

Harald Hauptmann

April 19th, 1936 – August 2nd, 2018

Eminent Scholar and Good Friend

Reminiscences of a Life Devoted to Archaeology

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Prof. Dr. Harald Hauptmann, one of the last luminary representatives of the generation of great archaeologists who prized hardcore knowledge, has passed away on August 2, 2018 at the age of 82. Prof. Hauptmann, or as best addressed in Turkey “Hauptmann Bey”, had been conducting fieldwork in various parts of Turkey since 1966, having previously attained experience in Thessaly excavating under Vladimir Milojević. He began his career in Turkey in 1966 as a research assistant at the German Archaeological Institute in Istanbul, assigned to be a part of the Boğazköy team.

During those years, the capital city of the Hittites, Boğazköy-Ḫattuša, was the only early site in Turkey under excavation by the German Archaeological Institute; Boğazköy is a very complex site covering vast areas: Hauptmann was summoned to excavate the location known as Yarikkaya. As it was with Milojević at Thessaly, Kurt Bittel, then the director of Boğazköy excavations, considered 3rd Millennium as the earliest possible date of habitation in areas west of Syro-Mesopotamia, evidently also of the Anatolia Plateau. The material recovered at Yarikkaya was evident to be different from what had yet been known from other parts of Boğazköy, with apparent similarities to Chalcolithic assemblages elsewhere. During that time, Bittel was still refusing to accept the presence not only of Neolithic, but also of Chalcolithic settlements on the Anatolian Plateau; thus the Yarikkaya assemblage, in accordance with Bittel’s chronological system, was taken and published as of Early Bronze Age - of course now we know it to be of a much earlier date.

Implementation of a large-scale international undertaking to carry rescue excavations within the reservoir area of the Keban Dam on the Euphrates, provided the means for Hauptmann to work on his own name. The project, came to be known as the Keban Project, was found in 1966 after the initiative taken by Halet Çambel in collaboration with Kemal Kurdaş – former minister of finance and at that time the running rector of the Middle East Technical University (METU). Even though the primary objective of the project was to organize salvage excavations within

the reservoir of the Keban Dam, which was already under construction, through time the project developed as a multidisciplinary driving force of Turkish archaeology. Preliminary survey of the dam reservoir area in 1967 had revealed the presence of over 50 sites in this hitherto unexplored region, some being substantial settlement mounds. During these years, the ranges of East Taurus Mountains were considered to be the northernmost possible limit of early civilizations that had emerged and developed in the lowlands of Syro-Mesopotamia extending down to Levant. Keban Dam is on the north side of the East Taurus range, the reservoir lake extend in the intermountain plains between the Eastern Taurus and Munzur Mountains further to the north; accordingly, nothing worth excavating was expected to be present in this area, thus the international call to join the Project did not find the anticipated response, “big names” restrained, only four foreign and four Turkish teams applied, three of them with no previous experience directing an excavation on their name. The managing committee of the Project, in spite



Fig. 1 Hauptmann Bey during lunch break at Toulouse Neolithic of the Mediterranean Region Congress. (Photo: Mehmet Özdoğan)

of their previous anticipations, had to yield important mound-sites to inexperienced young archaeologists. Hauptmann got Norşuntepe, the second biggest site in the region, regardless of the protests of some senior academicians who had not accepted the call. The fallacy of the trivialising assumptions on the cultural history of the region became evident even by the first seasons' work: The picture of cultural developments on the northern flanks of the East Taurus range turned out to be as complex as those in the south, with

Hauptmann Bey's site, Norşuntepe, playing a key role.

Along with the significance of what is being recovered, the remarkable exposures of Norşuntepe presented a previously unattested picture of what a masterly excavation it is or should be. From our site, Tepecik which was only at 5 km distance from Norşuntepe, we watched with amazement the rapid but orderly removal of soil and the changing view of the mound. Even the grid-system of the trenches was a novelty at that time. Trenches of Norşuntepe were going deep and deeper while profiles remained perfectly upright. I have never experienced another example of a large mound's excavation going at such a pace, with over 70 workmen, remaining always orderly clean and receiving a high-quality documentation. Hauptmann Bey was a virtuoso excavator. His work at Norşuntepe revealed an unbroken sequence running from Late Chalcolithic to Early Iron Age, but the most unpredicted was the EBA III palace with extensive storage facilities; at present it still is the most significant EBA palace building excavated in Turkey. Likewise, the Chalcolithic levels of Norşuntepe, together with those of Tepecik, Tülintepe and Korucutepe revealed an autochthonous system of administration that developed on the northern side of the Taurus range, though with strong connections with the south. During these years, there were no means to contextualize the Chalcolithic layers of Norşuntepe, or of the Uruk complex recovered at Tepecik; modalities of this administrative system became fully apparent only some years later after the excavations at Arslantepe.

