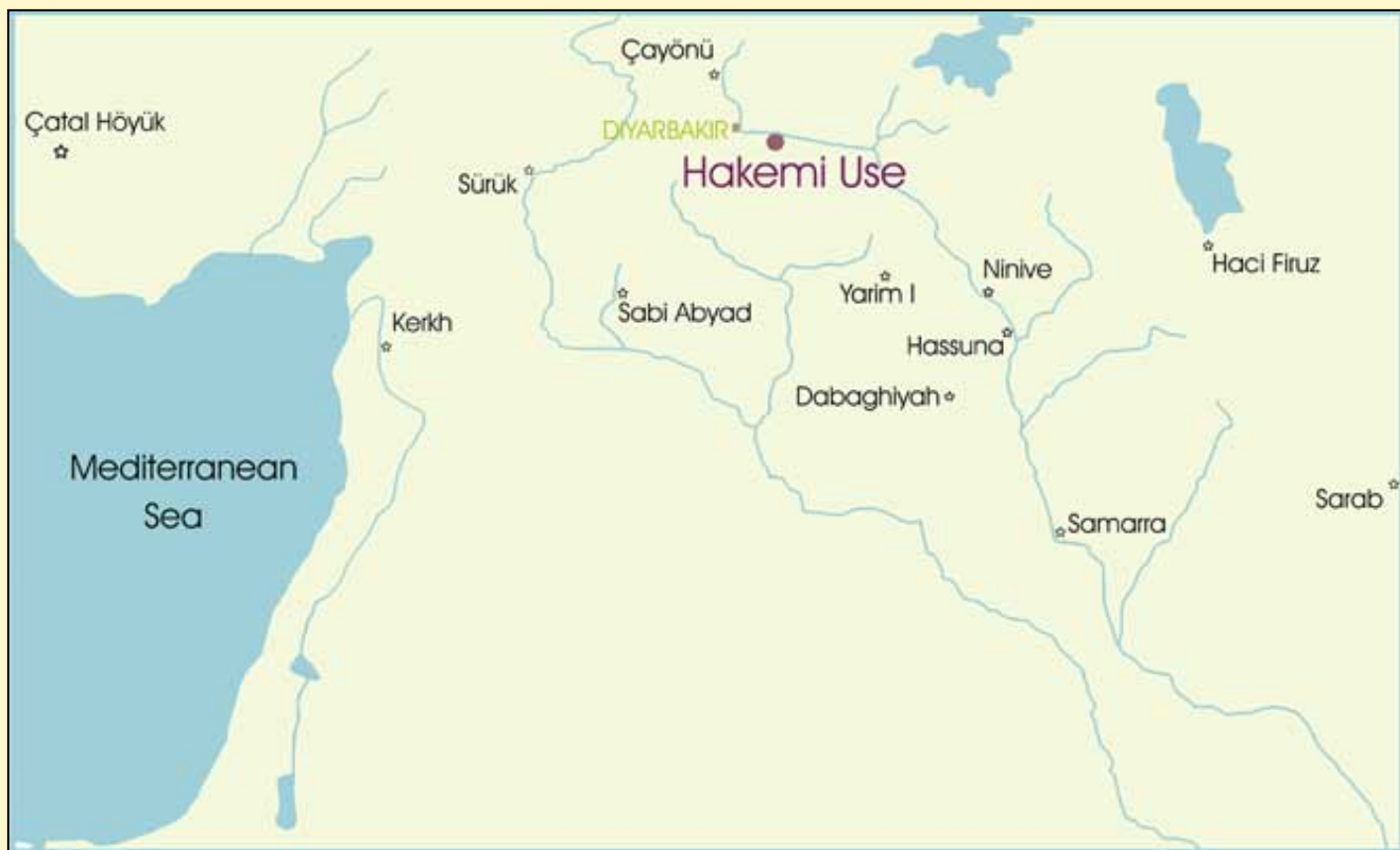


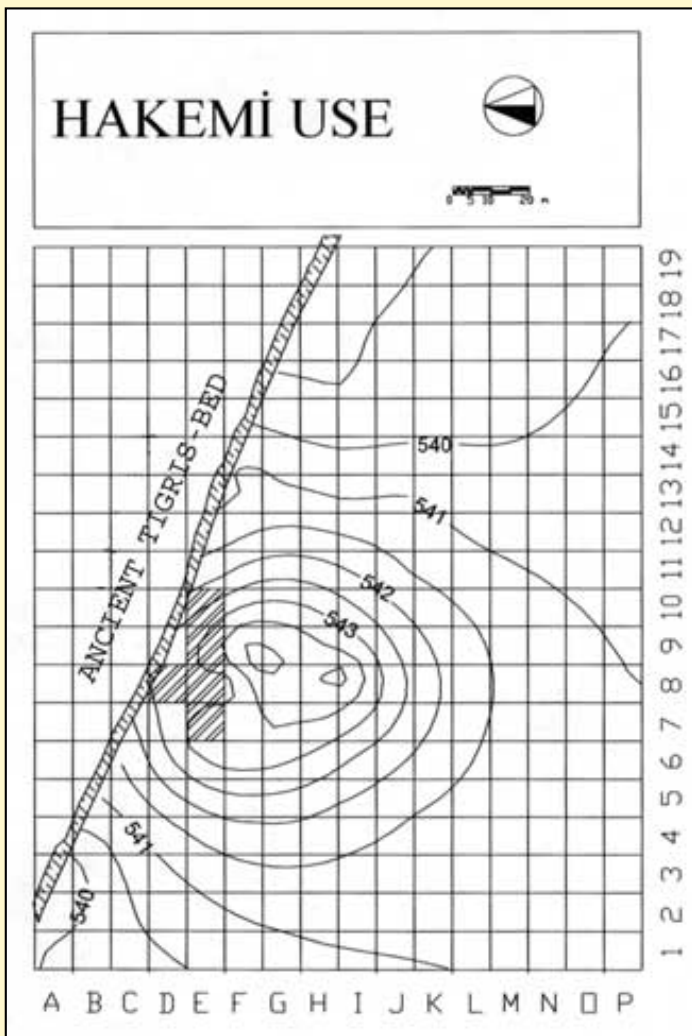
# Hakemi Use: a new discovery regarding the northern distribution of Hassunan/Samarran pottery in the Near East

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This paper describes the results of the first two excavation seasons at Hakemi Use, a Hassuna/Samarra settlement discovered on the Tigris River in south-eastern Anatolia. The Hassuna/Samarra period is a remarkable time in north Mesopotamian prehistory and the earliest Painted Ware still remains a mystery. It was previously thought that pottery from this period was not distributed as far as Turkey, but the excavations at Hakemi Use have proved this wrong. Hakemi Use now seems to form the northernmost border of Hassuna/Samarra Ware in the Near East.



