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REPORT ON THE 1967 CAMPAIGN AT ARSLANTEPE (MALATYA)

Dott. Paolo Emilio PECORELLA

The Italian Archaeological Mission in Eastern Anatolia, sponsored by the Institute of Palethnology of the University of Rome, with contributions of the National Centre for the Researches and the Centre for the Antiquities and History of Art of the Near East, resumed its work at Arslantepe in the Spring of 1967. Professor S.M. Puglisi, Director of the Mission, was unable to participate in the work. Therefore, the Mission was temporarily directed by myself; other member included Dr. E. Equini, archaeologist; I. Montalto and G. Fedrighelli, draftsmen; and R. Medini, restorer. In its usual friendly spirit of collaboration, the Turkish Department of Antiquities gave official assistance through Mr. Mehmet Turgut.

Owing to the reduced staff, we concentrated on the study and re-examination of the material recovered in the 1961 through 1966 campaigns. The storehouses were rearranged and the pottery fragments re-observed and classified. The most important pieces were shaped and photographed, and, when possible, restored and completed. Descriptions and shapes, arranged according to the levels and the find-spots, were prepared for the publication of the next preliminary report of the excavations, *Malatya II*, which we hope to publish in 1969. We were thus able to confirm the conclusions, expressed by Prof. S.M. Puglisi in his previous report; *i.e.*, the substantial cultural continuity of Arslantepe from Hittite imperial levels to the Neo-hittite and "Hellenistic" ones. In fact, quite apart from some characteristic shapes which can be matched in Central Anatolia, the pottery shows little

change-except some variations in the slip, which in Hittite imperial levels is brownish or reddish, with, sometimes, drippings of colour, and in Neo-hittite levels is orange or yellowish. From the "gallery", partially excavated in 1966, we obtained a beautiful and interesting set of ware with red or orange slip and incised motives on reserved bands, which, possibly, is of Eastern origin. Among the restored vases we can mention a beautiful hand-made storage vessel, blackish on the exterior and brownish on the interior, h. 1.50 *ca*, pertaining to the Early Bronze Age Period and found in the "Hellenistic" level of E 1 area. This vessel can be matched with similar, lesser vases from our soundings at Gelincik Tepe, not far from Arslantepe. This finding is indicative of the complexity of the stratification at Arslantepe, which otherwise is sufficiently known especially for the historical periods.

A few days were spent in a sounding in the area of the Hittite imperial gate. Its purpose was to clear the ramp and the burnt layers. Here, inside the citadel wall we found a stone pavement with some non - consistent mud - brick walls on it. This pavement was excavated for 4 x 2 meters. The area was covered by storage vessels - hole-mouthed, two handled and with a hole in the flat bases - of the type found elsewhere in the Neo-hittite levels of Arslantepe. The ramp, quite steep, was almost completely destroyed in ancient times, when, after the fire that destructed the acropolis gate, a huge pit was made in order to recover valuable materials, such as in the gate itself. This burnt layer extends over a large area inside the citadel.

The excavation will be very difficult owing to the superimposed ruins of a later massive stone wall, possibly coeval with the Lion Gate.

While preparing the plans of the architectural remains according to the various levels, Mr. Montalto was able to determine the exact location of the Lion Gate excavated by L. Delaporte. On the basis of his careful observations, the Lion Gate was approximately on the same spot of the Imperial Gate, but slightly differently orientated. Except some later walls to the west no remains testify, *helas!*, of the connexion of the Lion Gate with today's situation. The level of the Gate is almost the same than the Neo-hittite Palace, excavated in 1961. Therefore, it is clear that the last re-arrangement of the acropolis was the last one before the sack of Sargon. This observation and the differentiated plans will help to understand the sequence of the Neo-hittite period so conspicuous at Arslantepe.

The Roman-Byzantine village, whose structures are in stone, was cleaned and the walls strengthened. Miss Equini was in charge of this work. She is now preparing a study of these levels and materials recovered there. The complete area of the excavations was cleaned, but unfortunately rain, snow and sun bring heavy damages to the mud-brick structures.

On the occasion of some surface explorations in the oasis area, we were able to identify other settlements - probably villages depending on the major town of the plain.

Because of some agricultural works, a roman necropolis was found on a little ridge, a few hundred meters west of Arslantepe. Unfortunately, the votive gifts were sold by some peasants before the news of the finding arrived at the Mission. A tomb-stone, however, was recovered and, with the help of the local Authorities, carried by Mr. M. Turgut to the Primary School, where the objects from our excavations are collected. Here the complete collection was re-examined, classified, shaped and photographed in view of an arrangement for a Museum that the Governorate of Malatya intends to build in future years. Some objects, especially bronzes, were newly cleaned and restored.

