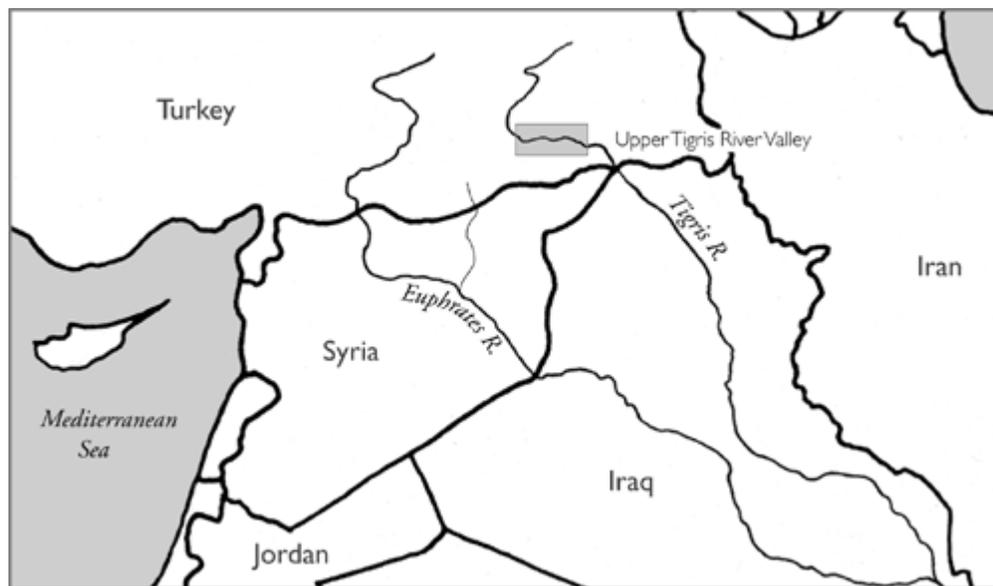


## Year 2001 Research Report for National Geographic Society Grant #7093-01

By  
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During the summer of 2001 members of the Upper Tigris Archaeological Research Project (UTARP) conducted a second season of excavation at the important archaeological site of Kenan Tepe in southeastern Turkey. Thanks to generous support provided by the National Geographic Society, the Office of the Vice President for Research at the University of Utah, the Curtiss T. and Mary G. Brennan Foundation, the University of Southern California, the University of Utah's Dee Council and the University of Utah's International Studies Center, a total of twenty-two UTARP members conducted over eight weeks of research at Kenan Tepe between June 21st and August 24th, 2001. What follows is a brief report of our preliminary analysis of the data collected during this period. For more information about the UTARP project please visit our website at <http://www.utarp.org>.



**Figure 1:** Map of the Modern Middle East showing the location of the UTARP study area in the Upper Tigris River Valley of southeastern Turkey.

