

EXCAVATIONS AT SAKYOL (Pulur, Turkey)

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Fig. 71

At the confluence of the Eastern Euphrates (Murat river) with the Western Euphrates (Karasu river), the Keban dam is going to form a lake of 120 kms in length which will flood an area which was intensively occupied from prehistoric times. Several institutions both from Turkey and from other countries are undertaking the task to try to save the numerous archaeological remains menaced by the water: since 1968 Turkish, British, American and German archaeological teams have been busy with excavations in Keban.

The present author has directed the excavations at Sakyol (Pulur), a prehistoric settlement on the top of a natural hill (60 m. in diameter), where it was possible to distinguish the cultural stratifications of the region from the Late Neolithic to the Early Bronze Age.

From the top to the bottom thirteen architectural levels were determined. As most of the buildings were successively burnt down, only the foundations are left.

C 14 tests made by the Michigan University laboratories date the Vth level to ca. 2350 B.C. and the VIIIth level to ca. 2470 B.C.; the Xth level, where the shrines of the «Fertility Goddess» are, seems to date back to ca. 4000 B.C.; further results of C 14 tests will provide, in the near future, additional chronological data.

As the mound was going to be flooded there was no need to keep the architectural levels intact, so they were removed successively and the associated material finds collected. The bulk of the objects was given to the Elazığ Museum.

Three main types of pottery were discovered at Pulur:

- I Karaz type. «Black burnished» ware. This type developed during the period Chalcolithic-Early Bronze Age; it is found in Transcaucasia, in *K* level at Goeytepe in Iran, at Güzelova, Karaz and Pulur in Erzurum, at Gelinciktepe (Malatya) in the Amuk valley and in the Khirbet Kerak assemblage of Palestine. This cultural area is undoubtedly related to the gradual spread of an ethnical group. Although the «black burnished» ware has parallels in Cen-

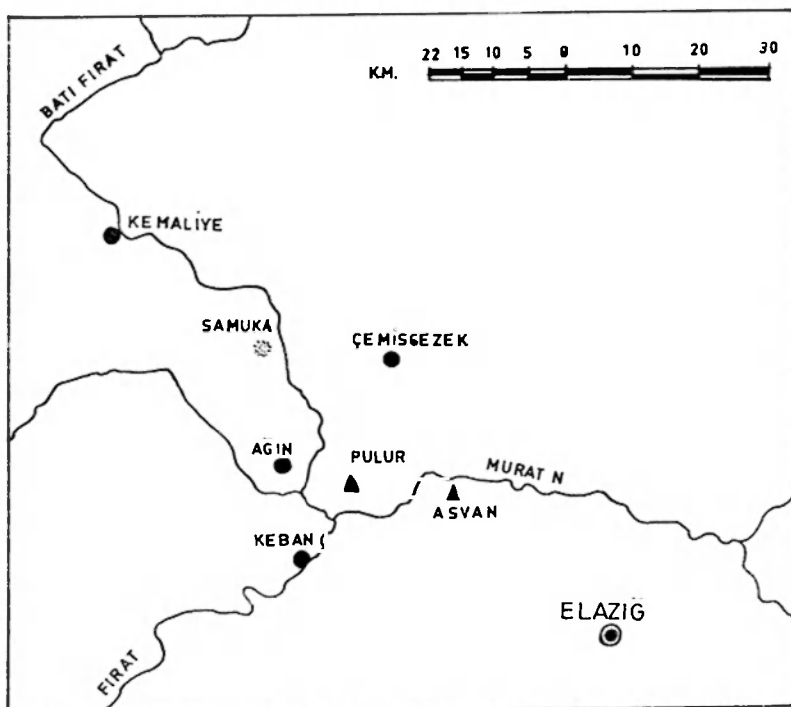


Fig. 71
 Map showing the site of Pulur in Anatolia.

Fig. 72
 Oven from level IX (Early Bronze Age).

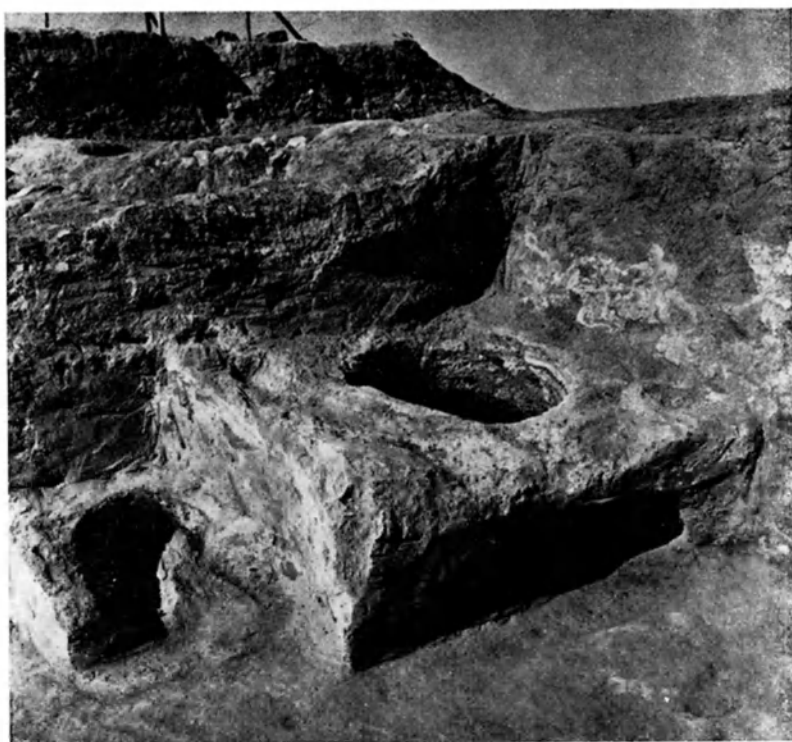


Fig. 73
Relief decoration
(Early Bronze
Age, ca. 4000
B.C.).

