



Observations on some finds with religious symbolism from the Early Bronze Age I settlement at Hacılar Büyük Höyük

Gülsün Umurtak ^a

^a Faculty of Letters, Department of Protohistory and the Near Eastern Archaeology, Istanbul University, Ordu Caddesi 6, Laleli-Istanbul, Turkey; gulsunumurtak@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

Excavations that started in 2011 at Hacılar Büyük Höyük, which is located 27 km southwest of Burdur, are still in progress. The EBA I settlement at the site consists of a strong defence system, which extends on a south to north axis in the western part of the mound, and some civilian buildings in the area closer to the centre of the settlement. No temple has yet been uncovered here but it is expected that, in the unexcavated central sections of the mound, not only sacred buildings but also some public buildings and a palace or ruler's residence are likely to be found. Although no specific sacred architectural building in the form of temple has yet been found, some religious symbols have been uncovered in the form of unusual architectural remains and non-portables, such as stelae. In addition to these, some items that seem to symbolise religious beliefs and are thought to have been used in religious ceremonies, including a special purpose juglet, a pedestalled vessel, a pithos fragment with a depiction of a birth scene on it, and idols and pubis models related to belief in the Mother Goddess, were found *in situ* inside the houses or in areas near the stelae and in the courtyards of the casemates.

KEYWORDS

Early Bronze Age, religious symbol, stele, giving birth scene, idol, unusual juglet, pedestalled bowl

Introduction

The Excavations at Hacılar Büyük Höyük, which is located 27 km southwest of Burdur (fig. 1), began under my direction in 2011 and constitute the most recent phase of a long-term excavation project in the region that started in 1976. In the context of the Excavations and Research Project of Burdur and its Surrounding Region initiated by Prof. Dr. Refik Duru (Emeritus, Istanbul University), excavations were carried out at Kuruçay (1978–1988), Höyücek (1989–1992) and Bademağacı (1993–2010) and investigative work took place at the Hacılar Necropolis (1995, 1996).

The Stratigraphy determined during the 12 years of excavations is given below:

Early Bronze Age III (EBA III)	?
Early Bronze Age II (EBA II)	EBA II / 1–3 Building Levels
Early Bronze Age I (EBA I)	EBA I / 1–2 Building Levels

Early Chalcolithic Period (?)	?
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Virgin Soil



Fig. 1. Map showing the location of sites in the Burdur Region and the surrounding area
 Обр. 1. Карта с местоположението на обекти в региона на Бурдур и околността

The EBA I settlement at the höyük consists of a strong defence system, which was uncovered in the first year of the excavations and extends on a south to north axis in the western part of the mound, and some civilian buildings in the area closer to the centre. The outer walls of the defence system are 1.50–1.60 m thick and are built of medium-sized stones that reach a height of 2 m in places. It is observed that protrusions in the defence wall, called ‘saw-teeth’, jut out to a length of around 2.00, 2.20, 2.50 m in accordance with the dimensions of the casemate they belong to. We think that, in the planning phase of the city’s layout, these protrusions were designed to form a circular plan (figs. 2–3).

Oval-shaped mudbricks and pisé pieces bearing imprints of tree branches found in the rubble of the buildings give some insight into the structure of the upper walls that did not survive. The average dimensions of the inner walls of the adjacent, sometimes slightly irregular sections (casemates) that form the defence wall, are 3.85×6.10 , 4.5×5.5 , 3.60×5.00 , 4.7×7.1 , and 5.7×7.4 m. They are 1.10 m, 1.30 m and 1.50 m in thickness, and their doors open onto the eastern courtyards. The doors in some of the rooms are 1.10–1.20 m in width, and the *in situ* pivot stone placed on the inside of the door in some of them indicates the wooden door leaf opened inwards, while the doors in other structures are in the form of a plaque and some of the thresholds are made of more irregular stones. On both sides of the doors of the casemates, on the same axis as the long side walls, there are short buttresses or antae walls that vary in size from 1–0.80 m. All these details cause the buildings to resemble a megaron. We think that the casemates would have been covered with wooden beams, branches and earth in the form of a flat roof. All kinds of pottery and items used for daily needs were



Fig. 2. Aerial view of the Hacilar Büyük Höyük (HBH Excavations – archive)
Обр. 2. Въздушен изглед на Хаджилар Бююк Хьююк (архив на разкопките)

found in these defence structures, which shows that in addition to the obvious defence function of the casemates, many of them were also used as dwellings.

There are two pre-planned gates used as entrances into the city, one of them the Western Gate and the other the Southern Gate. The gate building is formed in the approximately 4.00 m gap between the two rectangular casemates/towers and has buttresses/antae walls that extend on both sides, into and out of the city (figs. 2–3). Both gateways would have been covered with some form of roofing. In addition to this, the outer walls of some of the buildings facing out of the city that make up the defence system (such as G 6, G 7, G 17, K 6, K 7) were not closed – perhaps after they had been demolished for some reason – but seemingly left as simple openings for the entry and exit of people who worked in the fields or gardens, or engaged in hunting and even for the entry and exit of those carrying water or leading herds of animals.

A slight, narrow stone wall demarking the borders of the courtyard section of the casemates extends along the city wall on the inside of the defence system, with gaps in places left for passage through it. It is clear that this wall intentionally separated the interior of the settlement from the defence zone.

In the excavated area in the inner section of the city, there are two adjacent buildings with a megaron-type plan (figs. 2–3, 6). The southern one is 17.5 m in length including its antae walls, and its internal dimensions measure 7.55 × 5.40 m. Eight large earthenware storage jars were found *in situ* in the courtyard in front of its door. Just east of the courtyard, on a west-east axis and on the northern edge of a 7 m long wall, a row of five small adjacent cell rooms were uncovered. These

