

EXCAVATIONS AT KARATAŞ - SEMAYÜK, 1966

MACHTELD J. MELLINK

The excavations of Bryn Mawr College were continued for twelve weeks in the fall of 1966. This was the fourth campaign at the site. For the previous seasons, cf. the preliminary reports in *Türk Arkeoloji Dergisi* XIII, I, 1964, 97-98; XIII, II, 1964, 49-57; XIV, 1-2, 223-229; *American Journal of Archaeology* 68, 1964, 269-287; 69, 1965, 241-251; 70, 1966, 245-257.

The first three campaigns had exposed part of a cemetery and a small mound of the Early Bronze Age. In 1966, the flat area surrounding the mound was also investigated with the aid of a large number of trial trenches (fig. 1). As a result, we now have three categories of evidence for the site and its inhabitants:

I. The Cemetery.

In 1963 and 1964, a field measuring some 80 by 35 meters had yielded 137 pithos burials in reasonable preservation. The burials were all contained in large jars set aslant with their openings to the east. The location of each individual tomb had originally been marked by stones or posts; the lay-out of the pithoi followed a pattern of fairly regular rows. Most pithoi had served for a series of burials. Tomb gifts in the form of pottery, small metal items and marble idols accompanied the dead. The skeletal remains are being studied by Dr. J. Lawrence Angel, curator of physical anthropology of the Smithsonian Institution.

In 1966, an additional area to the northwest of the original cemetery field was investigated in order to strengthen the statistical evidence for the anthropological and archaeological analysis. The regular

cemetery turned out to continue some 75 meters in direction. In figure 1, the original cemetery area and the new cemetery trenches are cross-hatched. About sixty more burials of now familiar type were cleared (fig. 2 shows a typical pithos before opening, burial No. 144). The skeletal material was partly in good preservation. Among the tomb gifts, some new metal items deserve notice, e. g. bronze or copper razors, javelin heads, and small tools. Flat marble with spade-shaped bodies and disc heads apparently were restricted to burials of children. The idols were deliberately broken at the time of burial, a custom now proved for Karataş and suspected elsewhere (e. g. for Early Cycladic graves at Hagios Kosmas on the coast of Attica), but not generally prevalent in Anatolia. Among the pottery from the tombs some askoid vessels deserve notice, as do basket-handled miniature teapots in red polished ware. Some of the pottery gifts were left outside of the burial jars among the blocking stones.

II. The mound.

The fortified establishment of the Early Bronze II period was not yet excavated completely (fig. 3 gives a general view of the present state from the west). The rectangular house in the center had two storeys. It was surrounded on three sides by a roofed oval courtyard, with an entrance to the northwest. The outer wall of the courtyard had been gradually thickened and extended to the shape of a rampart-like platform, whose northern continuation was examined in 1966. A fence ran along the north edge of this platform,

which overlooked an outer glacis and retaining wall. A series of courtyards existed at a lower level along the outer west, south and east edges of the platform, protected by the retaining wall and a glacis with ditch cut in bedrock. The single entranceway was in the northwest corner. Internal communications were by ramps, stairs, and doorways giving access to the oval platform and in turn to the inner courtyard.

In the Early Bronze III period (level V and later), simpler houses began to encroach upon the former mansion. The latest signs of activity on the site are intrusive pithos burials of the Middle Bronze Age. One well preserved pithos (wheelmade, oriented with its rim to the south, unlike the Early Bronze Age orientation to the east) had a wheelmade buff bowl as a tomb gift (fig. 4 shows the tomb with its stone blocking intact; fig. 5 shows the skeletal remains and the buff bowl in situ). The houses of the Middle Bronze Age have not yet been located.

The most interesting small find from the mound, level V, is a miniature silver double axe (figs. 6 and 7, courtesy of Director Raci Temizer of the Ankara Museum). It is decorated on one side with incised lines suggesting a feather pattern and thongs. The miniature size and decoration of the axe are appropriate to a votive. Its level is well within the Early Bronze Age which makes this 'labrys' one of the earliest votives or models of its kind, perhaps connected with an early cult of a weather god. In shape the axe belongs to the Anatolian rather than the Aegean group of double axes. The Karataş axe and other metal objects found in 1966 were cleaned in the laboratory of the Ankara Museum thanks to the good offices of Director Recai Temizer and his staff.

