

ARSLANTEPE (MALATYA). REPORT ON THE EXCAVATIONS 1971 - 1972

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The Italian Archaeological Mission in Eastern Anatolia, sponsored by the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs and by the National Council of Researches, went on excavating in the Hüyük of Arslantepe in 1971 from August 15th to October 24th and in 1972 from July 25th to October 25th, under the direction of Prof. Salvatore M. Puglisi. The Istituto di Paleontologia of the University of Rome, which has been responsible from the beginning for the organization of the Mission, provided the staff as following: Doct. Alba Palmieri, vicedirector; Doct. Isabella Caneva, archaeologist; Doct. Alberto Palmieri, geologist; Mr. Luciano Narisi, topographer; Mr. Cesare Placidi, draughtsman; Mr. Filiberto Scarpelli, photographer; Miss Gilda Bocconi and Mr. Sergio Angelucci, restorers. Very valuable help was given to the Mission by the representatives of the Turkish Administration of Antiquities and Museums, Miss Seyhan Sayiner and Miss Ayfer Aker, and by the Authorities of the Malatya district.

North-eastern area:

In the North-eastern side of the hüyük the excavations carried out in the neo-hittite levels clearly revealed the overlapping of three defence walls (fig. 1). Indeed it was observed that the last defence wall found in this area, consisting of mudbricks with stone foundation and completely burnt, rests on another wall made in the same way; with this wall which shows no evidence of fire, also belonging to the

neo-hittite period, was concerned presumably the gate located in the close area by Prof. Cl.F.-A. Schaeffer (*Archiv für Orientforschung* XVI, 1952-53, p. 151 ss.)

Remains of the burnt wall belonging to the so called "Imperial Gate" were discovered in the level below. This wall differs from the two later ones because its lower part is represented by solid masonry and it was re-utilized, in the same way as the structures of the "Imperial Gate", to support domestic buildings. These buildings contained, among other furnitures, some bins full with cereals and according to the archaeological material must be ascribed to the neo-hittite period. C14 dates previously obtained for the same level point to the same period while the definite datation concerned with the actual constructing of the gate remains still a problem (S.M. Puglisi, A. Palmieri, *Researches in Malatya District*, T.A.D., XV-II, 1968, p. 82).

Going down with the excavations in the Vb level (Middle Bronze Age), a stone post was discovered which belongs to the entrance of the big gate (fig. 2), which was also re-utilized for domestic purpose and destroyed afterwards by fire (A. Palmieri, *Two years of excavations at Arslantepe*, T.A.D. XIX-II, 1970).

West of the gate, in the slopes of the hüyük, a number of soundings 1 mt. wide and considerably long were carried on into the glacis consisting mostly of fragments of clay rock and flanking the

gate still for a large extent. It was possible to observe that the ancient surface of the slope had been modified by a series of steps in order to avoid the slipping of the glaciis or perhaps to form narrow tracks which could be used for carrying the clay by means of animals (fig. 3).

South of the gate of the Middle Bronze Age, below the fire level connected with the re-utilization of the "Imperial Gate" and above the houses of the V b level which show a re-utilization also of the gate of the Middle Bronze Age, remains of two parallel thick walls were discovered (fig. 4): situation and orientation of these structures seem to indicate that they are a part of the early gallery found some years ago whose later elaboration appeared to be a clear trait (S.M. Puglisi, A. Palmieri, *Researches in the Malatya District*, cit., p. 83).

In the adjacent area levels belonging to period VII continued to be investigated. This cultural facies shows Syro-Mesopotamian connections already pointed out, particularly with the phase F of the Amuq (R.J. Braidwood, *Excavations in the Plain of Antioch*, Chicago 1960, p. 226 ss.; A. Palmieri, *Recenti dati sulla stratigrafia di Arslantepe*, Origini III, p. 13 ss.) and is clearly connected with the Keban area (H. Hauptman, *Die Grabungen auf dem Norsun-tepe*, Keban project 1970 Activities, p. 115; U. Esin, *Tepecik Excavations*, ibidem, p. 157).

A most interesting grave was removed from one of the period VII levels: the grave, entirely preserved and now exhibited in the Museum at Malatya, consist of a contracted body laying on the left side with a furniture of vessels: a cooking pot under each arm, a wheel-made chaff faced bowl with internally bevelled rim, a handmade bowl and a typical red-burnished beaker being inside each other above the feet.

For the first time it was ascertained in the lower levels the utilization of pots

for containing or covering the burials; indeed, the skeleton of a child within a handmade cooking pot (cfr. R.P. Harper, *Pagnik Öreni Excavations*, Keban Project 1969 Activities, pl. 63, 3) and that of an adult covered by half of a chaff-faced pot were found there (figs. 5, 6).

