ISSN: 0066-1546

ANATOLIAN STUDIES

Journal of the British Institute at Ankara



VOLUME 62 - 2012

CAMBRIDGEUNIVERSITY PRESS



Understanding Turkey and the Black Sea

ANATOLIAN STUDIES

Journal of the British Institute at Ankara

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With acknowledgements to The Society of Dilettanti.

Anatolian Studies is published by Cambridge University Press for the British Institute at Ankara.

Cover photo: the acropolis of Anazarbos-Caesarea (photo N.L. Wright). See 'The house of Tarkondimotos: a late Hellenistic dynasty between Rome and the East' by Nicholas L. Wright.

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INSTITUTIONAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES

Anatolian Studies (ISSN 0066-1546) is published once a year in December. The subscription price (excluding VAT) of volume 62 (2012), which includes print and online access, is £65 net (US\$107 in the USA, Canada and Mexico) for institutions. EU subscribers (outside the UK) who are not registered for VAT should add VAT at their country's rate. VAT-registered customers should provide their VAT registration number. Japanese prices for institutions (including ASP delivery) are available from Kinokuniya Company Ltd, P.O. Box 55, Chitose, Tokyo 156, Japan. All prices include delivery by air where appropriate.

Orders, which must be accompanied by payment, may be sent to a bookseller, subscription agent or direct to the publisher: Cambridge University Press, The Edinburgh Building, Shaftesbury Road, Cambridge CB2 8RU; or in the USA, Canada and Mexico: Cambridge University Press, Journals Fulfillment Department, 100 Brook Hill Drive, West Nyack, New York 10994-2133, USA.

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Printed in the United Kingdom at Bell & Bain Ltd, Glasgow. © The British Institute at Ankara, 2012.

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James Mellaart

Jimmy Mellaart, as he was always known, was born in London on 14 November 1925 and died there on 29 July 2012. He will be remembered for his ground-breaking contributions to Anatolian archaeology from the Neolithic to the Iron Age, beginning in 1951–1952 with an extensive survey recording höyüks, in a zone stretching from the Konya plain westwards to the Aegean. With limited funds, and unable to drive, he moved on foot, until in the first winter he had worn his shoes into holes. This first great enterprise began the process of bringing Anatolia centre stage, no more on the sidelines of the Fertile Crescent. Jimmy's achievements over the years were recognised late in life, on his 80th birthday, by messages of appreciation from a number of Turkish prehistorians.

Of course he is best known for his excavations, initially in conjunction with Seton Lloyd at Beycesultan in the Maeander valley, one of the largest sites he had discovered on his survey. Another such site, Hacılar near lake Burdur, was chosen for four seasons of very productive excavations (1957–1960). Jimmy was, however, anxious to cast light on the Neolithic. Following a drive by Land Rover, a very large mound was examined near Çumra, Çatal Höyük, where again he had four seasons of excavations (1961–1965). At length, in the early 1990s, he was ready to welcome resumption of work at Çatal Höyük, led by Ian Hodder.

James Mellaart was born of a Dutch father with Scottish ancestry and a mother from Northern Ireland. Until late in life he discounted his Dutch background, emphasising his Scottish links. In 1932, with a decline in the art market in which his farther was involved, the family left London for Holland. Thus Jimmy was caught in the German occupation, his father arranging for him to move from Maastricht to Leiden, where he worked in the museum. Warned of impending deportation as slave labour to the east, he managed to return to the family seat in Maastricht, where, in September 1944, he was able to welcome the British and other Allied units, acting as an interpreter. In 1947 he began a four-year course in ancient history and Egyptology (having worked already on the latter) at University College, London. But by 1951 his interest was strongly focused on archaeology. In addition to his surveys in Anatolia, he carried out a survey in the Jordan valley and worked at Jericho for the first three seasons of Kathleen Kenyon's excavations.

