
The Prehistoric Project

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Again, the Prehistoric Project's year was spent mainly in our basement laboratory, slugging away to complete old publication responsibilities. The pleasure and excitement—the real fun—of field excavation has to be paid for by the drudgery of classifying, describing, and interpreting the finds. Our guess is that it may take at least five times as long to adequately and carefully process a bulk of artifacts for publication as it does to dig them up. However, unless this responsibility to publish is met, it is completely fair to say

that the original excavation was performed without reason or morality.

In our case, too, we set ourselves a high standard when we published *The Archeology of the Plain of Antioch I*, reporting on excavations done in north Syria in the late 1930's. Now we struggle to keep to that standard in the final reporting on the work we did at Jarmo.

Last October, we did make a quick visit to Turkey. The excuse was that we were both invited to present papers at an international meeting of the Turkish Historical Society in Ankara. The real purpose was the chance such a visit gave to allow us to make final plans for a new field season. We needed to discuss with our Turkish colleague and co-director, Prof. Dr. Halet Çambel of Istanbul University, how best to frame a new proposal to the National Science Foundation. We anticipate that this will be our last season's work at the early village site of Çayönü. The site's yield has been most gratifyingly fruitful in information about life in a village-farming community of 7500 B.C. or earlier. In Çayönü's earlier strata, wheat and pulses were already present but recognizably domesticated animals (save for the dog) did not appear until some time later. Indeed, we seem to have, at Çayönü, evidence for understanding a fascinating moment of transition in the life-ways of humankind.

Since by Turkish law excavated materials may not leave the country, we shall have to do the final processing for publication of the Çayönü finds in Turkey. Hence, our proposal to the NSF calls for only a modest amount of excavation, for the solution of certain outstanding architectural problems. Our major effort will be, again, the drudge-work of preparation for a publication.

About three weeks before we write this, word came that the NSF will fund our proposal, although with substantial cutbacks. We shall only be able to take out two graduate students, but Prof. Cambel will provide four or five of her bright young Turkish students who will also serve as assistants. The recent news of the Turkish election also augurs well for the country's political stability.

While we were in Istanbul last October, we also learned that preliminary planning and surface survey was under way for a new archeological salvage effort on the stretch of the Euphrates River in the southern part of Turkey. New hydroelectric and irrigation dams are in prospect and the flood pools behind these dams will inundate much of the region, covering whatever sites may exist. Since we had participated with Prof. Çambel in getting salvage work started farther up river in 1968, she involved us in this new planning.

Unfortunately, the sites in the region to be flooded are not of the spectacular above-surface character which drew so much attention to the Nubian salvage effort in Egypt. At the same time, the high potential in yield of knowledge of the past which this stretch of the Euphrates in Turkey promises is underlined by the recent finds made in the Syrian salvage area on the Euphrates south of the border. These remarkable Syrian results, plus the nearby location of Tell Mardikh-Ebla, with its thousands of cuneiform tablets, underlines the importance of the just-upstream Turkish riverine region. One may now visualize a much more expanded ancient Mesopotamian culture area than we have usually conceived to have been the case. We shall doubtless find ourselves again involved in salvage planning when we return to Turkey in October, 1977.

We can hardly close these thoughts without recalling long and happy associations with the late Carl Haines. Bob and Carl were roommates at the Syrian expedition field house already in 1933 and Linda came into this picture in early 1937. We have many sweet memories of our earlier days with Carl and then of the close ties our two families have kept ever since.