

The Prehistoric Project

Linda S. and Robert J. Braidwood

◆ Incredible! It's hard to believe that we first began work in Turkey in 1963—in a completely cooperative partnership between the Oriental Institute and the Prehistory Department of the University of Istanbul and that the partnership has survived and still flourishes even with the addition of a third partner in 1978, the Institut für Baugeschichte of Karlsruhe. It will not seem so incredible to those of you who have met Halet Çambel. She should be cloned !!

We had firmly announced in 1985 that 1988 would be the last year for Chicago's active participation in excavating Çayönü—that it was high time for us to concentrate on getting Çayönü published. Halet agreed that she would also concentrate on getting Çayönü published, but at the same time would try to finish pressing work at Karatepe, her other important involvement. Wulf Schirmer, our Karlsruhe colleague, also thought it high time for him to concentrate on publishing the Çayönü architecture.

The 1988 season (reported on in *News & Notes* No. 117) was excellent, but, of course, our targeted objectives were not completely accomplished. The Skull Building excavation could not be completed within the time allotted (too many pits containing human bones in wretched condition that required slow patient excavation). We did not gain a better comprehension of the earliest sub-phase—the wattle and daub structures (too much intrusion and disturbances by later construction), nor did we achieve the clear understanding we had hoped to of the latest aspect of the main prehistoric phase.

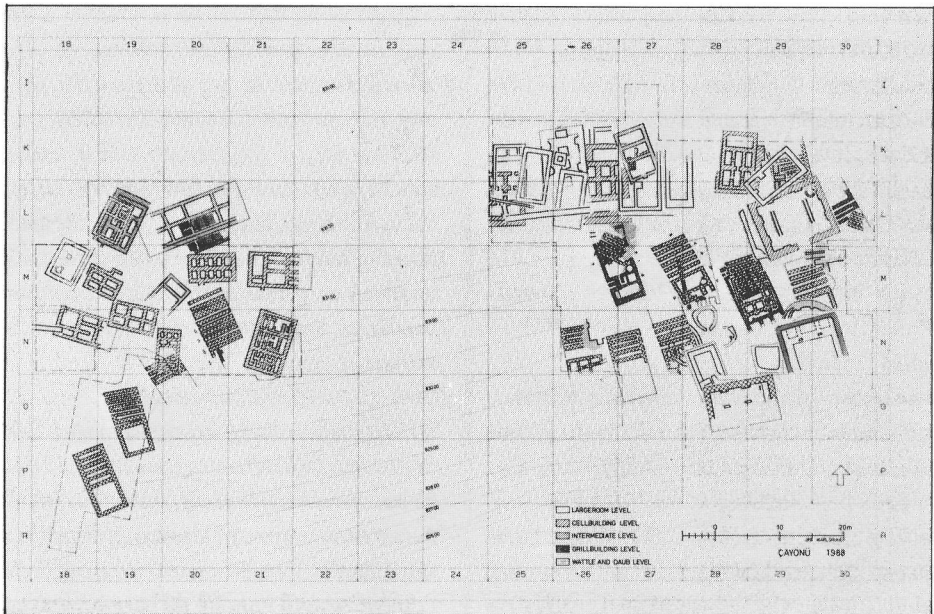
Since one never seems to be able to answer all the questions one poses, there is never a satisfactory stopping point for any excavation, and so it is good that we had set a firm closing date for our *own* participation in the Çayönü excavations.

We are happy to report, however, that Prof. Mehmet Özdoğan of Istanbul University (an old student of Halet's and on Çayönü's staff for many years) agreed to take over the Çayönü excavation and that he and

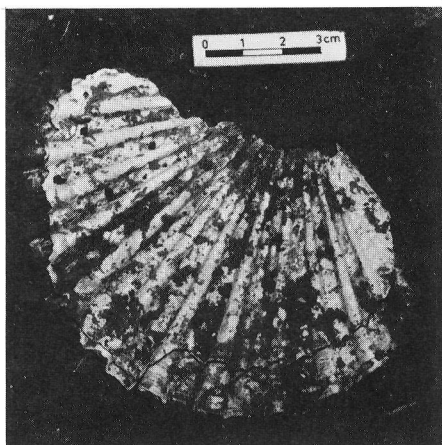
Aslı (his wife) and a team of graduate students, many of whom have been working at Çayönü in the past years, excavated at Çayönü this August and September (our able assistant, Mike Davis, represented Chicago on the excavation). It's an extremely competent team. They made a clean break with past excavations, and opened a large new area to the north where they could concentrate on later pottery-bearing levels. They are enthusiastic about the results of this season—well preserved building remains directly under the surface and much pottery. Mehmet, who thrives on early pottery, found many unusual features, some painted wares and some that at first glance suggested the Caucasus to him. We are eagerly awaiting Mehmet's letter with details. We are, needless to say, most happy at their enthusiasm, for there is still much essential work that needs to be done in the area—including a comprehensive survey which they have already begun.