HACILAR BÜYÜK HÖYÜK 2011-2022

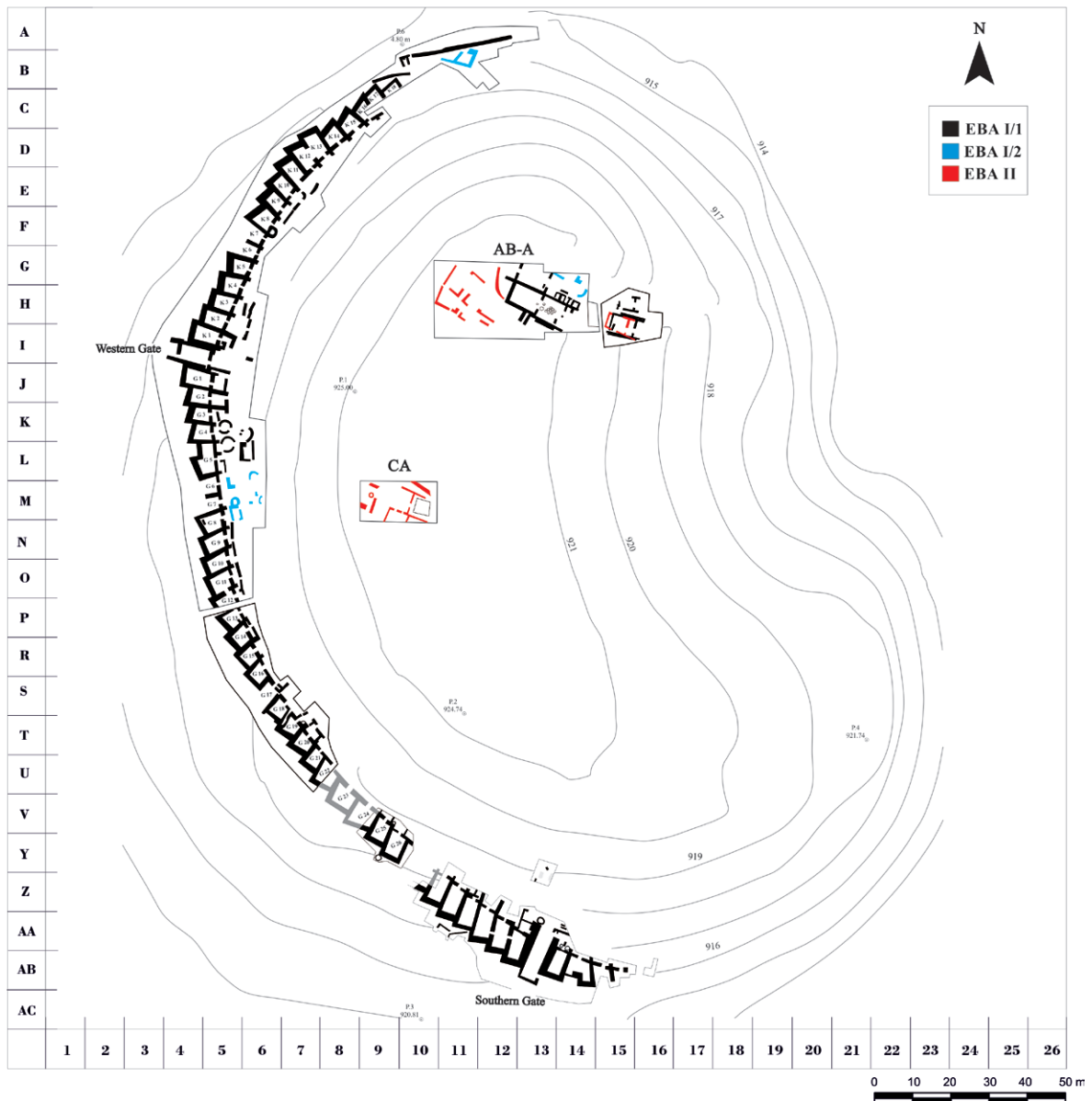


Fig. 3. Plan of the Hacilar Büyük Höyük EBA settlements (by Fatih Çongur)
 Обр. 3. План на селищата от РБЕ в Хаджилар Бююк Хьююк (автор Fatih Çongur)

rooms with stone foundations seem to have been integrated with the northern antae walls of the storage building. The walls of these rooms are 15–20 cm in thickness, and its dimensions average 1.9×2.1 m and 1.8×1.6 m. The doors of these cells, whose function (or what kind of storage they were used for) is not fully understood, open in different directions. The interior dimensions of the building to the north, which is adjacent to the large building in the south, measure 10.80×5.70 m. These buildings can be considered to have been part of a complex of large multi-room warehouse structures that have not yet been fully excavated. It is likely that official storage and other related activities were carried out in this part of the settlement. As excavations progress, findings connected to storage systems are expected to increase.

At the eastern end of the same trench, a carefully constructed megaron with dimensions of 5.6×8.5 m must have been rebuilt several times after it had collapsed, with a few minor changes in plan



1

2



Fig. 4. 1. The semi-circular structure, twin stelae and circular structures in the courtyard of casemates G 4 and G 5, view from the East; 2. The twin steles and one of the circular structures, view from the East (photo by G. Umurtak)

Обр. 4. 1. Полукръгла структура, двойни стели и кръгли конструкции в очертанията на каземати G 4 и G 5, изглед от изток; 2. Двойните стели и една от кръглите структури, поглед от изток (снимка G. Umurtak)

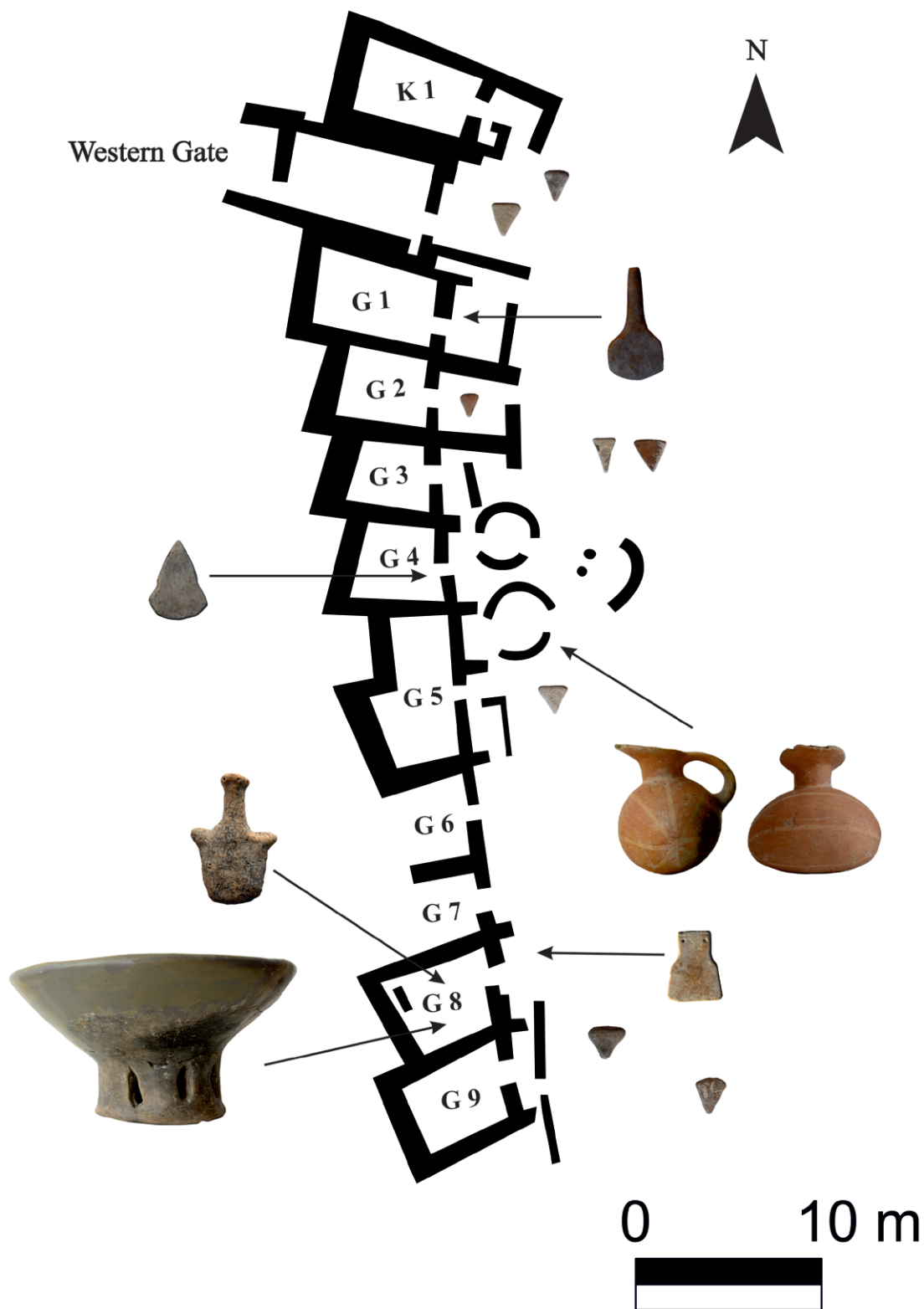


Fig. 5. Some religious objects and their find locations (HBH Excavations – archive)
Обр. 5. Религиозни предмети и техните местонахождения (архив на разкопките)



Fig. 6. AB trench. Aerial view of the large adjacent buildings, storage structures and the limestone stele in the courtyard (HBH Excavations – archive)

Обр. 6. Траншея АВ. Въздушен изглед на големите съседни сгради, складови конструкции и варовиковата стела в двора (архив на разкопките)

(figs. 2–3, 6). The remains of another building, which had an intentional 2 m gap immediately next to it on the western side, resembles a megaron. The similarity between the plan of this megaron and the plan of the entrance gates to the city would suggest the possibility that this building could also have been a gate (*propylon*). This megaron may have been an entrance in an inner wall surrounding the acropolis in the middle of the city that contained official and religious buildings. The inner sections of the city have not yet been extensively excavated, so that no buildings such as a ‘Palace’ or a ‘Temple’ have been uncovered. Suggestions of this kind will be confirmed or revised in future excavation seasons (Umurtak 2020; 2021; 2022).

