

THE SOCIO-ECONOMIC DEFINITION OF THE NEOLITHIC AND CHALCOLITHIC PERIODS IN THE LIGHT OF NEW RESEARCH IN TURKEY

TÜRKİYE'DEKİ YENİ ARAŞTIRMALAR IŞIĞINDA NEOLİTİK ve KALKOLİTİK DEVİRLERİN SOSYO-EKONOMİK TANIMI

Dedicated to the memory of Professor Robert J. Braidwood, a most senior among the eminent Near Eastern scholars whose decades long contributions to Prehistory retain their monumental proportions.

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Key words: Anatolia, sedentary hunter & gatherers, Neolithic, terminology, prehistoric village community

Anahtar sözcükler: Anadolu, yerleşik düzenli avcı-toplayıcılar, Neolitik, terminoloji, tarihöncesi köy toplulukları

Anadolu'da tarihöncesi araştırmalardan ortaya çıkan görüntü açıkça göstermektedir ki; kullarındaki geleneksel terminoloji Anadolu'nun neolitikleşme sürecini tüm ekonomik, sosyal, tinsel ve teknolojik öğeleriyle birlikte tanımlamaya yeterli değildir. Dahası, yerleşik düzendeki toplumların, maddesel kültür buluntularının ve yerleşme düzenlerinin de yansıttığı gibi, çevrelerini değiştirmelerinde kabul edilen yanıtlar, geleneksel terminolojide doğru bir ifade bulmaktan uzaktır. Burada teklif edilen şema tarihöncesi köylerin sosyal, ekonomik ve teknolojik karmaşıklığı yönünden daha dakik bir tanımlamayı getirmektedir. Böyle bir şema halen kullarındaki tanımların, en azından hemen, yerini almayı gerektirmemektedir, fakat karşılaştırmalı araştırmalar için muhakkak ki yararlı olacaktır. Örneğin; köy kültürleri arasında yakın benzerlikler, yerel veya kronolojik değişiklikler gibi, göç, yayılım v.s. konulu tartışmalarda, çok daha iyi anlaşılabilen, bir çizelge olarak görülebilmektedir.

New socio-economic data in Anatolian prehistory necessitates a review of the traditional cultural definitions. Most scholars agree that cultural periodizations such as Epipaleolithic, Aceramic or Pre-Pottery Neolithic, Early and Late Neolithic, or Early, Middle and Late Chalcolithic are not descriptive enough and at times even misleading. Therefore, these definitions should have long been considered obsolete. However, in the absence of consensus for an alternative terminology most of us still adhere to this deep-rooted nomenclature. In the preface of my book Prehistoric Anatolia, I pointed out the shortco-

mings of this traditional terminology for periods and cultures. Hence, I proposed, for consideration only, the use of "Early Village Culture (s)" as a general term for the Neolithic and Chalcolithic cultures preceded either by a technical reference to indicate the successive phases (e.g. pre-ceramic, ceramic, painted pottery) or in reference to a particular time - scale (e.g. "Early Village Culture of the Sixth Millennium BC.") (J. Yakar, 1991,ix). I still believe that terms such as Aceramic Neolithic or Early Neolithic are hardly appropriate, certainly not descriptive enough, to define the subsistence strategies of hunter-gat-

herer communities settled in permanent villages, but not yet significantly involved in cultivation or domestication. By the same token, the term Aceramic Neolithic is not quite suited to describe the culture of hunter-gatherers whose high technological achievements (mainly in monumental stone architecture and plastic art), economic activities, or social complexity are in many ways more impressive than anything observed later on.

Regarding the hunting and gathering mode of subsistence, which initially was sometimes accompanied by selective cultivation of wild food-plants and perhaps in local attempts at keeping certain wild food animals in captivity, the fact is that it continued to be pursued at different levels of intensity by most village communities already involved in broad range cultivation and domestication, in other words in mixed farming.

