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THE 1968 EXCAVATION AT KORUCUTEPE NEAR ELÂZİĞ

MAURITS VAN LOON and GIORGIO BUCCELLATI

A team from the University of Chicago and the University of California, Los Angeles, spent its first season in the Keban Dam area investigating the stratigraphy and pottery sequence at a medium-sized mound in the Altınova plain, Korucu Tepe near Aşağı İçme. The north side of the mound consists of Early Bronze Age (third millennium B.C.) and earlier deposits.

The Early Bronze Age deposit includes six burned levels; in the fourth and fifth of these mud-brick structures with small rectangular rooms were encountered (figure 1). Walls and floors were covered with mud plaster. Hearths were rectangular and raised or with raised rims, mud-plastered or paved with sherds. Remains of portable horseshoe-shaped hearths were also found.

The Early Bronze Age levels were characterized by the well-known hand-made chaff-tempered black burnished ware, with recessed necks on bowls and pots as well as on jars. Triangular lugs were often connected to the rim. Pierced boss handles ("Nahcevan lugs") also occurred. Occasionally the vessels were decorated in relief with designs based on a lozenge or on a horned animal's head. Considerable use was also made of a local ware with thick sandy slip, decorated in red paint with hatched triangles below a wavy line. This "Early Bronze II" assemblage is tentatively dated about 2600-2200 B.C... In the upper Early Bronze II levels a third, wheel-made, fine grit-tempered and very high-fired gray to orange ware occurred, obviously imported from north Mesopotamia or north Syria.

Among the many obsidian pieces recovered from the Early Bronze Age levels only the arrowheads seem to have been retouched with great care; all of them are triangular, with deep notches separating the wings from the tang (fig. 2). Pin shafts of copper were also found in these levels.

The ground stone industry was represented by green stone and diorite celts and a group of large ring-shaped beads of gray stone. A squat limestone cylinder seal was engraved with a row of large birds.

A preliminary analysis of the vegetal remains from the Early Bronze levels indicates that common bread wheat and two-rowed barley were in use. A first study of the animal bones confirms that sheep and goats and especially cattle were kept. Pigs may only have been hunted.

Black-on-white "Early Bronze III" painted ware (using wide, closely spaced bands, zigzag panels and diagonal strokes on the rim) was only found scattered on top of the northern part of the mound and at the base of the southern part.

The sequence at the south side of the mound began with bowls of hand-made chaff-tempered black burnished ware with incurved thickened rims, related in shape to the painted ware just mentioned. Next came a phase containing strongly wheel-marked fine grit-tempered gray ware together with some red-burnished and cream-slipped sherds. In this level a double stone foundation was built, apparently for a fortification wall (fig. 3). Between the two dry stone foundations, each 1.45 m. wide, was a space 2.40 m. wide which

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had been filled with green clay apparently brought from the mountains. This same material had been piled against the outside of the double structure to form a bank 2 m high, on which the mud-brick fortification wall would then have been built.

The accumulation above and behind the city wall represented the remains of frequently rebuilt mud-brick buildings incorporating wooden beams, including one structure with a heavy dry stone foundation which had been several times reinforced. In these levels the red or brown burnished and cream-slipped wares occurred with greater frequency, the most characteristic shape being a vat with out-rolled rim which was also common at Boğazköy in the Old Hittite levels (about 1600-1400 B.C.). A large burned building at the eastern foot of the mound, of similar construction and containing similar pottery, awaits further investigation in the forthcoming season. It has yielded some baked clay animal and pawn-shaped human figurines and bronze pins with hemispherical or conical heads.

Although no clear instance of burning has been found on the south side of the mound, there are thick ash layers overlying part of the Old Hittite levels. A faience cylinder seal of common Mitannian type (about 1500-1350 B.C.) was found in these ash layers.

In the next level less substantial structures were built, with flat stones set on edge to protect the outside base of the mud-brick walls. A strongly sloping courtyard contained a corbeled brick oven, D-shaped in plan. Another mud-brick wall delimited a large hollow partly dug into the earlier ash layers and itself filled with alternating layers of hearth-sweepings and rain-wash. In it were found twelve

impressions of Hittite Empire stamp seals (about 1400-1200 B.C.) with hieroglyphic inscriptions (fig. 4) and, in two instances, the figure of a warrior god in the center. Subsequently the settlement shrunk even more, and we find pits (probably for making bricks) destroying the architecture but filling up with pottery similar to that in the house remains. This pottery is predominantly coarse orange ware, the widely-flaring shallow bowl or "plate" being by far the most popular shape. Parallels from Boğazköy and Tarsus confirm the fourteenth to thirteenth century date of this level. It was poor in other finds, among which only two green stone incised spindle whorls and two pieces of iron deserve mention.

The Hittite Empire occupation seems to have ended in abandonment and was succeeded by a layer one meter thick without architecture, but with a completely new pottery assemblage: slow-wheel-made grit-tempered red burnished pots with inturned grooved rim and round base, often having handles or a spout attached to the rim (in surface collections these have mistakenly grouped with "Early Bronze III" material). A chaff-tempered buff burnished ware decorated with incised herringbones or red-painted pendant triangles and dots occurred simultaneously. An assymetric iron fibula and a faience cylinder bead with herringbone design suggest a date of about 1000-800 B.C. for this level.

Finally, the top of the mound was resettled in the period about 1000-1300 A. D., with stone-founded houses and courts containing underground domed ovens in which many fragments of green or polychrome glazed *sgraffiato* ware bowls and copper coins were found.



Fig. 1. Room of mud brick house with rectangular hearth at Korucu Tepe near Elâzığ. Early Bronze Age II, toward 2200 B.C.

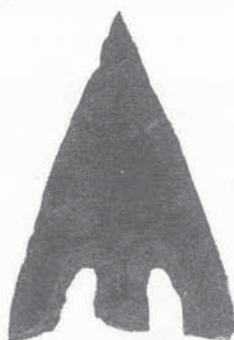


Fig. 2. Obsidian arrowhead, Early Bronze Age II, toward 2200 B.C.



Fig. 3. Double fortification wall foundation, built about 1800 B.C.



Fig. 4. Hieroglyphic seal impression on conical clay bulla, toward 1200 B.C.