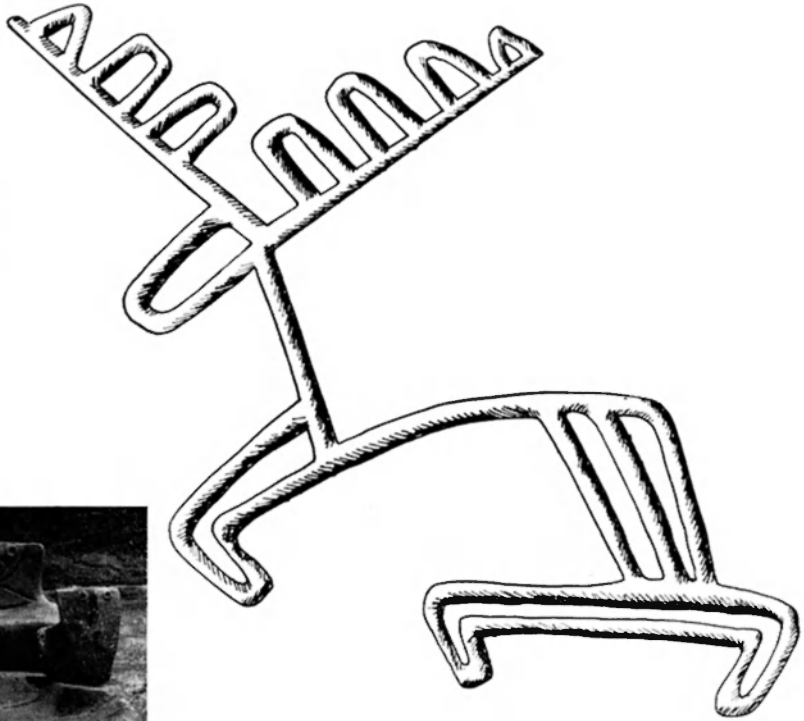


Fig. 74
Shrine of the
«Fertility God-
dess» in level X
(c. 4.000 B.C.).

tral Anatolia, it presents some original aspects which make it permissible to consider it here as a special group. Pottery of this type occurs from the Ist level down to the XIth; at lower levels it disappears and only rough monochrome and coloured pottery is found.

- II Coloured pottery. Brown or red geometrical patterns on a cream coloured background; sometimes schematic animals are represented. This type occurs in levels I-VIII. It is dated to the Bronze Age. This culture is well known in Diyarbakir and its surrounding area.

After the XIth level there is a fairly sterile layer of clay one metre thick which seems to indicate that the site was not inhabited for a long time.

- III «Red on white» ware. (A rough dark-coloured monochrome pottery is also found). The «red on white» ware has patterns of narrow stripes. Similar pottery is found in the Hacilar Late Neolithic level near Burdur lake, at Sesklo in Greece and Sotiri in Cyprus; it is dated by J. Mellaart to ca. 5.400 B.C. (Mellaart, J. 1965, *Earliest Civilizations of the Near East*, London, Thames and Hudson, p. 103).

Architecture

Architectural structures were found from the Vth to the XIth level. Rectangular rooms are arranged around a

Fig. 72 central yard which follows the shape of the mound. In the interior are ovens, fire places, smaller horse-shoe shaped, fire-places used as braziers, fixed grinding stones, funnel shaped mortars in the ground with stones at the bottom. Altogether more than 90 rooms were counted in the excavated area.

Shrines

Four shrines were made of clay and in ceremonies were used as holy fire-places and altars. Near these shrines many cult objects connected with the «Fertility Goddess» were discovered, all of them burnt to pieces. One of the attributes of the «Fertility Goddess» seems to be the wild bird with its terrible looking eyes which appears on the side of large pots.

The shrines are built up in two parts: behind the main statue there is a «panel» made of masonry. Some eyed idols were also found in the same rooms; apparently they wore dresses and necklaces.

The same sort of shrine is known in Beycesultan in Anatolia; the twin axed temple at Cnossos was probably inspired by the same idea*.

* The Pulur excavation reports are to be published by the Middle East Technical University of Ankara; we are pleased to anticipate the short news to the *Bollettino* readers.

RÉSUMÉ

Des fouilles récentes à Sakyol (Pulur) ont permis de relever une succession de 13 niveaux d'habitation, du néolithique récent à l'âge du bronze ancien. Des datations avec la méthode du radio-carbon sont en train d'être fixées. Trois types de céramique ont été distingués; ils révèlent des caractères originaux mais aussi des contacts culturels avec d'autres endroits du Proche Orient. Particulièrement intéressantes sont les structures architecturales: dans les couches moyennes, des chambres rectangulaires groupées autour de cours sont remarquées avec des foyers, des mortiers et d'autres outils. Quatre «autels» ont la forme de figures humaines assises. Plusieurs objets rituels semblent témoigner d'un culte de la «Déesse Mère».

RIASSUNTO

Recenti scavi a Sakyol (Pulur) hanno permesso di rilevare una successione di 13 livelli di abitazione, dal tardo neolitico alla prima età del bronzo. Datazioni col metodo del radiocarbonio sono in corso. Si sono distinti tre tipi di ceramica che rivelano caratteri originali ma anche contatti culturali con altre località del Vicino Oriente. Particolarmente interessanti sono le strutture architettoniche: negli strati intermedi si notano stanze rettangolari raggruppate intorno a cortili, con focolari, mortai e altri strumenti. Quattro «altari» hanno la forma di esseri umani seduti. Molti oggetti rituali sembrano attestare il culto della «Dea Madre».