As for the use of the term 'Chalcolithic', mainly in reference to painted pottery producing cultures of the late sixth/early fifth millennium BC, it remains a misnomer in view of the fact that a basic copper metallurgy existed in parts of Anatolia long before the introduction of pottery. Archaeologists generally adhere to this term for the period extending from the mid-sixth to the late fourth millennium BC, despite the fact some sedentary hunter-gatherer communities in Anatolia were successfully experimenting with the basics of copper technology, still complex enough necessitating some degree of familiarity with mineral identification as well as cold working, annealing and smelting procedures.

Since archaeology investigates the social, economic, technologic and spiritual aspects of a culture through their artifactual and non-artifactual assemblages, cultural definitions should be more descriptive. With such and other problem oriented issues in mind, a number of Near East and Anatolia oriented prehistorians meeting at a recent workshop forum (CANeW) held in Istanbul 23-24 November 2001), (Gerard and

Thissen 2002), tried to conceptualize the nature of Central Anatolian Neolithic.

Reading the proceedings of the CANeW, including the discussions, one gets the feeling that disagreements on various subjects, but particularly concerning environmental studies, dating and terminology, although not fundamental, still are not easy to bridge, no matter how narrow a gap remains. I think no one could have explained the reasons for this better than Jean Perrot. Perrot rightly points out that archaeology as a discipline suffers from a state of confusion due to the "bulk of archaeological data and simultaneously, big gaps in knowledge" (J. Perrot, 2002, 7). Therefore, "there is the weakness of a poorly structured ensemble of information, the scientific status of which is still tentative; and, perhaps first of all, our vocabulary and terminology remain inadequate." (J. Perrot, 2002,7). Moreover concerning the true value of methods used in archaeology, he puts it quite bluntly: "the archaeological 'reality' is a reality that owes much to the imagination and intuition of the excavator". I have no doubt that more than a few scholars of Prehistory shares this opinion, but few would have the tenacity to acknowledge it openly! On the issue of interdisciplinary scientific research Perrot rightly remarks that "The numerous specialists from various disciplines that the archaeologist invites to scrutinize the 'reality' that he lays before them are not always aware of its limitations; just as the archaeologist is not always conscious of the frailties of the disciplines whose advice he seeks. The equivocal interdisciplinarity, not only for archaeology, muddles the reconstruction of 'what really happened', the nature and turn of events that are the raw materials of historical reconstruction" (J. Perrot, 2002,7).

Returning to the problem of terminology for Anatolia, and in particular Central Anatolia, there is now some sort of consensus that definitions about periods and divisions should not be pinned-down to single material culture elements. In other words in describing a cultural

prehistoric entity its entire cultural development should be taken into consideration. Although most prehistorians agree that a valid separation of periods and cultures need correct definitions of terms, the debate with a diversity of views still continues. In my opinion the proposed regional terminology of M.Özbaşaran and H.Buitenhuis, 'ECA', which is only slightly different than that proposed by Matthews (M.Özbaşaran and H. Buitenhuis, 2002, 68-69), is an attractive scheme that could also be used as 'EA' for all Anatolia. After all, to use the definition of 'Early Anatolia' with its cultural subdivisions starting from the beginning of sedentarization, can hardly be more confusing than terms such as 'Cycladic', 'Helladic' or 'Cypriote' defining some of the Bronze Age sequences in the Aegean and eastern Mediterranean.

As an option one could assign the term 'Early Anatolian I' with its subdivisions to define the entire Neolithic period, naturally starting from the earliest Aceramic sub phase ('EAI a'). Next, 'Early Anatolian II' with its subdivisions could be assigned to cover the entire Chalcolithic period. Such a scheme is flexible enough to incorporate cultural sub phases yet to be discovered. Finally, 'Early Anatolian III' with its sub phases can define the EBA.