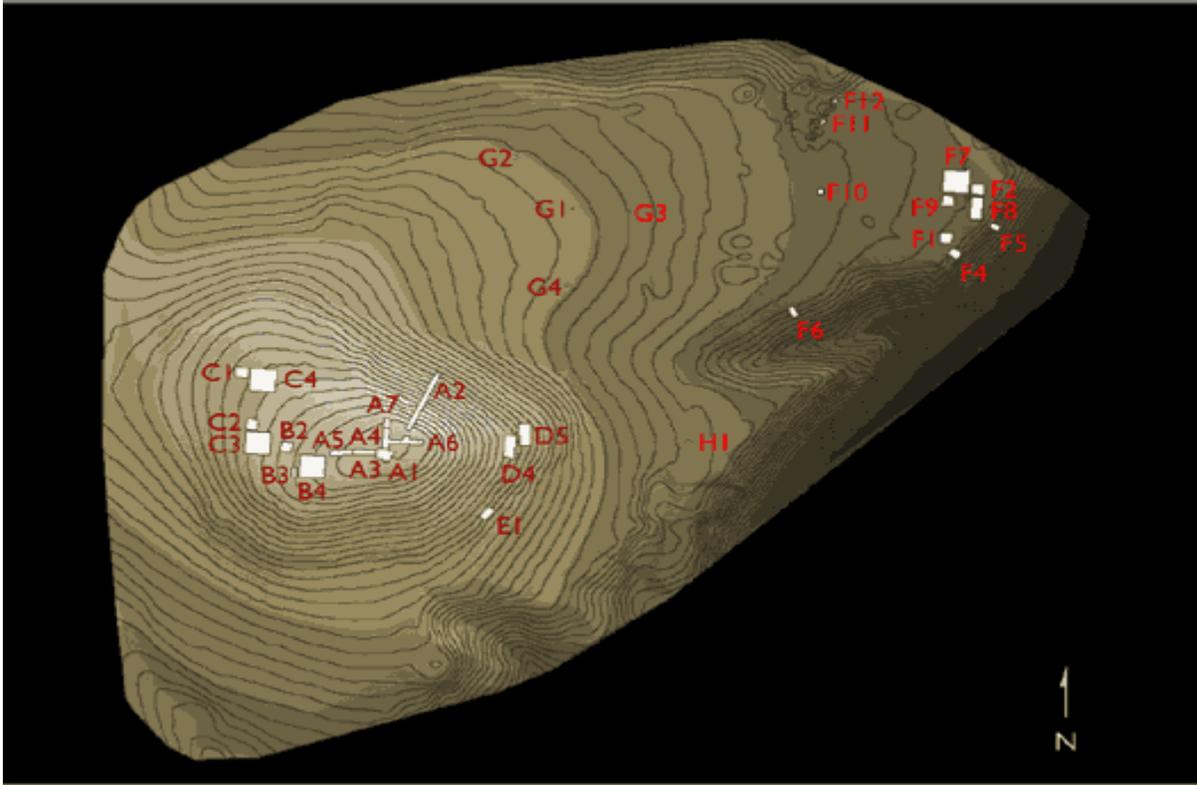
Kenan Tepe is a multi-period mound located on the Tigris River about fifteen kilometers east of the modern town of Bismil in southeastern Turkey (**figure 1**). The site is quite large measuring a total of 300 by 150 meters. It consists of a tall central mound (henceforth referred to as the main mound) and a large lower city stretching out to the east of the main mound (**figure 2**). During the course of the 2001 field season members of UTARP conducted various operations in seven areas of the site. In Area A we continued excavation in the 2 by 25 meter step trench begun last year (trench A2) while a team of anthropologists from the University of Utah opened a series of 2 by 10 meter trenches to explore the extent of Kenan Tepe's late period cemetery (A3-A7). We opened

one new 10 by 10 meter trench in Area B (B4). In Area C we opened two new 10 by 10 meter trenches (C3 and C4) and continued excavation in two 5 by 5 meter trenches begun last year (C1 and C2). Trenches begun last year in Area D were expanded into two 5 by 10 meter units (D4 and D5). We also concentrated research on Area F where we completed the excavation of a 4 by 5 meter trench begun last year (F4), continued excavation in three of last year's 5 by 5 meters trenches (F1, F2 and F3), opened one new 10 by 10 meter trench (F7), one new 5 by 10 meter trench (F8), one 1 by 1 meter sounding (F10), and three section clearings (F6, F11 and F12). We also dug five 1 by 1 meter soundings in two new areas (areas G and H).



