

THE JOINT PREHISTORIC PROJECT

Robert J. Braidwood and Linda S. Braidwood

Again, the Prehistoric Project has no direct field activity to report. The senior field staff members—our colleagues Prof. Dr. Halet Çambel (Istanbul University) and Prof. Dr. Ing. Wulf Schirmer (Karlsruhe University), and we ourselves—were last together on the early village site of Çayönü in 1988. As explained in last year's *Annual Report*, younger Istanbul University colleagues under Dr. Mehmet Özdoğan's direction took over the excavations at Çayönü in 1989, joined shortly thereafter by a University of Rome team headed by Dr. Isabella Caneva. But by the end of the 1991 field season, the political situation in southeastern Turkey had become increasingly explosive to the point that there has been no fieldwork possible at Çayönü since then.

Before working in southeastern Turkey, the Prehistoric Project had profitably worked in northern Iraq, centering mainly on the site of Jarmo (but also unearthing extremely relevant earlier materials), until the monarchy fell and work there became impossible. A good season in Iran followed. By then, however, other colleagues—including two Chicago colleagues who had been with us in Iran excavating Sarab and Asiab—had decided on working in Iran. So when excavation in southeastern Turkey, the keystone of the area that interested us, became a possibility, we felt free to move in this direction.

And so it was that in 1963–64, great thanks to the help and complete participation of the wonderful one and only Halet Çambel, we began work in the eastern Taurus foothills of Turkey—indeed, in the headwaters of the Tigris River. Our Joint Prehistoric Project has happily and fruitfully continued over many field seasons.

Southeastern Turkey, together with fair sized portions of the Zagros mountain slopes in Iraq and Iran, is inhabited by people known as the Kurds. They speak an Indo-Aryan language. It is generally agreed that they were undoubtedly the people called the Kardouchoi, who even then (406 B.C.) caused Xenophon and his "Ten Thousand" great trouble. We have always liked the Kurds, but for the last dozen years or so the Zagros-eastern Taurus mountain slopes have become increasingly restless, and a relatively small group of militant Kurds, the PKK, have even made the area dangerous for outsiders. The decision to stop work at Çayönü in 1991 was actually made for us since the Istanbul University Prehistory Department lowered the boom on having its students and faculty go into southeastern Turkey.

We have a whimsical hunch that some newspaper columnist or television analyst will presently say that each place the Braidwoods went to excavate, revolution soon followed.

In our last report, we mentioned the necessity of re-roofing the expedition house. This will sound like a stuck record because we are still in much the same position we were in a year ago. Can it be done or can it not be done? The man who was to tackle the re-roofing last year wants to try to get it done this June. Whether he can

do it without arousing the PKK Kurds to insist on a stiff financial cut for themselves remains to be seen.

Our ever present responsibility lies in the publication of the already excavated Çayönü materials—full description and interpretation of what we have found. Since the post-war years, as we have mentioned repeatedly, we have been seeking evidence as to how settled village-farming community life first began in the southwestern Asian instance.

Digging, of course, is only the beginning of the process. In addition to the *artifacts*, the actual things the villagers produced and made (not spectacular in this time range), we also seek carefully for *non-artifactual* evidence of their life. Such evidence includes the bones of animals used for food (some still wild, some on the threshold of domestication?, and some, domesticated); plant materials (for example, completely wild wheat or wheat on the way to full domestication?), and the like. By Turkish law, we may take the *non-artifactual* materials home or into Europe for study by experts, but *not* any of the *artifactual* materials. This means that all of the man-made objects recovered must get their full description and interpretation in Turkey.

Since it would be completely unrealistic to move some graduate students and ourselves to Turkey for the long time it takes to produce a final publication, the only other alternative was to aid our Istanbul University colleagues in training their own resident Turkish students for the job. Happily, in fair part thanks to the generosity of friends of the Prehistoric Project, this has been highly successful. In addition, foreign colleagues have also been most helpful.

A few words on the progress of the studies—Aslı Özdoğan and Erhan Bıçakçı hope to finish their doctorates (in Istanbul University and Karlsruhe University, respectively) this summer/fall and will then be free to focus with Mike Davis on writing up the stratigraphy of the site. Over the years, our two biggest worries have been centered on achieving the study of the tremendous bulk of chipped stone at Çayönü, as well as the study of the animal bones.

In last year's *Annual Report*, we mentioned the tremendous loss of Berrin Kuşatman, as a person and as a recognized scholar of ethno-zoology, who was working on the Çayönü animal bones. Thanks to Professor Richard Meadow of the Harvard Peabody Museum (a former student of Barbara Lawrence) who agreed to Barbara's request to visit the University of Istanbul and consult with our colleagues on what to do about continuing the study of the animal bones, a solution will be forthcoming. Richard and his Japanese graduate student, Ms. Tonga, will be giving a working session this summer on excavated faunal material at a Japanese archeological site in central Turkey. The two students who helped Berrin in the preliminary sorting of bones and are interested in continuing work in this field have been working hard at learning English so that they can attend the summer session. Then this fall when Miss Tonga finishes her doctorate at Harvard, she will go to Turkey to concentrate on the study of the Çayönü animal bones (with the two Turkish students assisting). This will probably be for a period of two years, at least. Richard has agreed to supervise, but Miss Tonga will definitely be in charge.

And, as to the chipped stone—the flint and obsidian artifacts—we are glad to report that Isabella Caneva has been able to continue her work on the Çayönü chipped stone (with some Italian funding for her research), despite the fact that she has not been able to return to her own site which is a short distance from Çayönü and a bit later in time. In addition to the two or three Italian specialists she

brings with her, she will also be assisted in preliminary sorting by two Turkish students, who—like the bone girls—with our support are also taking English lessons. We are most happy with Isabella's approach to the material and thankful that she has taken over the analysis.

And so the work continues on Çayönü despite the fact that all excavation, for the present, has come to a halt. We end this report with the thought that meaningful understandings of the past require far more than the excavation and recovery of “glitzy” artifacts or of spectacular settlements of the past. Our many thanks to all the good friends of the Prehistoric Project, who have so generously aided in the work at Çayönü.
