

HACILAR - BURDUR EXCAVATIONS 1958

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A second season's work was carried out at Hacilar during August and September 1958 by James Mellaart. Mr. Seton Lloyd, Director of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, was also present for part of the time.

Once more we were happy in securing the assistance of Bay Osman Aksoy as representative of the Turkish Government and the help and courtesy of the Vali and local officials at Burdur. We are especially indebted to the Vali, Bay Orhan Kapan for providing a bulldozer at the end of the excavation free of charge to fill in the trenches in accordance with the agreement made with the owners of the fields.

This successful five - weeks season of excavation produced new surprises and added greatly to our knowledge of the earliest settled communities in Anatolia. Nor were they in any sense repetitive, since the new discoveries are for the most part derived from the uppermost chalcolithic level (Level I) and from the earliest neolithic settlement (Levels VI - IX), of which little till now had been learnt.

Level I.

Our conception of the settlement with which we have been dealing as an open village, has this year been superseded by the discovery in Level I of a powerful system of fortifications surrounding it and the evidence of its deliberate destruction by fire. This early chalcolithic fortress, of which we have so far been able to excavate no more than a dozen chambers and an entrance passage, was constructed of mudbrick on a foundation of stone (Figs. 1, 2). Its walls varied in thickness from 1,5 to 2,5 metres and were preserved in some rooms to a height of over two metres. It is the earliest example of a military defense construction yet discovered in

Anatolia, antedating the fortress recorded by Professor J. Garstang in his sixteenth level at Mersin by a full thousand years.

The construction of the fortress involved a preparatory re-shaping of the existing mound, around which it was built; and the cutting of a terrace to receive its foundations involved the demolition and removal of a similar fortification belonging to Level II and the remains of earlier occupations to a depth of about three metres. As a result, the foundations themselves rested directly upon the remains of the neolithic settlement—a fortunate circumstance of which we did not fail to take advantage.

Unlike the Mersin XVI fortress, which consisted of a single row of chambers built against a strong enclosure wall, the Hacilar fortification was composed less regularly of communicating chambers with abnormally thick walls, arranged as many as three deep around the periphery of the settlement. Doors between them were no more than 0.60 m. wide. Each chamber had a hearth and the larger ones, internal buttresses, notholes, platforms etc. like domestic dwellings: but the thickness of the walls, the absence of pottery or objects in situ on the floors and the enormous deposit (over two metres thick) of burnt debris and ashes which filled them and was found to contain literally tons of pottery, as well as quantities of burnt human bones, all suggested the existence of an upper storey, perhaps lightly constructed of timber and used for residential purposes in the summer months, as is the normal practice today in Anatolian village houses. It was evidently this upper structure that had collapsed into the chambers beneath as a result of the fire, carrying with it the defenders of

the fortress and their belongings. The whole fortress had apparently been in use for a considerable length of time, since it showed signs of periodical strengthening and repairs. After the fire, also, there were traces of at least two successive occupations by squatters.

The size of the fortress, the preparation of its site, and the fact that it appears to have been completely constructed in one operation, all tends to suggest that we are here dealing not with a mere village community but with the central authority controlling a considerable province, of which Hacilar may well have been the administrative capital. The quantity of pottery collected from its ruins is extraordinary. Our estimate of more than a hundred thousand sherds is a conservative one and not less than sixty complete vessels were reconstructed and sent to the Ankara Archeological Museum, while many more can be restored on paper for publication.

Out of this great volume of sherds, about forty or fifty show a new technique of surface ornament (though the shapes on the whole are not much different), of white paint on a pink or red background (Fig. 3). Combined with other features, such as horned handles, strap handles from neck to body, new bowl shapes, etc., these form a link with the Late Chalcolithic culture discovered this year in the deepest levels of the sounding at Beycesultan (Levels XL - XX). It is, therefore, unlikely that any considerable chronological gap (let alone an intermediate "Middle Chalcolithic" culture), will be found to separate the final occupation at Hacilar from the earliest at Beycesultan - a satisfactory circumstance, since the stratigraphic sequence for Southwest Anatolia would thus be completed, but for the stages between the Mesolithic and the beginning of Hacilar.

The most common technique of the Level I pottery at Hacilar, however, was *red-on-white*, as in the earlier levels: but the patterns with the exception of spirals and meanders, are all geometrical. The

ingenuity of the potters in the invention of designs is most remarkable, no two vessels being alike. Some continuity is discernible between Levels I and II, but this is a continuity of technique rather than of shapes and patterns. The Level I shapes are as ingenious as the patterns. In addition to circular vessels (Fig. 4) there are oval or rectangular bowls on circular bases, others that are subrectangular or lozenge-shaped, while jars are often shaped like a Rugby football. About 75 percent of the pottery shows painted ornament.

Figurines are again common in Level I, but have distinctive forms. Seated figures are now found and one of these had the navel emphasised by an inlay of obsidian. Others are conventionalised so that they begin to resemble the "fiddle" type familiar in later times. Several vessels of anthropomorphic shape in the form of a seated goddess, fully dressed, with plastically modelled nose, ears and arms and occasionally with eyes inlaid in obsidian, occur for the first time in this level. Painted animal figures were also common. Stone tools were found, some of them complete with the bone or antler handle in which they were set.

Taking advantage of their proximity below the Level I fortress, a further examination was made of the neolithic levels. The mud-brick walls of dwelling houses on stone foundations were found in Levels VI and VIII and new observations made regarding the stratification. It was now found that painted pottery with some oval shapes (Fig. 5) and figurines all occur as early as the first occupation (Level IX). Painted pottery becomes more common in Levels VII and VI and predominant in Level V (beginning of early chalcolithic). There is in fact no break to account for the transition from "neolithic" to "chalcolithic" and this terminology, adopted from the parallel development at Mersin, accordingly becomes disutable. A lump of native copper was found in the deepest level of all.