Finds with Religious Symbolism

Sacredness is a relative concept and, like all abstract imagery, is always open to discussion. As mentioned above, no temple has yet been uncovered in the Hacilar Büyük Höyük EBA I settlement during the excavations that have been in progress since 2011. Of course, this does not mean that there were no temple(s) in the settlement. It is expected that, in the so far unexcavated central sections of the mound, not only sacred buildings but also some public buildings and a palace or ruler’s residence are likely to be found. Although no concrete example of a specific sacred architectural entity or a temple has yet been uncovered, some religious symbols have emerged in the form of unusual architectural remains and immovables (non-portables), such as stelae. Pottery and some other small finds that seem to symbolise religious beliefs have been found *in situ* inside the houses or in communal areas and courtyards of the EBA I settlement.

In the courtyard section of the G 4 and G 5 casemates south of the Western Gate in the western part of the settlement, two circular buildings situated side by side with a 1 m gap between them were uncovered (figs. 2–4). The inner diameter of one of the structures is 2.53 m and that of the other is 3.20 m. These buildings, which have stone foundations approximately 40 cm in thickness, had sur-



Fig. 7. Rectangular limestone stele in casemate G 8 (photo by R. Duru)
Обр. 7. Правоъгълна варовикова стела в каземат G 8 (снимка R. Duru)

vived up to a height of 40–50 cm. There are two wide openings (doors?) on the east-west axis of these structures and their curved walls on the northern and southern sides resemble two opposing brackets. Just beyond these circular buildings and in front of a semi-circular wall, there are two limestone stelae spaced 80 cm apart (referred to as twin stelae due to their similarity and proximity)¹, the height of one is 90 cm and the other 50 cm. The upper sections of these quadrangular stone structures are incomplete due to having broken off, and there are no symbols, relief decorations, depictions, etc. on any of their four surfaces. It is clear that these stones were placed vertically into a hole dug for each of them and then put into position by placing support stones at their bases. It is not possible to know the original height of these twin stelae. Unfortunately, there is also no intact example that we could use for the purpose of comparison. The isometric drawing is an approximate reconstruction based on our own estimates (fig. 14). We do not know how the twin stelae, along with the circular and semi-circular structures, relate to the defence system in the immediate vicinity, so it is not possible to give any information about the connection between them. It is also not known how high the walls of the circular structures would have been, so it is unclear whether there was a door in the openings on each side, or whether or not there was any kind of roofing over them. Even if we assumed that both buildings had doors and their roofs were covered, they would have been unsuitable for living in due to their size. In addition to this, no objects or grain remains etc. that could give insight into their function were found. The same can be said when discussing the function of the semi-circular

¹ In order to understand whether the stone type used in the stone foundations and stelae of the settlement was brought from the same source, samples were taken from the walls and stelae and the surrounding stone sources, and X-ray diffraction (XRD) analysis were carried out on them by Assoc. Prof. Gonca Dardeniz Arıkan. It was concluded that the stones used for the twin stelae, and the stones of the stele in casemate G 8, were brought from a different quarry to the one that the foundation stones of the defence system came from. The stone of the stele in the courtyard of the large building in the centre of the höyük is from a different source to that of the other stelae.



Fig. 8. Unusual beak spouted juglet (HBH Excavations – archive)
 Обр. 8. Необичайна каничка с клюновидно устие (архив на разкопките)

stone foundation behind the twin stelae. We therefore need to consider that the twin stelae had a shared function together with this semi-circular foundation. No such system has been found in any of the areas already excavated. At the same settlement, there are circular structures with much smaller diameters in the inner city entrance of the Southern Gate and in the courtyard of the casemate immediately south of this gate (figs. 2–3), but they are not discussed here because there is no evidence that they are related to any belief system.

In the Burdur-Antalya region where Hacilar Büyük Höyük is located, there is no tradition of circular buildings in the architecture of the period of transition to settled life that began around 7100 BC, as represented at Bademağacı in levels EN I/9–5, EN II/4–1; at Höyücek in ESP 1–3, ShP; at Kuruçay levels 13–11; and at Hacilar in levels VII–I; IX–VI. In Western Anatolia, however, examples of early circular buildings are seen at settlements such as Bahçelievler levels 7–3 (Fidan 2020, 31–32, figs. 3–4; Fidan et al. 2022, figs. 2, 4), Ege Gübre levels IV and III (Sağlamtimur 2012, 230–234, figs. 7a–b, 8a–b), Hocaçeşme Phase IV (Karul 2000, 70, figs. 21–23) and Aktopraklık C (Karul 2017, 69, fig. 53). The circular structures at Hacilar Büyük Höyük, which we do not consider to have been suitable for use as dwellings, are clearly not connected in any way to the those found in Western Anatolia or, for example, to the dwellings from the earliest levels of Aşıklı Höyük in Central Anatolia that are dated to the Aceramic Neolithic (Özbaşaran et al. 2018, 65, fig. 33). With the recent excavations in south-eastern Anatolia, an increasing number of circular buildings in “the Pre-Pottery Neolithic building tradition” have been uncovered (Özdoğan 2017, 725, figs. 80.2, 80.3 a–d). However, the tradition of circular buildings seen at centres such as Hallan Çemi (Rosenberg 2011, 61, figs. 2–5), Gusir Höyük (Karul 2011, 1, figs. 4–5, 11), Çayönü (Erim-Özdoğan 2011, 194–196, figs. 6–7, 9), Göbeklitepe (Schmidt 2011, 41, figs. 25–26, 31) and Karahantepe (Karul 2022, 3, fig. 2) clearly bears no relation at all to the structures at Hacilar Büyük Höyük in terms of precedence and succession. In the same way, there is a great temporal (chronological) and geographical distance between the circular Neolithic buildings of Khirokitia and Sotira in Cyprus (Bucholz, Karageorghis 1971, 124, figs. 46–51, 1437, 1438) the Halaf Period tholos-type structures of the Near East (Matthews 2002, 138), and the circular structures of Hacilar Büyük Höyük that are discussed here.

In addition to the above-mentioned twin stelae, two more limestone stelae were uncovered at the Hacilar Büyük Höyük EBA I settlement. The first is a stele with a height of 38 cm and a circumference of 85 cm that had been placed in the courtyard of the southern one of the two large storage structures in the central section of the mound. It seems to have been put in an intentionally dug hole



Fig. 9. Pedestalled bowl (HBH Excavations – archive)

Обр. 9. Куна със столче (архив на разкопките)

and secured in an upright position by placing small stones at its base, which is the same method as the one used for the twin stelae described above. As mentioned in the introduction, eight pithoi and five cell-shaped storage rooms were uncovered in the same area (figs. 3, 6).

The other stele, unlike the others, is roughly rectangular (length 125 cm, height 58 cm, thickness 25 cm) and had been placed on its longer side. It was positioned parallel to the western rear wall and opposite the door of casemate G 8, which measures 5.80 × 4.60 m, using the same technique (by forming supports using small stones in a purposely dug out hole) (figs. 3, 7).

The history of the stele tradition in the region where Hacilar Büyük Höyük is located can be traced back to the Late Chalcolithic Period. Altar-hearths with stelae made of mudbricks found at Kuruçay inside the temple of level 6A (Duru 1996, 12, Pl. 13.1–2) and inside the houses of levels 6b and 6a (*ibid.*, Pl. 13, 19.1–2; 14, 20.2, 21.1–2) are considered to be the prototypes of stelae in the region. The closest parallel to the roughly rectangular stone stele seen at Hacilar Büyük Höyük is the stone stele² uncovered in the 17-room complex called the ‘Ruler’s house’ or ‘Palace’ at the Bademağacı EBA II settlement (Duru 2008, figs. 302–304).

The stelae with hearths stele type seen at Kuruçay continues from the example from Beycesultan level XXXI, dated to the Late Chalcolithic Period, until the middle of the Early Bronze Age with some significant changes, such as variation in the number of stelae and the appearance of salient projections reminiscent of a bull horn (Lloyd, Mellaart 1962, 23, figs. 5, 8–17, 19–20; Duru 1996, 23). We are unable to evaluate the object made of mudbricks (Lamb 1938, 225–226, fig. 3) that appears in Period B, as we could not obtain any detailed information about it, but the altar with horn spikes found in the “shrine” of Period C seems to continue the Beycesultan EBA tradition (Lamb 1937, 12, 37, Pl. V.4; 1956, 87, Pl. Va). These stelae bear no direct resemblance to the Hacilar Büyük Höyük stelae.