Among the structures, beside the houses usually built with mud-briks, a half-underground dwelling is to be noted (fig. 7), as a result of cutting earlier deposits, about mt 1,80 deep, with stone walls whose lowest part shows remains of plaster which covers also the whole floor. A mud-brik party wall, partially preserved, marked two separate rooms. The plan of the house is about mt. 5 × 3,50.

South-western area:

Moreover during the last two campaigns digging was undertaken in the south-western side of the hüyük, where stratigraphic sequence shows different traits: indeed the deposit appears being made there mostly by the overlapping of prehistoric levels, while substantial remains of neo-hittite period are lacking. In this area the present-day thickness of the archaeological deposits is probably the same as at the end of the Early Bronze Age; these deposits were cut by terraces mosly of Middle Bronze and Roma-Bizantine Age. The morphology of the hüyük is then very like to that one noticed in Tepecik (U. Esin, *op. cit.*). As in Tepecik, just below the surface, a cemetery of Bizantine Age was discovered, in which the bodies of adults and children had been buried lying on their back in simple graves, having the head at west, sometimes sheltered with stones.

Among ninety graves already dug out, some of them appear to cut each other (figs. 8, 9), while only four of them were furnished with objects as personal ornaments carefully made: beads and elaborate glass bracelets, one of them decorated with inlaid work (fig. 10).

In the slopes west of the necropolis Architectural remains of the Middle Bronze Age have been found; these consist of some houses destroyed by fire which were built in terraces and their archaeological material shows remarkable affinity with that from the level V b of the northeastern area of the hüyük. A big pithos is to be noticed, which is ornamented with rib, grooves and the figuration in relief of an animal (fig. 11). Similar levels are also well known from Tepecik (U. Esin, *Tepecik Excavations*, Keban Project 1969 Activities, pp. 122 ss.).

Also to the Middle Bronze Age is probably attributable the most important architectural finding in the new-excavated area: it consists in a large building, covered by fire debris, whose plan measured originally about mt. 9×8 , also surrounded by walls partially built with terrace technique (fig. 12). The western and eastern walls, made by big stones, are very well preserved and their inner surface and the floor are covered by plaster. In the middle of the house a remarkable double horse-shoe hearth had been made with clay, extending in the front into a circular platform, about 2 mt. in diameter, having the edge lightly prominent. Inside the house some features appears to have been modelled with clay: a small circular platform with elevated rim, a bench about two meters wide, rising about 10 cm., extended alongside an entire wall, and three projecting weirs for a wooden corbel whose mark was still visible on the wall. Just in this place a clay object was discovered, having cylindrical shape with enlarged basis, about 20 cm. high, probably a cultual object.

As a result of the collapse of the house a person, probably a woman, lost her life, as it was shown by a skeleton lying on the floor close to the hearth (fig. 13); two simple ear-rings, perhaps of tin, have been found near the head. A considerable number of loom weights gives evidence of intensive weaving activity, while some

of the pots found in situ contained carbonized seeds of wheat and barley. It is difficult at the moment to set this complex into a chronological and cultural frame, and only a generic attribution to the Middle Bronze Age could be considered: the pottery, mostly wheel-made, includes big storage vessels, cooking pots and a black-burnished storage pot with rail rim (fig. 14); a ribbed pedestal (fig. 15) and a vase with peculiar decoration in relief (fig. 16) were also found. The last one can be perhaps compared with some sherds from Tepecik (U. Esin, *Tepecik excavations*, Keban Project 1969 Activities, pl. 90, 4).

The western side of the house proved to have been cut by a paving, perhaps a road of Byzantine age (fig. 17), which has disturbed also some levels of the end of the Early Bronze Age, the period indicated as VI in the stratigraphic sequence observed in the north-eastern area of the hüyük. Some buildings of this period have been excavated, whose dating was clearly ascertained by means of typical black-burnished two-colour and three-colour pottery, well known in the Malatya-Elazığ districts. Indeed strictly related facies have been identified in the Keban area, where especially in Norşuntepe particularly impressive structures of remarkable socio-economic relevance have been uncovered (M. van Loon, *Korucutepe Excavations*, Keban Project 1969 Activities, pl. 43, 3; H. Koşay, *Pulur (Sakyol) Excavations*, *ibid.*, p. 103 ss.; U. Esin, *Tepecik Excavations*, *ibid.*, pl. 92, 2; H. Hauptmann, *Die Grabungen auf dem Norşuntepe*, *ibid.*, pl. 50-52, 58, 60; *id.*, Keban Project 1970 Activities, pl. 61-64, 74-75, 78). In the level ascribed to this period which has been cleared up a number of rooms have been found surrounding a paved area (Fig. 18). Among these a quadrangular structure whose walls built with stones and mud, were covered with plaster in the same way as the pavement, appeared to be cut by some pits and by a Roman bath. Another

