

THE 1970 EXCAVATION AT KORUCUTEPE NEAR ELAZIĞ

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A combined team from the Universities of Chicago, California (Los Angeles) and Amsterdam, with Hans G. Güterbock as director and Maurits van Loon, Giorgio Buccellati and Philo Houwink ten Cate as co-directors conducted a third excavation campaign at Korucutepe from August 3 to October 23, 1970¹. The results of this season's work may be summarized as follows :

1. *The "Early Chalcolithic" Age (about 4500 - 3500 B.C.).*

At the northwest foot of the mound, where road and farm building had removed 3rd-millennium and later levels, a 4 × 4 m square (later reduced to a 1 × 1 m pit) was sunk through the earliest deposits. Virgin soil was reached at 20 m below the summit of the mound. Above it the earliest architectural level appeared, consisting of two yellow-plastered mud brick walls incorporating both horizontal and vertical timbers and enclosing a room with plastered floor (Fig. 1). The pottery collected from here was hand-turned, grit-tempered and black burnished, with straight sides occasionally enlivened by knobs or a ridge which may have finger impressions simulating rope. Some Halaf-like and Ubaid-like sherds, undoubtedly imported, indicate a date between 4500 and 4000 B. C. for the first settlement at our site.

After 2 m of water-laid deposit had

covered up these earliest remains the area was reoccupied by a yellow mud brick structure twice rebuilt. The pottery was now more often mottled or light brown in color, but there was no change in shapes or ware except for the occasional appearance of a finger-streaked and partly wheel-turned high-fired orange chaff-tempered ware, apparently imported from south of the Taurus mountains².

2. *The "Late Chalcolithic" Age (about 3500 - 3000 B. C.).*

After a period long enough for another 3 m to accumulate, the "chaff-faced" ware just mentioned had become predominant. At this elevation along the northwest face of the mound a burned two-room house, previously visible in section, has now been cleared. The largest room, measuring 3 × 6 m, had a narrow door or window and a circular hearth. Among the many cooking and storage vessels lay a set of three unbaked clay horn-shaped fire dogs with finger grips. Carbon samples previously taken from this burned floor had given dates around 3400 B.C. (uncorrected)³ and botanical samples had been identified as six-rowed barley, emmer wheat and flax.

The "Late Chalcolithic" phase left altogether 2 m of repeatedly rebuilt house remains. Into the top of these had been dug two brick-lined adult graves and an

¹ For the 1969 results, see Maurits van Loon and Hans G. Güterbock, "The 1969 Excavation at Korucutepe near Elâzig," *Türk Arkeoloji Dergisi*. XVIII. 2, pp. 123-128

² Cf. Robert J. Braidwood et al., *Excavations in the Plain of Antioch I* (OIP 61, Chicago, 1960), pp. 232-238.

³ Sample numbers GrN-5286 (5370±40 B.P.), GrN-5287 (5330±40 B.P.).

infant jar burial. In the first grave lay a woman adorned with hundreds of tiny limestone, carnelian and bone beads which once formed a belt, bracelets and anklets, as well as a silver diadem, crescent-shaped gorget and hair rings of the same material. A double burial of the same type was found close to the first (Fig. 2). The man had a mace with iron-ore head, a silver wrist-guard and a copper dagger. His lady, whose head had been cut off by a later pit, still had near her arm a unique silver bracelet-stamp seal engraved with a wild goat (Fig. 3).

3. The "Early Bronze Age II" (about 2750 - 2300 B. C.).

Areas representative of each occupation phase were cleared along the north-south axis of Korucutepe. North of the hillock that sticks up from the center of the mound, we further exposed the burned complex of the mid-3rd millennium B.C. partly cleared in 1968.⁴ This is the last level in which emmer wheat, as opposed to common bread wheat is found. It is also the last level in which the humidity-loving ash and elm are found alongside with oak and poplar. A wide-hipped female figurine with heavy necklace, bird-like head and long hair incised on the back recalls Syrian figurines of Early Dynastic and Akkad times (Fig. 4).

From another burned thin-walled house south of the central hillock we retrieved and mended a complete "andiron" and about 30 hand-turned chaff-tempered black or brown burnished jars, pots, bowls, lids and pot stands, all with the recessed band around the neck that is typical of the period. Three of the large jars were decorated in relief with a complex pattern consisting of a quartered lozenge with pennants and pendent crescents, flanked by angularly stylized birds and quadrupeds.

⁴ Maurits van Loon and Giorgio Buccellati, "The 1968 Excavation at Korucutepe near Elâziğ," *Türk Arkeoloji Dergisi* XVII. 1 pp. 79-82, fig. 1.

4. The "Early Bronze Age III" (about 2300 - 2000 B. C.).

By the next, "Early Bronze III" phase red, red-and-black and dark orange unburnished vessels came into use for processing and storage, along with the traditional black burnished ones, which were now often fluted along the rim and diagonally down the body with some mechanical device.