It is not possible to speak of any common features among the stelae dating to the EBA in Western Anatolia. The first examples that come to mind in this regard are a stele from Troy I, found near Tower R, that has a relief on it depicting the upper part of a human figure carrying a sceptre or a weapon (?) (Blegen et al. 1950, 15, 46, 155, figs. 190–192; Korfmann, Mannsperger 1998, 53, Abb. 80); a stele from Höyücek-Helvacıköy that has an engraved human figure on it (Doğer 1995, fig. 1, 2); a stele with engraved horizontal and slanted lines on it from level V.2 at Limantepe that belongs to EBA II (Erkanal et al. 2016, 435, fig. 5), and stelae from Külliüoba that are dated to the early phases of EBA II and the second half of EBA II (Fidan 2011, 107–108, Pl. 73a, fig. 22; 2014, 20). It is not possible to talk of any similarity between the Hacilar Büyük Höyük stelae and the stelae described

² Vol. I of the Final Report of the Bademağacı Excavations was recently published (Duru, Umurtak 2019). Vol. II, which includes results from the Late Chalcolithic, Early Bronze Age and later settlements, is currently being prepared for publication.

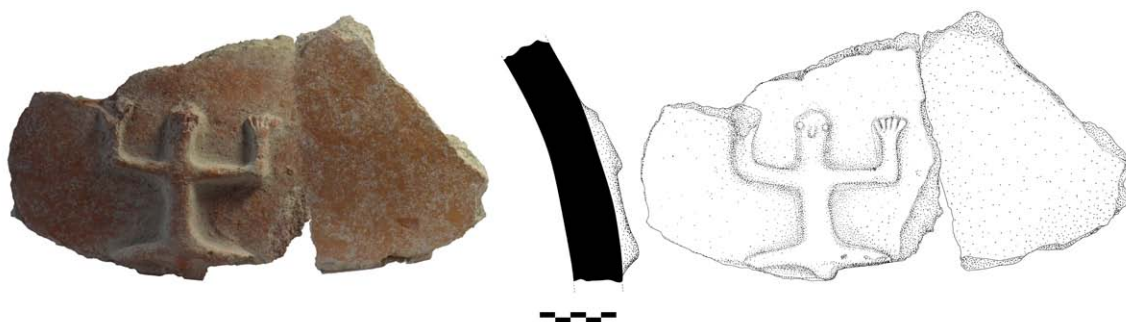


Fig. 10. 'Giving birth' scene depicted in a relief on a pithos fragment (HBH Excavations – archive)
Обр. 10. Сцена „Раждане“, релефно изоражение върху фрагмент от питос (архив на разкопките)

here in terms of their location or shape, or technique used.

The origin and development process of the stela tradition in Anatolia follows a path that involves centres in different regions that seem unrelated to each other and have huge chronological differences between them. In this context it is well known that, in addition to the early examples of plain stelae from the Pre-Pottery Neolithic Period found at Çayönü (Erim-Özdoğan 2011, fig. 20; 206–207, fig. 46), Gusir Höyük (Karul 2011, 2, fig. 5) and Gre Filla (Ökse 2022, 32, figs. 10–11), stelae with intricate artistic decorations or symbols on them have been found at settlements such as Göbeklitepe (Schmidt 2011, 41, figs. 7–11, 29), Karahantepe (Karul 2022, 1, figs. 2, 5) and Sayburç (Özdoğan, Uludağ 2022, figs. 16, 18–20) and, at a slightly later date, Nevalı Çori (Hauptmann 2011, 95, figs. 8–9). This tradition cannot possibly have any connection with the stelae found at Hacılar Büyük Höyük and its contemporaries.

No temple or shrine building was uncovered during the excavations carried out in the last 12 years at Hacılar Büyük Höyük. However, on a few occasions some unusual pottery and small finds that we think had a special function, or even a religious meaning, were found in the communal area with the circular structures and twin stelae described above, in a few casemates where the people lived and in the area where the storage buildings are located (Umurtak 2021).

A miniature jug in the shape of a large egg with a wide beaked rim that was found very close to the twin stelae and circular structures is a very high quality vessel with an unusual form (fig. 8). The plant and mineral tempered paste of the juglet is dark beige in colour. A band decoration had been applied to this well-fired orange juglet using pale cream paint and a fine brush. The decoration is in the form of radial bands coming from the two ends of the body of the vessel and another band around the neck. The vessel is understood to belong to the Ware 4 group that was produced at Hacılar Büyük Höyük (Umurtak, Duru 2016, 36–37), a popular type during EBA I. However, there is no production of this form in the Ware 4 group and there are no other examples of it in the other pottery groups at the settlement. As yet, no painted decoration has been seen on any of the Ware 4 type vessels. This juglet, which reflects a special creativity and was most likely produced as a unique item or in very limited numbers, is not found in any contemporary neighbouring settlements.

A beige pedestalled bowl (fig. 9) belonging to the Ware 1 group (Umurtak, Duru 2016, 36) was found in structure G 8 where a rectangular stela is located. This carefully made fruitstand with a mineral tempered paste is self-slipped and burnished, and has some greyish stains on it due to the firing process, and the pedestal of the vessel is decorated with seven oval vertical holes. It should not be thought that this vessel was used as a kitchen container by ordinary people for food preparation in the context of the eating habits of daily life. It is more logical that this unique vessel, the only one found at Hacılar Büyük Höyük, was used for special offerings. Pedestalled bowls have frequently been encountered in Anatolia and the neighbouring geographical regions, but it cannot be said that



Fig. 11.1–2. Baked clay idols (HBH Excavations – archive)
 Обр. 11. 1–2. Керамични идоли (архив на разкопките)

they reflect a shared common tradition. The most prominent examples of this vessel form were uncovered at the Troy I settlement (Blegen et al. 1950, 61, fig. 129/ Typ A13, 224.36.840, 262.27). Pedestalled vessels were also found at Beycesultan in levels XVI–XIII (Lloyd, Mellaart 1962, fig. 22.10, 13, 15; 27, 28.5–6, 8,10; 38.5; 43.3) but there is not much similarity between these examples and the ones from Hacilar Büyük Höyük, except that they have pedestals. The pedestalled bowl from Kusura phase C (Lamb 1937, Pl. VIII.9) bears no resemblance to our find.

Body sherds of a broken earthenware pithos that had parts of it missing were found between casemates 3 and 4 during the excavations on the northern side of the Southern Gate (fig. 10). It is understood that the paste of this red-slipped and well-fired earthenware pithos was of Ware 5 type (Umurtak, Duru 2016, 37), which was used for large pots and jars. The head of a figure on one of the pieces has traces of a hair bun on it, and the eyes and nose on the face are accentuated. The two arms of the figure are bent at the elbows and raised and, although the details of the left hand are not clear because this part is worn down, the five fingers of the right hand are clearly marked. The body is narrow and long and there are no details to indicate the gender such as breasts, enlarged belly, or a pubic triangle. In fact, breasts are not marked on any of the idols found so far at Hacilar Büyük Höyük. There is no general tendency to portray the female body with all its details in the depictions of these periods. There is a protrusion between the legs of the figure, which are spread out to the sides. The protrusion between the legs can be interpreted as the head of a baby in the process of being born, so the figure portrayed is more likely to be a woman in childbirth than a man.

