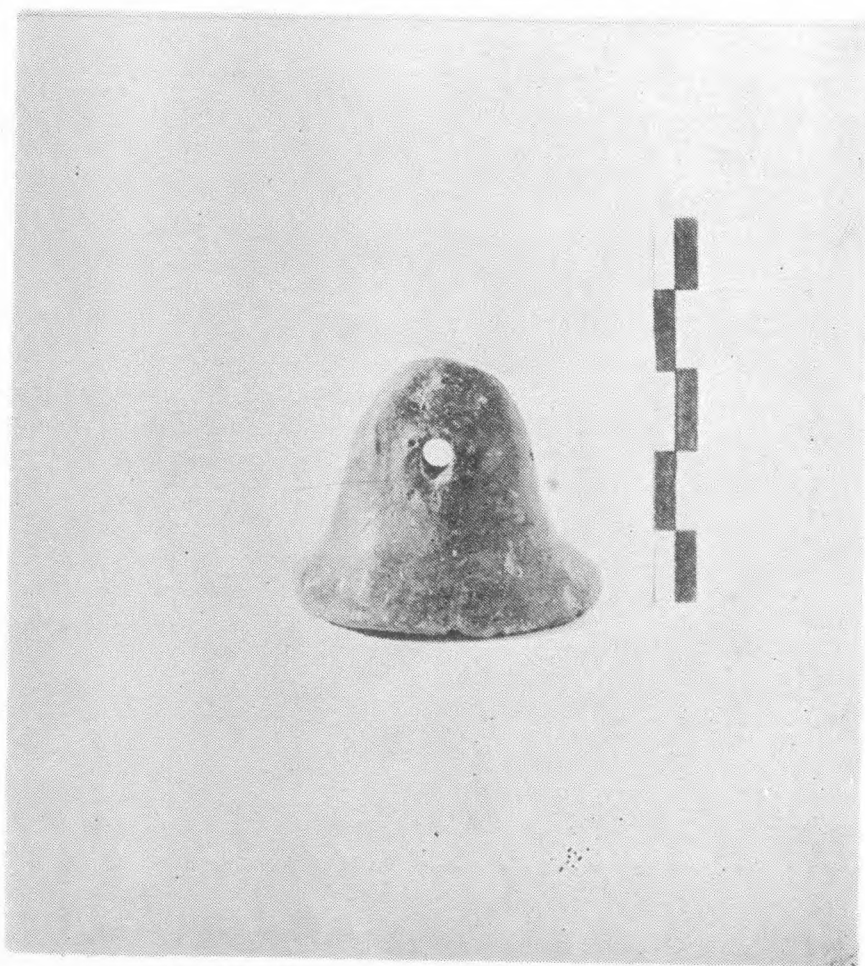


Fig. 10 a. Terracotta stamp - seal from courtyard of house

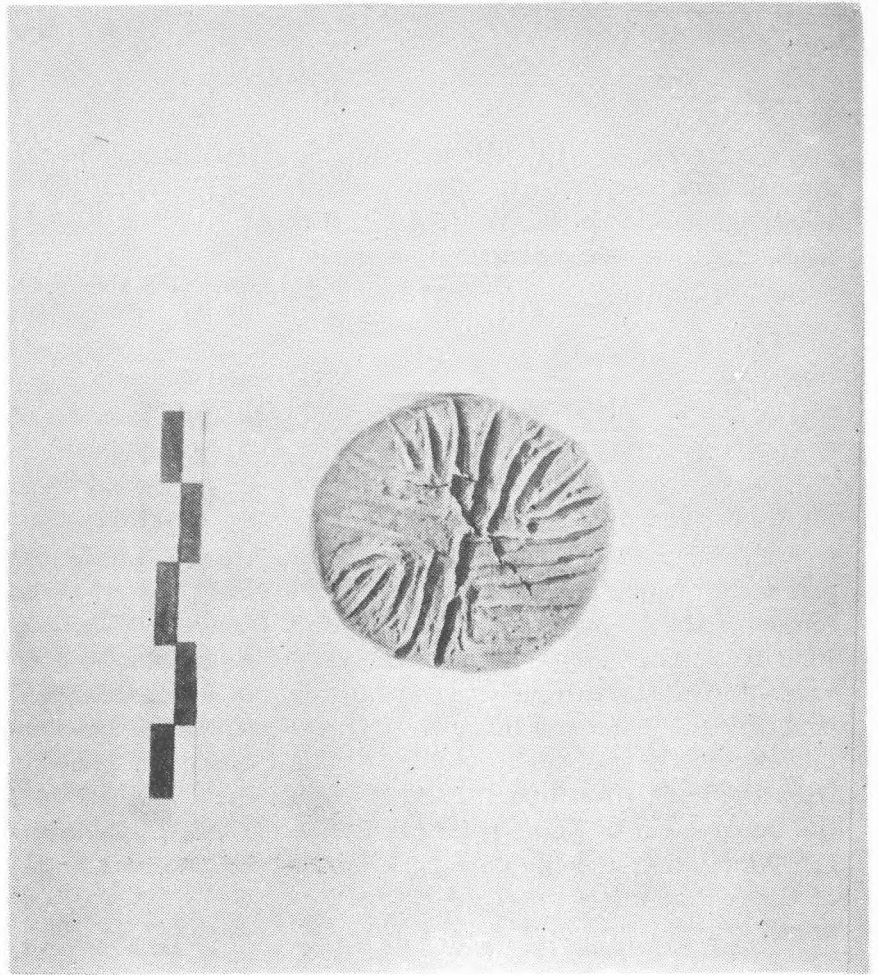


Fig. 10 b.

