

CAN HASAN 1966

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The sixth season of excavations at Can Hasan began on 28th August, 1966, and continued until 30th September. A further two weeks were spent on dealing with the finds and on records and photography. The staff consisted of Messrs. D.C. Biernoff, S. Payne and J. N. Postgate who assisted on the excavation; Mrs. S. Payne took charge of the work in the house with the help of Mr. C. Slack and Misses M. Bell, C. Prater and T. Harrington-Smith. In addition Mrs Payne had particular charge of the pottery, Mr. Payne of the obsidian, Miss Harrington-Smith of registration and Mr. Slack and Miss Bell of conservation and pottery mending. Bay Bedri Yalman from the Konya Museum represented the Turkish Government. All registered objects were taken to the Ankara Museum at the end of the season. All other objects and materials are stored in the depot at Can Hasan.

The aims of this season were similar to those of 1965: 1) to continue the excavation of House 7 (Layer 2 B, Early Chalcolithic) started in 1962 and continued in 1964 and 1965; 2) to excavate more of Layer 3, which had been discovered in 1965, lying directly below House 7; 3) to excavate below Layer 3; 4) to continue the excavation of Layer 2 A in and around square S 25 c where an important deposit of pottery had been discovered in 1965. The results of the season's work will be discussed in chronological order.

Layer 2 A; Middle Chalcolithic:

In square S 25 c no architecture was found but, below the deposit of pottery

found in 1965, there was a series of surfaces and burnt hearth-areas. These surfaces continued downwards to a depth of 5.50 m at which point excavation in this square stopped. They may perhaps be considered "living-surfaces"; this interpretation became clear when excavation revealed a series of mud-brick walls in square S 25 a, the next square to the north. The surfaces and hearths in S 25 c were seen in section to be in clear association with the structures in S 25 a. These mud-brick walls, four in number, and built more or less above one another, are not well preserved and survive only for a few courses. There are no apparent "living-surfaces" on the north side of these walls but only an accumulation of rubbish and soil, featureless except for wash-lines. This phenomenon may be explained by the discovery of a steep slope which begins at the north side of square S 25 a and falls abruptly southwards at a very sharp angle. This slope may represent the line of a terrace cut out of the older (Layer 2 B) mound by the later inhabitants (of Layer 2 A). The mud-brick structure would then have been built on this slope with "living-surfaces" within (to the south) and behind (to the north) of the north wall debris and at one point a deposit of pottery accumulated. Further north up the slope were two infant skeletons.

Architecture belonging to Layer 2 A was also found in square Q 21 d. A structure known as House 8 had been excavated in 1962. In plan it resembled the houses of Layer 2 B and it was assigned to

this period although it contained, to the depth to which we then excavated, only 2 A pottery. This was thought to represent reoccupation of a type known in houses in other squares. In 1966, however, it was discovered that this structure belongs entirely to the 2 A period and is only one of a series of structures and superimposed walls, all belonging to Layer 2 A. Other architecture of the 2 A period was uncovered in the adjacent square Q 21 c and the combination of the results from these two squares provides much needed evidence on Middle Chalcolithic architecture. The structures are not as well preserved as the buildings of Layer 2 B and the line of some walls can now be reconstructed only on paper. Nevertheless there is good evidence of frequent rebuilding and remodelling. As far as we know at present, the only major difference in building method between Layer 2 B and 2 A is a greater use of stone foundations in 2 A. Evidence for the lay-out of the settlement is meagre but it should be noted that these groups of structures both in Q 21 c/d and S 25 a/c lie along the probable edge of the 2 B settlement.

The work of 1965 had enabled a series of five phases to be distinguished in the pottery sequence of Layer 2 A (*AS XVI* (1966) 116). This year further good samples of pottery, particularly of phases 2 and 3, were found in squares Q 21 c and d. The same squares also produced good samples of artifacts and materials from well-defined contexts. The following are worthy of note: stone beads and pendants; stone studs; an animal figurine of clay (apparently unbaked) with horns sloping forward and on the back at one side a rough "saddle" and a thick coil over it; a bone needle (over 0.16 m. long); and a bracelet of what appears to be ivory.

Layer 2 B; Early Chalcolithic:

In square Q 21 d, beneath the structures now associated with Layer 2 A, a house built of large yellow mud-bricks (similar to those used for House 7) was

exposed. Only a few courses of brick survive from this building but it is clear that it repeats the type of Layer 2 B house-plan familiar from earlier seasons. The fill against the west wall contained pottery of characteristic Layer 2 B types. The surface lines, associated with the base of the wall at the outside, slope away downwards to the west and there is no evidence that the settlement continued further westwards.