A figure on a pottery fragment thought to belong to the Neolithic, found among mixed material at Kuruçay Höyük, has arms that are bent at the elbow and raised, clearly indicated fingers and legs spread apart. Refik Duru thought that although the breasts and genitalia were not specified, the figure with a very large belly was a depiction of a pregnant woman (Duru 1994, 62, Pl. 42.12, 196.4). A relief depicting two male figures and a pregnant woman is seen on a limestone basin fragment un-

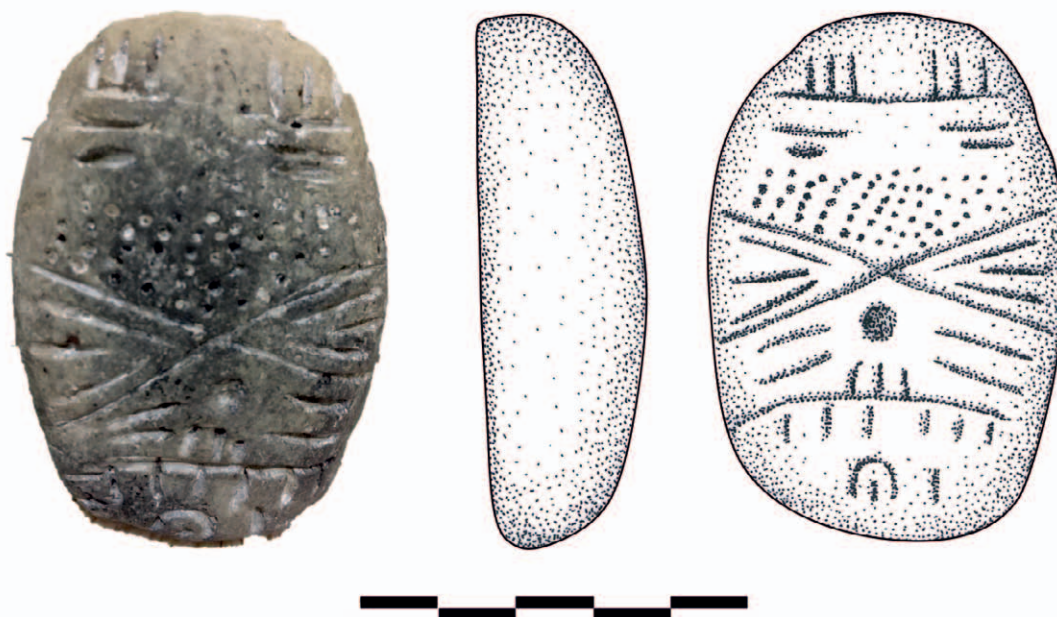


Fig. 12. Baked clay idol (HBH Excavations – archive)
Обр. 12. Керамичен идол (архив на разкопките)

covered in the Pre Pottery Neolithic settlement at Nevalı Çori in south-eastern Anatolia. The raised arms, accentuated fingers, and spread legs of the figures that Harald Hauptmann interpreted as dancing (Hauptmann 2011, 100, fig. 22) resemble the figure on the piece found in Hacilar Büyük Höyük.

Based on this view, the depiction from Hacilar Büyük Höyük could be interpreted as a dancing male figure. Then the protrusion between the legs of the figure would need to be considered as male genitalia. This possible interpretation brings to mind the relief on the Ein El-Jarba pottery at Wadi Rabah dated to the Chalcolithic (Milevski et al. 2016, 157, fig. 2). Dancing figures dating to the Neolithic are also seen at Köşk Höyük in Central Anatolia, but these are depictions of women and the iconography does not resemble that of our example (Öztan 2011, figs. 37–38). Apart from the figures with arms and legs raised upwards (Mellaart 1967, 88, 135, fig. 16, Pl. VII), which are seen in reliefs on the walls at Çatal Höyük, it is difficult to decipher the message conveyed by the positions in the similar iconography of ‘bear seal’ that was found in recent years (Türkcan 2007, 260–262, figs. 4, 6). Although some scholars have debated this issue (*ibid.*, 260), we will not discuss it further here as it is beyond our present scope. However, among these scholars Wolfgang Helck, for example, does not accept James Mellaart’s interpretation of the relief in question as a “birth stance” as he expects to see a depiction of the baby being born (Helck 1971, 90).

It is difficult to explain the function of the female figure with her arms raised on an Early Chalcolithic pottery sherd from the Tepecik-Çiftlik settlement in Central Anatolia (Bıçakçı et al. 2011, 98, fig. 53). There are figures with raised arms on some pottery sherds from the EBA II settlement at İkiztepe in the Central Black Sea Region (Bilgi 2012, 160, figs. 38–40). The figure in the upper section of the depiction consisting of two images seen on a pot found at Truşeşti in the Balkans also has raised arms that are bent at the elbows (Müller-Karpe 1968, 474, Pl. 172.1). In the example from Kolešovice, the human figure/woman? depiction engraved on the pottery has arms that are raised by bending the elbow, the fingers are clearly marked, the legs are spread apart, and the toes are also emphasised (*ibid.*, 484, Pl. 196.A). On another piece found at Sarvaš, there is a depiction of a woman in a similar position (*ibid.*, 463, Pl. 143, 1). It is not easy to say that birth scenes are being portrayed on the examples we have considered here. These find locations of these depictions are geographically very distant from the Hacilar Büyük Höyük ones and they are also chronologically much earlier.

However, the similarities are striking in terms of the raised arms and the clearly marked fingers on some of them (Mantu 1993, 129, fig. 1).

It is observed that, not only at Hacilar Büyük Höyük but in the whole region, male/god portrayals are very rare in depiction traditions from the Neolithic onwards. On the contrary, the Mother Goddess, who is the symbol of fertility, reproduction and continuity of life, is portrayed in a variety of different positions and in ways that highlight various stages of life (such as sitting on a throne, lying down, standing, young, mature, ruler over the animals, giving birth, and holding her baby in her lap) (Mellaart 1970, 175, Pl. CXXV–CLXX; Duru 1994, 60–61, Pl. 185–193; Umurtak 2005, 92, Pl. 111–129; Duru 2019, 74–75, pl. 118–120).

In the region we are looking at the earliest portrayal of a mother giving birth to a baby is the terracotta Mother Goddess figurine found in the Sanctuaries Phase belonging to the Neolithic Period at Höyücek. This figurine portrays the goddess crouching on bent knees with her legs spread out and the head of a clearly depicted baby head between the legs (Umurtak 2005, Pl. 118.1, 155.1, 162.1).

Although not very numerous, there are examples of scenes portraying childbirth from different eras and found in regions distant from each other where very different belief systems prevailed. The earliest known examples of this subject matter reflect very different styles. In Europe, at Upper Palaeolithic centres such as Laussel (Dordogne, France), Balzi Rossi (Northern Italy) and Ranaldi Shelter (Southern Italy), we encounter variations of a Mother Goddess giving birth, depicted in different styles in bas-relief or using red paint (Merlini 2021, 49).

A crude carving depicting a naked woman in a crouching position for giving birth is engraved on a stone slab was found in the “Lion Pillar Building” at Göbeklitepe in south-eastern Anatolia that is dated to the Pre-Pottery Neolithic (Schmidt 2010, 246, fig. 13; 2011, fig. 15). In addition to this, a badly damaged totem pole was found at the same site (Schmidt 2010, 248, fig. 18). Three female figures are depicted on the totem, and these are connected to each other as they progress from large to small, and from the top downwards. Marco Merlini interprets this as a sequential childbirth scene of “a mother giving birth to a mother giving birth to a mother giving birth” (Merlini 2021, 58, fig. 9).

A terracotta figurine from Çatal Höyük found in the grain silo of the Shrine in level II that portrays the Mother Goddess giving birth in her throne carried by a pair of panthers (Mellaart 1963, 93, 95, fig. 31–32; 1967, 234, fig. 52, Pl. 67–68, IX) is one of the first examples to come to mind. Apart from the broken and incomplete depiction of a goddess giving birth found at Vădastra in Southwestern Romania and dating to around 5000 BC (Gimbutas 1989, fig. 178), examples of a goddess giving birth and close parallels to it increase in number with finds from the Achilleion IIA period in mainland Greece (*ibid.*, figs. 174–176; Gimbutas et al. 1989, 196, fig. 7.46).

