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KAZI SONUÇLARI TOPLANTISI 3. CİLT



T.C.
KÜLTÜR VE TURİZM BAKANLIĞI
Kültür Varlıkları ve Müzeler Genel Müdürlüğü



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NEW RESULTS FROM THE EXCAVATIONS SEASON 2016 AT UŞAKLI HÖYÜK (YOZGAT)

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Anacleto D'AGOSTINO
Valentina ORSI*

Excavations carried out between 2013 and 2016 at Uşaklı Höyük, in the province of Yozgat in the Central Anatolian Plateau have brought to light parts of structures relating to three phases of occupation: a late-Roman phase, an Iron Age or Late Phrygian phase and one relating to the Late Bronze of Imperial Hittite period. Middle and final Early Bronze Ages are, instead, documented only by sporadic materials not found in context. These phases relate to the period of highest population in the region, as would appear to be supported also by the survey of the surrounding area carried out in 2008-2010 and now published (Mazzoni and Pecchioli 2015).

Work during the 2016 was aimed at extending the excavation of two buildings dating to the Hittite phase, the temple in the south-eastern part of the lower town (Building II, Area A) and the palace on the southern slope of the acropolis (Building III, Area D) as well as parts of the citadel fortification dating to the Iron Age, or Late Phrygian Period (Area D)¹ (Fig. 1).

AREA A

Building II, Late Bronze Age / Hittite Period.

During the 2013-2015 campaigns large parts of the central and northern sections, which had been well-documented by the geomagnetic survey, were brought to light. In 2016 the southern edge of the building was identified, consisting of a 2.80m thick wall of large stone blocks. We can, therefo-

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¹ More detailed information on the Uşaklı Höyük Archaeological Project and the results of both survey and excavation can be found in Mazzoni and D'Agostino 2015, D'Agostino and Orsi 2016 and on the official website <http://usaklihoyuk.org/>.

re, today calculate a length of roughly 45 metres per side, with at least 16 rooms and covering a total area of approximately 2025 square metres (Fig. 2 and Fig. 3).

The principal characteristic of this structure is undoubtedly the megalithic technique employed in creating its base. The walls are, in fact, as much as 2 metres thick and are made from large granite blocks (Fig. 4). On top of the first row there must have been a second layer of regularly cut blocks, only a few examples of which have survived. The structure was constructed on a thick underground substructure or supporting terrace consisting of layers of pebbles and earth aimed at providing both insulation and a solid base capable of bearing the massive weight of the building itself. Following careful planning, the structure must have been built using sophisticated architectonic techniques for the preparation, cutting and assembly of the large stone blocks. The general planimetry, technical preparation of the granite monoliths, the jutting stone foundations, and the few materials found inside the building, such as three miniature cups and the pottery from the terrace and substructure levels can date this monumental structure to the Late Bronze Age; it is certainly noteworthy that its general layout and composition with large asymmetric blocks of rooms find comparisons in the earliest temples of Hattusa 2, 3 and 5.

No materials have been found in place inside the building, there are no traces of destruction by fire and it would appear to have been demolished and the blocks sacked over a long period. Both to the north-west and to the south-east there are the remains of rows of small stones above the Hittite foundations along with deposits of Roman tiles and pottery (Fig. 5 and Fig. 6), and undamaged parts of an iron plough come from a layer of beaten earth. To the south-east there are also a few traces of squatting amidst the ruins, occasional piles of stones and abundant pottery dating to the Iron and Roman ages. The building must have furnished blocks and other materials for the construction of both the stone glacis which protected the lower slope of the neighbouring acropolis and the Roman houses which lay in the immediate vicinity to the north and north-east.

AREA D

Iron Age Glacis, Late Phrygian Period.

In Area D in 2015 a small sector of Building III, detected by geomagnetic analysis, was brought to light on the southern slope of the acropolis. In 2016

the excavation was extended northwards, towards the summit of the acropolis, and to the east and west so as to obtain a stratigraphic sequence of the area. In the highest part of the trench, immediately below a thin layer of humus, a sloping dry-stone structure appeared, consisting of medium-sized stones partially fallen down (Fig. 7). The current slope of the höyük in this sector was, therefore, created by this sloping wall or glacis. Only the innermost part has been preserved, with large pebbles and dry-stone mixed with earth, whilst the external façade has been lost but must have been made from well-cut medium-sized blocks as in the glacis of Area C. To the east the wall has a face of more regularly cut blocks which extends into the northern section (Fig. 8). Here, floors and remains of a later phase are preserved and are observable in the northern section.