We Braidwoods plan to go out to Istanbul to work towards publication, probably in the early winter when Halet returns from Karatepe. There is an excellent chance that we will get aid from Turkish businesses to help pay for publication. At the same time, we need to convince these gentlemen that pre-publication aid is also an essential part of publication.

♦ **A**s we all know, the simple popular impression of archaeology tends to mean the excavation of fascinating ancient sites and the recovery of fascinating finds for the great enrichment of museum collections. Fewer people understand the importance of the whole “processing” sequence—from the complete recording, description, and illustration of *all* finds (and their findspots) through their analysis to their interpretation as to most probable cultural meanings. One can easily guess that such full processing can take *at least* five or six



The plot plan of various exposures and buildings in them, as of the 1988 season.



A scallop shell, with the broken remains of holes for a string (so it might be used as a necklace?).

times as much time and effort as does actual excavation itself. But unless this whole process is completed, our real culture historical job is not yet done. Çayönü has far too important a potential yield of information to leave it unanalyzed. Some ten thousand years ago, portions of present day Turkey took part in one of the greatest changes in all human history. Indeed, what were the really important cultural interrelationships and changes going on as the completely new agricultural way of life crystallized? Our task with the Çayönü materials is by no means yet finished.

◆ **U**p to now, the Chicago end of the Prehistoric Project, thanks to its generous friends, has been able to pay for the basic cataloging, drawing, and photography done by the graduate students in the Istanbul lab during the months between excavations in the field, and we fully intend to continue covering this expenditure for all of the material excavated through the 1988 season. (The Turkish Department of Antiquities' funds given for Çayönü

can only be used for workmen and those materials used in the actual excavations in the field. There is no money for work in the lab between excavations and the students need paying jobs to make ends meet.)

There are further needs and commitments as well. There must be another three month session of the senior staff—Aslı Özdoğan, Erhan Bıcağcı (now finally out of the army), and Mike Davis—to finish correlating the find-spots and their work on the stratigraphy. (For example, which of the cell houses in the eastern portion of the excavation were contemporaneous, and do they all co-exist with the terrazzo-floored building?) This information is definitely needed by all staff members working on the various Çayönü artifact categories.

◆ **A**nother great need has to do with the right person to tackle the ever increasing bulk of chipped stone tools—preferably a Turk since it would be far too expensive to cover a foreigner's expenses for the amount of time needed. Fortunately, we now have the right person, Ayşe Seeher, a young Turkish woman who was part of the Çayönü staff in earlier seasons, who is just now finishing her doctorate in Tübingen. She will need periodic guidance in tackling the huge job and we have managed to persuade one of our European colleagues, Peder Mortensen, to agree to act as advisor.

Our hard-working archaeo-zoologist, Berir Kusatman, who has been backed and aided by interested friends of the Project in obtaining a doctorate from the University of London, should be finishing her degree by the end of the year or in early 1990. We are eagerly awaiting her return to continue the study of the Çayönü

animal bones—among other things to tell us just when domesticated animals became a part of the Çayönü inventory. She will need modest funding so that she can eat and sleep during the two years it will take her to finish studying the Çayönü animal bones.

♦ Other smaller studies should be funded. And funding is also required for additional needed personnel and for honoraria for various tests.

A large computer is going to be essential to correlate the great bulk of artifactual material. We were told by Halet that a colleague in the sciences is helping her in applying to NATO, since Turkey is considered a Third World country, and this friend is convinced that one of the agencies will be able to fill this need. Barring this, we think there will definitely be a good chance of persuading the Turkish businesses that this is a need they should fill.

As you can see, we have a potent wish list. Our friends of the Prehistoric Project know how much is involved in archaeology besides actual earth-moving. We hope that others will also understand that although fascinating bits of information have already come from the Çayönü materials, there is still very much more to come with study.

The Prehistoric Project is greatly indebted to many people. We have already mentioned Mike Davis, who continues to play a strong role in the Prehistoric Project and gives freely of his time and energy. We should also mention other volunteers: Andrée Wood who is working on obtaining and analyzing blood residues on artifacts, Vivian Broman Morales who just recently finished her work on the Çayönü clay figurines, Diana Grodzins who has, among other things, taken charge of the Çayönü photographic file, and Carlotta Maher who has given freely of her time to help us in raising money in the States and in Turkey. We are most grateful to them, and also to the many friends of the Prehistoric Project.

The scallop shell in place in a burial. This mollusk occurs both in the Persian Gulf and Mediterranean, but not in fresh water, hence a distant contact was involved.