Regretfully, excavations at Norşuntepe had to stop without reaching virgin soil, though the site remained as an island, and still is. The importance of Norşuntepe is now, almost half a century later, much more evident than before, particularly the critical role it played to exemplifying changing spheres of interaction of East Anatolian highlands, through time swaying



Fig. 2 Norşuntepe aerial view, 1973. (Photo: Norşuntepe Project Archive)

from Central Anatolia to Caucasus, to Western Iran, to Syro-Mesopotamia and even to the littoral Mediterranean; apparently by the later part of the Early Bronze Age, Norşuntepe must have been the central site of the region monitoring long-distance relations.

After the completion of the Keban Dam, the project, still under the umbrella of the Middle East Technical University, was extended to cover the Karakaya and Atatürk Dam reservoirs, both on the Euphrates. This time there was a larger participation, but the number of sites to be destroyed was much more, exceeding 600; there the mound sites were incomparably bigger than of Keban area. Hauptmann decided to work at Lidar Höyük, on the left bank of the Euphrates, the second biggest mound after Samsat. As to be expected from any mega-site in that region, Lidar revealed cultural levels of almost every period, all with monumental architectural remains; most significant were the Bronze Age cemetery and the pottery kilns.

The Neolithic site of Nevalı Çori, the site that I had missed in my survey of the dam reservoir area, being in close vicinity of Lidar had initially been noted by Hans Georg Gebel in 1980 during his survey for Hauptmann's Lidar project; in spite of his ongoing macro-scale work at Lidar, Nevalı Çori became another component of Hauptmann Bey's field activity from 1983 onwards, exemplifying his endless energy. Excavating in large trenches, in the style of Hauptmann excavations, Nevalı Çori, along with a medium-size Halaf settlement, manifested the intricacy of a village of the Pre-Pottery Neolithic period. The ground-breaking sculptured depictions of Nevalı Çori had revolutionizing consequences, necessitating to redefine even what is implied by the term "Neolithic". Prior to Nevalı Çori, the region of Southeastern Anatolia, and as well the neighbouring regions of northern Syria were not considered within the region of primary neolithization; it was generally

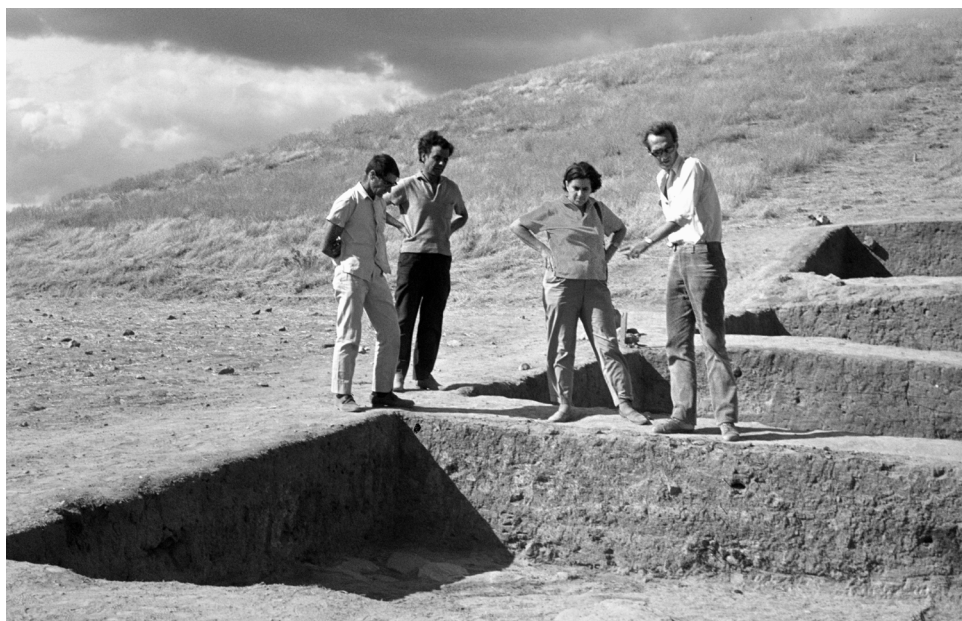


Fig. 3 Norşuntepe 1968, Hauptmann Bey and Halet Çambel. (Photo: Istanbul University Tepecik Archive)