The sloping wall has been exposed for a length of 11.50m and a 7.50m length was removed to the east, creating an internal trench measuring 950 m E-W x 3.50 N-S. The deposit beneath this wall consists of an accumulation of greyish earth, above a red layer and cut through by various ashy pits with a few discarded materials, bones and pottery. In the eastern sector, east of the glacis, there are the remains of layers containing stones, ashy filling and earth with broken bricks. Below this accumulation there is a well-made paved layer which, to the south, appears to be replaced by a white ashy layer that slopes gently down towards the south.

Beneath this, a thick and homogeneous accumulation of brown earth with various irregular circular and oval ashy pits with fragments of burnt bricks and burnt layers covers and seals the remains of the Late Bronze Age building.

Building III, Late Bronze Age / Hittite Period.

The 2015 and 2016 campaigns uncovered two rows of rooms of Building III (Fig. 9). The southern sector consists of a large room to the east and two narrow rooms to the west. Of these, the innermost had a completely burnt and vitrified floor (Fig. 10). Next to this, to the east there is a square room with plastered floor and a horseshoe-shaped fireplace which extends halfway into the northern part of the space. Again to the east, another room has a burnt and almost vitrified floor and walls with well preserved section bearing white plaster that is linked to the pavement

This wing of the building is bounded to the south by a façade, 13 metres of which have so far been exposed, consisting of dressed stones with

straight joints, an example of polygonal masonry in the best Hittite tradition (Fig. 11).

No materials were found in the rooms or on the floors and they were, therefore, empty at the time the building was destroyed. In the eastern room an extensive survey conducted below the flooring brought to light the foundations of the walls and a thick accumulation of layers of compacted earth fill. This deposit covered a hard clay layer which still holds footprints and was, therefore, presumably laid when still wet. The foundations of the walls are in dry-stone with undressed stones of varying size and are thicker than the upper walls over the floor level; the upper parts of the walls were constituted by two faces filled by bricks and stones. The foundations and their filling formed a solid terrace capable of bearing the notable weight of the entire system of walls, which may have been two floors high.

The pottery assemblage from the foundations of Building III is characterised by a large percentage of wheel-made red slip and plain wares. Noteworthy is the relatively high incidence of the so-called Gold Wash Ware (D'Agostino, Orsi 2015, 65-66), a fine ware characterised by a thin coat of glistening gold-coloured particles, most probably mica, thin walls and very fine fabric, which is considered typical of the first half of the 'Hittite sequence' (Schoop 2011, 262). Instead, only very few drab and coarse ware types have been identified that are usually associated to the latest phase of the Hittite sequence.

CONCLUSIONS

Excavations carried out in Area D contributed greatly to our understanding of the development of this part of the acropolis and have enabled us to propose a preliminary hypothetical interpretation of its occupation sequence.

1. Building III was built upon an artificial terrace created by levelling the high plateau of the hill and filling a thick shuttering that was formed by a regular grid of stone foundations. These walls contained a deposit of compacted earth on to of a prepared layer of clay, the latter probably being laid wet, as indicated by the footprints left on the surface, so that it would harden and become denser in the same way as unbaked bricks. A perimeter wall of large, dressed and squared blocks enclosed and protected the external front of the building along the natural slope of the hill and formed a long and imposing façade that would have been visible from a distance.

2. Building III shows no internal phases of re-use, alterations of structural changes but is the result of a single project realised over a limited period of time.

3. The size of the palace still cannot be determined by the excavations which have been limited to a small portion of the building but at least its southern façade can easily be identified in the line, over 60m long which appears in the geophysical analysis of this area and which runs along the entire southern side of the acropolis. This enables us to estimate that the complex originally covered most of the hill, if we presume that the sides were of similar length, possibly on a square plan, or a different and even greater area if the floor-plan was, instead, rectangular. This latter hypothesis is, perhaps, preferable given the current shape of the höyük and comparison with similar structures, especially the palace of Maşat Höyük (ancient Tapikka) in north-eastern Anatolia (Özgüç 1982, Pl. 4). Applying the first hypothesis, we can estimate an area of at least 3600 square metres whereas, with the second, we can hypothesise that the building covered the entire plateau and an area of roughly two hectares.

4. Building III was abandoned and emptied of all its contents and materials. Nothing has been found on the floor. After the abandonment, it was destroyed by what was possibly a long and fierce conflagration, with temperatures high enough to vitrify and melt the plaster of the pavements. No wooden parts have survived and lengthy exposure to the elements must also have caused a progressive deterioration of the structure.

5. The Late Bronze Age Building III and its structures, burnt walls and floors and material from the collapse of the walls would appear to have been evenly levelled and forms the base of a deposit relating to use and settlement with layers, pits and burnt materials dating to Iron I. We must, however, wait for the results of the complete and in-depth analyses of the pottery corpus of this layer before proposing any conclusive hypotheses on a period in central Anatolia for which dates and phases of development are still so controversial.

