

A PLAN FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL EXCAVATION OF LYSTRA (ZOLDURA HÖYÜK)

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ABSTRACT

Anatolia has acted as the host for many civilizations. The plain of Lycaonia, which is located in the center of Anatolia, is at the crossroads of these civilizations. Today the most important city of this region is Konya, known as Ikonium in Antiquity, with its surrounding area. Many ancient settlements exist here, notably Çatalhöyük and Karahöyük, where excavation has been carried out. These excavations have mainly informed us about the region's prehistory and protohistory. But we need more research to shed light upon the historical ages of this region.

Since 1994 we have been carrying out surveys in this area with the permission of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism of the Turkish Republic and the support of the Selçuk University (Konya). Our work has enabled us to create a cultural inventory of the region from prehistoric times to the Middle Ages. In the course of the studies which we carried out in this region, we have found archaeological material dating to the Chalcolithic Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Hellenistic and Roman Ages.

During these surveys we realized how great is the importance of the Lystra-Zoldura Höyük (Hatunsaray II), which constitutes a unique site in this region (Map 1). The cultural continuity at Lystra (Zoldura) demonstrates the importance of this mound for the stratigraphy of Central Anatolia (Figure 1). The situation at this mound requires an archaeological excavation. Therefore, we have repeatedly made surveys of the mound. In addition, by drawing up a topographic map of Lystra, we have united topographic, cadaster and site maps in a map-drawing program. In the context of these maps, archaeological excavation of these settlements has been planned.

1. INTRODUCTION

Zoldura Höyük is located 500 m. north of the village of Hatunsaray (Lusna in the Hittite period?; ancient Lystra). This village is 37 km. south of the Meram district. Hatunsaray I Höyük is situated about 700 m. southeast of the Zoldura Höyük. From Zoldura we have finds dated to the Chalcolithic, Early Bronze, Middle Bronze, Late Bronze, Early Iron, Middle Iron, Late Iron, Hellenistic and Roman periods¹. The extent of this mound is: East-west: 740 m. ; north-south: 650 m. ; height: 31.73 m. (ca. 31.5 m). ; archaeological sit area: 299150.60 m² (F: 30 hectar); the area surrounding: 2506.39 m.



Figure 1: Zoldura Höyük

The mound was identified as Lystra by Sterrett in 1860² Lystra was an important place in classical antiquity. The emperor Augustus founded here in 9 B.C. the Colonia Iulia Felix Gemina Lystra, which was a military base (Figure 2). The main reason for this foundation was to dominate the rebellious Isaurians. By means of the legion installed in this area, Rome could control Central Anatolia and the Southern Taurus Mountains.



Figure 2: Lystra Inscription

¹ Sterrett, 1888; Hardy 1941,188; Garstang-Gurney 1959, Bahar 1999, 23, 52, figure 1; del Monte-Tischler 1978, 252; Zgusta 1984, 349 (734); Zgusta 1992, 97; Bahar-Koçak 2004, 20.

²

This inscription is in the Konya Archelogical Museum; See. *Monumenta Asiae Minoris Antiqua, Vol. VIII*, 1 ff.; Sterret 1888, no. 242; CIL iii, 6786; Monte-Tischler 1978, 252; Zgusta 1984, 349 (734); Zgusta 1992, 97. (Diuum Aug(ustum) I Col(onua) Iul(ia) fe I lix gemina I Lustra II (5) conse I crauit I d(ecreto) d(ecurionum)

On the other hand, the Bible contains some sentences which tell us about St. Paul, who conveyed Christianity to the Romans and the Jews in this region. Before the importance of the city in the Roman period, written sources from the second millennium B.C. designate this region as Lusna³.

With the beginning of surveys in this area, J. Mellaart (after 1954) and our team (since 1997) have found archaeological evidence which supports the written sources⁴. Furthermore, we have carried out systematic research which can shed light on the period from the end of the Hittite Empire to the Phrygian era. We intend to use our finds to understand more about the political situation in Anatolia during this period of 450 years. But in addition to this period, Zoldura Höyük shows cultural continuity during the Chalcolithic, Bronze, Iron and Hellenistic-Roman eras. This situation shows that Zoldura has an important place in the stratigraphy of Central Anatolia.