One of the last days of the campaign, owing to some previous removing of earth from our G area by the local Board of Schools, a pottery factory of Neo-hittite period was identified. The material was collected, but there was no time for restoration.

Finally a fragmentary hieroglyphic seal, which Prof. P. Meriggi will soon publish, was found in the debris of preceding excavations.

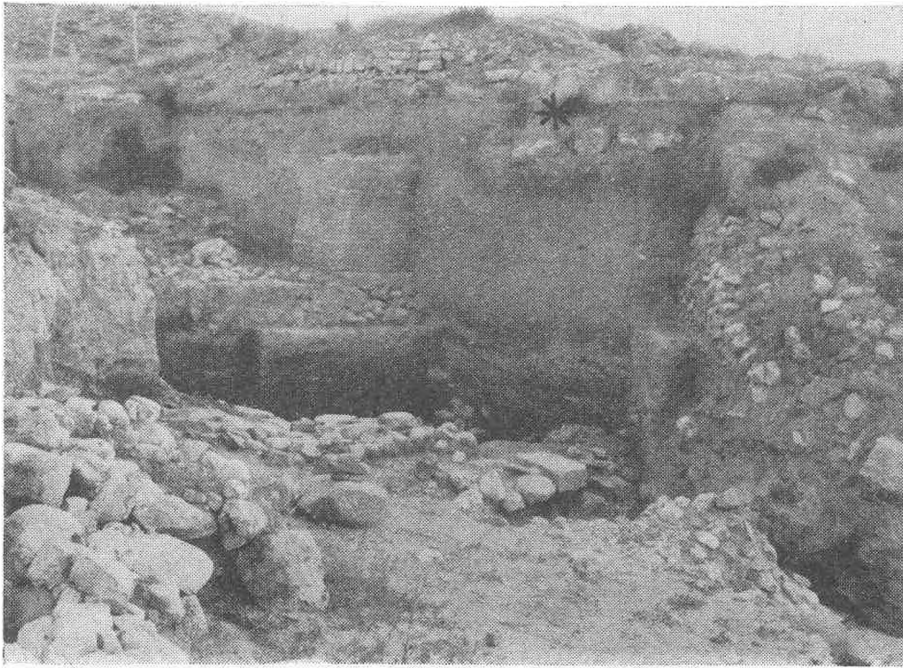


Fig. 1

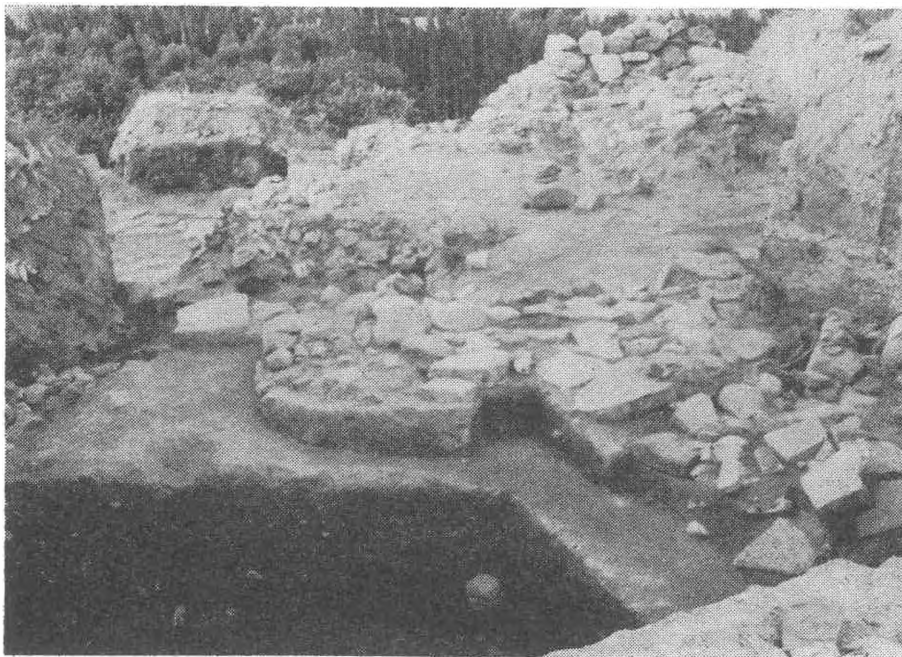


Fig. 2



Fig. 3



Fig. 4