

HAZOREA I

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of Hazorea, Israel.

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EDITORIAL PREFACE

This fifth volume of ARCHIVI is the first one of the series which does not deal with prehistoric art. The Editorial Board is now planning to develop the series with a wider range of subjects and interests, within the frame of prehistory and ethnology. Prehistoric art will still remain, however, one of the major fields concerning the series.

The present publication, which has been made possible by the generous assistance of C.I.P.S.H., presents the preliminary results of an excavation undertaken in Israel by the CENTRO CAMUNO DI STUDI PREISTORICI, in cooperation with TEL-AVIV UNIVERSITY and with BETH WILFRID MUSEUM of Hazorea, with the support of the Italian Ministry of Foreign Affairs. It is the first of successive volumes, which will be devoted to the archaeological investigation of one site.

The locality appears to have been inhabited throughout most prehistoric periods; its Palaeolithic and Neolithic finds are of particular relevance for world prehistory. Abu-Zureiq, near Hazorea, has produced an outstanding series of lower Palaeolithic artifacts and the fossilized bones of pithecanthropians: they are the oldest human skeletal remains known so far from the Near East. The excavations have revealed a stratigraphic series of levels that provide new light on the evolution of the Chalcolithic and the Neolithic periods. The location of the site, not far from the Mediterranean coast, along a major, Near-eastern trading highway, makes it a key point for the prehistory of the Near East.

This work presents several new techniques in archaeology, some of which are purely methodological, such as the quantitative analysis of decorated pottery or the synthesis of the material content of archaeological levels. These techniques contribute to improving the present methods of analysis and of excavation. The Editorial Board, however, wishes to stress in particular another aspect of this study, which in its view is no less important: one of the main reasons for the isolation in which prehistorians have found themselves in the frame-work of culture

has been the long-standing but unfortunate identification of « scientific » with « technical », « pedantic », « dry » and « conventional ». This book is clearly opposed to such identifications. The authors present the results of their research in a scientific and competent way, but they try to make their text accessible and readable. The book describes not only results, but working processes. The illustrations show the excavations during various stages of works, thus offering the reader a more direct and lively contact with the research undertaken.

This book illustrates a cultural approach to prehistory, and tries to render this field more human and more comprehensible to a wider audience, while still maintaining all the rigour and precision of a scientific text. It is not however a popular book, nor a book of synthesis, but the preliminary report on an excavation which is still in process and which will be the object of further analysis and discussion in subsequent volumes.

The Editorial Board sees a particular significance in the fact that the book offers a wide public the direct experience of scholars from a specific excavation. Indeed, the contact which is established between the scientist and his readers offers a new insight into the meaning of research; this dialogue between archaeologist and layman intends to stimulate a wider interest for the study of early man and may well lead to the creation of a new dimension of historical and cultural evaluation.

I. INTRODUCTION

A systematic archaeological survey of Kibbutz Hazorea and its surroundings was started in 1950 by one of its members, E. Meyerhof, for the Beth Wilfrid Museum at Kibbutz Hazorea. By then, the exploration of this area had already had a long history. The two main tells located near the highway, Tell Yoqneam and Tell Abu-Zureiq, had been visited repeatedly by scholars in the last two generations and surface finds had been collected.

In 1952, during building operations in the area of Kibbutz Hazorea, some remains of walls came to light (site 11-B). Subsequently a small settlement belonging to the end of the Early Bronze Age and the beginning of the Middle Bronze Age was excavated by L. I. Rahmani for the Israel Department of Antiquities. In 1956, again in consequence of building operations, a large necropolis of approximately the same period came to light in the vicinity (site 11-A). The present writer excavated there for one season for the Israel Department of Antiquities (Anati, 1961, pp. 368-371). The excavations were subsequently continued by E. Meyerhof and every year new rock-cut tombs came to light.

Meanwhile, the survey had brought E. Meyerhof to the discovery of various prehistoric sites, particularly from the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods, which attracted the interest of various scholars.

