Figure 1

HACILAR BÜYÜK HÖYÜK

Hacılar Büyük Höyük, a mound measuring 280 m x 240 m in dimension, is located within the boundaries of Hacılar Village approximately 27 km southwest of the town of Burdur, the provincial capital. The archaeological excavations that began in 2011 under the direction of Prof.Dr. Gülsün Umurtak and in the name of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and İstanbul University are still in progress.

The first research into the prehistoric periods of the Burdur Lakes Region was carried out by James Mellaart between the years 1957 - 1960 at the site of Hacılar, about 400 m south of Hacılar Büyük and this brief excavations campaign yielded extremely significant results. However, no archaeological remains are currently visible at that site.

Figure 2

After the 'Burdur Region Prehistoric Research Project' was initiated by Prof. Dr. Refik Duru in the name of Istanbul University in 1976, excavations were carried out at Kuruçay (1978-1988) and Höyücek (1989-1992), followed by research work at the Hacılar Necropolis (1985- 1986). As a result of these efforts, and the publications of the work that followed shortly after, the Burdur area became one of the regions of Anatolia where the prehistoric civilisations are best known. The Hacılar Büyük Höyük Excavations represent the most recent stage of this long term excavations and research project.

Further excavations need to take place before it can be determined when Hacılar Büyük Höyük was first settled. In the first four years of excavations, part of a very strong defence system belonging to a settlement dating to around 3000 BC / the beginning of the Early Bronze Age was uncovered in excavation areas on the western side of the höyük. The section of this defence system uncovered was approx.150 m in length and consists of zigzag lines on a north-south axis with a "saw edge" appearance and rows of individual rooms/casemates (Figure 1-4). This section also includes a gate (the Western Gate) that provided entrance into the city and exit out of it (Figure 3).

Figure 3

All of the 31 individual casemate sections uncovered so far in the defence system have doors approximately 1 m in width in the middle of the narrower walls that face inward towards the city. The average dimensions of these rooms are 4.5 x 5.5 m and the internal walls are 1.00 - 1.10 m in width and have doors that open into an area on the eastern side. The stone foundations of the defence system reach a height of around 1.80 - 2.00 m and are well preserved.

As well as forming part of the defence system, the internal furnishing of these rooms and the household goods left in situ on the floors show they were also used as homes. The earth used to form the floors of these buildings had been well flattened and smoothed over. Some of the rooms had the remains of a horse shoe shaped hearth in the centre, or mudbrick supports /platforms next to the walls for the purpose of placing jars or pithos in them. A large amount of burnt grain was found in the jars and scattered over the floors of the rooms.

Figure 5

Figure 4

Figure 6

Extensive areas of the centre of the höyük, which was surrounded by the defence system, have begun to be excavated and so far a building complex consisting of three rooms has been uncovered. The city is at least 250 m in diameter so it would not be difficult to guess that the settlement included many important and impressive buildings such as a palace and a temple. If the homes of the ordinary people are included, it can be said that this settlement at Hacılar Büyük Höyük was one of the largest and most impressive settlements of this period in Anatolia. This settlement was clearly pre-planned and seems to have been built carefully according that plan. Evidence shows that the city was destoyed by a devastating fire.

Figure 7

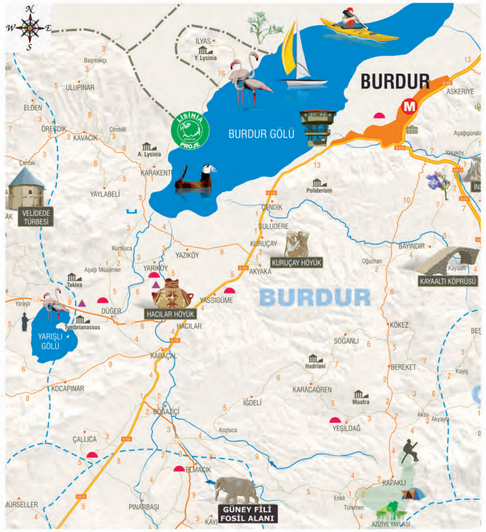
Figure 8

The objects found in the sections that make up defence system of the Early Bronze Age I city consist of various types of clay pottery used in the course of daily life, such as plates, deep bowls, bottles, jugs and storage jars (Figure 5-7). Other objects found include unique clay and stone idols / schematic representations of goddesses (Figure 8-9) and stamp seals (Figure 10), metal decorative pins. There are also objects such as pins, piercers, knife handles made from animal horns and a large number of chipped stone objects such as knives, stone mortars, pestles and hand grinders. Every year new examples of metal pins are added to the repertoire.

Figure 9

Burnt remains of chickpeas, peas and lentils and grains such as barley and wheat, along with fruits such as grapes and figs found in the homes and inside the the pots and storage jars in the courtyards show what the settlement owners ate and provide evidence that they were intentionally involved in agriculture. As well as bones of domesticated sheep, cattle, goats, pigs and dogs, there were bones from squirrel, red fox, a type of deer and a bone belonging to a panther at the settlement. All the above mentioned finds support the view originally put forward in the first excavations season that these sections of the defence system were also used as homes.

Figure 10



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