In square R 21 b a further portion of House 7 was uncovered. This included a part of the north wall of the house, the line of which is not straight. Instead of joining the west wall, it turns at right angles, at a distance of ca. 2 m. from the west wall. Between the corner of this (north) wall and the west wall, a cross-wall was inserted on a foundation of small stones. In the northeast corner of square R 21 b and north of House 7 there was, at a lower (absolute) level than the earliest floor of House 7, an occupied area or space of which only the southern part lay within the limits of the square. The purpose of this area is not clear but the north face of the wall and the floor of the space beyond were frequently renovated by the addition of thick layers of mud-plaster faced with thin coats of red (clay?). This space had been constructed by terracing into the core of the mound. The stratification of the earlier layers was to be seen quite clearly when we removed the north wall of House 7 and thereby revealed the scarp of the terrace.

The stratigraphy of House 7 and its relation to the burnt houses to the south have enabled the pottery of Layer 2 B to be divided into three phases (*AS XVI* (1966) 118). A most important problem at all early sites is the introduction or development of painted pottery. At Can Hasan the first occurrence of red-painted pottery falls, on present evidence, a short time before the building of House 7. (There is only a slight amount of painted pottery in Layer 3). The pottery of phase 1

of Layer 2 B, which was associated with the first occupation levels of House 7, is still not clearly defined as the sample is slight. The second phase is associated with the later occupation of House 7 and the period immediately following its ruin, when the gap between the walls of House 4 and Houses 7 and 8 was used as a dump. The painted ware of this phase is related to Çatal West ware ("Early Chalcolithic I"). The third phase of the period, which is represented only by debris lines in the stratigraphy of House 7, is that of the destruction level pottery from Houses 3 and 4. It is marked by the introduction of Dark on Light pottery.

Finds of this layer were not spectacular in 1966 but good samples of materials were recovered, particularly from square R 21 b.

Layer 3:

The best evidence for Layer 3 is in the form of architecture. In 1965 in square R 21 a the remains of a substantial structure were discovered beneath House 7 and in 1966 further portions of this were cleared in square R 21 b. The greater part of the north and west walls have now been traced. The east and south walls probably lie under the walls of House 7. It is clear that the builders of House 7 were aware of the existence of the earlier walls and made use of parts of these walls as a solid foundation for their own building. This structure in squares R 21 a and b is as big and substantial as its successor, House 7. The house walls are ca. 0.80 m. thick with strong internal buttresses.

The sample of pottery and other materials from this layer is meagre and further work in future seasons will be needed to define them adequately.

Layers 4-7:

A small test trench was dug in the southwest corner of square R 21 b down to a depth of 4 m. This trench revealed a sequence of at least four superimposed mud-brick buildings. There may perhaps be 1 m. more of deposit still to be excavated

before reaching the original surface. Nothing is known yet of the plan of any of these buildings. The mud-bricks seem in some cases to be smaller than those used in Layers 3 and 2 B. There is some evidence that the wall surfaces may have been faced with red (clay?) plaster. There was a burnt surface (? hearth) associated with the wall of Layer 6.

The amount of pottery found in these layers was not large. It is, however, clear that the general character of the pottery is close to that of the Upper Neolithic levels at Mersin and the uppermost material of Çatal East. The main shape appears to be a hole mouth jar. There are also small bowls with out-turned rims. Surface colours are dark brown or dark red; the surface was finely burnished.

The samples of objects and materials were also slight. From Layer 6 there was part of a stone bowl in limestone. From the same layer a good carbon sample was recovered from the hearth which should provide useful chronological evidence. The samples of animal bone have not yet been examined but it is hoped that they may provide important information on the development of animal husbandry in the area.

SUMMARY

The 1966 season at Can Hasan has provided the answers to several outstanding problems and made clear the lines on which future work must proceed. It is particularly satisfactory that architecture of Layer 2 A has been identified. There are good samples of all materials from this layer, all related to well-defined contexts, and we now have recovered, at least in outline, the full picture of the period. The relation of this Layer 2 A architecture to the edge of the Layer 2 B settlement is one of the questions which will be investigated in the next season at the site.

Even more important is the discovery of the layers below layer 3, building levels,

apparently consecutive, and assignable to the Neolithic period. This greatly extends the range of the stratified sequence at Can Hasan and means that it should be possible to trace at one site the development from so-called Neolithic to Late Chalcolithic, a span of some 2,000 years. In the next season it is planned to extend the work on these early layers in the hope of recovering adequate samples of all materials which contribute to the total evidence for the period.