He was appointed Assistant Director of the British Institute at Ankara in 1959. Two years later, on the retirement of Seton Lloyd from the directorship, he moved to Istanbul, where he was for two years a lecturer in the university. In 1964 he was appointed Lecturer in Anatolian Archaeology in the Institute of Archaeology, London, remaining there until his retirement in 1991. From the mid 1960s his career was blighted by the 'Dorak affair', which had arisen from his publication of drawings of objects alleged to have come from a site in the Aegean region of Turkey. The fact that these have been lost from view, combined with the absence of photographs, led many to question the very existence of this treasure. A serious factor was Jimmy's complete ignorance of photography, as he did not know the back from the front of a camera. But Dorak, although it was seized on by the Turkish press, was surely not the only reason for his being banned from further fieldwork in Turkey. Academic jealousy can be very strong, and the discoveries at Catal Höyük had made the name of Mellaart outshine others in the profession.

James Mellaart was a larger than life character, inspiring both respect and envy. He did not suffer fools gladly, a trait contributing to his difficulties. Enthusiasm, dedication, curiosity and generosity can sum up his character. The last was apparent in his readiness to give his time to discussion with and guidance of younger archaeologists. He might at times have been guilty of wishful thinking, but he was incapable of deliberate invention. Among his most controversial contributions were those that related to fragmentary records of wall paintings from Çatal Höyük. These followed after the destruction of many of his excavation records that burnt down his wife Arlette's yalı on the Bosphorus in 1976. Jimmy's curiosity was never better displayed than at Jericho in 1954, when, impatiently awaiting the arrival of the photographer, he began scraping into the supposed limestone bedrock. Here he found flecks of charcoal in what was in fact decayed plaster floor. In due course excavation was to continue down ten more metres. Jimmy always took the wider view, deriding those in the Jericho team who were not interested in the implications of the excavations as a whole but only in their own trench.

His other interests, apart from Anatolian historical geography, included geology and Seljuk architecture. Until his recent illness, Jimmy had a remarkable memory. By many he will be missed.

Charles Burney

Richard Harper

Richard Harper, who died in January 2012, was Assistant Director of the British Institute at Ankara (BIAA) from 1966 to 1972. He first came to the Institute in 1962, to begin research on the Roman province of Cappadocia as a graduate student of the University of Durham, where he had been a pupil of Eric Birley. He was BIAA Scholar in 1964 and Librarian in 1965 before his appointment as Assistant Director.

During the 1960s he assisted the Director, Michael Gough, in the Alahan excavations, conducted his own epigraphic survey work in the provinces of Nevşehir, Niğde and Kayseri, and carried out an excavation at the Cappadocian city of Comana (modern Şar) in collaboration with Dr İnce Bayburtluoğlu from the Museum of Anatolian Civilisations, Ankara. published the inscriptions of Comana in a series of articles in Anatolian Studies in 1968, 1969 and 1972. In 1968 he accepted the general invitation that went out to all archaeologists in Turkey to undertake rescue excavations in the Keban dam area, and chose the Roman fort at Pagnik, on the west bank of the Fırat, to excavate, and worked there for four seasons until 1971. In 1971 he expanded the range of his epigraphic work to cover the museums of Adana and Maras, and also recorded inscriptions for Turkish colleagues working at Euromos and Cibyra. In 1972 he was invited by Dumbarton Oaks, the Byzantine research centre in Washington DC, to direct another rescue excavation on

the Euphrates in Syria at Dibsi Faraj, which ran until 1974. Thereafter he was based at the British School in Jerusalem until his retirement in 1995, and his projects there included work at Zohar, a late Roman site, published in 1995, and at Belmont, a Crusader site, in collaboration with Professor Denys Pringle, now at Cardiff University.

Richard and his wife Yvonne were the heart and soul of the BIAA during the late 1960s, during the last years of Michael Gough's and the first of David French's directorships. All those who spent time in Ankara during that period will have warm memories of their generosity and hospitality. I first appreciated this in April 1967 when he drove me and a student friend from Ankara down to Silifke in his Land Rover, where we stayed in the old han, before our ways parted. Such supportive gestures were many times repeated, when I was based for longer periods in Ankara between 1970 and 1972. His commitment to the Institute, including a passion for maintaining and expanding the library (which he was to replicate during his time in Jerusalem), reduced the amount of time that he was able to devote to his own research. He never completed a doctorate, although he will be remembered for a series of epigraphic and archaeological contributions, many of which appeared in Anatolian Studies. His contribution to the well-being and stability of the BIAA during a difficult period of its history was a vital one, which was well appreciated at the time and deserves to be remembered.

Stephen Mitchell