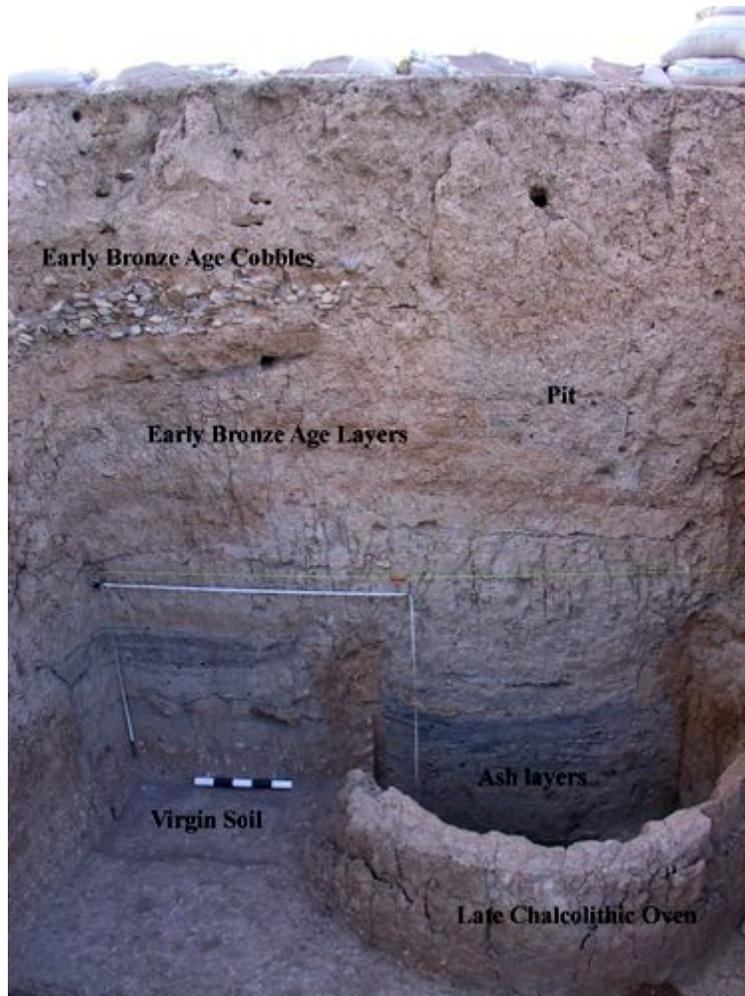
**Figure 2:** *View of Kenan Tepe facing South. Note the tents over the excavation areas*

Thanks to a generous instrumentation grant from the University of Utah that enabled us to purchase a total station, several digital cameras, computers, and other essential equipment, UTARP team members made a high-resolution topographic map (consisting of over 8000 points shot with a Leica total station [figure 3]), took nearly 2000 digital photographs, continued to develop a method of making trench maps using digital images, and perfected our database which now contains all of the data collected during the 2000 and 2001 field seasons. UTARP also rented a GPS unit from the British Institute of Archaeology at Ankara. Using that instrument we were able to position our main datum on the world grid to +/- 10 centimeters.



**Figure 3:** *Topographic map of Kenan Tepe showing the location of excavation units and areas. Contour lines are at one meter intervals.*

After two seasons of excavation, and considering the size of our operation during the 2001 field season, we are now in a position to give a preliminary outline of the cultural history of Kenan Tepe. Although we reported last year that we discovered Ubaid Period (ca. 4500-3500 B.C.) ceramics in a sounding in Area E, we did not continue excavations in that area during the 2001 field season. Nevertheless, Ubaid ceramics did appear in mixed contexts in trench D5. Since no Ubaid ceramics have been recovered anywhere in areas F, G and H, it appears that the earliest occupation at Kenan Tepe during the Ubaid Period was restricted to the main mound. However, remains dating to the Late Chalcolithic (ca 3500-3000 B.C.) and the first half of the Early Bronze Age (ca. 3000-2500) were not only discovered in abundance in Area F, but were also encountered in the soundings in areas G and H. These data have several important implications. First, since the remains dating to the Late Chalcolithic and the Early Bronze Age are not covered by later material, the data show that Kenan Tepe reached its largest extent during the late third and early fourth millennia B.C., making it perhaps the largest and most important site in the region during this era. And second, the fact that there is little or no overburden covering and therefore obscuring levels dating to the Late Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age also means that future excavations at Kenan Tepe are certain to yield large horizontal exposures dating to these periods.