III. The habitation area.

In a large number of trial trenches cut to the west, north, east and southeast

of the small central mound evidence of extensive habitation during the Early Bronze III period came to light (fig. 1, hatched trenches). Remnants of houses were found just below the surface of the fields. They consist of foundations of fieldstones, originally used as socles for mudbrick walls of which only scattered bits were encountered in the fill. The plans of the houses display the characteristics of the so-called megaron, a traditional Anatolian and Aegean building form. A typical Karataş house consists of an open porch with antae, a main room opening to the porch, a hearth in the center of the room, and extensions of the long walls in the back (antae at the rear corners) to form a shallow back porch. In some cases the Karataş houses had a triple division, with a back room used for storage, mostly in pithoi. The best series of 'megara' appeared in trench 35-37 (plan in fig. 8, views in figs. 9 and 10). The length of the freestanding houses varies from 6.15-12.00 m., the width from 3.70-5.75 m. The affinity of this building type to the megara of Troy II is evident from the plan, although the Karataş houses are no more than modest representatives of a building form monumentally developed at Troy. The period to which the Karataş houses belong is contemporary with Troy II-III to judge by the relatively well preserved pottery, which included red polished beaked pitchers, large red and buff (some wheelmade) plates, lentoid jugs, two-handled tankards and depasshapes.

Larger establishments were found in trenches 63-64 to the southeast of the mound, where more work remains to be done. The stratification in general is shallow and does not preserve much evidence of earlier building levels. Trenches 35-37 are exceptional in this respect; a stratigraphic excavation is planned for 1967.

In the open areas among the houses several pithos graves, also of the Early Bronze III period, came to light. This means that the separation of habitation and cemetery areas was not as strict as

had been suspected before but in no case had tombs been placed inside of inhabited houses. The detailed analysis of the 'intramural' burials may yet reveal chronological and cultural traits that separate them from the extramural cemetery.

The fields between the central mound and the southern cemetery remain to be explored. They should contain further clues to the distribution of tombs and houses. The detailed investigation of the central, fortified complex also remains on the program of further excavations.