The traditionalists voicing their discomfort concerning the wisdom of detaching Anatolia, and particularly Central Anatolia from a universally accepted terminology, no matter how antiquated, are not about to subscribe to this, or any other alternative scheme. Therefore, one has to devise an intermediate solution to this impasse. An acceptable intermediate solution could be the maintaining of the traditional terminology, but make it more descriptive regarding the socio-economic, cultural and technological complexity/level/status of each period and its sub periods. Otherwise, without a revised nomenclature, the material culture assemblages produced by hunter-gatherer communities and farmers, which reflect their cultural accomplishment and technological sophistication as well as

their socio-economic organization and spiritual activities will continue to be encapsulated into slots of meaningless definitions. For instance, currently used terms emphasizing the absence of ceramic utensils do not quite describe the social structure (e.g. "egalitarian" versus "ranked"), the subsistence economy (increasing emphasis on the cultivation of wild species, captivation of wild animals) or the settlement pattern of societies in question. After all the subsistence related activities of prehistoric hunter-gatherer groups in the archaeological records of Anatolia are reasonably well documented, and they often reflect their social structures. Therefore, from this point of view alone, it is about time to desist from classifying architectural remains and other various material assemblages recovered from prehistoric villages within misleading and rigid cultural definitions.

In discussions pertaining to the economic, cultural and technological definitions relating to prehistoric village communities, it is important to re-emphasize the fact that continuity or change were dictated primarily, though not solely, by the degree of environmental stability or instability.

Environmental differences observed even within Central Anatolia, between the principal sub-regions such as the Konya plain and Cappadocia during particular periods reflect macro/micro climatic variations due to spells/cycles of changes in the seasonality of winds, temperatures and precipitation (C. Kuzucuoğlu, 2002; See also H. Woldring, 2002). Thus, at the core of chronological differences in the emergence of similar patterns of settlement (subsistence oriented, trade oriented, long or short duration, seasonality, large versus small villages, clusters versus isolated villages, organization, etc.) lies the environmental factor guiding the subsistence related activities of hunter-gatherers. Even a relatively short-term instability in climatic conditions, could have affected the living conditions in a particular environmental niche, affecting the growth and migratory pat-

terms of food-resources, and the subsistence requirements of those dependent on them. In coping with such stress situations communities would have selected one of a number of options according to preference or manageability. These would have been; a) narrow spectrum exploitation, if necessary in a different ecological niche, b) broad-spectrum exploitation, c) permanent settlement. The first two options could have resulted in the establishment of seasonal dispersed villages, with some occupied for most part of the year. We may reasonably assume that narrow spectrum exploitation by hunter-gatherers could have in the long term led to a population increase, which in turn would have resulted in one of the following developments; broad-spectrum exploitation, migration to a marginal zone or sedentism in an optimal zone. In all these cases no doubt that new villages would have been established. Put it this way, the sedentarization of hunter-gatherers could be seen as the outcome of a economic strategy opting for a subsistence mode requiring much less group mobility. The choice and success of this strategy would have depended on a number of interlinked preconditions, such as: a) the choice of settlement location; b) a measure of social complexity; c) a balanced demography with a majority of healthy youngsters; d) an economic organization with emphasis on resource management and surplus production. In most hunter-gatherer societies economic activities could have been grouped based, at least in the initial phases of the sedentarization and more or less in the Epipaleolithic tradition, benefiting the entire community. This phase in village architecture is characterized mainly by round houses (huts), which provided small living spaces with hardly any storage capacity under the same roof. Later on and as suggested by the development of larger habitation units with intramural storage facilities, village economies may have become family based.

Resource management was certainly an important concern among sedentarized hunter-gatherers, regardless of their economies organization

(e.g. community or family based). Resource management dictated not only the settlement pattern, but also the selection of environmental niches, which would have ensured long-term economic stability (e.g. meeting the subsistence requirements of an expanding community). Those settling in optimal zones could have fed themselves for a few generations without having to cultivate food plants, or domesticate certain animals on condition that they did not over exploit the rich wild life and vegetation. Those settling on the marginal zones on the other hand could have been involved in the intensive exploitation of a limited range of animal and plant resources. Reaching critically low levels of such wild resources, cultivation and domestication would have been the logical alternative for these settled hunter-gatherers.