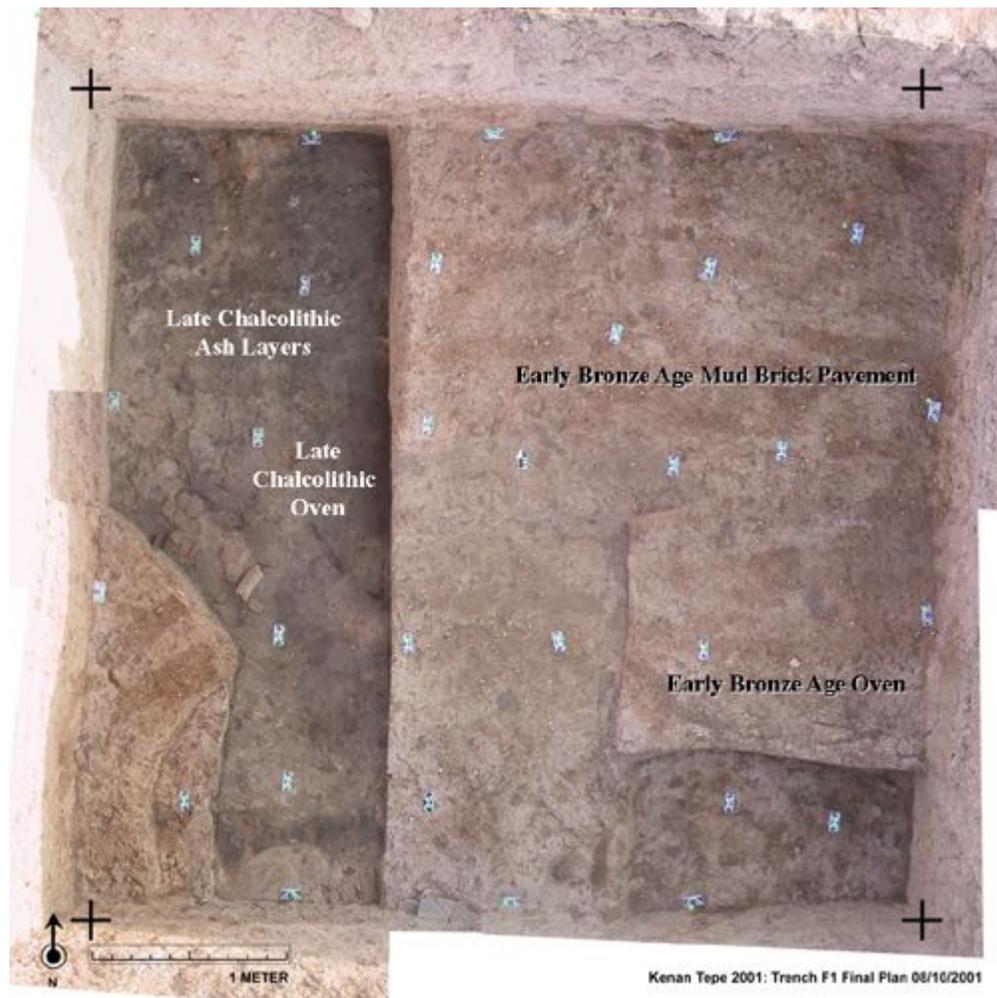


**Figure 4:** View of Late Chalcolithic oven in Trench F4. Note the layers of ash in and around the oven. Also note the Early Bronze Age cobble surface and other Early Bronze Age remains in the baulk.

The nature of occupation during the Late Chalcolithic and Early Bronze Age uncovered at Kenan Tepe is also very interesting. Thus far, none of our trenches in Area F have yielded domestic architecture. Instead, levels dating to the Late Chalcolithic in Area F are characterized by a series of large ovens, some up to 2 meters in diameter (**figure 4**), and significant ash deposits. These data indicate that during the Late Chalcolithic Period, Area F at Kenan Tepe was home to large scale production of some product requiring the use of fire. Unfortunately, the artisans in charge of production were evidently quite meticulous as they regularly cleaned their ovens and in doing so not only spread large amounts of ash around their production area, but also disposed of any byproducts of their production. Thus, at least for the time being, we can only speculate about the goods being produced in these ovens. However, several lines of evidence have led us to the hypothesis that the inhabitants of Kenan Tepe were smelting metals in their production facilities in Area F. This hypothesis is supported by the fact that in later periods (the Middle Bronze

Age and the Early Iron Age) we do have evidence for metal working in the form of slag and slag pits (see below).