**Figure 1.** Map showing the location of Hakemi Use.



**Figure 2.** Topographical plan of Hakemi Use.

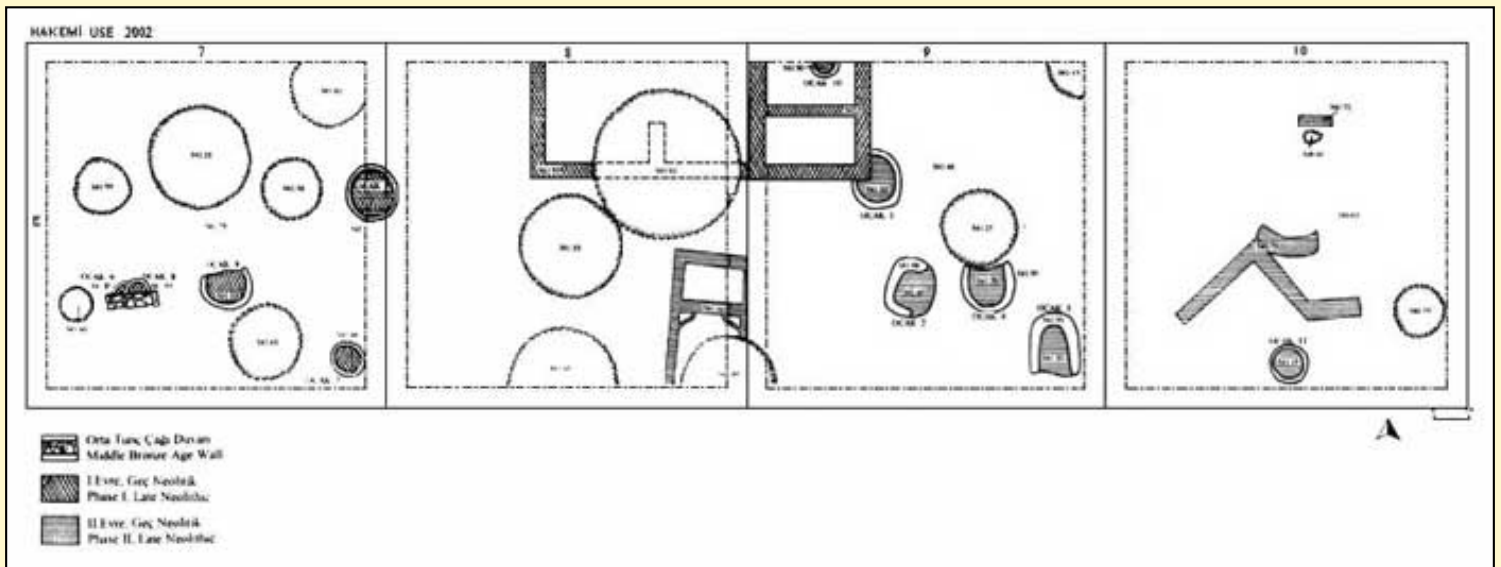
## Introduction

Although the Hassuna/Samarra Period plays a significant role in the prehistory of Mesopotamia, it is still a phenomenon in Near Eastern archaeology. Many researchers have put forward various ideas regarding this period since the 1940s when the Tell Hassuna excavations were carried out. The period also produces the earliest Near Eastern painted ware. Archaeologists suspect that there is Hassuna/Samarra painted ware within the borders of Turkey. There is a widespread belief that this pottery is not distributed to the inner parts of the Turkish-Syrian border. This idea has been disproved by the Hakemi Use excavations on the bank of the Tigris River within the modern province of Diyarbakır in south-east Turkey. The Hassuna-Samarra sherds found in this settlement, about 100km from the modern Turkish-Syrian border, also form the northern limit of this pottery in the Near East. This new discovery establishes that Hassuna/Samarra Ware is also found on the southern skirt of the Taurus mountains in the inner parts of Turkey.

## Location

Hakemi Use is a small mound settlement located on the right bank of the Tigris River, c. 70km to the east of Diyarbakır. It is c. 70km to the south-east of Çayönü, one of the remarkable Neolithic settlements in Turkey, as the crow flies (Figure 1). Since 2001, excavations have been carried out on the mound within the scope of the Salvage Project of the Archaeological Heritage of the Ilısu Dam Reservoir to be constructed on the Tigris River (Tekin 2003; 2004a; 2004b). The mound is a small, flat settlement with a diameter of 120m and a height of c. 4m above the plain. Cotton agriculture has been practiced on the surface of

the mound for many years, causing severe damage to the upper layers of the mound.