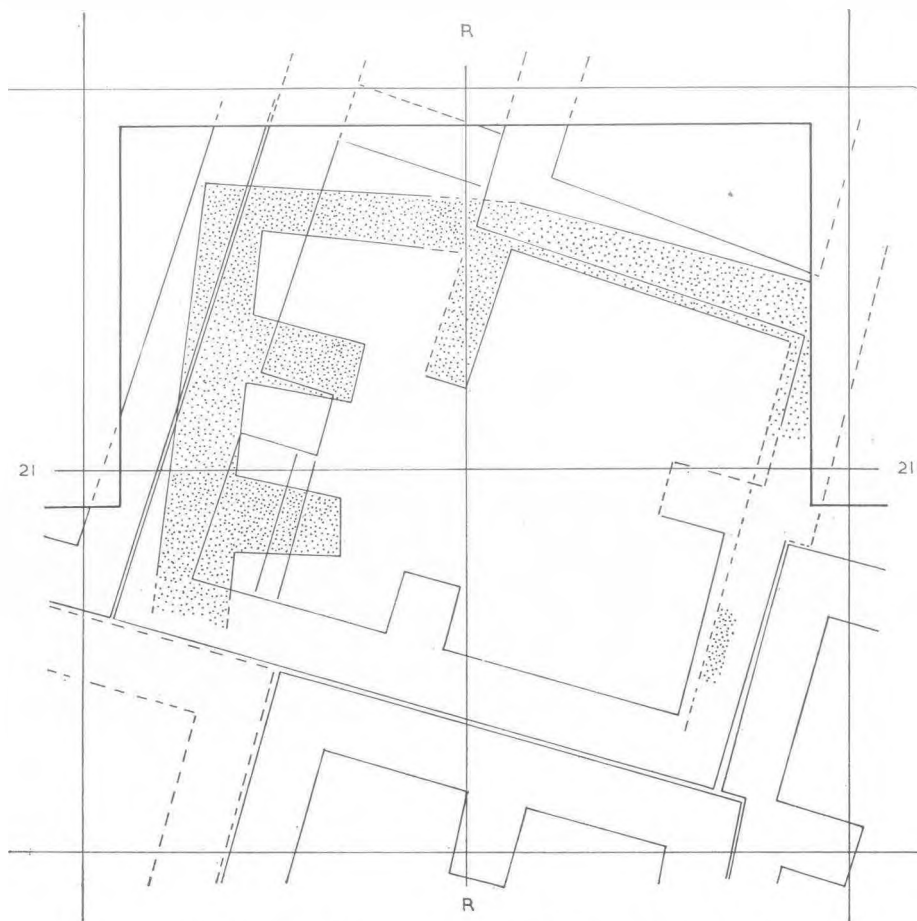


Fig. 1 — Plan of houses in Layers 2 B and 3 (shaded).

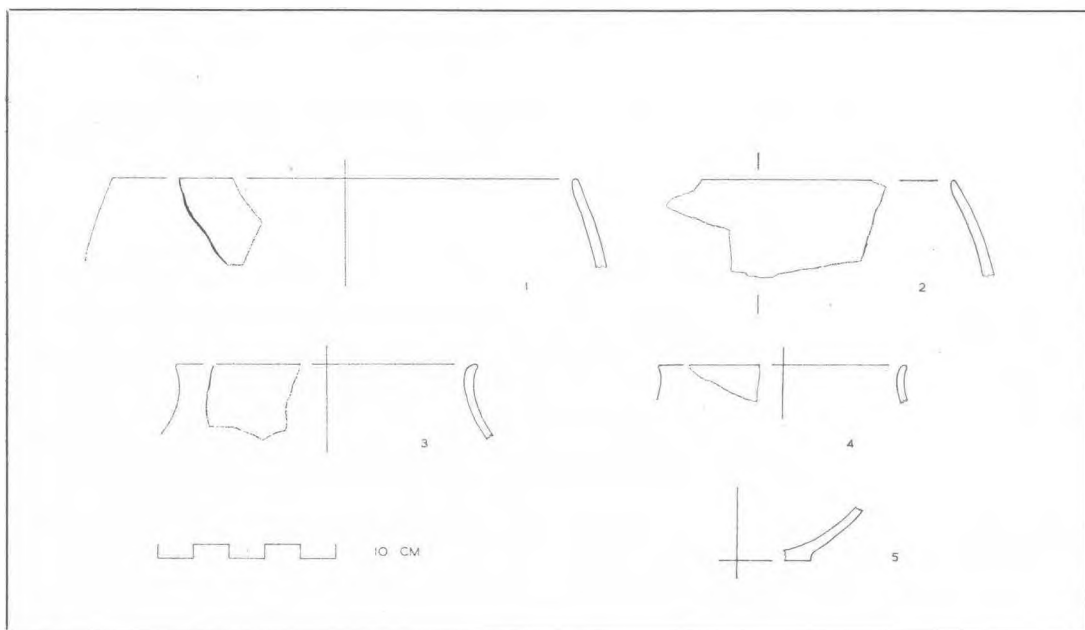


Fig. 2 — Pottery from Layers 4 to 7.