



The Prehistoric Project

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about ten years ago, Bob invented what he calls "Braidwood's Law Number 53" (you've doubtlessly heard it): ▼ *"The wise archeologist*

goes to a site for only one season, digs only one small exposure and interpretation is simple and easy; one must not return and expose more!" ▼ We've just reread our "Archeological Newsletter" to the Oriental Institute dated June 22, 1964. We had just completed our first season's digging at Çayönü. We had opened two modest squares that together equalled about the area of one tennis court. There was enough yield in artifacts, however, to assure us that Çayönü was a site of great promise. The architectural remains were especially impressive. In addition, there was promise of much evidence (animal bones, plant material, etc.) to help in understanding the natural environment of Çayönü's time. ▼ In twelve seasons of work at Çayönü we've exposed areas equivalent to about nineteen tennis courts, most of it to some depth and with stratigraphic changes. There are thousands of artifacts and thousands of non-artifactual finds of which only a small fraction has yet been analyzed. By law, none of the artifacts may leave Turkey so that analysis must be done either in the field or in Istanbul University. The cost of keeping our own graduate students there for the analysis/processing is prohibitive. We are, however, participating in the training of an increasing number of very good young Turkish students and this is a good feeling. In addition, one thing has become increasingly clear over the years: Çayönü was definitely not the comparatively simple village we naively thought, in 1964, it would turn out to be. ▼ The broad areas opened at Çayönü have yielded an astonishing variety of architectural remains and we were most fortunate when our colleagues from Karlsruhe joined forces with us. The excavating tradition in Germany has long been one of concern with the use of stone as building material. In addition, Wulf Schirmer and his staff with their interest in the history of architecture are superbly equipped to get the greatest meaning from the building remains we find at Çayönü. This is especially important because it may be that — in what seems to be a transition from casual hut-like shelters to the beginnings of formalized building planning — ARCHITECTURE was being born. ▼ As to actual excavation in the 1987 season — we had hoped to finish the large public building, the "skull" building, but several pits containing masses of human bones turned up very late in the season. This is extremely time-consuming work and had to be left for the 1988 season. Some work was

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Air view. The exposure of building foundations in the easternmost of the two areas of excavation at Çayönü.

done on the earliest sub-phase containing wattle and daub huts, but unfortunately the area exposed had only meagre remains of this sub-phase. We were more fortunate in working on the latest sub-phase, for although the excavated area was very close to the surface, fairly numerous building remains were exposed. More await the 1988 digging season. We are fascinated to know whether these remains — which include pottery — will turn out to be the latest aspect of the main Çayönü prehistoric phase.

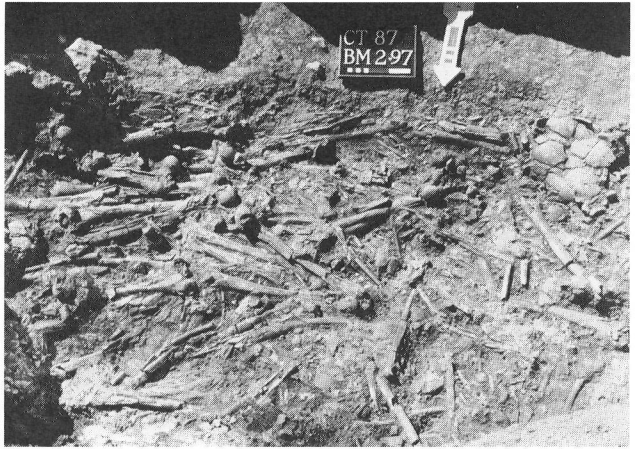
During the spring of 1988, Prof. Wulf Schirmer arranged a working session at Karlsruhe to correlate all the different levels and findspots at Çayönü. Asli Özdoğan (the wife of Mehmet Özdoğan, Çayönü's field director), a Ph.D candidate at Istanbul University with many seasons' experience on the site, Erhan Bıçakçı, another Turkish field hand, who is



Air view. The exposure of building foundations at the end of the 1964 (the first) season of excavation.

now a Ph.D. candidate at the Karlsruhe Institute, and our regular field assistant of many years, Mike Davis, were all at Wulf's institute for several months for the correlation job. This should put us a long way

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One of the clusters of human bones in the deeper aspect of the "skull building," exposed in 1987.



ahead, since there has never been time at the end of any given field season to make the correlation of the records of that season with those of earlier seasons.

We used to complain bitterly about radiocarbon determinations while working on Jarmo in north Iraq, for we had a stupendous range of radioactive carbon age assays to choose from. Cayönü is acting most civilized as regards its carbon age assays (most come from Groningen University's

counter in Holland). The twenty-one assays from the upper-middle to the basal levels all fall within seven hundred years - 6800 to 7500 B.C. (uncalibrated). Given the new agreements on the additional calibration necessary for the time range of these twenty-one assays, we feel assured that Çayönü was a flourishing, far from simple, village of ten thousand years ago.