**Figure 3.** Plan of Late Neolithic architecture.



**Figure 4a.** Purplish Brown Slipped Ware from Building Level I.



**Figure 4b.** Grey-Black Slipped Ware from Building Level I.



**Figure 4c.** Standard Incised Ware from Building Level I.



**Figure 4d.** Impressed Ware from Building Level I.

### Excavations

Five trenches of 10x10m were opened parallel to the Tigris River on the northern part of the mound (Figure 2). Data concerning the upper layers is limited due to the damages caused by agriculture. The surface of the mound has been disturbed by the digging of modern burial pits when the mound was used as a cemetery in the early twentieth century. Three periods have been established at Hakemi Use during the two excavation seasons:

- I. first millennium BC (Early Iron Age - Late Assyrian Period)
- II. second millennium BC (Late and Middle Bronze Age - Middle and Early Assyrian Period)
- III. sixth millennium BC (Late Neolithic - Hassuna/Samarra Period)

## Architecture

The architectural remains of the two upper periods are irregular due to modern damage. Scattered stone foundation and mudbrick remains are dated to these periods. The architecture of the third period is significant although it has been disturbed by Early Iron Age garbage pits at various points. Two building levels dating to the Late Neolithic were exposed in the first two excavation seasons (Figure 3). The northern part of a 10.5 x 2.5m house with a rectangular plan related to the first building level is left in the trench profile. The walls of the building without stone foundations were constructed by the technique of mudbrick and pisé. The exposed four rooms of the building are of similar sizes. The northernmost room has a hearth. The other hearths related to this building level are outside the building related to each other. Only a few parts of the house dating to the building level II have been uncovered. The floor of this building which was exposed by the end of the 2002 excavation season has not been reached yet. This building with walls constructed by pisé technique has similar characteristics to the building of the previous building level. The house, of which the southern part is disturbed by an Early Iron Age pit, has a large room with two sections of c. 50cm wide made of clay. Although it is not definite why these sections were made, they were probably used for storage. Hearths of this building level are attached to each other outside the house, and seem to be related to each other. There is dense ash near these circular or horse-shoe shaped hearths, together with cereals like barley and wheat and bones of animals like sheep and goats. The data suggest that the 13 hearths related to both of the building levels were used for food cooking.

## Pottery

Although Hakemi Use is a small mound, there is a remarkably high density of sherds on its surface. During the first two excavation seasons c. 25 000 sherds were collected, of which 40 per cent are sherds which can be defined as rims or bottoms and 60 per cent consist of amorphous pieces. Among the pottery collected; 3 per cent is Early Iron Age and Late Assyrian Period, 2 per cent is Late and Middle Bronze Ages - Middle and Early Assyrian Periods and 95 per cent is dated to the Late Neolithic - Hassuna/Samarra Period. Most of the first and second building level pottery is fast running wheel-made monochrome ware. There is also hand-made cooking ware dating to the Early Iron Age and a small amount of Painted Ware which is similar to the pottery of the Upper Euphrates Basin.



**Figure 5.** Samarran sherds from Building Level I.



**Figure 6a.** Husking tray from Building Level II.

About 85 per cent of the Late Neolithic pottery are sherds defined as the Standard Monochrome. The sherds are hand-made, dark buff in colour and highly chaff-tempered in fabric. Since these thick-walled (1-2.5cm) pieces are not fired at a high enough temperature, their cores are dark in colour. This group usually consists of open formed vessels. Some of them are basins 60-70cm wide, and there are a few bowl sherds. This group forms most of the pottery in both building levels. As a result of the first two excavation seasons, the distinguishing characteristics of the Late Neolithic Pottery can be established according to the building levels I and II.

**Building Level I Pottery** is of fine craftsmanship and the pottery forms indicate a finer, more professional production. The pottery from building level 1 can be divided into four groups:

1. Slipped Burnished Ware
2. Standard Incised Ware
3. Impressed Ware
4. Samarra Ware

These type of pottery can be grouped as fine ware, with inclusions of chaff, fine sand and minerals. Some examples are well-fired. Among the Slipped Ware, the latest examples of form and technique are *Purplish Brown Slipped Ware* (Figure 4a). This group resembles the Late Neolithic Ware of Central Anatolia. Another group is the *Grey-Black Slipped Ware* (Figure 4b). This group is parallel to the *Dark Faced Burnished Ware* (Braidwood & Braidwood 1960) well-known in the North Syrian-Cilician region. *Standard Incised* (Figure 4c) and *Impressed Wares* (Figure 4d) are significant in the Northern Syrian Late Neolithic pottery (Iwasaki & Tsuneki 2003; Sulieman &