building, partially excavated, has shown evident traces of fire; among the material discovered there i. e. mainly big dark-burnished *pithoi* with rail rim and lids with handles, a crucible and a sandstone mould are to be noticed, the last one having the form of a parallelepiped (cm. 22,5 l, cm. 8, 8 w, cm. 6,9 h) with hollows for casting

different objects (axes, chisels, a crossed object) on four of the sides (fig. 19).

From another contiguous building furnished with a mud plastered hearth came out a large part of a vase painted in three colours which is made notable by the figuration of an animal just below the main decorative band (fig. 20).



Fig. 1

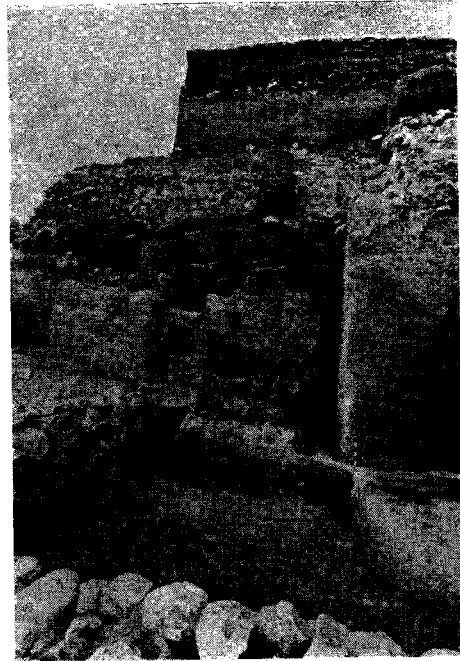


Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4

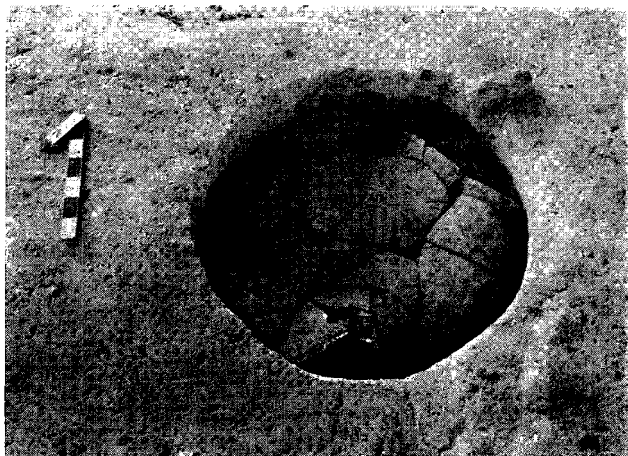


Fig. 5



Fig. 6

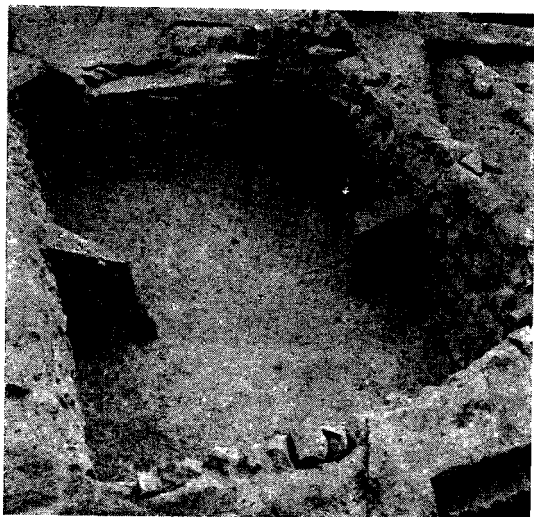


Fig. 7



Fig. 8



Fig. 9

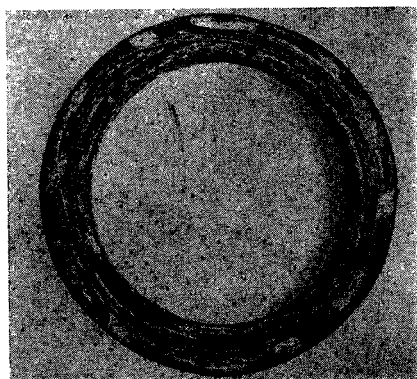


Fig. 10



Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Fig. 13



Fig. 14

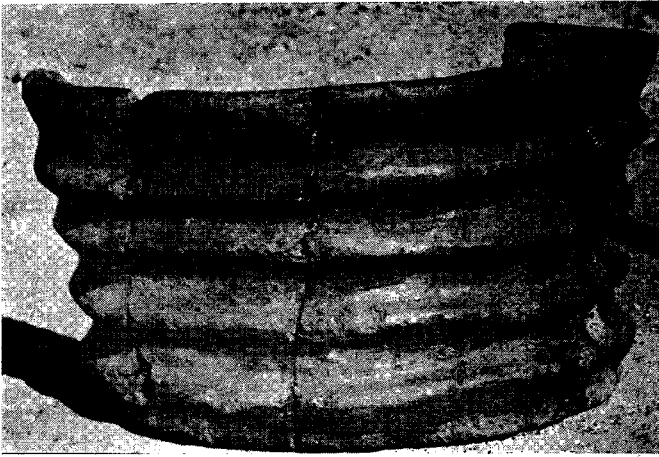


Fig. 15

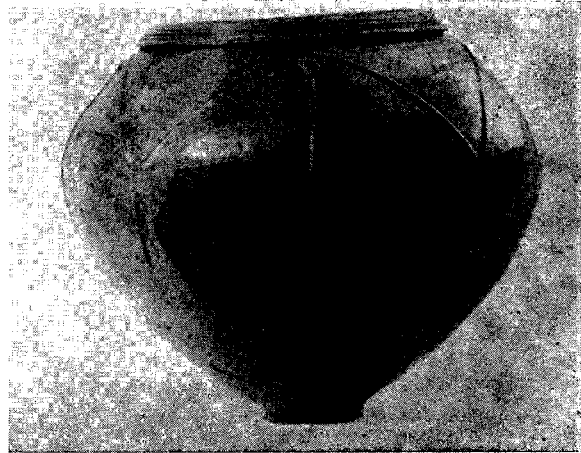


Fig. 16

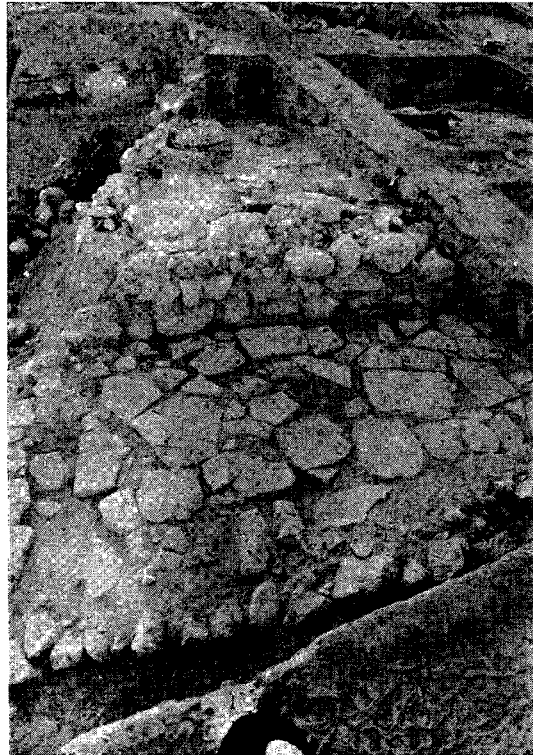


Fig. 17



Fig. 18



Fig. 19

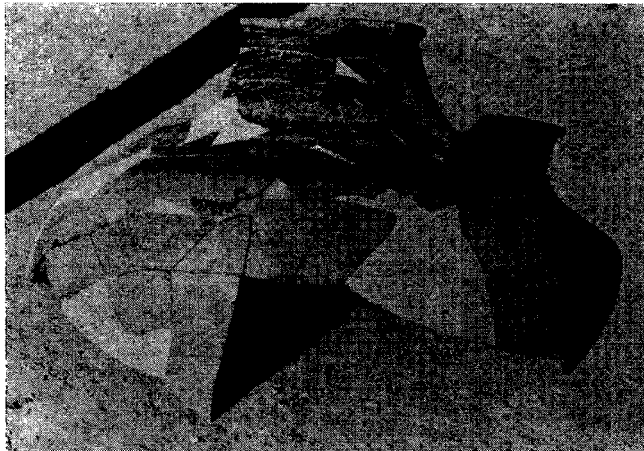


Fig. 20