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HACILAR EXCAVATIONS 1960

James MELLAART

The fourth season of excavations at Hacilar lasted from 1st. August till 7th. September. In spite of a number of difficulties such as shortage of staff, workmen and time, a most successful season of work was accomplished. The Assistant Director was in charge, ably assisted by Mrs. Mellaart (housekeeping, accounts, registry and photography), Miss Clare Goff (surveyor) and Mr. David French (pottery). Bay İ. Ebcioglu represented the Turkish Department of Antiquities. Once more the expedition lived in the large school building.

We are much indebted to the Vali of Burdur, Bay Ziya Önder, who not only took an active interest in the progress of the work, but undertook to fill in the excavations by bulldozer after we had left. Other visitors included the Maarif Müdürü, the Garrison Commander of Burdur, the Jandarma Komutanı and other notables, both military and civil from Burdur.

An average of forty men were employed on the dig, some from Beycesultan and others from the villages of Hacilar and Karaçal (who turned out to be more satisfactory than the locals). Veli Karaaslan was again our foreman and the success of the dig is in no small measure due to him and to the skill of our Ustas, Rifat Çelimli, Mustafa Duman, Mehmet Kurt and Mustafa Arı, all Beycesultan men.

The 1960 season was devoted to an examination of the lower levels, III-IX, which had only been reached in

limited soundings in previous seasons. For this purpose we chose an area contiguous to that of the 1957 sounding so that the building levels could be tied up with the floors found there. This involved some laborious shifting of dumps of the previous seasons, but once these difficulties had been overcome we found the same number of building levels as encountered before.

A second sounding was undertaken some twenty-five metres further west as a check and here a completely different sequence of building levels was found. A narrow trench was then dug to connect the two soundings and establish the stratigraphic relations between both areas. Virgin soil was reached over a distance of some fifty metres in the middle of the mound.

Descending below level II, it was found that Levels III and IV were represented in the main (P) area by domestic courtyards like those of Level II a, found last year. It would appear that the houses of those settlements lay not directly below those of the level II settlement, but further north in the unexcavated northern half of the mound. The settlements of Levels III and IV, it would appear, spread over a larger area of the mound than that of Level II. Each contained at least a number of floors and in the P area, seven burials were found in an open area below the Level IV floor. These were all simple contracted burials with no consistent orientation, in shallow oval earth graves. Each was accompanied by a monochrome red burnished bowl.

Level v, only represented by a floor in the 1957 sounding, proved to be an ephemeral layer without any traces of buildings of a permanent nature, at least in the areas of the mound which we excavated. One has the impression that the survivors of the disaster that laid the sixth level in ashes merely squatted for some time among the ruins before they were again able to reconstruct the settlement in Level iv. Far more monochrome pottery was found in V deposits than our original sounding suggested, and in many respects Level V represents the impoverished survivors of Level VI.

The clearance of a sector of the burnt Level VI settlement proved the climax of the 1960 season. This, the last late Neolithic, settlement was only known to us from a number of floors and one thin wall found in 1957 and 1958, which gave but little indication of its character. One could not have guessed that two yards away there were burnt buildings standing six feet high! Nor that these could be found immediately below the western houses of the Level II settlement in area Q.

The earlier Late Neolithic levels, VII-IX, on the other hand, turned out to be of much less importance. It would appear that Level VII is not much more than an early form (or floor) of VI. Levels VII and IX also would seem to be two floors of one building level, characterised by stone walls on virgin soil. No house plans of Levels VII-IX were found and it would appear these earliest settlers left rather ephemeral structures, at least in the areas excavated. In the Q area also, no structures which could be assigned to levels VIII-IX were found except courtyard floors covered with broken bones and pottery. The excellence of the earliest pottery, the sophisticated fragments of figurines and a very fine piece of stone carving- as well

as the thickness of the wellbuilt stone walls (1 m. thick) however suggest that the earliest buildings may well be more substantial on other parts of the mound.

The burnt Late Neolithic settlement of Level VI.

Eight houses of the Level VI settlement were excavated in areas P and Q and the long trench R gave us the length of the court around which they appear to have been arranged. Many of the houses were preserved to a height of six feet and windows were found in two. The walls, about 1 m. wide were built of large planoconvex bricks on a stone foundation and covered with several layers of plaster. Doorways were wide and evidently had double doors. Rooms were rectangular: each house consisting apparently of a single room of to up 8.5x 5.5 m., with at least one portion partitioned off by a plastered screen. The houses were entered by a doorway in the middle of the long side and when entering the house one faced a hearth and oven against the back wall. Many houses have great wall cupboards or niches, well raised above the floor. One house has a mudbrick cupboard in the form of a pillar of brick with three superimposed niches. Next to it was found a well plastered peephole into the next house, which was eventually bricked up by the neighbour. Plastered bins and platforms are a feature of every house; tables and grinding platforms occur in most of the best built houses. A carefully constructed and plastered stairway led to the upper storey, which was supported by a longitudinal row of four stout posts. Apart from the oven (domed but with a flat top) and the rectangular hearth, there are fireboxes for glowing embers in most rooms. Floors are made of beautifully smoothed plaster of clay with a lime admixture. The wallplaster was originally white.