**Figure 6b.** Husking tray sherds from Building Level II.

Nieuwenhuyse 2002). The tradition of decorating the vessels by incising when wet is observed dating from Tell Hassuna Ib (Safar and Lloyd 1945). Hakemi Use examples are parallel to Tell Hassuna VI. The decorations on the Impressed Ware are done when wet, as with the Incised Ware.

*Samarra Painted Ware* forms c. 5 per cent of the ceramics from building level I (Figure 5). Most of the vessels consist of open forms. The paste of vessels like plates or bowls are usually orange or rarely dark buff. There are chocolate and dark brown hatched triangles inside or outside of the body of bowls. There are inclusions of a small amount of mica and fine sand. This pottery, which is usually defined by the first findings from near a cemetery in the environs of the well-known medieval settlement Samarra (Herzfeld 1930) on the Tigris River, is usually known as Middle Mesopotamian Ware. There have been remarkable findings from Tell Sabi Abyad in Syria, close to the Turkish border (Le Mié re & Neiuwenhuyse 1996). Most of the Samarra Ware uncovered in Hakemi Use are '*northern*' examples. Only a few items of '*classic*' Samarra Ware have been found. It is difficult to say whether Samarra Ware was produced here or not since the excavated area is narrow and it has only been excavated for two seasons. The idea that Samarra Ware had been imported to Hakemi Use is convincing, considering the ratio of Samarra Ware among pottery in general and the situation in other settlements. Although there is information that Samarra Ware is present within the borders of Turkey (Campbell *et al.* 1995: 407; Bernbeck *et al.* 1999), there is not much detailed data. At present, Hakemi Use findings are the first examples of Samarra Ware collected in the excavations carried out in Turkey. However, it is still not definite whether this pottery is locally produced or imported.



**Figure 7a.** Hassunan sherds from Building Level II.

**Building Level II Pottery** shows rather coarse craftsmanship as of the previous level. This group makes up 90 per cent of the '*Standard monochrome*' collected in building level II. Since the production techniques of the examples related to this building level is rather coarser than building level I, they are defined as Coarse Ware according to their fabric. '*Husking trays*' (Figure 6a-b) which are characteristic forms of *Hassuna Ware* are prominent. The pottery of this building level can be grouped as follows:

1. Red-Banded Ware
2. Hassuna Ware
3. Archaic Painted Ware

#### 4. Standard Monochrome Ware

*Red-Bands* usually consist of 1 or 2cm thick bands painted vertically on the rims or beneath the rims of open formed vessels. The most beautiful pottery of this building level is surely the *Hassuna Painted Ware* (Figure 7a-c). Their fabric is orange or pinkish in colour, decorated with dark red or brown bands on the outside. In a few examples, same kind of decoration is done in dark brown colour on the surface of the greenish buff paste. Parallel to this ware, which is named after Tell Hassuna, excavations have been carried out at Tell Boueid II (Suleiman & Neiuwenhuys 2002: fig. 4.15) in the Middle Khabur region in Syria and Tell Aray (Iwasaki *et al.* 1995: fig. 16:13) to the south of Aleppo. The pottery of Hakemi Use has been the first examples found in the northern regions of south-eastern Turkey. Parallels to Hassuna Painted Ware have been found before in Yumuktepe, Mersin on the coast of southern Turkey and in Carchemish on the Euphrates River. However, both of these settlements are affected more by Syrian culture than the Anatolian.

A few Archaic Painted sherds found in building level II in Hakemi Use are related to the lower levels which have not yet been excavated; these sherds might have come from the upper layer due to mixed contexts.



