

## THE 1969 EXCAVATION AT KORUCUTEPE NEAR ELÂZİĞ

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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 second campaign of excavations at Korucutepe from August 15 to November 15, 1969<sup>1</sup>. The results of this season's work may be summarized as follows :

### *1 - The Early Bronze Age Settlement (about 2900-2600 B. C.)*<sup>2</sup>.

At the north edge of the table-shaped mound, excavation has gradually revealed the domestic part of a large prehistoric village establishment. East of the mud brick walls that we think enclosed the residential quarters, a walled patio measuring at least  $9 \times 7$  m contained a spacious array of clay and mud-plaster household appointments: three or four rectangular hearth platforms of up to  $3 \times 1.50 \times 25$  m; circular sunk fireplaces; a circular fireplace raised like a table top, with traces of a horseshoe-shaped hearth; a fixed horseshoe-shaped hearth and two grain bins (Fig. 1). Holes filled with charcoal near the corners of the rectangular platforms mark the spots where posts held up the roof. Over all of this a ceiling made of oak beams and rushes had burned and collapsed, burying the inventory of the patio.

The use of full-grown oaks hints at richer natural resources available in the

<sup>1</sup> For the 1968 results, see Maurits van Loon and Giorgio Buccellati, "The 1968 Excavation at Korucutepe near Elâziğ," *Türk Arkeoloji Dergisi* 17 (1968), pp. 79-82.

<sup>2</sup> See the carbon dates at the end of this article.

3rd millennium B. C. The rushes indicate that marshy conditions may have prevailed at the time.

Botanist Willem van Zeist from the University of Groningen, Netherlands identified the plant remains and found the local villagers of the 3rd millennium depended heavily on agriculture (we had learned before that cattlegrazing was another mainstay of their economy). Many thousands of charred grains of bread wheat and two-rowed barley, as well as remains of lentils, chick peas, field peas, grapes, acorns and pistachies, were recovered from in and around the storage jars and cooking pots crushed by the roof fall just described.

These hand - turned dung - tempered black vessels as well as the red or brown eating and drinking bowls found on the "table" nearby give us the complete, very limited range of Early Bronze II pottery shapes. With all these highly burnished vessels we found one piece of the Early Bronze II red on yellow painted ware with a design of hatched triangles under a wavy line. On the burned floor there was an almost complete goblet in the dainty, wheel - turned, very high - fired gray to orange ware that was made in northeast Syria and north Mesopotamia in the Early Dynastic III and Akkad periods<sup>3</sup>.

In the Early Bronze Age tool kit one can likewise see a survival of early techniques, which produced allover - retouched

<sup>3</sup> M. E. L. Mallowan, "Excavations at Brak and Chagar Bazar," *Iraq* 9 (1947), pp. 29-31; Anton Moortgat, *Tell Chuera in Nordost-Syrien...* 1963 (Cologne, 1965), pp.-15, 41-40.41

barbed arrowheads of obsidian (Fig. 2), side by side with pins made of copper and "Canaanite" chert sickle blades.

A partly wheel - turned grit - tempered pottery painted in black on white with zigzag panels, etc. occurs in shapes known from the Old Assyrian merchant colony at Kültepe and through this link with written history we can date it about 1950-1750 B. C. From sporadic finds of this ware we know that the southern extension to our mound was resettled in that time, but it was only between 1700 and 1600 B. C. that Korucutepe (whatever its ancient name) took on importance as a fortified town.

### 2 - The "Old Hittite" Settlement (about 1700-1600 B. C.)<sup>2</sup>.

An area with a diameter of 160 m was surrounded by a double stone foundation, packed with mountain clay to support a mud brick and wood city wall 6 m wide. At intervals of 16 m we found square towers 8 m wide (Fig. 3). At two points such towers flanked a sloping passage which may have served as a sally port.

In the best preserved of these, perilously overhanging walls stand up to 3 m over a floor that slopes down into ground water and off towards the fields beyond the mound. The pottery we find in the city wall system consists mostly of wares not known outside of eastern Anatolia, such as the technologically very perfected "gray wheel - marked" ware. Only occasional finds like that of a "lentoid flask" of Old Hittite type (Fig. 4)<sup>4</sup> had helped us assign it a tentative date between 1750 and 1500 B. C., which found some confirmation in a seal and seal impression encountered nearby. This has now been narrowed down to 1700-1600 B. C. by radiocarbon tests<sup>2</sup>.