It is also interesting to note that none of the characteristic "Uruk" style ceramics have been recovered so far in our excavations of the Late Chalcolithic levels at Kenan Tepe. Instead the ceramic assemblage appears to be of a local flavor. This being the case, the potential to research the effect that the so-called "Uruk Outreach" (Algaze 1989b; Stein 1998) had on the local Late Chalcolithic population of southeastern Anatolia is obvious. In future seasons part of our research agenda will be to discover if industrial production at this local Anatolian town was driven by markets in southern Mesopotamia. We will also examine how such contact affected the development of complexity at the site.



**Figure 5:** View of Early Bronze Age mud brick pavement in trench F1. Note that the western portion of the pavement has been removed revealing the transition to the ash layers of the Late Chalcolithic just below. Note: this is a measured digital map composed from nine digital photographs

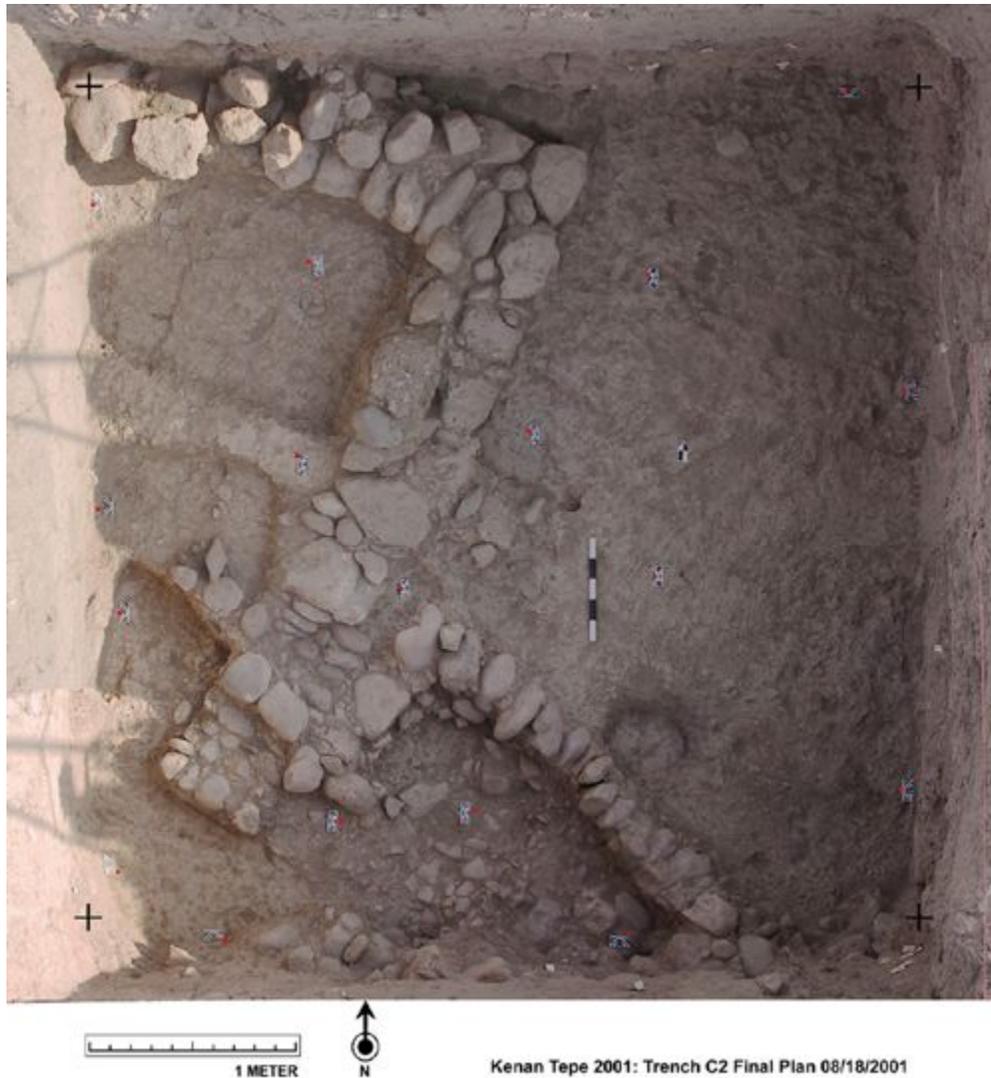
Another research goal will be to explore the transition between the Late Chalcolithic Period, which is often characterized in the literature as a time of village based "chiefdom" level societies in southeastern Anatolia, and the state-level societies of the Early Bronze Age (Stein and Rothman 1994). This transition is marked in Area F at Kenan Tepe by a curious phenomenon. It appears that the ash and other debris created by decades of production during the Chalcolithic Period was, by the beginning of the third millennium, too much for the inhabitants of Kenan Tepe to bear. To alleviate this problem the inhabitants of the Early Bronze Age town sealed the mess of the Late Chalcolithic levels by covering the debris by, in one case a mud brick pavement, and in another, re-deposited virgin soil (**figure 5**). Upon this new foundation, the inhabitants of the Early Bronze Age town continued the tradition of industrial scale production by constructing new ovens and creating new deposits of ash and other debris.