Now coming back to the question of terminology, proposed here for consideration, and if necessary for further refinement is a data description format to assist in the cultural classification of individual prehistoric village sites. The term "village community" should be viewed as a cultural stage common to all sedentary societies starting with Early Holocene hunters and gatherers. Needless to say, the purpose of this "exercise" is not to replace the traditional terminology for prehistoric Anatolia, but to further stress the importance of chronological and cultural placement of prehistoric village communities using a uniform format. In this format likely variations in subsistence strategies are proposed based on archaeological data recovered from prehistoric villages such as Hallan Çemi, Demirci, Çayönü, Nevali Çori, Göbekli Tepe, Gürcütepe, Cafer Höyük, Aşıklı, Musular, Çatal Höyük, Hacılar, Höyücek; Bademağacı, Kuruçay, Yumuktepe; and others.

Although these sites follow a chronological sequence, considerable overlapping between them and different localities/regions cannot be ruled out. Once the chronological framework and cultural stage emphasizing socio-economic and industrial complexity of all excavated pre-

historic village in Anatolia are clearly established, discussions pertaining to diffusions,

migrations, continuity and change will be producing more convincing results.

Data description format for the cultural classification of individual villages*

Name Period	Dates BC. (Calibrated)	Village Layout	Social and Religious Complexity	Economy	Storage/Food Processing	Technology	Art
PVC VI	4000-3000						
PVC V	5000-4000						
PVC IV	6000-5000						
PVC III	7000-6000						
PVC II	8000-7000						
PVC I	8000-						

PVC=Prehistoric Village Community

Village Layout in terms of house plan and disposition:

a) Freestanding:

- (1) Round; (2) Grill-plan;
 (3) Channeled; (4) Cobble-paved;
 (5) Cell-plan; (6) Other;

b) Agglutinated or other.

Social Complexity:

a) Segregated Domestic/Sacral Units;

b) Communal Structures;

c) Disposal of the Dead:

- (1) Collective
 (i) Primary, (ii) Secondary;
 (2) Individual
 (i) Primary, (ii) Secondary;
 (3) Special post mortem treatment:
 (i) Skull removal, (ii) Plastered skulls,
 (iii) Painted skulls, (iv) Painted long bones.

Economy:

a) Hunting-Gathering: Broad Spectrum Exploitation;

b) Hunting-Gathering: Narrow Spectrum Exploitation;

c) Hunting-Gathering and Incipient Animal Domestication;

d) Hunting-Gathering and Selective Cultivation of Legumes / Wild cereals / No Domestication of animals;

e) Hunting-Gathering and Selective Cultivation of Cereals / Incipient / Selective Animal Domestication;

f) Hunting-Gathering and Cultivation of Domesticated Food Plants / Animal Husbandry;

g) Cultivation of Domesticated Food Plants / Animal Husbandry / Hunting-Gathering,

h) Exchange of Surplus / Specialized

Commodities:

- (1) Long distance exchange on a seasonal basis perhaps via intermediaries;
 (2) Short distance direct exchange.

Storage and Food Processing Installations:

a) Indoor;

b) Outdoor;

- (1) Oven; (2) Hearth;
 (3) Roasting-pit; (4) Storage-pit;
 (5) Storage-bin; (6) Work platform with grinders / mortars.

Technology:

a) Copper Industry;

b) Lithic and Stone Industry:

- (1) Flint tools and weapons;
 (2) Obsidian tools, weapons and utensils
 (3) Stone weapons, tools, ornaments, utensils;
 (4) Marble utensils and ornaments;

c) Ceramic Industry:

- (1) Plain pots;
 (2) Decorated pots:
 (i) Incised, (ii) Relief,

- (iii) Painted,
- e) Textile Industry:
 - (1) Flax;
 - (2) Wool;
- f) Bone Industry;
- g) Wood Industry;
- ğ) Other (extraction of oil and paint from plants and minerals).

Art:

- a) Wall-painting;
- b) Wall relief;
- c) Decorated Stone Pillars;

- d) Stone Sculptures;
- e) Anthropomorphic Figurines:
 - (1) Female;
 - (2) Male;
 - (3) Composite;
- f) Animal Figurines;
- g) Anthropomorphic and Zoomorphic Pots.

*Key words such as freestanding cell-plan houses and collective secondary burial with post mortem skull removal should appear in their allotted space as **a.3** and **c.1.ii,c.3.i**

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