In the Early Bronze Age, idols representing the Mother Goddess replaced the steatopygic figurines from the Neolithic. Finds such as the terracotta and marble idols with pubic triangles are tangible evidence of belief in the Mother Goddess at the Hacilar Büyük Höyük EBA settlement, which had experienced the urbanisation process. Two terracotta idols, with heads and eyes that are very similar to the woman giving birth, belong to the same level. The first of these idols is beige in colour and has a flat section containing four holes on top of the head, just two holes on the face to represent the eyes, truncated protrusions for the arms and a cross-shaped groove on the chest, while the lower part of the idol slightly widens (fig. 11.1). The second idol is light beige in colour, the top of its head is flat, and its eyes are indicated by two dots; it has a long neck, arms in the form of short protrusions, and the lower end of the idol is rounded (fig. 11.2). A very different example from the others in form is a dark grey idol with a flat back and slightly raised front section. The shape of the idol looks like it could have been the lid of a tiny sacred vessel. All of the markings on this idol were formed with grooves, the strands of hair of the idol on the forehead are marked with vertical lines, and the eyebrows and eyes are indicated with grooves. There are impression dots on its body, three intersecting lines in the



Fig. 13. 1–3. Marble idols; 4–5. Stone idols; 6. “Pubis” models shaped from pebbles
(НВН Excavations – archive)

Обр. 13. 1–3. Мраморни идоли; 4–5. Каменни идоли; 6. Модели „пубис“ (полов триъгълник), оформени от камъчета (архив на разкопките)

centre between the lines that diagonally cross each other, the navel is indicated below this, and there are two horizontal lines on each side and three vertical lines under them. At the bottom, a dot in the middle of a semi-circular groove emphasizes the goddess's female genital organ (fig. 12). It is not possible to know what each line symbolizes here. In this example, the femininity of the Mother Goddess is symbolised not by her breasts, but by her genitals.

Apart from the terracotta idols mentioned above, there are also some meticulously made schematic marble idols. The first one has a pointed head, and its arms are indistinct protrusions (fig. 13.1), while the other one has a pointed head, blunt protrusions for its arms, and its body is flatter than that of the other idol (fig. 13.2). The third example has a long pointed head and a short, truncated body (fig. 13.3). In addition to these, there is a flat idol with eyes represented by two holes and a body section that widens towards the bottom (fig. 13.4) and a flat, plaque-shaped triangular example (fig. 13.5).

There is a similarity between one of the marble idols from Hacılar Büyük Höyük (fig. 13.2) and a marble idol found in the debris of level 7 at Kuruçay dating to the Early Chalcolithic Period (Umurtak 1994, 69, 222/2, 232/2). This object is the only idol from the Early Chalcolithic levels at Kuruçay. The similarity observed would suggest that the Kuruçay idol was actually from the EBA deposit and had somehow become mixed with the lower levels. A similar idol type (fig. 13.3) is a surface find that was found at nearby Büyükyaka Höyük (Bilgi 2012, nos. 518–519). We think this object should be dated to around the beginning of the EBA, a similar date to the Hacılar Büyük Höyük finds. There are obvious similarities between the stone and marble idols from Hacılar Büyük Höyük and the marble idols from Beycesultan (Lloyd, Mellaart 1962, fig. F. 1.1–14). An idol from Kusura (Lamb 1938, fig. 17.5) resembles one of the Hacılar Büyük Höyük examples in style (fig. 13.4). In view of the many problems encountered when attempting to date the finds from Kusura, this piece should be considered to belong to the EBA I period. One of the marble idols found at Çine-Tepecik (Günel 2008, fig. 1.4) is similar to the Hacılar Büyük Höyük idol (fig. 13.5) in terms of both shape and size. Another example from Çine-Tepecik (*ibid.*, fig. 1.5) resembles the 'pubis' models from Hacılar Büyük Höyük.

Objects made of pebbles of different colours that had been formed into triangular shapes, leaving the surfaces virtually untouched, are numerous at Hacılar Büyük Höyük, where they were found in many houses and courtyards (fig. 13.6). Looking at the Neolithic examples uncovered at Höyücek and Bademağacı during our excavations in Burdur and its surroundings (Umurtak 2005, Pl.132.8, 172.2; Duru 2019, Pl.126.2), we think these objects are actually 'pubis' models. The nearest parallels to these finds are the one called the "pebble figurine" from the Late Chalcolithic Period 3 at Aphrodisias (Joukowsky 1986, 208, figs. 209–216), and those included in the marble figurine group at Saliagos (Evans, Renfrew 1968, fig. 88.4, 5, Pl. XLIII).

Concluding Remarks

As we have reiterated many times, the strong walls surrounding the Hacılar Büyük Höyük EBA I settlement, which was in the process of urbanisation, must have been built to protect significant wealth (Umurtak 2020, 2022). The progress in development is clearly evident in all the sections of the city that have already been excavated; at the entrance gates to the city, in the casemates that form the defence system, the warehouses in the central area and the megarons. No shrine or temple has yet been uncovered within the settlement layout, which is understood to have been pre-planned and designed in advance. Looking at the size of the unexcavated areas at the mound, it is likely that there are public buildings such as residences and religious buildings here that are yet to be uncovered. During the EBA I settlement period, religious activities would have been carried out in the central

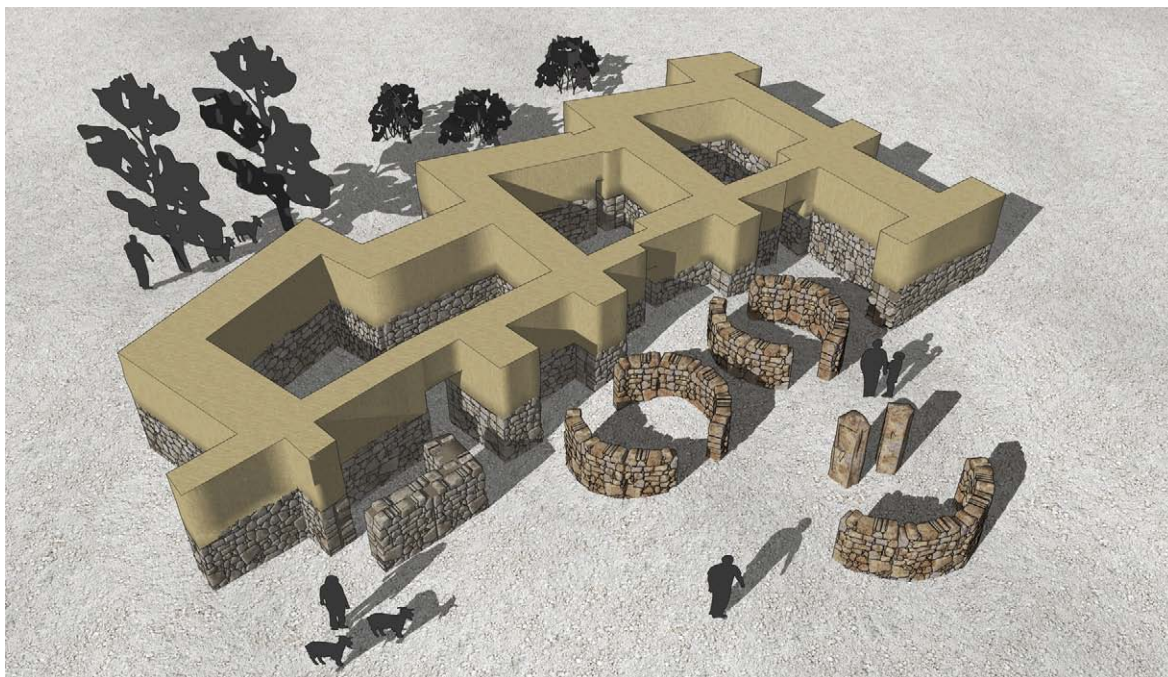


Fig. 14. Hacilar Büyük Höyük: Isometric drawing of the semi-circular structure, twin stelae and circular structures in the courtyard of casemates G 4 and G 5 (by M. Akif Uğan)

Обр. 14. Хаджилар Буюк Хьюк: Изометричен чертеж на полукръгла структура, двойни стели и кръгли структури в двора на каземати G 4 и G 5 (автор М. Акиф Уган)

temple(s) inside the city, but there were also sacred places in some other parts of the settlement. Located in an area near the Western Gate, there are two circular structures in the courtyard of casemates G 4 and G 5 that face the city, and twin stelae in front of a semi-circular wall opposite them (fig. 14); there is also a stele in building G 8 and another stele in the central part of the city where the warehouses are located. All of these structures should be considered to have had a sacred purpose and function. In this context it is possible to say that the circular structures, the semi-circular wall and the twin stelae near the Western Gate form a whole unit and serve the same purpose. Perhaps the vertical positioning of the twin stelae and the stele near the warehouses, in contrast to the horizontal positioning of the one in the G 8 structure, was related to the function of the stelae. It is not possible to understand the function of the semi-circular wall and the circular structures next to the twin stelae, or why they were designed to be circular in plan rather than rectangular like the other buildings (fig. 3).