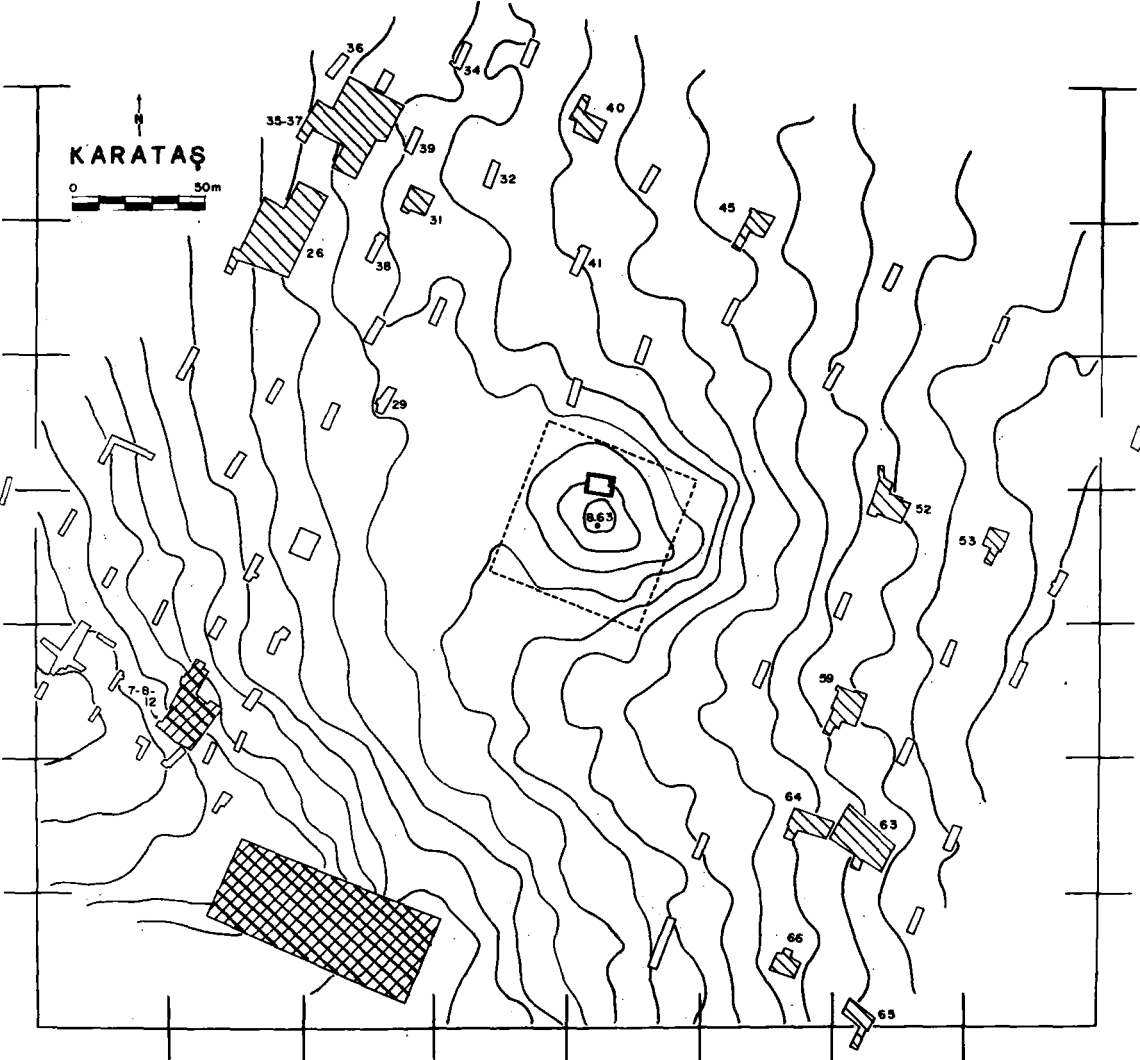


Fig. 1. Plan of trial trenches 1966. Cross-hatched: area of cemetery. Hatched: habitation area. Dotted rectangle: area of fortified house-complex.

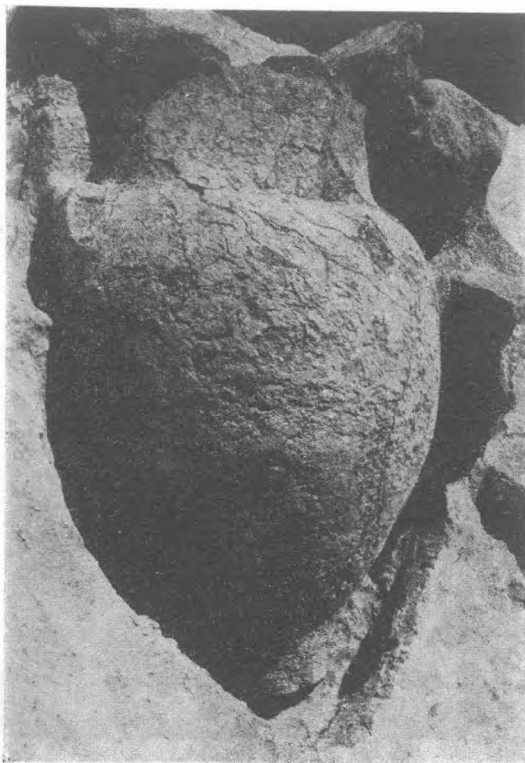


Fig. 2. Pithos burial 144
before opening.



Fig. 3. Karataş. View of complex in
central mound, looking west.



Fig. 4. Karataş. Middle Bronze Age
burial from central mound.