Excavating toward the inside of the mound at the other passage we found

<sup>4</sup> Cf. Franz Fischer, *Die hethitische Keramik von Boğazköy* (WVDOG 75, Berlin, 1963), fig. 18, no. 468 (1650-1400); fig. 19, no. 489 (1850-1750 B. C.).

that the town area was not built up right away. By the time of its destruction in the middle of the 2nd millennium B. C., the charred beams, burned mud bricks and calcined limestone of the fortifications fell into an empty space behind the city wall. Subsequently the east part of the mound lay abandoned during a period long enough for 1 1/2 m of wash to accumulate.

The south slope, however, was soon reoccupied. In the level overlying the destroyed city wall here a Middle Hittite "vat"<sup>5</sup> was found in 1968<sup>1</sup>. Samples from the Middle Hittite levels have yielded dates around 1600 B. C.<sup>2</sup>.

The destruction of the city wall may be connected with any number of known or unknown historical events. One of these is the weakening of Hittite power and the strengthening of their Hurrian enemies. The struggle between these two powers lasted into the 15th century B. C.

### 3 - The Hittite Empire Settlement (about 1400-1150 B. C.)<sup>2</sup>.

Soon afterwards, in the 14th century, Hittite power reasserted itself. Our area (the country of Ishuwa, governed by elders) lost its independence and became a vassal kingdom under the Hittite Empire (about 1400-1150 B. C.). The possessions which the new inhabitants of Korucutepe broke, discarded and lost down their drains or between the stones of their pavements do not differ greatly from those found, for instance, at Tarsus, another Hittite Empire stronghold<sup>6</sup>.

Within the levels strewn with Hittite Empire orange pottery we think we can now distinguish a 14th-century B. C. occupation from the terminal Hittite Empire phase of the 13th century B. C. The first is represented by a house-lined street which was built after the period of abandonment over the east passage (Fig.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, fig. 18, no. 969 (1650-1400); fig. 19, no. 983 (1650-1400) B.C.).

<sup>6</sup> Hetty Goldman, *Excavations at Gözlü Kule, Tarsus II* (Princeton, 1956), The "Late Bronze Age" (passim).

5). On the northwest slope of the mound we dug through yellow-plastered stone houses with similar pottery. This is usually finished with a slip or a burnish. Bronze pins and needles are another common find.

The 13th-century complex is known from the trash pits that we painstakingly emptied in the center of the mound. They contained quite a few decorated marble spindle whorls and much pottery without surface finish (Fig. 6), such as "miniature bowls" and "platters"?. Their purpose must have been an everyday one, to judge by the quantities in which they turn up.

The organic remains from the Hittite trash pits showed a continuation of the same agriculture-based economy as before. Wheat outnumbered barley by about three to one. Wild foods collected included gruz and hackberry. An additional aim in emptying the pits was to recover more of the conical lumps of clay on which 13th-century B. C. officials would stamp their personal seal, containing their name and title, to secure shipments. To our collection of 12 such *bullae* from last year another two were added this year.

#### 4 - *The Transitional and Full Early Iron Age settlement (about 1150-800 B.C.)*<sup>2</sup>.

Excavation on the west slope has given us some significant insights into what happened after the fall of the Hittite Empire about 1150 B. C. Into soil still thick with Hittite "platter" sherds, a monumental mud brick building with 2 1/2 cm-thick plaster was sunk. Its red

and gray mud bricks on stone foundations can be followed around the mound edge for 10 m. The top courses of brick had burned and fallen, covering an iron knife or sickle and some extremely interesting storage jars and smaller vessels. Some were turned on the fast wheel according to Hittite mass-production methods, others are slow-wheel or even hand-turned and decorated with diagonal incisions or with pairs of "breasts." This latter ware is a hallmark of the subsequent full Early Iron Age level (about 1000-800 B. C.), discovered in 1968<sup>1</sup>. By the looks of it we have now hit a transitional stage that fills the gap between 1150 and 1000 B. C. and quite substantial remains of it must survive inside our mound.

