

Under the auspices of the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara, excavations were begun on the prehistoric mound of Canhasan, in the kaza of Karaman, during the month of October 1961. The work was directed by David French, Senior Fellow of the Institute assisted by Mrs French, Miss Maureen Barry, Miss Catherine Maclucas, Miss Marjorie MacGregor, Mr. Nicholas Kinderley and Mr. Robin Oakley. The Turkish Government was represented by Mr. Ziya Ceran, Director of the Akşehir Museum.

Canhasan village lies about 12 km NE of Karaman and the site itself is just outside, and to the North of, the village. It is one of three mounds in the vicinity. The mound is approximately 360m long and 280m wide and stands about 5m above the level of the plain. It is not cultivated but the southern end is enclosed by a cemetery wall. A great deal of earth has been taken away from the west side by villagers in search of suitable earth for roofing their houses. Large earthcovered heaps of straw are a prominent feature of the north end of the mound.

The site was excavated on a grid system and by good fortune in the first square we found, almost on the surface, the side walls of a large burnt structure. This subsequently developed into a large room which we called the Plaster Room on account of the large number of pieces of painted plaster found in the fallen debris. The lack of surface soil on top of both this house and its neighbo-

urs enabled us to investigate a fairly wide area and in all a total of 151 square metres was cleared to a depth of 3metres. We found five independent buildings centred (possibly) round the large burnt room. (Fig 1) The walls of all these buildings stand to a height of almost 3m. in places and are very well preserved. The shape and plan of these houses are clear. Their corners are virtually right-angled and an elaborate system of buttresses and benches was employed. From this and other facts it is obvious that all these houses must have had a second storey. Upper storeys with fresco-decorated rooms can be reconstructed on paper, particularly for the so-called Plaster Room and a complete reconstruction from ground to ceiling is being attempted. The central position of the Plaster Room may be due to chance but further investigation should answer this question and also that of how the lower rooms were entered, which is not at present apparent. A test sounding through the floor in one place revealed walls and pottery of an earlier period but this deposit needs further investigation.

A variety of objects were recovered from the debris fallen into these houses. Two female figurines were found of an interesting type; the squatting position is known from elsewhere but the heads of these figurines are probably unique. The noses, ears and particularly the chin are different in style from those previously known. One head may be wearing a hat or crown. Small crude figures of animals, often attached to

vases were also found. A mace head apparently of copper (from the Plaster Room) is perhaps the earliest piece of worked metal yet found in Anatolia. Tools of stone and obsidian were fairly common but poorly worked; no polished stone axes were found and only one bone implement. It was, however, possible to collect plentiful samples of grain, carbon, and bones for analysis and dating.

Perhaps most interesting were the many fragments of wall plaster (Fig 2), almost entirely from the debris of one room or house, the large burnt so-called Plaster Room Found at a height of about 2m. above the floor level they were certainly fallen from the walls of an upper storey. They are painted in simple geometric patterns which are identical with those found on the incised and white-filled pottery. The colour scheme is mainly red on white but there may have been some plain blue as well as plain white and plain red. Some of the pieces show signs of being used on columns and on the edges or side faces of doors, windows, or niches, all of which would have been well off a

true vertical-an interesting architectural feature.

From the pottery it is clear that we are dealing mainly with an intermediate phase between Early Chalcolithic (of Çatal West type) and Middle Chalcolithic of Mersin type which could be tentatively dated to about 4750 BC. Red on cream ware is still common but dark on light ware is beginning to appear. Completely unexpected were the sherds of incised and white-filled pottery of both bowl and jar shapes. (Fig 3) The technique is reminiscent of a bowl from Mersin XIV. The possibility that the North Anatolian Late Chalcolithic of Büyük Güllücek type may have its origin in South Anatolia or vice versa must now be examined. Developed Middle Chalcolithic pottery of Mersin type has so far been found at Canhasan only on the surface of the mound and in a small area of deposit in the North East corner of one square. The site thus forms an important direct link between the early prehistoric cultures of South West Anatolia and Cilicia.