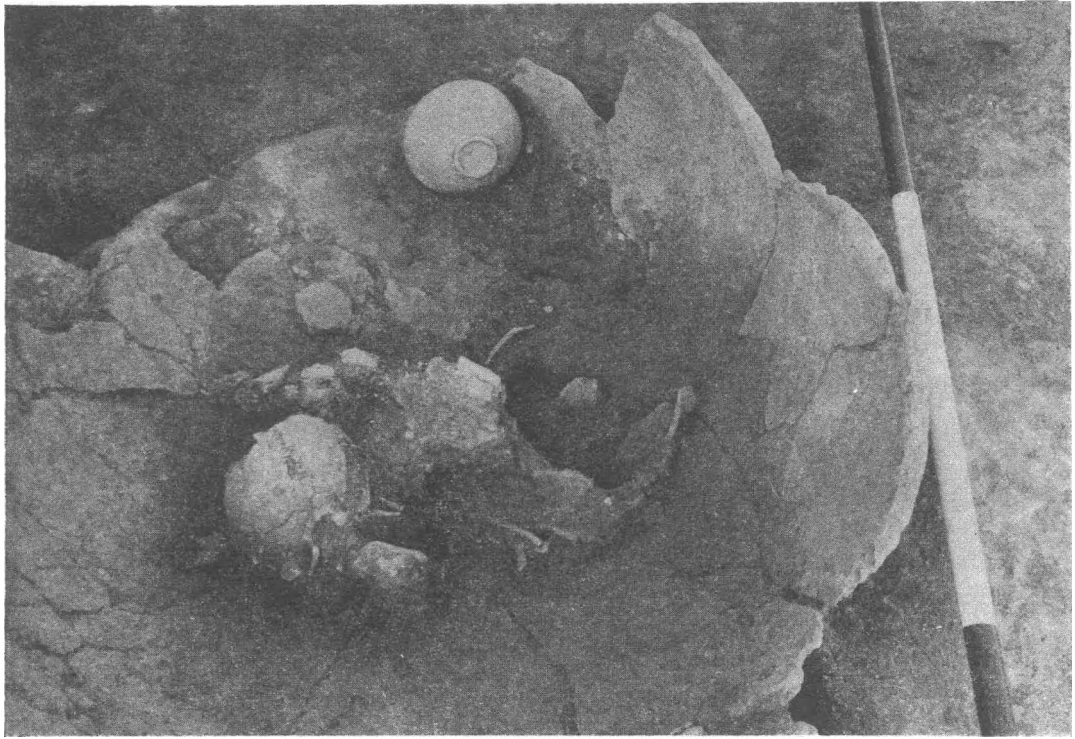


Fig. 5. Skeletal remains and wheelmade bowl in Middle Bronze Age pithos-grave.

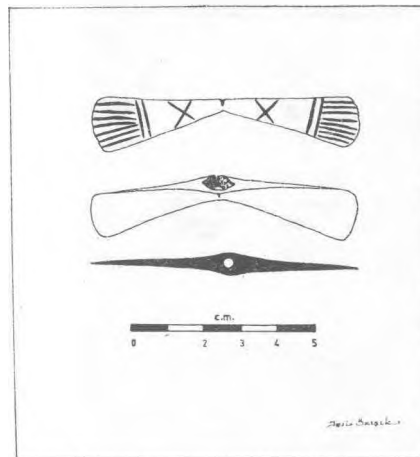


Fig. 6. Miniature double axe, silver. Early Bronze Age (Drawing by Işıl Özışık).

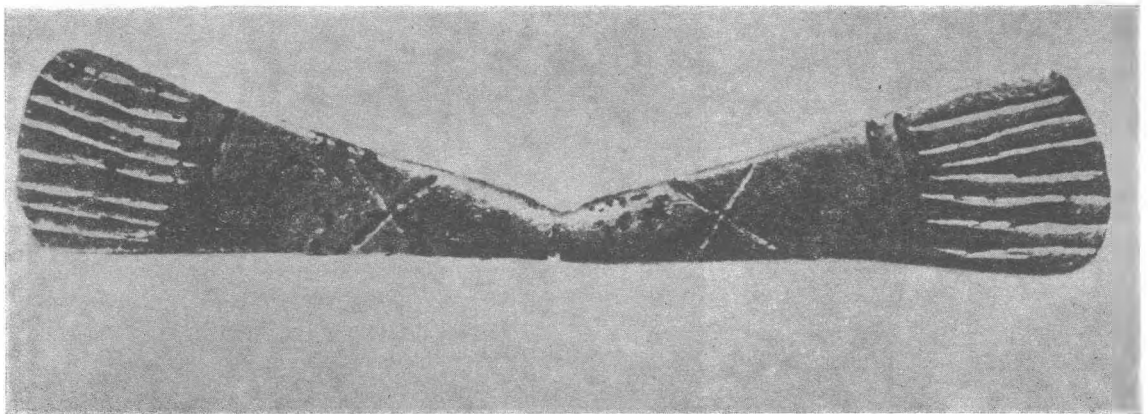


Fig. 7. Miniature double axe. Photograph courtesy of Director Raci Temizer, Ankara Museum.



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Fig. 8. Karataş. House in Trench 35-37. Plan.