Five 1 by 1 meter soundings placed in areas G and H, between the industrial facilities in Area F and the main mound (figure 3), yielded deep deposits dating to the Early Bronze Age, and below that, the Late Chalcolithic Period. Although our sample is still very small, the discovery of a child interred in a large ceramic jar, several mud brick walls, and the abundance of cooking pot sherds, suggests that the remains in these areas are domestic in nature. If this interpretation is correct, further excavation in areas G and H at Kenan Tepe has the potential to reveal intimate details about domestic architecture, the domestic economy and town planning during both the Early Bronze Age and the Late Chalcolithic Period.



**Figure 6:** *Khabur or Khabur-related ceramics from trench D4. These ceramics show that there are significant remains dating to the early second millennium B.C. at Kenan Tepe.*

In our previous report, I discussed a new ceramic assemblage discovered sealed beneath Early Iron Age layers in areas B and C. I also remarked on the similarities between several ceramic types in this assemblage and various Hellenistic types. One of the goals of the 2001 field season was to illuminate and define this so-called "mystery period." We approached this problem by continuing excavation in areas B and C and by expanding existing trenches in Area D. In doing so we exposed well preserved stone architecture, sealed floors and associated features dating to this period. Sealed floors in trench D4 yielded vast amounts of ceramics and allowed us to further define the nature of occupation in this period. Now that we have a complete assemblage of these ceramics, we can quite confidently say that this assemblage is closely related to the "Khabur Ware" assemblage well known in north Syria. Although there are some close parallels with Khabur Ware that firmly date this assemblage to the early second millennium B.C., there is also no question that this assemblage is regionally distinct. An analysis of the ceramics from floors in trench D4 has revealed at least twelve main ceramic types that consistently appear together in several trenches at Kenan Tepe (**figure 6**). Since virtually nothing is known about the nature of occupation in most of southeastern Anatolia during the early second millennium, data from Kenan Tepe promise to be extremely important to the understanding of southeastern Anatolia in this period.