6. A later phase of occupation probably dates to the Middle Iron Age, as suggested by the abundant pottery, including painted examples (Fig. 12), and is documented to the east by smooth paving of dressed stone and, to the south, by a floor covered with whitish plaster.

7. Above this thick deposit the glacis which can be dated to the Late Iron Age was constructed, with its mighty escarpment that must have covered the entire southern slope of the citadel and in which a passage or gateway may have been cut. Here the glacis is documented on the upper slope of the acropolis, whilst on the south-eastern slope excavated in 2014-2015 in Area C, the lower front of the escarpment in well-dressed stone is preserved and the upper part is formed by an earthwork contained by brick walls laid radially and harnessed on the surface by small stone walls. As yet it is difficult to say whether these two different kinds of fortifications of the acropolis reflect separate construction phases or different means of protecting and supporting the slopes related to the varying topography of the ancient deposits of the acropolis. The repertoire coming from the superficial layers contains many painted sherds (Fig. 13 and Fig. 14).

8. The large temple in the north-east sector of the lower city (Building II), and the palace (Building III) on the acropolis, prove that the identification of Uşaklı Höyük with the Holy city of the Storm-god of Zippalanda, the second major Hittite sanctuary after Arinna (Alaca Höyük) devoted to the Sun-goddess, was correct. At the end of the Spring-festival (which lasted 35 / 40 days), the king reached Zippalanda. The day after he climbed up Mount Daha (Kerkenes Dağ) for an open-air celebration for the Storm-god, reaching then Ankuwa (Alişar Höyük), where the festival ended. From there the king could start his yearly military campaign going the main road leading to the east regions, the road which bordered the Erciyes Dağ, a volcano whose top is covered by perpetual snow.

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Participants in the 2016 campaign were:

Prof. Dr. Stefania Mazzoni (director), Dr. Mustafa Kibaroglu, (vice-director), Dr. Anacleto D'Agostino (vice-director), Dr. Valentina Orsi (coordinator); the archaeologists Dr. Giuseppe Minunno, Melissa Ricetti, Stefano

Spagni, Sabina Calderone; the students (Master) Iolanda Cacoza, Alessandro Salotti, Anete Mezmaca, Giuliana Paradiso, Giacomo Casucci, Christopher Caletti; the topographers and draughtsman Francesco Leprai and Sergio Martelli, and the restorer Anna Maria Graziani. The Hittitologists Prof. Dr. Alfonso Archi, Prof. Giulia Torri and Dr. Carlo Corti also participate in the project.

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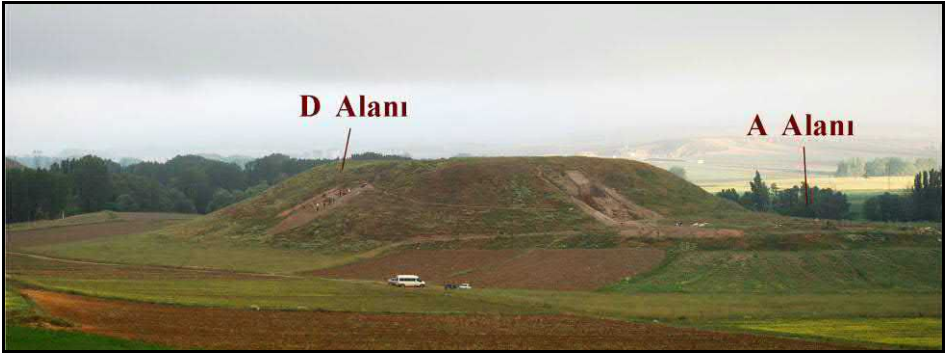


Fig. 1: Uşaklı Höyük, from south-east. The excavations area A and D.



Fig. 2: Area A, Building II. From east.



Fig. 3: Area A, Building II, foundation walls. From north-east.



Fig. 4: Area A, Building II. From north-east.



Fig. 5: Area A, small walls of later period; Building II on the background. From east.



Fig. 6: Area A, small stone walls above the foundation walls of Building II. From east.



Fig. 7: Area D, the stone glacial. From south-west.



Fig. 8: Area D, the stone glacial. From west.

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Fig. 9: Area D, Building III. From south.



Fig. 10: Area D, Building III: some rooms with burnt and vitrified floors. From west.



Fig. 11: Area D, the southern wall of Building III. From south-west.



Fig. 12: Area D, painted pottery sherds.



Fig. 13: Area D, painted pottery sherds.



Fig. 14 : Area D, painted pottery sherds.