In 1962, the French archaeologist J. Perrot made a sounding at Abu-Zureiq (site 16-B), where he found a Chalcolithic level (Perrot, 1963, p. 559). In 1966, J. Kaplan, Director of the Jaffa archaeological museum, excavated at Ein el-Jarba (site 13-B), where he found remains of the cultural assemblages which he termed "Wadi Raba phase" and which he considers to be Early Chalcolithic (Kaplan, 1958, 1969; Arensburg, 1970). As we shall see in further pages, this is a transi-

tional phase from Neolithic to Chalcolithic: the final phase of the Coastal Neolithic culture.

In February 1967, after deep plowing in a plantation field at Abu-Zureiq near the site excavated by J. Perrot, E. Meyerhof brought to the attention of the present writer a series of Palaeolithic implements and fossil bones which had been collected on the surface. Among the heavily fossilized bones belonging to the Pleistocene period, a few human bones were discovered. They included five fragments of cranium belonging to five different individuals. From a preliminary examination of the human bones, undertaken by Dr. N. Haas, it appeared that three of the fragments belonged to *Homo Erectus* (*Pithecanthropus* type), while the other two were of *Pre-Sapiens* type. The five bones were considered as the oldest human remains known so far from the Near East (Anati and Haas, 1967, a, b, c). The finds of the material culture included hand-axes and other bifacial tools from the Lower Palaeolithic and various flint implements from the Middle and Upper Palaeolithic, as well as pottery and flints from the Neolithic and Chalcolithic periods. A preliminary survey showed that all the major prehistoric periods were represented there, a fact which demonstrated the interest of the site.

Abu-Zureiq was known from previous research, but the Palaeolithic finds were a new factor. The site was known mainly for its Chalcolithic remains which had been collected at the surface for years by E. Meyerhof and other members of Kibbutz Hazorea, and were excavated by Perrot in 1962. The Neolithic period was known from sporadic surface remains.

The new finds were peculiar in that a whole series of prehistoric periods were found on the same spot and made the site extremely promising for further investigation. The research was undertaken by the present author with the help of Prof. M. Avnimelech, geologist from the Hebrew University, Dr. N. Haas, physical anthropologist from the Hadassah Medical School, and Mr. E. Meyerhof, the local archaeologist. During the season 1970-71 the present author was assisted by Dr. P. Padovani, E. English, B. Gordin, D. B. Kaufmann, D. K. Kaufman, J. Livni and R. Simpson; students and volunteers participated in the field-work in every research campaign. The drawings have been made by R. Simpson, D. Ladiray and H. Bronowski. The photographs have been made by M. Pan and A. Hai.

In 1967 a survey of the Abu-Zureiq area was undertaken and a first sounding was conducted in the sector where the Palaeolithic material had come to light. In 1968 a longer research campaign took place

under the sponsorship of Tel-Aviv University. It had the purpose of examining in a general way the stratigraphy of the site and making a thorough survey of the locality and its surroundings. The stratigraphy was checked by deep trenches which cut the site in several places and provided evidence for the archaeological levels represented on the spot. Then, in 1969, the trenches were studied thoroughly; the finds were analysed and the laboratory work convinced us that the archaeological investigation of the site should be continued. In 1970-1971 the research was taken up again as a joint project of Tel-Aviv University (Israel), Beth Wilfrid Museum, Hazorea (Israel), and Centro Camuno di Studi Preistorici (Italy), with the support of the Cultural Relations Department of the Italian Foreign Ministry.

Fig. 1

A general view of Tell Abu-Zureiq from Ein el-Jarba.

The site is located on the edge of the Esdraelon Valley at the foot of the Menasse Hills, on the terrace sloping down between 85 and 60 m.s.l. The terrace is crossed at the height of 70 m.s.l. by the high-



way leading from Megiddo to Haifa. On this terrace, Tell Abu-Zureiq is a small hill which reaches the maximum height of 75.9 m.s.l. and which has important Late Bronze Age and Iron Age levels at the surface. At about 85 m.s.l. the terrace comes to an end and the stoney slopes of the Menasse Hills start. A second terrace is to be found at the height of 130 m.s.l. On this terrace the Arab village Abu-Zureiq was built, a cluster of a few houses, which gave the name to the area and to the nearby tell. The hills go further up to a plateau, which is about 230 m.s.l.

The wealth of prehistoric discoveries on the spot made it clear that the site is worth further investigation and the archaeological excavations are being continued in order to study the sequence of prehistoric cultures represented.



Fig. 2
Principal sites of early farming and herding in the Near East.