assumed that the Neolithic way of living firstly appeared further in the south and expanded northwards only by the late stages of PPNA through the “Levantine Corridor”; thus, SE Anatolia was denominated as the area of secondary neolithization. Until Hauptmann Bey’s work at Nevalı Çori, Çayönü had been the only excavated PPN site in Southeastern Turkey. In this respect, it is of interest to note that even by the first excavation campaign of 1964, Çayönü had drawn the picture of a highly sophisticated complex Neolithic settlement covering the entire time span of PPN. Primary modalities of Southeast Anatolian Pre-Pottery culture, such as the antiquity of Neolithic, sedentarism preceding food production, the presence of cult build-

ings with standing stones and indications of stratified social structure during the early stages of neolithization had all been manifested at Çayönü. However, due to the prevailing biases, the evidence of Çayönü, lacking an explicit artistic inventory like that of Nevalı Çori, was mostly overlooked or underestimated. In this respect Nevalı Çori succeeded in making the ground-breaking impact, almost forcing to redefine every aspect related to the formation processes of primary neolithization. Even the location of the site, being on a river terrace and hill not at all located on arable land, challenged the interception of environmental preference

of early Neolithic communities; a few kilometres away, there were the fertile alluvial plains, if they would have been looking for farmlands. Sculptured depictions and sophisticated status objects not only testified the high level of craftsmanship, but more significantly justified the presence of an elite decision-making group selecting craftsmen with artistic talents; this could only have taken place in a stratified society.

What is of interest is an overview of the similarities and differences between Nevalı Çori and Çayönü being highly informative on the modalities of interaction that took place among different sites of the core area. For example, evolutionary stages of domestic architecture, from “grill plan” to “channelled” to “cobble paved”

structures were so similar between the two sites that one even wondered if there were mobile constructors moving between Nevalı Çori and Çayönü; while terrazzo flooring is present at both sites, Çayönü lacked the sculptured depictions. Likewise, there were also several striking similarities and differences among the artefactual assemblages of both sites, most apparent in the use of obsidian, which is practically absent at Nevalı Çori while comprising over 50% of Çayönü’s lithic assemblage. The presence or absence of certain types strongly suggest that a distribution pattern was monitored by mobile craftsman, each



Fig. 4 Norşuntepe palace with the northernmost heights of Eastern Taurus, 1972. (Photo: Norşuntepe Project Archive)

having a distinct trajectory of its own. Excavations at Nevalı Çori lasted with some interruptions from 1983 to 1991 when it inundated earlier than planned by the sudden rise of the Atatürk Dam reservoir.

While working at Nevalı Çori, Hauptmann Bey was also engaged in excavations at the Bronze Age cemetery of Titriş Höyük, a site previously worked on by G. Al-gaze. In 1995 Hauptmann began working at two other Pre-Pottery Neolithic sites, Gürcütepe and Göbekli Tepe, the latter through time turned out to be a ground-breaking site of the Neolithic era overriding Nevalı Çori. Due to the overwhelming workload

Göbekli Tepe necessitated, work at Gürcütepe discontinued. Following his retirement, he commended Göbekli Tepe to his field director Klaus Schmidt, though keeping his interest in the region and in Turkey. Before his retirement, he had initiated an extensive field project on the easternmost part of Pakistan, documenting endangered rock reliefs of the Hindukush region. He, with full energy kept his pace in the field in spite of growing political problems in what can be justified as one of the most difficult and dangerous regions of our world. Like his work in Turkey, his recent achievements at Pakistan revealed the potentials Hauptmann Bey had in establishing genuine relations with local communities, regardless of who they are; there are not many who can achieve this as securely as Hauptmann Bey did.



Fig. 5 Norşuntepe section through Early Bronze Age layers. (Photo: Norşuntepe Project Archive)

Hauptmann believed in hard core information which could only be attained through extensive excavation, exposing areas large enough to yield dependable information. His assessments were based on facts, not on contemplations, avoiding to fall into the trap of hypothetical biases. He had a broad-spectrum interest in entire sequence of cultural history, from prehistory to late Medieval, following current research, scrutinizing details in depth though still succeeding to be compendious. He was a connoisseur of antiquarian books, particularly of maps and cultural relicts; in any discussion, the historic depth of his knowledge was immediately apparent. There are not many left in his calibre; we shall miss him greatly.



Fig. 6 Norşuntepe 2018: Visible upper Norşuntepe as an island in the Keban Reservoir lake. (Photo: Mehmet Özdoğan)