**Figure 7b.** Hassunan sherds from Building Level II.

#### **Burials**

Ten earth burials dating to the Late Neolithic Building level I have been found. Research on the skeletons is continuing. Most of the skeletons in the burials are of babies and children. Besides well-preserved pottery, there are sherds of broken vessels or vessels with missing bodies which were left as grave goods. No painted ware was found in the burials. The forms are composed fruit stands (Figure 8) or short-necked vessels. Besides obsidian

## Figure 7c. Hassunan sherds from Building Level II.

Figurines made of clay are similar to those in the Northern Mesopotamian Hassuna settlements. Clay figurines unearthed in Yarimtepe I in the Sincar Valley in the Northern Iraq are parallel to those of Hakemi Use.

### Discussion

Hassuna/Samarra Ware, which has an important place in the prehistory of Mesopotamia, also comprises the earliest Painted Ware in the region. The existence of this pottery within the borders of Turkey has long been a matter of discussion in the world of archaeology. The origin and distribution of the pottery has not been established precisely. Although there was a widespread idea that this pottery is the prehistoric material of northern and central Iraq, this idea has been proved to be invalid as a result of the excavations carried out in various parts of the Near East, especially northern Syria and south-eastern Anatolia (Teleilat and Akarçay within the scope of Carchemish Dam Reservoir Project). The characteristics of this pottery are established by the excavations carried out in Tell Sabi Abyad near the Turkish-Syrian border. In the finds analysis, the term of 'transitional' is

instruments in the burials, there are also ear-plugs, labrets and beads made of stone.

### Small Finds

Very few stone objects as per a Late Neolithic settlement have been found in Hakemi Use in the first two excavation seasons. Among the chipped stone industry, 90 per cent is obsidian and 10 per cent is flint. Hakemi Use is located not far from the obsidian reservations in the Eastern Anatolia. The Van Lake reservations, which is one of the most important obsidian reservations of the Near East, are only a few hundred kilometres to the east. Mortar and pestles of the ground stone industry found during the excavations are remarkable.



Figure 8. Fruit stand vessel from Building Level I.

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used instead of Hassuna/Samarra Ware, since this pottery is dated to a period between *Pre-Halaf* and *Early Halaf*.

As a result of the Hakemi Use excavation, the northern border of this pottery has also changed and it is proved that the distribution of this ware reached to the edges of the south-eastern Taurus Mountains. Another significance of the Hakemi Use excavations is that it filled the gaps in the information regarding the period of Pottery Neolithic in south-eastern Turkey. The Pre-Pottery Neolithic settlements of the region like Çayönü and Halan Çemi are also the earliest village settlements of Turkey. However, there is a lack of data regarding the period after Pre-Pottery Neolithic B in the region. To the south, this information is partly obtained by the excavations carried out at Umm Dabaghiyah and Tell Sotto in the Musul region of Northern Iraq. The other missing part is solved by the Hakemi Use excavation in the northernmost part of Northern Mesopotamia. The clay analysis of the sherds from Hakemi Use are being carried out in the Geology Laboratory of Hacettepe University in Ankara. As a result of the analysis which is still in process, remarkable results regarding the clay reservations and circulation of the pottery of Hakemi Use Ware should be obtained.

The results of radiocarbon analysis in Hakemi Use are not yet complete. However, a general chronology can be made from the archaeological findings. The Hakemi Use pottery can be dated to the late phase of the Pre-Halaf Period and the early phase of the 'transitional' period. Therefore, the '*Orange Fine Ware*' in levels 6 and 8 in Tell Sabi Abyad are contemporary with Hakemi Use Painted Ware. Grey-Black Ware and Pattern Burnished Ware collected in Hakemi Use are parallel to the Dark Faced Burnished Ware of Amuq B Period. At present, Hakemi Use is the first and only Pottery Neolithic settlement in

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south-eastern Turkey, settlement where excavations have been carried out. There is still a lot more to excavate, so it is certain that the site will produce remarkable results regarding not only Anatolian archaeology, but also the Near Eastern Late Neolithic.

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