Over its top lie two more levels. The first had low stone foundations and a bathtub-shaped oven. The second contained high stone walls with rounded corners, enclosing another hoard of pottery-this time all slow-wheel or hand-turned pieces with red burnish or other finishes typical of the full Early Iron Age (about 1000-800 B. C.).

Some fragments of similar vessels have been found 60 km east of our site, at the citadel of Palu, which was conquered about 800 B. C. by Menua, king of Urartu and prince of Van, according to an inscription he carved on the rock. The origin of the people who supplanted the Hittites at Korucutepe may therefore have to be sought to the east.

#### *Radiocarbon dates.*

The University of Pennsylvania College Department of Physics has kindly communicated the following results of dating tests on charcoal samples from Korucutepe.

<sup>1</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 204, fig. 327, no. 1176; fig. 317, no. 1118.

<sup>2</sup> See Elizabeth K. Ralph and Henry N. Michael, "University of Pennsylvania Radiocarbon Dates XII," *Radiocarbon* 11 (1969), pp. 469-481.

Sample No.	Context	Pretreatment	5568 Half-life Dates		5730 Half-life	MASCA corrected 5730 Half-life
			B.P. (1950)	B.C.	Date B.C.	Date8 B.C.
P-1618	Early Bronze I, 6 m below patio	NaOH	4224 ± 62	2274	2401	2851
P-1617-A	Early Bronze II, 1/3 m below patio	—	4106 ± 65	2156	2280	2730
P-1617-B		NaOH	4074 ± 64	2124	2247	2697
P-1629	Early Bronze II, floor of patio	—	3963 ± 65	2013	2132	2582
P-1628		—	3989 ± 64	2039	2159	2609
P-1614	"Old Hittite," passage through city wall	NaOH	3321 ± 165*	1370	1471	1721
P-1627		NaOH	3270 ± 51	1320	1419	1669
P-1613		NaOH	3222 ± 65	1271	1368	1618
P-1616	"Middle Hittite," 1/2 m above des- troyed city wall	—	3247 ± 63	1297	1395	1645
P-1615	"Middle Hittite," 1 1/2 m above des- troyed city wall	NaOH	3244 ± 59	1294	1392	1642
P-1612	Terminal Hittite Empire, pit with seal impressions	NaOH	2871 ± 63	921	1008	1108
P-1611		—	2924 ± 57	974	1062	1162
P-1626	Full Early Iron, rounded stone building with pottery hoard	NaOH	2921 ± 71	971	1059	1159

\* Undersized

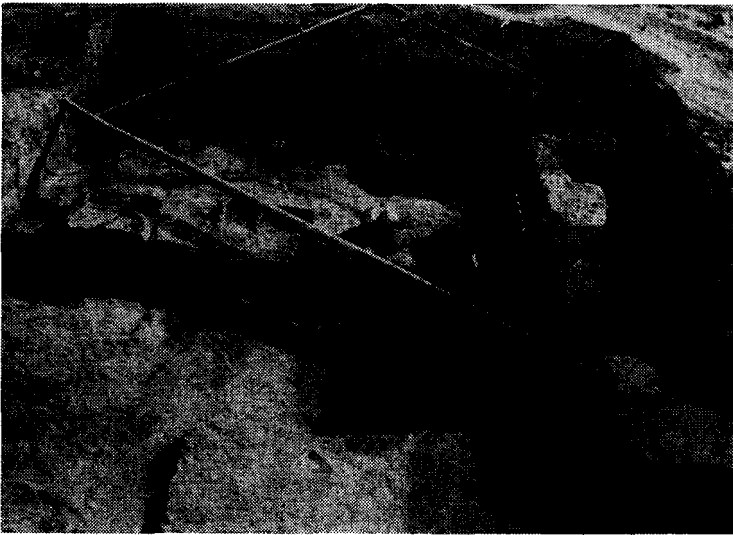


Fig. 1 - Patio with hearth platforms and sunk fireplace at Korucutepe, Turkey, about 2600 B. C. the irrigation pipes are modern