Regarding the function of stelae, Michael Hundley's view of them as being "much like a cult image, each stele belonged to a specific deity" can be discussed together with the tangible evidence of the finds discussed here (Hundley 2014, 193). The definitions given by scholars of "Ḫuwaši", a word that appears in Hittite written documents, do not vary very much: M. Hundley defines "Ḫuwaši" as stelae mostly made of stone and occasionally engraved that were primarily located outside town, often in a grove, near a spring or on a mountain — that means 'any location imbued with a sense of the sacred' (Hundley 2014, 194). Jaan Puhvel describes "Ḫuwaši" as a stone or wood pillar, occasionally made of metal (silver, iron), that served as an outdoor or sheltered cult object, or as a boundary marker (Puhvel 1991, 438). Piotr Taracha, however, gives the following definition: "a stela Hittite (Hittite ḫuwaši) often constituted a cult object, commonly made of stone, less often of wood or even silver. Occasional relief decoration facilitated its identification with a specific deity. Stelae were mounted in temples or in different places around town, but most often in a sanctuary outside the city, in a forest or grove, for example" (Taracha 2009, 61, footnote 320). It can be stated that the Hacilar

Büyük Höyük stelae were erected for a similar purpose, approximately 1500 years earlier than the “Huwaši-stones” of the Hittite belief system. It is not possible for us to know the names of the divine powers that these stones/stelae symbolise, as they would have been given at a time when writing was not yet known in Anatolia. Of course, we are not saying that this tradition – or indeed the casemate defence wall system – that emerged at Hacılar Büyük Höyük was a precursor for the Hittite world.

The first possibility that comes to mind is that the twin stelae may represent a god and goddess couple. However, no depiction or symbol of any god has yet been found at Hacılar Büyük Höyük. We therefore have to accept that no god was worshiped here or that, if there was a god, it was not a dominant one. The beak-spouted special purpose vessel (figs. 5, 8), uncovered in the immediate vicinity of the twin stelae, is one of the tangible finds that provides evidence that religious ceremonies and rituals were performed here. In addition to this, idols were found in front of casemate G 1 (figs. 5, 13.3) and inside casemate G 4 (figs. 5, 13.5), and triangular shaped pubis models (figs. 5, 13.6) were found almost everywhere in the excavations area (fig. 14). Apart from providing the means of entrance and exit in and out of the city, the Western Gate was also connected to the area where the circular structures and twin stelae are located, so perhaps the stelae had a ‘gate keeper’ function. An offering vessel (figs. 5, 9) and an idol (figs. 5, 11.2) found near the stele in building G 8 and another idol (fig. 5, 13.4) found in the courtyard show that the building was not an ordinary residence, but we cannot claim there is sufficient evidence to call this place a shrine. However, we can say that the stele found close to the warehouses in the central section of the settlement may also be a symbol of another divine power or powers, and perhaps it was placed in this area for the continuity of abundance and fruitfulness here.

In the Early Bronze Age, most of the anthropomorphic depictions of the Mother Goddess are in the form of idols. In this period, it is apparent that the tradition of steatopygic figurines that had continued in the Anatolian Plateau since the Neolithic had been forgotten. An interesting point observed on the idols from Hacılar Büyük Höyük is that, in keeping with tradition of Mother Goddess depictions that had continued for thousands of years, the mouth is still not indicated in any way. The breasts of the Mother Goddess are also not shown, and other body details that could symbolise her femininity, such as the belly and hips, are not indicated, but the female genital organ is sometimes strongly accentuated instead (fig. 12). The earliest examples in which the vulva is depicted on its own are rock carvings and figurines from the Upper Paleolithic in Europe, and portrayals of it that continued over period lasting thousands of years include depictions on a variety of materials, such as pebbles and pottery (Gimbutas 1989, 99).

In the relief example (fig.10) on the pithos fragment at Hacılar Büyük Höyük, it seems that the breasts do not actually have to be indicated in order to identify the “woman giving birth”. A birth process is portrayed in the last scene of the narrative sequence on a situla recovered from Pieve d’Alpago (Italy), which is dated much later. This scene is a clear depiction of a woman giving birth, and the important details portrayed include the fact that the birth takes place with the support of assistants, along with the observation that, despite the much more realistic style of this work, the breasts of the Goddess are not marked (Rebay-Salisbury 2016, 172, fig. 7.13; 190, fig. 7.21). Although the figures with arms raised and legs spread out to the sides often seem to suggest the ‘birth posture’, it seems that in most of them, when there is no detail of the unborn baby, the sexuality of the goddess is accentuated.

When we examine the contemporary pantheons of the Near East, for example those seen in the early Sumerian cities, we encounter a divine realm consisting of monumental temples, sanctuaries, and the gods and goddesses to whom they were dedicated. The imagery associated with Inanna ‘Lady of Heaven’ (Black, Green 1992, 108) lived on through the ages in neighbouring regions and in different ethnic societies, renewing its influence through the changing of its name and iconography, and

the symbols associated with it. It can be said that, in contrast to the belief in the seemingly universal goddess, who was worshipped throughout the Sumerian World, the examples from Hacilar Büyük Höyük in Anatolia reflect a local and regional form of worship.

Our knowledge about the pantheon of the era at this centre and in the wider region is limited to depictions, as there are no written sources. From the earliest ages issues such as fertility in reproduction, abundance of agriculture and fertility and increase of animal herds would have been the main concerns of societies. There are many tangible examples that show how this situation shaped belief systems. Around the beginning of the Early Bronze Age, alongside these traditional beliefs that continued, new divine powers must have emerged that gained importance due to urbanisation, new ethnic frameworks and changes in social priorities. In this context, goddess(es) who were considered to be the protectors of the city gates, the defence walls and also the city must have been added to the pantheon alongside the procreative Mother Goddess, who was considered to bring abundance and fertility. Were the stelae symbols of these new divine powers? The symbolism of the Mother Goddess at the Hacilar Büyük Höyük seems to have focused on the unrivalled power of sexuality, birth, reproduction and the continual renewal, movement and continuity of all life in the city.

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Catalogue

1. Unusual Beak Spouted Juglet (fig. 8)

Find location: Near the two stelae and circular planned structures (!)