**Figure 7:** *Measured photograph of early second millennium house in trench C2.*

Well preserved levels dating to the early second millennium have been discovered on both sides of the main mound (areas C and D) but were absent from the soundings in areas G and H. Thus it is safe to say that second millennium occupation at the site encompassed the entire main mound but did not extend into the lower town. Architectural remains dating to this period at Kenan Tepe include a variety of well built stone structures. In the case of Area C, these structures appear to be domestic in nature (**figure 7**), while those recovered in Area D appear to be the remains of a large public building (**figure 8**). The structure we theorize to be a public building contains architecture made of boulders as well as a floor or hallway made of up-standing river cobbles. Several slag pits were also discovered in Area C. Although the analysis of this material is still underway, a preliminary assessment of the slag samples undertaken at the Los Angeles County Museum of Art has shown that both copper and iron were being processed during the early second millennium at Kenan Tepe. Archaeological data thus far recovered suggested that there was a hiatus of occupation at Kenan Tepe during the Late Bronze

Age. Only a handful of sherds of the Middle Assyrian and Mitannian assemblages (Pfälzner 1995; Wilkinson and Tucker 1995) have been identified in the literally hundreds of ceramics processed during the 2001 field season.



**Figure 8:** View of early second millennium structure in trench D4. Note the well preserved walls and surfaces.

Kenan Tepe was again the home to a flourishing town during the Early Iron Age (ca. 1100-900 B.C.). Remains from this period have been discovered in abundance in areas B and C, although there is no indication of Iron Age remains in the lower town. In the case of Kenan Tepe's Early Iron Age town, it is quite clear that we are again dealing with an indigenous Anatolian village. The ceramics coming from these areas are very similar to those we viewed this summer from Nurshun Tepe (now in the Elazih Museum). The assemblage includes types belonging to the "corrugated wares" from Nurshun Tepe (Bartle 1994) as well as types that I have defined as "indigenous Iron Age" base on survey material from the Upper Tigris River region (Parker 1997; 2001). Although many of the contexts dating to this period are somewhat disturbed due to the proximity of this material to the surface of the site, we are nevertheless in a good position to evaluate the nature of occupation during the Early Iron Age (ca. 1100-900 B.C.). To begin with, the chronology of the town appears to be limited to the Early Iron Age, as there is no indication of occupation during the Neo-Assyrian Imperial Period. In fact, it appears that the town was either abandon or destroyed in the wake of Assyrian colonization of the region in the ninth century B.C. Thus further excavation at Kenan Tepe might illuminate

the affects that Neo-Assyrian imperialism had on the indigenous population of the Upper Tigris River region.

Excavations have revealed several large walls running, in several cases, the entire length of our excavation units. Walls discovered in trenches C3 and C4 presumably belong either to very large houses or some type of public building. In trench B4 we uncovered large piles of stones. We theorize that these stones belonged either to an other large building or, perhaps, to a fortification wall. There is also evidence of metal working during the Early Iron Age. Slag, ovens and outdoor work surfaces have been discovered in abundance in Area C. This material is currently being analyzed at the Los Angeles County Art Museum.



**Figure 9:** *Burial in trench A7.*

During the 2001 field season a team of anthropologists led by Professor Richard Paine from the University of Utah joined the UTARP team with the goal of exploring the late period cemetery discovered on the top of the high mound during the year 2000 field season. In order to discover the size of the cemetery and to get an idea of how many burials it contains, we dug four 2 by 10 meter trenches radiating out from trench A1. After removing the top 30 centimeters, we located a total of twenty-five new burials. Of those we completely excavated seven burials. Unfortunately, none of these burials contained grave goods making dating very difficult. The only concrete information we have in this regard is the fact that all of these burials are cut into Hellenistic period remains. We hope to receive permission from the Turkish authorities to export bone samples for carbon dating in the coming season. In the last few days of the season we found three cist tombs in trench A6. Of those we fully excavated one (**figure 9**). The discovery of these tombs is very encouraging since it suggests that there might be an earlier cemetery under the one that we have been excavating. Our hope is that by

examining a large number of burials from the cemeteries at Kenan Tepe, and hopefully by conducting DNA research on some of the bones, we might be able to draw some conclusions about the health and mortality rates of the population of the region in various periods.

In conclusion, we feel that the 2001 field season was very successful. With this new data in hand, we are now working on processing the data for publication and planning our next field season which will begin in July of 2002.

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