2. A PLANNING STUDY OF ZOLDURA HÖYÜK

The importance of the location of this settlement requires systematic work, because one ought to preserve this site in order to shed light on this area with scientific data. The fact that destruction (during construction of a water reservoir) has taken place in the prehistoric Hatunsaray I Höyük, shows that a culture of preservation has not developed here. The cadaster of this region established in 2003 included nearly half of an area which had been designated as an archaeological site (Fig. 4) by the Kültür and Tabiat Varlıkları Koruma Kurulu. As a result, the local peasants can easily access and damage the mound. During our work here during ten years, we have seen the worst agricultural destruction during the autumn of 2003. We have collaborated with the Geodesy and Photogrammetry Engineering Department at Selçuk University to protect the region systematically, but during this time more damage has occurred. In addition, we believe that there is other cultural material which can easily be damaged.

We have cited the example of Zoldura in order to show how such places are damaged and to make institutions and scholars more sensitive about such matters. We have also worked with the Topographic and Engineering Departments which are active in matters such as regional planning. Such work will guide institutions like the Köy Hizmetleri (Village Services) and the Cadastral Map Service which work with land and soil use. Furthermore, during the preliminary studies, some local administrative, political and security institutions were visited in order to make them more conscious about the various archaeological sites.

On the other hand, we will make use of communication facilities during our studies. With an excavation in the region, these facilities will be more effective. It is very important that an excavation bring to light a place's culture, because such an act will attract people's attention to that area. Recent archaeological work aims firstly at protecting existing cultural objects as they are.

We think that we need to excavate because we want to shed light on some dark periods of the past. To reduce unwanted or even necessary damage, we have drawn up a detailed geodesic and photogrammetric plan. Until now, in many places, this has been done late or not at all. Our aim was not to cover a large area in a short time, but to do concerted interdisciplinary research and furthermore to avoid frequent mistakes. Therefore we covered with a grid a small area of the field of study. We

plan to carry on so-called micro-archaeology in every grid square before excavation.

In addition, topographic maps of Zoldura have been drawn (Fig. 5). These topographic, cadastral and archaeological site maps are linked to each other in a drafting program (Fig. 6). Excavation is planned according to this grid plan, which is linked to the maps (Fig. 7). Next season we will do geophysical work in the context of these grid plans. At the end of this work, when areas suitable for sondages have been determined, the excavation can begin. Preventive measures, preceding and following excavation, have already been planned.

Our biggest advantage is that this project is located within the Selçuk University regional borders. During our work we will use University resources such as staff, materials and buildings. In addition to this, we want to set up a research center in Hatunsaray. In this center scholars will work to protect the excavation area and surrounding cultural objects and natural environment. The research center will be used all year round; therefore, during the academic year we can perform not only theoretical studies but also practical projects.

Hatunsaray is situated only 37 km. from Konya, so its touristic potential is important. As the example of the Mevlana shrine shows, in recent years religious and cultural tourism has increased. The fact that St. Paul visited Ikonium, Lystra and Derbe, will influence regional tourism. Besides this, Çatalhöyük, which is situated in the area, attracts worldwide attention. Important Hittite monuments like Yalburt, Eflatunpınar, Kurunta, Fasillar, Kızıldağ, Karadağ and İvriz are located in the Konya region too. Also the archaeological sites and cultural-religious personalities like Mevlana and St. Paul will enlarge the region's cultural potential. Unfortunately these places are not protected, so a preservation project at Zoldura will increase the safety of the site.

Scientific information should be used to attract public attention. Therefore one should increase scholarly research, conferences and publishing.

Some of our undergraduates and archaeology majors have chosen thesis topics concerning Zoldura and nearby settlements. The archaeological finds made during our surveys are examined and evaluated. Zoldura and the settlements in its vicinity are evaluated and our conclusion is that:

In the recent years we have made new finds dated to the Neolithic, Chalcolithic, Bronze and Iron ages. Because of this, we must carry out once again an evaluation of our area of cultural research.

