

## Can Hasan Excavations

Can Hasan, a prehistoric site near Karaman, was first believed to be of archaeological importance by James Mellaart after he found patterned sherds on the mound. In October 1958, Mellaart re-visited the site with Alan Hall and David French.

Between 30 September and 11 October 1961, the first season of excavation work was undertaken under French's direction on three separate mounds. At the main mound a structure dubbed 'the Plaster Room' was found at the excavation's outset. The pottery showed the buildings as dating to around 4750 BC. Some interesting figurines were discovered, as were fragments of painted geometric decorations on the architecture. It was hoped that the pottery at Can Hasan would overlap with the discoveries at Çatalhöyük to provide a more complete stratigraphic sequence for the Konya Plain. Outside of excavation, an additional week was spent on plans, photography, and pottery study.

The second season of excavation lasted from 10 September until 10 October 1962. Nine houses were discovered this season and yielded some pottery, metal objects and figurines, as well as very small samples of grain and worked bone. The pottery was helpful in advancing knowledge about the stratification sequence.

In 1963, excavation work was undertaken between 7 and 28 September. Early in the excavation, houses and courtyards from the Late Chalcolithic period were discovered, some containing pottery. Thus, the season primarily contributed to information on the Late Chalcolithic period, though at the outset they had planned to focus on the Early or Middle periods.

Between 2 September and 16 October 1964 a new season began, enhanced by the introduction of new facilities for the archaeologists. 228m<sup>2</sup> were excavated this season, uncovering remains of Late Chalcolithic structures, and more pottery from this period than before. One room particularly revealed an abundance of clay artefacts, grain, and animal bone. Animal bones were also plentiful in the Middle Chalcolithic deposit, though no architectural evidence from this period was found.

The fifth season of excavation at Can Hasan lasted between 1 September and 16 October 1965. The team further explored the Late Chalcolithic building complex, as well as one of the Early Chalcolithic period houses, and obtained additional stratigraphic evidence. Pottery was also found, much of which was polychrome, and one of the more unusual finds of the season was a deposit with some 100 sheep jaws and dozens of frog skeletons. Registered finds were taken to the Ankara Archaeological Museum (now the Museum of Anatolian Civilizations), while other material was kept at the on-site depot.

Excavation work was carried out between 28 August and 30 September 1966, with storage and post-excavation work carrying on until 12 October. This season was significant in that the results of the excavation made it possible to stratigraphically link Çatalhöyük to Can Hasan, thus creating a near complete 2,000 year sequence (from Late Neolithic to Late Chalcolithic) for the Konya Plain. This information allowed for the further study on the progress of agriculture and animal domestication in the region as a whole. During this season, architectural remains from the Middle Chalcolithic period also came to light.

In the 1967 season, the team was able to locate stone and bone artefacts in the Late Neolithic section, as well as some grains, seeds, and canid skeletons. The Early Chalcolithic levels yielded additional pottery and some human burials, with skeletal material, pots, and beads. A home

belonging to the Middle Chalcolithic period was found to contain some unbaked clay items and animal bone. Some pots were reconstructed and exhibited in the Ankara Archaeological Museum.

The work was put on pause for a season in 1968, to allow the director, David French, to start a rescue excavation at Aşvan in the Keban project.

When recommenced in 1969, excavation work focused on Can Hasan III, where they first conducted a test in May, then followed-up with two and a half months of excavation work in the autumn. During this excavation season, an "air house" was set up in order to better recover and preserve wet material. Structures with tools, ornaments, and utensils were discovered, as well as grains, seeds, animal bones, and plant remains. A very successful water-sieving system was implemented.

In 1970, a final season of work was undertaken between late May and early June. Excavation was completed at Can Hasan III, where the team members finished the surface-clearance on the mound's top and completed the deep sounding. Some carbonized grain was discovered in an oven, as well as additional animal bone, worked bone, and obsidian samples.