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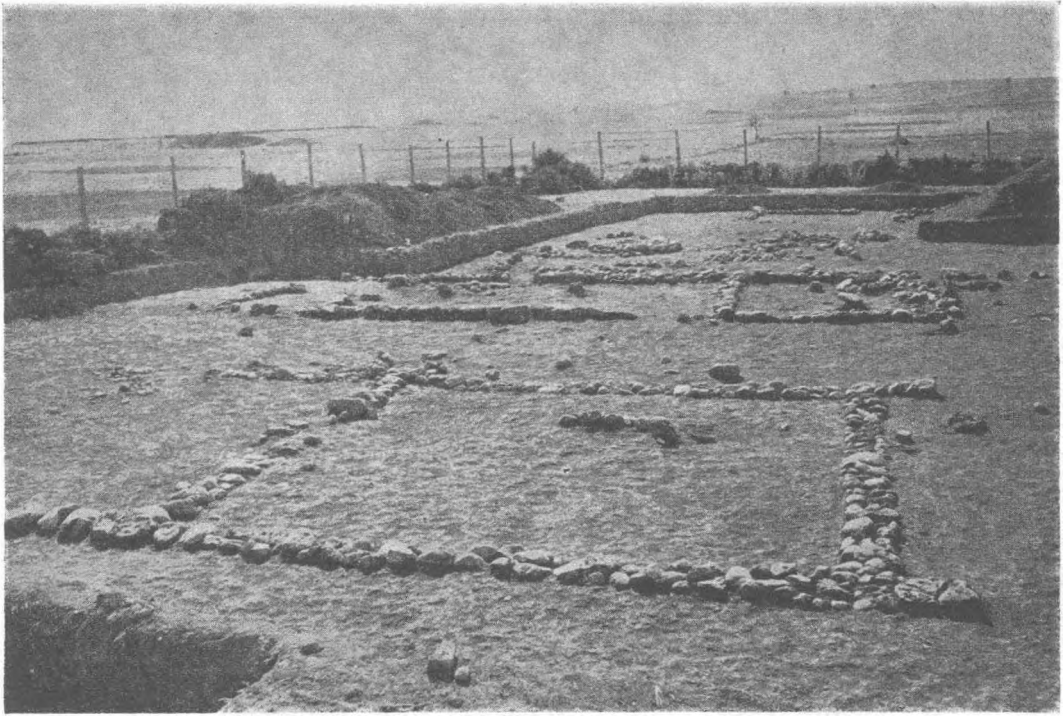


Fig. 9. Trench 35-37. View of houses from north.

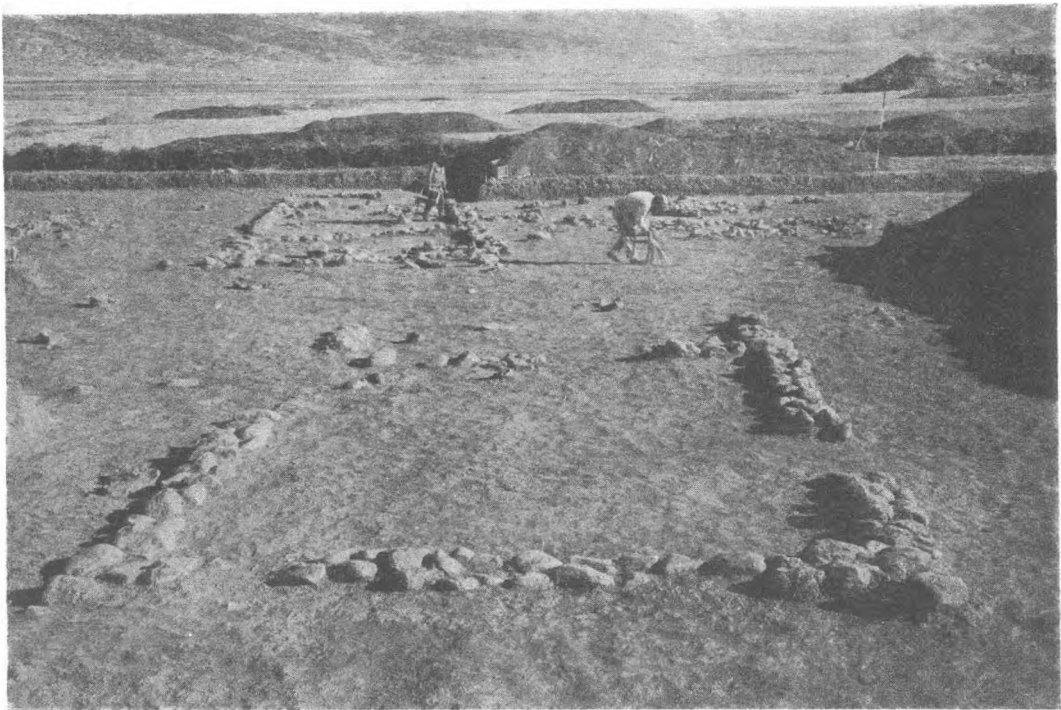


Fig. 10. Trench 35-37. View of houses from west.