The Zoldura settlement had an important geopolitical location during all its history. It was an important link between prehistoric settlements like Çatalhöyük, Er Baba and Suberde. This area, situated at the north foot of the Taurus Mountains, supplies water to the Konya Plain. Therefore, as mentioned above, if the Roman Emperor Augustus' main reason to found a colony here was the Isaurians, another reason was these water supplies. The MBA (Middle Bronze Age) settlements were located at the center of the Konya Plain, but in the LBA (Late Bronze Age) and in the EIA (Early Iron Age), settlements moved to mountainous and sloping areas because of security reasons. Therefore the important MBA settlements like Karahöyük, İşgalaman, Sırçalı and Çomaklı Höyük became weaker in the LBA and EIA. The LBA and EIA cultures are densely attested in the entrance to the mountainous area (where the plain ends). Some of the settlements situated in this region are, for example, Hatip Kale, Akören Karahöyük, Seydişehir II Höyük, Cicek and Sarıoğlan. This transient feature can account for Zoldura's growth in the LBA and the EIA. With the weakening of the Hittite state around 1200 B.C., these areas became stronger.

During our surveys we discovered the Kurunta monument on

³ Garstang-Gurney 1959, 63-64, 124

⁴ Mellaart 1954, 175 ff.; Mellaart 1958, 311 ff.; Mellaart 1963, 199 ff.; Bahar 1998, 200; Bahar 1999, 23 ff.; Bahar-Koçak 2004, 20 ff.

the Hatip cliffs *kendi yayınlarına referans burada verebilirsiniz*. This helped to shed light on the Hittite Imperial Period in the Konya and Karaman regions. In our research around Zoldura, this fortress and monument may furnish more information about the dominating Tarhuntašša Kingdom's borders and situation. Especially questions about the capital of the Kingdom and whether Zoldura, with its numerous LBA finds, can be identified as the capital, will be considered in our studies.

This region was important because it was the center of Hittite expansion and thus constituted a link to the Mediterranean and to Western Anatolia. Zoldura was a crossroads between Second Millennium settlements like May Höyük and Ortakaraviran Büyük Höyük to the south, Akören Karahöyük and Alibeyhöyüğü to the east, Mula Höyük in Kilistra and Seydişehir II Höyük to the south-west, and further away to Fasillar and Eflatunpınar. To the north it was linked to settlement mounds such as Çomaklı, Boruktolu and Alibeyhöyüğü.

The section located south of the Central Hittite expansion area, which is bordered by the Tarhuntašša Kingdom and the Hulaia River Lands, played an important role during the Hittite period in the region of Konya-Karaman. Especially the struggles between Hattuša and Tarhuntašša at the end of the Hittite hegemony become more comprehensible with our finds of recent years. With the exception of some written sources concerning the Kingdom of Tarhuntašša, there exist no sources which would enable us to determine the Kingdom's borders. An archaeological excavation will cast light upon the cultural stratigraphy, and among the finds, perhaps some written sources may also appear. Such discoveries will help us to date the region's history. Moreover, historical events at that time in Anatolia will become clearer.

We think that this study will enable us to understand why the strong MBA culture and settlement in our research area became weaker in the LBA, and why the settlement's structure changed.

Also, new Mycenaean finds have been made during our research. This is important because that culture is not densely attested in inner Anatolia. It is a big problem to determine how intensive was Mycenaean trading in Central Anatolia at this time and at the end of the Hittite Imperial period. The most interesting find we made at Zoldura is a crater sherd with a bird decoration in a panel under the exterior rim (Figure 3). This sherd is similar to the group of Tarsus Mycenaean wear⁵.



Figure 3: A Crater Sherd

Another cultural problem we have faced during our Hatunsaray

⁵ Goldman 1956, Plate 315; 1085 (Tarsus LBA 1); Plate 335: 1323-1326 (Tarsus LBA II b-Mycenaean); Bahar-Koçak 2004, 74).

study concerns the Iron Age. As is known, after the end of Hittite hegemony in the 12th century, there was a lack of central power in this area, and it is therefore difficult to understand the region's political history. But in recent years, surveys and excavations at Boğazköy, Gordion, Kerkenes Dağ, Kilisetepe, Porsuk and Kaman-Kalehöyük have provided important data about this "Dark Age" in Anatolia. Among these, excavations at Boğazköy Middle Plateau furnish important chronological data concerning this period⁶.

Our region of research, Konya-Karaman, is an important Iron Age cultural area too. Alaettin Tepe in the center of Konya, Seydişehir II Höyük, Hatip Kale, Çavuş Höyük, Sarıoğlan, Cicek and Zoldura are some settlements which represent that period.

