

## THE JOINT PREHISTORIC PROJECT

**Robert J. Braidwood and Linda S. Braidwood**

Again—as has been the case since 1991—there is no digging to report on at Çayönü in southeastern Turkey. Past accounts in annual reports have covered the sad story of how our early village site, Çayönü, suffers from being right in the area where the PKK Kurds are in revolt. The Istanbul University Prehistory Department has understandably forbidden its students and staff to work in the area.

Work proceeds, however, under the direction of Dr. Mehmet Özdoğan and his wife Asli, on the artifactual materials and records that are in Istanbul. The expedition's budget has been able to pay for English lessons, as well as for small monthly stipends for four well-qualified Turkish students who are involved in report preparation—for their work on sorting animal bones and also on flint artifacts. As usual, Bruce Howe was in Istanbul for the winter semester preparing one of his sites for publication and at the same time teaching two students working on flint materials.

Dr. Metin Özbek of the Anthropology Department of Hacettepe University in Ankara continues his detailed examination of the human skeletal materials from Çayönü. He reckons there are the remains of well over five hundred individuals of various ages—a far greater number than has been found, up to now, on so early a site (ca. 8000 B.C.). The large number also makes possible important general observations as to the length of life spans, the diet over time, and the general health of the populations, including diseases—all especially fascinating at this time and early stage of food-production. Friends of the expedition made it possible for us to provide Özbek's laboratory with a good computer and also to send out a helpful anthropological colleague, Robin Lille, for a brief visit to give advice on the publication of the material. Robin is part of the Office of the State Archaeologist of the University of Iowa and is well used to the handling and study of great quantities of American Indian bones. We anticipate new information from Metin's studies on the impact of a partially food-producing way of life on very early villagers.

This study of the recovered animal bones proceeds on schedule, although slowly. The two Turkish students while studying English have also been sorting the material by sub-phases. Richard Meadow's student, Hitomi Honga, after completing her doctorate at Harvard, has received an excellent research position in Japan that will enable her to spend part of the year in Turkey working on the material and supervising. Meanwhile we are all anxiously awaiting news as to whether the National Science Foundation grant, applied for by Richard Meadow of Harvard, as overall director of the study, will be funded.

Following several years of meetings and discussions, a group of Turkish, German, and American specialists are nearing completion on their joint report on the Çayönü copper. We await its appearance with great interest.

For us personally, we are most enthusiastic about the news that our splendid younger colleague, Aslihan Yener, is to begin work for the Oriental Institute in the area where we cut most of our own archaeological teeth—the Amuq or Plain of Antioch! Aslihan welcome, *hoş geldiniz!*

As usual, we are most grateful to the friends of the Prehistoric Project and also want to give special thanks to Diana Grodzins for contributing precious hours on her special work on photograph mounting.

Finally, we want to share with you an excerpt that gave us great delight. This is from the introduction of Mehmet Özdoğan's recent article in *Readings in Prehistory*, a collection of articles written by members of the Istanbul University's Prehistory Department in honor of Halet Çambel:

... the strong impact that the Project had on Turkish archaeology is overlooked. The project stands as a landmark, not only as the first multinational and multidisciplinary Turkish archaeological program, but more significantly, as the only international archaeological joint work of the world that endured, without any conflicts, for over thirty years. This long-lasting, productive cooperation between the senior members of the Project, Halet Çambel, Linda and Robert Braidwood, is most outstanding; it demonstrates what can be achieved when a scientific project is founded on a scholarly and friendly basis, and not on personal ambitions ...

From the beginning of our work in Turkey, the senior members have had strong positive feelings about the Joint Prehistoric Project, and so we were really pleased to hear this affirmation (albeit overblown) from the younger generation.

---