This period is characterized at our site by a different type of occupation, apparently limited to a single, heavy-walled building the ruins of which left a conical hillock on the center of the mound. Much of the last campaign was spent on clearance of the main phase of this yellow mud brick structure, which was subsequently rebuilt in red mudbrick. Its central feature was a whitewashed hall, measuring 6 × 9 m and accessible from the south. Against the east wall a podium 1 m high had been erected and in front of this, on a plastered circular platform, there were three semicircular clay "andirons," the largest one 3 m in diameter and each one holding a smaller version of itself between its "arms" (Fig. 5). Their triangular façades were framed by double grooves and tapered downward. Next to this triple feature stood a large pottery stand or drain, and into a clay strut supporting it from behind a copper dagger and an antler had been incorporated. Otherwise the hall had been cleared of its contents and filled with bricks before its rebuilding at a higher level, which had almost completely eroded away. A row of variously shaped hearths against the outer wall of the hall increases our suspicion that religious ceremonies may have taken place here.

5. The "Late Bronze Age" (about 1400 - 1200 B. C.).

The Late Bronze period, in time corresponding to that of the Hittite Empire, is mainly represented on the southern apron of the mound, which we investi-

gated along its east-west as well as its north-south axis. The "Hittite" buildings were built in terraces on the slope of what must then have been a high mound of Early Bronze remains.

The earlier, more prosperous part of this occupation (roughly corresponding to the 14th century B. C.) is characterized by red smoothed platters with ledge rims and orange smoothed, slipped or burnished jugs, bowls etc. The houses had stone foundations of up to six courses on the downhill side, sometimes incorporating wooden posts. Horizontal wooden timbers in the mud brick superstructure were a regular feature.

In the 13th century B.C. flat stones tended to be set against the lower wall courses for protection of the mud brick. Much of the southern mound edge was heavily pitted in this period. Characteristic of the pit contents, among which 13th-century seal impressions were found in 1968 and 1969, are orange wheel-marked platters without ledge rims and miniature

footed bowls. Two disc-shaped seals of Middle Bronze Age type, one carved with a wheel design and the other with a long-necked bird (Fig. 6), turned up in this context during the current campaign.

One of the surprises of the season was the appearance of another, western sally port, this time of the Late Bronze Age⁵. A sagging platform of red mud brick partly exposed by road and farm building was found to be L-shaped in plan and to cover up a corbeled stone passage, of which we have cleared only entrance and exit (Fig. 7). It seems to run from the settlement west into the platform and thence to emerge southward, having made an angle similar to that in the platform above.

⁵ For the eastern and southern sally ports, belonging to the Middle Bronze Age fortifications, see *Türk Arkeoloji Dergisi*. XVIII. 2 124f. The superstructure of the western, Late Bronze Age sally port, which was reused in the Early Iron Age, is mentioned *loc. cit.* as "a monumental mud brick building with 2 1/2 cm-thick plaster."

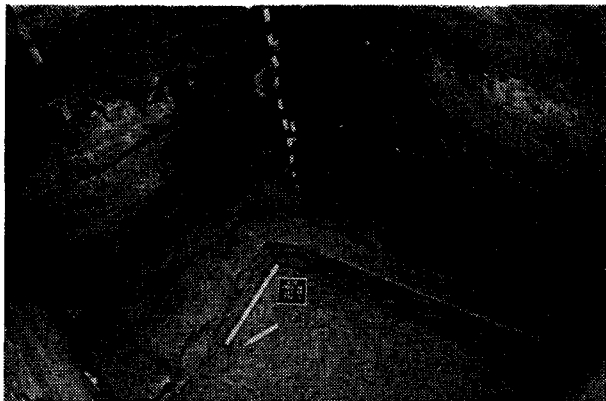


Fig. 1 — Walls and floor of “Early Chalcolithic” house at Korucutepe, about 4500-400 B. C.

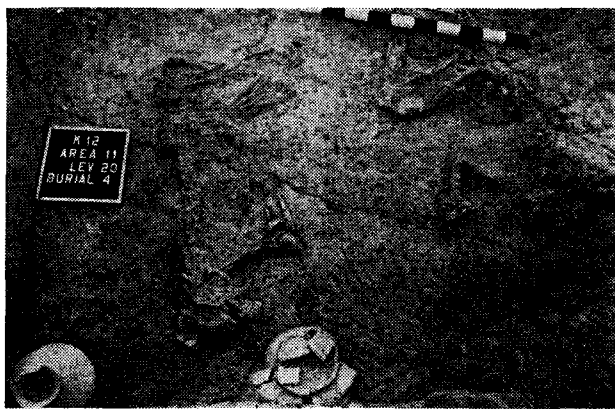


Fig. 2 — “Late Chalcolithic” double burial, toward 3000 B. C. Silver wrist-guard, copper dagger, iron-ore mace head, pot stand and jar are placed arounds man’s skeleton.