These Late Neolithic people were evidently successful farmers. Great deposits of wheat were found in each house, either stored in bins of various shapes or heaps on the floor (probably in sacks.) Barley was less common than wheat, and lentils and peas and vetch are frequent. Seeds of hemp were found in several houses.

No animal bones littered the floors, for domestic rubbish was carefully swept into refuse pits in the courtyard. Querns of all sizes were found with the broken wheat, peas and lentils still on them. Pounders and pestles abound. The pottery was all red and buff monochrome, painting being rare and confined to vertical stripes. Stone bowls, often of great sophistication were more numerous than in any later level, but in shape they imitate the pottery and not the other way round. Many had three or four stumpy feet and vertical tubular lugs are frequent. Not less than six complete sickles of polished deer antler were found; two with their chert blades, set in a V-shaped groove. Equally characteristic were bone spatulae, the finer ones with handles ending in animal heads carved with great delicacy.

Great numbers of polishing stones in white limestone and haematite were found, as well as Jade-like small celts and miniature chisels. Stone beads and pendants were common, a variety of materials, including obsidian being used. Children played with fine stone marbles, and most houses had a stock of knuckle bones of cattle, a game called *asık*, still played in Anatolia. Game counters of clay were found with them and an incised clay plaque is either a gaming board or a drawing of the plan of a house.

Another feature of Level VI is the occurrence of complicated therionorphic vessels - unfortunately fragmentary - but of surprising size and naturalism. One

shows recumbent quadrupeds, another a bull; still another a bird shape. A small vessel has two pigs' heads back to back and a most remarkable cup or rhyton is fashioned in the form of a woman's head and neck, with plastic nose, ears, bun, grooved eyes and hair. Trade and prospecting are well attested. Lumps of copper are occurred in several houses; obsidian of several varieties was imported and widely used. Pumice stone was fashioned into grinders. Fossil shells were collected for the manufacture of rings and bracelets. Fresh water mussels provided the mother of pearl used for pendants. Sea shells, dentalium and cockle, came from the Mediterranean. In the corner of one house was found a roll of bark of a coniferous tree. Lumps of red ochre - found on the shore of Lake Eğirdir - occurred in nearly every house. Miniature marble pestles and mortars attest the use of cosmetics. Mat impressions are frequent. Slingstones and maceheads are the only weapons found.

More than in any later level there were found in every house traces of domestic cult. Slabs of stone up to a foot high, were incised with a pair of eyes, the outline of hair on top of the head and a line for the chin. In one house this miniature stele actually lay next to a small pedestal of two steps, carefully plastered, from which it might have fallen. Flat clay plaques with a more naturalistic representation of the deity, occurred in two houses. Both had legs and arms and features were incised.

In a niche in house I, area Q there was a deposit of schematised figurines with a hole for a pegshaped wooden head, unfortunately carbonised. These figurines are closely related to the same sitting type as is found at the Late Neolithic site of Çukurkent and help to date it. With the schematised figurines lay five smoothed clay bars. The deposit was unbaked. Behind a parti-

tion lay another figurine grotesquely steatopygous and crude and again with a small hole for a wooden head or stick. Another had no head but two raised arms, like a small figurine in green stone, used as a pendant or charm. It is fortunate that we were able to extend, for during the last days of the excavation we found in three houses a collection of c. 40 clay statuettes of such variety, interest and beauty as to revolutionise one's ideas about "neolithic" figurines. Instead of schematic figurines, there is here a naturalism already observed in the animal carvings of the spoon handles and in the theriomorphic vessels which far outstrips anything in the later levels on the site. The statuettes were unbaked which shows that they were made on the site. A group of heads was found in a pot near the oven, ready for baking. Unlike the stereotyped figures of the later levels, we find here a great variety of forms, but all of the female deity. She is shown standing, with her arms straight down her side (up to 10 ins. high or more judging by some fragments), standing and holding her breasts, either naked or with a loin-cloth, an apron or dressed in a robe indicated in white paint. Although usually steatopygous, some figures, distinguished by pigtailed instead of a bun of hair at the back of the head, appear to represent the goddess as a young girl. Other have pendulous breasts, still others show her legs tucked under her or seated. A large statuette shows her in a sleeping position; another shows her squatting. A most remarkable group shows a seated or squatting goddess with a child. In one a small child stands next to her, embracing her, another shows her seated with a bigger child climbing up on her lap. Still another shows her as the "Mistress of Animals" seated on a throne, in the form of a leopard whose tail curves up her back. She is shown embracing a sprawled animal, which judging by its

tail is a small leopard. Still another seated figurine shows her with a small-child clinging to her back. Another seated figurine has two animal tails on the back, probably from a leopard throne which is missing. Most of these figurines are unbaked and need extensive treatment.