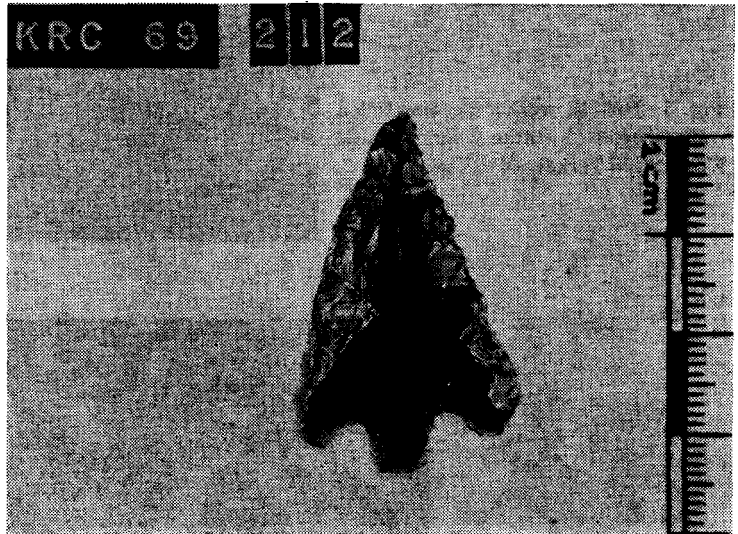


Fig. 2 - Obsidian arrowhead from Korucutepe, Turkey. About 2600 B. C.

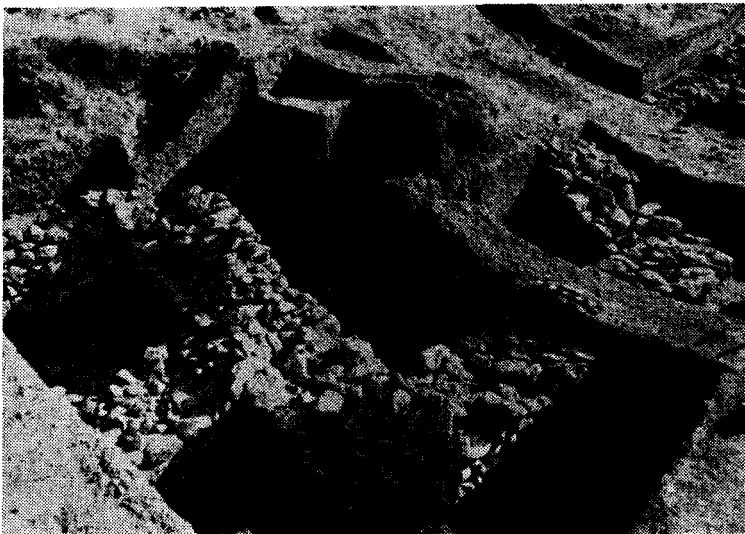
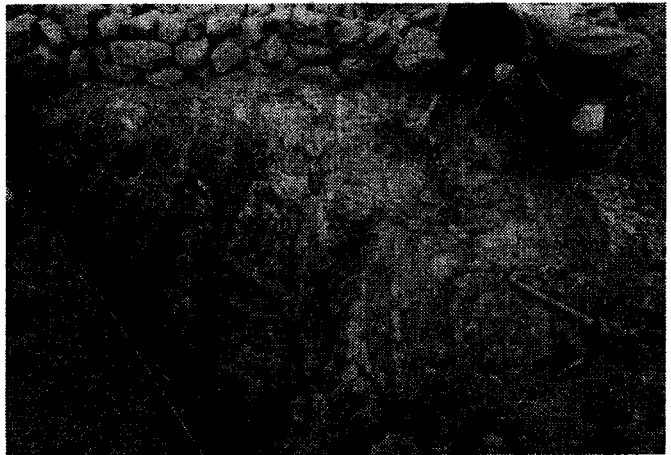


Fig. 3 - Stone founded tower and parallel walls of fortification system at Korucutepe, Turkey. About 1700 - 1600 B. C.



**Fig. 4 - Brown burnished lentoid flask found in passage of fortification system at Korucutepe Turkey. About 1700-1600 B.C.**

**Fig. 5 - Turkish worker cleaning fallen ceiling beams of Hittite Empire house. Korucutepe Turkey. 14th Century B. C.**



**Fig. 6 - Part of relief decorated pottery vessel of the Hittite Empire. Korucutepe, Turkey. 13th Century B. C.**