Material: Baked clay

Measurements: Height 9.6 cm, mouth width 5.0–5.4 cm

Excavation Inventory number: HBH 2014/15

Burdur Archaeological Museum Inventory number: P.15.1.14

2. Pedestalled Bowl (fig. 9)

Find location: Casemate G 8

Material: Baked clay

Measurements: Height 15.4 cm, mouth diameter 29 cm

Excavation Inventory number: HBH 2014/ 34

Burdur Archaeological Museum Inventory number: P.34.1.14

3. Pithos Fragment with Relief (fig. 10)

Find location: North of the Southern Gate, between Casemates 3 and 4

Material: Baked clay

Measurements: Height 15.4 cm, width 32 cm

Excavation Inventory number: HBH 2022/31

Burdur Archaeological Museum Inventory number: P.68.2.22

4. Idol (fig. 11.1)

Find location: Trench A–B, near the large storage structures

Material: Baked clay

Measurements: Height 3.1 cm, width 1.3 cm

Excavation Inventory number: HBH 2014/30

Burdur Archaeological Museum Inventory number: P.30.1.14

5. Idol (fig. 11.2)

Find location: Casemate G 8

Material: Baked clay

Measurements: Height 5.9 cm thickness 2.2 cm

Excavation Inventory number: HBH 2013/9

Burdur Archaeological Museum Inventory number: P.9.1.13

6. Idol (fig. 12)

Find location: Western side of the settlement

- Material: Baked clay
Measurements: Height 7.1 cm, width 4.9 cm, thickness 1.1 cm
Excavation Inventory number: HBH 2019/3
Burdur Archaeological Museum Inventory number: P.2.1.19
7. Idol (fig. 13.1)
Find location: Western side of the settlement
Material: Marble
Measurements: Height 2.0 cm, thickness 0.4 cm
Excavation Inventory number: HBH 2017/3
Burdur Archaeological Museum Inventory number: P.3.1.17
8. Idol (fig. 13.2)
Find location: Near the Southern Gate
Material: Marble
Measurements: Height 2.0 cm, thickness 0.3 cm
Excavation Inventory number: HBH 2022/24
Burdur Archaeological Museum Inventory number: P.66.2.22
9. Idol (fig. 13.3)
Find location: Courtyard of Casemate G1
Material: Marble
Measurements: Height 4.1 cm, width 2.5 cm, thickness 0.6 cm
Excavation Inventory number: HBH 2012/13
Burdur Archaeological Museum Inventory number: P.18.23.12
10. Idol (fig. 13.4)
Find location: Courtyard of Casemate G 8
Material: Stone
Measurements: Height 3.1 cm, width 2.2 cm, thickness 0.4 cm
Excavation Inventory number: HBH 2012/15
Burdur Archaeological Museum Inventory number: P.20.23.12
11. Idol (Fig. 13.5)
Find location: Casemate G 4
Material: Stone
Measurements: Height 3.0 cm, width 3.4 cm
Excavation Inventory number: HBH 2012/34
Burdur Archaeological Museum Inventory number: P.39.23.12

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Наблюдения върху някои находки с религиозна символика от селището от ранната бронзова епоха I в Хаджилар Бююк Хьююк

Гюлсюн Умуртак

(резюме)

Разкопките в Хаджилар Бююк Хьююк, който се намира на 27 km югозападно от Бурдур (обр. 1), се провеждат от 2011 г. под ръководството на настоящия автор. Те представляват най-новата фаза на дългосрочен изследователски проект в региона, започнал през 1976 г. Селището от РБЕ I в Хаджилар Бююк Хьююк, което се простира от юг на север в западната част на могилата, се състои от силна отбранителна система, образувана от каземати, които понякога са били използвани като жилища, и няколко цивилни сгради, разположени по-близо до центъра. Тази отбранителна система има две градски порти, които са проектирани да съответстват на нейното оформление; първата е Западната порта, а другата е Южната порта (обр. 2–3).

Разкопките във вътрешната част на града разкриха две съседни сгради с мегаронен план (обр. 2–3, 6). Южната е с дължина 17,5 m заедно с антите, а вътрешните ѝ размери са 7,55 × 5,40 m. В двора пред вратата ѝ са намерени *in situ* осем големи керамични хранилища. Непосредствено на изток от двора, по оста запад–изток и на северния край на стена с дължина 7 m, се разкри редица от пет малки съседни стаи. Вероятно тази част на селището е служила като склад и свързаните с това дейности. С напредването на разкопките се очаква увеличение на находките, свързани със складовата система.

Все още не е открит храм при разкопките на селището от РБЕ I, но това не означава, че то не е разполагало с храм(ове). Очаква се в неразкопаните досега централни участъци на могилата да се открият не само сакрални сгради, но и някои обществени постройки, както и дворец или владетелска резиденция. Въпреки че все още не е открит конкретен пример за

определена свещена архитектура или храм, се намират някои религиозни символи под формата на необичайни архитектурни останки и недвижими (непреносими) вещи, например стели. Керамика и някои други дребни находки, които изглеждат символизируют религиозни вярвания, се намират *in situ* в къщите или в общите части и дворовете на селището от РБЕ I.

В дворния участък на каземати G 4 и G 5, южно от Западната порта в западната част на селището, са разкрити две кръгли сгради (!), разположени на 1 m една от друга (обр. 2–3, 4.1–2). Вътрешният диаметър на едната конструкция е 2,53 m, а на другата – 3,20 m. Тези постройките, които имат каменни основи с дебелина около 40 cm, са запазени до височина 40–50 cm. По оста изток-запад на тези конструкции има два широки отвора (врати?), а извитите им стени от северната и южната страна наподобяват две срещуположни скоби. Точно до тези кръгли сгради и пред една полукръгла стена са разкрити две варовикови стели, разположени на 80 cm една от друга (наречени стели близнаци поради тяхната прилика и близост), като височината на едната е 90 cm, а на другата – 50 cm. Горните участъци на тези четириъгълни каменни структури са незавършени поради отчупване и върху нито една от четирите им повърхности няма символи, релефни украси, изображения и др. Следователно трябва да заключим, че двойните стели са имали някаква обща функция заедно с полукръглата стена.

В допълнение към гореспоменатите двойни стели са разкрити още две варовикови стели в селището от РБЕ I. Първата е с височина 38 cm и обиколка 85 cm, издигната в двора на южната от двете големи складови конструкции в централната част на могилата (обр. 2–3, 6). Другата стела, за разлика от останалите, е приблизително правоъгълна (височина 125 cm, ширина 58 cm, дебелина 25 cm) Тя е разположена успоредно на западната задна стена и срещу вратата на каземат G 8 (обр. 2–3, 7).

Намерената в непосредствена близост до двойните стели и кръгли конструкции каничка с яйцевидна форма и широко клюновидно устие е висококачествен съд с необичайна форма (обр. 8). В структура G 8, където е разположена правоъгълната стела, е открита също и бежова купа със столче (обр. 9). При разкопките на север от Южната порта между каземати 3 и 4 са открити останки от фрагментиран глинени питос с липсващи части. Върху парче от този питос има изобразена сцена на раждане (обр. 10). Освен тях са открити и глинени, мраморни и каменни идоли, както и модели на пубис (полов триъгълник) (обр. 11.1–2, 12, 13.1–5).

През РБЕ I религиозни дейности са се извършвали в централния храм (в храмовете) на града, но свещени места са се намирали и в някои други части на селището. От хетския период са познати стели, известни като „камъни *Ḫuwašī*“, които наподобяват култови изображения, тъй като всяка стела е принадлежала на определено божество. Може да се твърди, че стелите от Хаджилар Бююк Хьююк са били издигнати с подобна цел, приблизително 1500 години по-рано от „камъните *Ḫuwašī*“ на хетската система от вярвания. Невъзможно е да назовем имената на божествените сили, които тези камъни/стели символизируют, тъй като те произлизат от време, когато писмеността все още не е позната в Анатолия. Нито тази традиция, нито казематната защитна стена, засвидетелствана в Хаджилар Бююк Хьююк, е предшественик на хетския културен кръг.

Нашите познания за пантеона на епохата в този център и в по-широкия регион са ограничени до изображения, тъй като липсват писмени източници. От най-дълбока древност проблемите на човешкото възпроизводство, земеделското изобилие, плодородието и увеличаването на животинските стада са били основните грижи на обществата. Има много осезаеми примери, които показват как тези грижи са оформили определена система от вярвания. Около началото на ранната бронзова епоха, наред с тези традиционни вярвания, се появяват нови божествени сили, чиито значения се пораждат от урбанизацията, новите етнически рамки и промените в социалните приоритети. В този контекст богиня(и), които се смятат за защитни-

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ци на градските порти, отбранителните стени, а също и на града, трябва да са били добавени към пантеона заедно с репродуктивната Богиня-майка, за която се смята, че носи изобилие и плодородие. Стелите може да са били символ на тези нови божествени сили. Символиката на Богинята-майка в Хаджилар Бююк Хьоюк изглежда се фокусира върху ненадминатата сила на сексуалността, раждането, възпроизводството и непрекъснатото обновяване, движение и непрекъснатост на всички аспекти на градския живот.