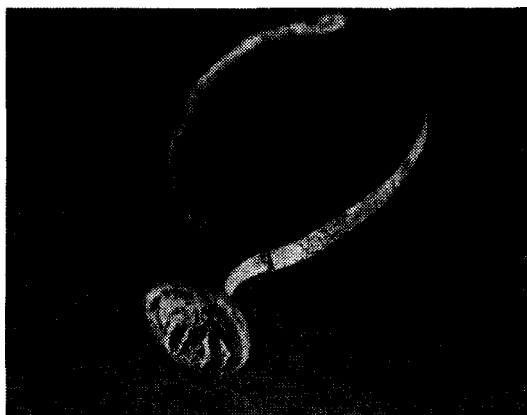


Fig. 3 — Silver bracelet-stamp seal engraved with wild goat found on woman’s skeleton, toward 3000 B. C.

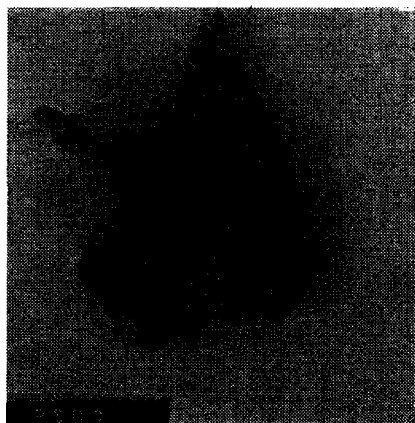


Fig. 4 — Baked clay figurine of naked woman with triple necklace, about 2600-2300 B. C. Breasts, one arm and both legs broken.



Fig. 5 — Unbaked clay triple andiron on circular hearth in “Early Bronze III” hall, about 2300-2000 B. C. Meter stick is lying on remains of podium, rest was destroyed by large circular Medieval pit.

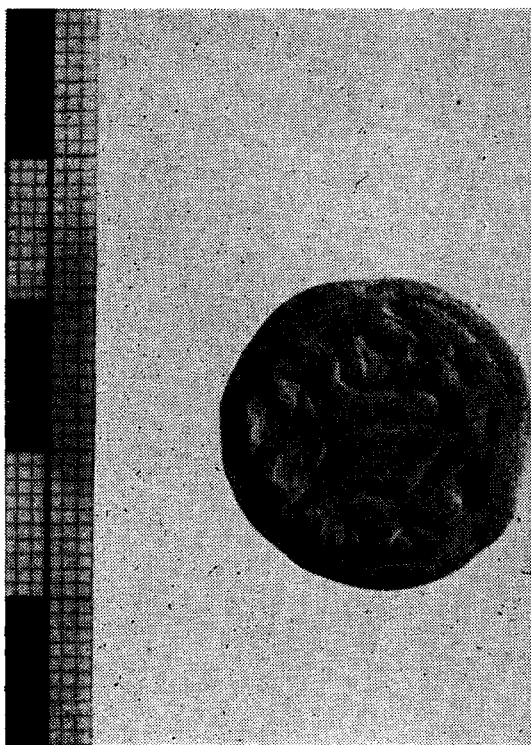


Fig. 6 — Disc-shaped seal carved with long-necked bird from 13th-century B.C. pit.

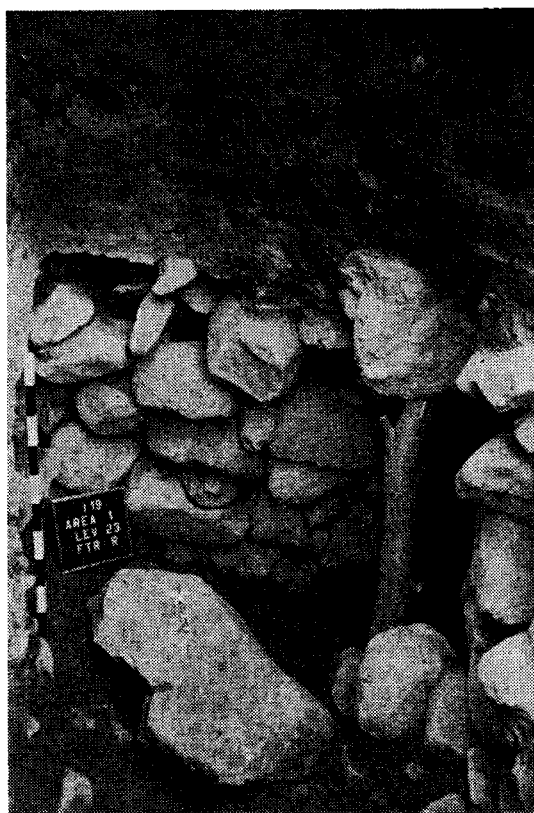


Fig. 7 — View through collapsed side wall into corbeled stone passage covered by mud brick platform, forming western sally port of “Late Bronze Age” Korucutepe, about 1400-1200 B.C. Fallen capstone is lying in foreground.