Zoldura Höyük is the mound which best attests EIA and MIA cultures. This mound shows a transition from LBA to EIA, and it informs us about the various Iron Age cultures without interruption. We have found some MIA wares⁷ too. A special feature of Zoldura is that the settlement was a colony during the Roman period. We hope to shed light on this period and to discover archaeological objects such as architectural ruins, steles, inscriptions on stone dating to the Roman period. There are many inscriptions in the region from the Hellenistic and Roman periods. We want to cooperate with a specialist in that field to preserve these inscriptions. We are sure that we will encounter different objects from classical times during our research in the village of Hatunsaray and in the settlement at Zoldura. The discovery of loom weights at Zoldura informs us about the settlement's socio-economic situation and its development in the Hellenistic-Roman period.

During the archaeological surveys we have been conducting in the Konya-Karaman region since 1994, we have investigated approximately 280 settlements. Our work has been conducted with new technological tools and has been evaluated according to recent data. Among all the settlements we studied, Zoldura is located on a transit point and shows cultural continuity without a break from the prehistoric period onwards. Therefore we think that there exists a need for archaeological excavations at Zoldura Höyük.

3. CONCLUSION

Zoldura Höyük with its cultural continuity is important for the chronology of Central Anatolia. During our surveys there we have made finds from the second millennium B.C., the problematic (in Anatolia) Mycenaean era, and various periods of the Iron Age. This mound is also important because of its geographical situation and its chronology, so that excavation is needed to learn more about settlement there.

With this aim we have ascertained the legal property situation of the project area, shown its topographic location, compiled the area's borders on the map and plotted grids over the excavation area according to the map coordinates. All this was done as preliminary studies. The cadaster of this region was laid down by the Konya Meram Cadastral Directorate in 2003. Unfortunately some of the parcels included in the cadaster form part of the archeological site. This will create problems during excavation and conservation of finds made in the course of our survey. This situation shows that cooperation between the Cadastral Office and the staff of the Ministry of Culture and Tourism and of other scientific institutions is a necessity. We

⁶ Seeher 2000: 19 ...; Genz 2000, 35 ...; Genz 2003, 179 ...; Bahar-Koçak 2003, 193; Dönmez 2003, 213...; Bahar-Koçak 2004, 29, 77

⁷ Hansen-Postgate 1999, 116, Figure 19-21 (Kilise Tepe EIA); Sams 1994, Figure 63, Cross and Lozange Panels 5

believe that our studies will contribute to such collaboration.

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Figure 4: Cadastral Situation and Archaeological Sit Borders of Zoldura Höyük (the red lines show the archaeological sit area, the blues lines show the property area).

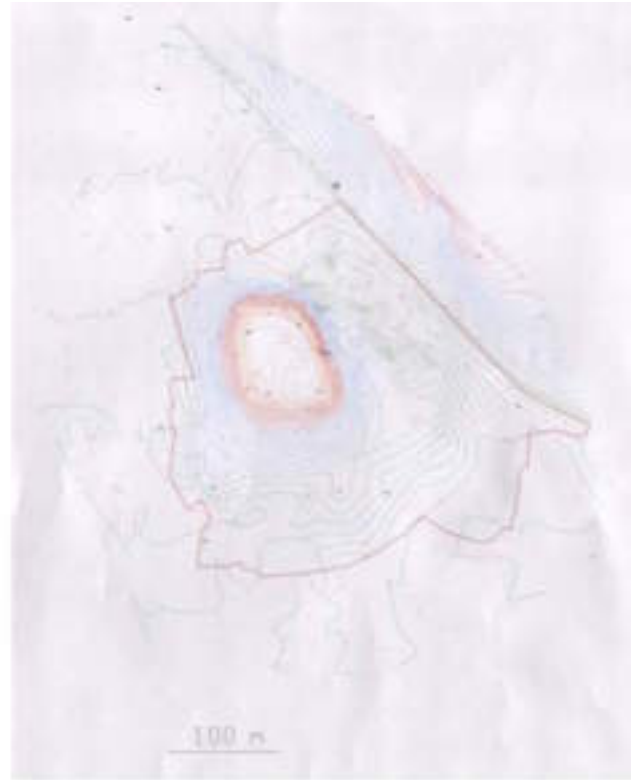


Figure 5: Topographic situation of Zoldura Höyük



Figure 6: Cadastral and Topographic Situation of Zoldura Höyük.



Figure 7: The Sectional Zoldura Höyük Map and Grit nr.