Level VI is dated by Carbon 14 to about 5500 B. C. and I need hardly point out that no other level at any other excavated site in the Near East of comparable date has produced such a number of unique art objects.

The Aceramic Levels.

Descending below the level of the burnt houses of Level VI in area Q in order to test the stratigraphy, we made our second most important discovery of the season.

Instead of producing evidence for levels VIII and IX (the lower floors in these houses can be counted as level VII) we came upon a deposit, 5 ft. deep of building levels, distinguished by the total absence of pottery (and figurines). Below this we again reached virgin soil, and it could be observed that these levels sloped both in a northern and eastern direction, fading out in the direction of our other sounding.

From these observations it is clear that under area Q there lay an earlier shallow mound, preceding level IX-the earliest level with (Late Neolithic) pottery-on the site.

The top of this earlier mound showed all the signs of prolonged denudation. Walls had crumbled and only fragments of floors had survived the ravages of time. There is a profound stratigraphical hiatus between the end of the aceramic mound and the beginning of the Late Neolithic one and this is evident from the pottery development. It is inconceivable that Hacilar IX could have developed directly out of the aceramic culture. The Hacilar Late Neolithic (IX-VI) culture evidently had a long ceramic ancestry,

such as one can probably trace at Kızılkaya and the Konya Plain, if not right back to the ceramic final mesolithic of Beldibi. Theorising in a previous report I doubted whether an aceramic culture could have existed in "Neolithic" South-eastern Anatolia. It evidently does, but what is its date? Perhaps Carbon 14 can help us there.

The aceramic deposits form a proper mound, which still rises to about 5 ft. above virgin soil. Lack of time prevented us from digging it over the whole extent of the area, but the following points could be established:

- a) At least seven superimposed floor levels could be established, which may correspond to as many building phases.
- b) walls are built of proper mudbrick (72 x 28 x 8 cms.) of a greenish colour with much wheat-straw, properly bonded (headers and stretchers) with black mud mortar. Outer walls are about 1 m. thick, but interior walls are one brick thick (c. 20-30 cms.)
- c) Great courtyard floors of green to yellow mud plaster carried groups of ovens and hearths, each built with mud-brick curbs plastered over and with floors laid on pebbles or stones, baked hard as cement by use.
- d) The floors of important rooms were laid on small stones or pebbles covered with a lime plaster, which curved where it met the wall and was continued up it. These walls were painted light red or crimson, and burnished. About six square of floor 2 was painted in red on buff plaster leaving a broad reserve band round a plastered circular depression in the middle of the floor. Other fragments show the use of red painted stripes on cream plaster.
- e) None of these floors shows any sign of destruction and the settlement was evidently deserted. The courtyard floors were covered with thick deposits of burnt straw (not rushes). This with the ovens

suggests that agriculture was practised. f) Animal bones are badly splintered, but include sheep, goat, cattle, deer and tortoise.

g) The scarcity of objects is noteworthy. Not a single sherd of pottery, nor a single fragment of figurine was found. The only finds are a fine bone awl, and a number of small chert and *obsidian blades*.

h) On floor 3 a detached human skull rested supported on two stones. On floor 5 the detached skull of a baby was found and below the lowest floor (7) of plaster but without stone base there were found on virgin soil two upright human skulls, propped up on stones. In no case was there any trace of skeletons

It is difficult not to regard these skulls as connected with a skull cult such as is well attested at Jericho and Eynan, the origins of which can be traced back to the Lower Natufian at the latter site.

In view of the evident parallelism-plaster floors mud-brick architecture, incipient agriculture and animal domestication, absence of pottery-and the preservation of ancestors' skulls that can now be established between aceramic Hacilar and pre-pottery neolithic B of Jericho - it might be tempting to invoke the radio-carbon dates from Jericho- (6250 and 5800 B. C.) suggesting a range of 6500-5500 B. C. for that culture - to help date Hacilar.

There are some difficulties though, for unlike the excavation at Jericho we have to accommodate a whole early neolithic culture with pottery preceeding Hacilar IX, which may have started in rough terms c. 5600 B. C. It seems difficult to allow less than a millennium for this culture, which would bring one to a date near 6500 B. C. Unless the Hacilar region presents a back-water in the Early Neolithic (with pottery) which is hard to believe as Early Neolithic pottery occurs only 50 miles away, one would feel happier to date the aceramic of Hacilar before

the middle of the 7 th. millenium. After all there is good pottery in the final mesolithic at Beldibi, 80 miles away.

Whatever the eventual date of the Hacilar aceramic will turn out to be, we must remember that Dr. Kathleen Kenyon has established that pre-pottery neolithic B culture with its plaster floors has no antecedents at Jericho and repre-

sents a foreign culture introduced from elsewhere.

Whether aceramic cultures with plaster are a feature of pre-Early Neolithic (with pottery) Anatolian cultures, (there is evidence for Early Neolithic with red plaster floors at a number of sites in Western Anatolia) only more extensive excavation on Anatolian sites can reveal.