

ÇATALHÖYÜK 2006 ARCHIVE REPORT

Çatalhöyük Research Project



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Introduction

The TP (Team Poznan) team made of eleven archaeologists and students of Institute of Prehistory, University of Poznań and Institute of Archaeology, University of Gdańsk conducted its sixth excavation season at Çatalhöyük. This year works began on June 22 and continued until July 18, 2006. The excavations continued in an extension trench 5 by 10 meters on top of the east mound, in a strip between the main TP trench, excavated in previous seasons, and the east trench dug by Mellaart in the 1960s. Since the excavated structures turned out to be larger and more complex than originally expected, the excavation area was slightly expanded horizontally to the west.

The previous excavation season resulted in a complete recognition and excavation of the latest phase of the Neolithic occupation of the mound dated back to Level 0. Hence, the main aim of the 2006 season was to investigate various structures placed underneath these youngest Neolithic deposits and to bring these into phase with the main trench excavated in previous seasons. This would allow a better understanding of the architecture and use of space in the late Neolithic, and reveal similarities and differences from the earlier Levels.

Overall, this season brought about a complete excavation of a sequence of two Buildings 61 and 62 and some kind of occupation area placed directly beneath. This sequence was located in northern part of the extension trench and varied considerably from the stratigraphic situation in its southern section.

The excavations continued also in the area directly south and east to the sequence of Buildings 61 and 62 along with the occupation levels underneath. This comprised infill layers deposited in an area deliberately cut off prior to construction of Space 248 and probably adjacent spaces. This event took place after abandonment of Building 62 dated tentatively to Level II.

Özet

2006 sezonundaki kazılar, önceki sezonlarda kazılmış olan ana TP açması ve 1960'larda Mellaart tarafından kazılan doğu açması arasındaki bir şerit içinde bulunan 5x10 metrelik uzatılmış bir açmada devam etti. Kazılan yapıların beklendiğinden daha geniş ve kompleks olması dolayısıyla, kazı alanı yatay olarak batıya doğru genişletildi.

2005 kazı sezonu, höyükteki Neolitik yerleşmenin Tabaka 0'ya tarihlenen en son evresinin kazısı ve tam olarak tanımlanmasıyla sonuçlanmıştı. Bu nedenle 2006 sezonunun ana amacı, en geç Neolitik birikintilerin altına yerleştirilmiş olan çeşitli yapıların araştırılması ve bu yapıların daha önceki sezonlarda kazılan ana açmanın evresine getirilmesiydi. Bu çalışma, geç Neolitik dönemdeki alan kullanımı ve mimariyi daha detaylı bir şekilde anlamamıza yardımcı olurken, erken Tabakalarla arasındaki benzerlik ve ayrılıkları da ortaya koyar.

Bu sezon genel olarak iki ayrı bina (Bina 61 ve 62) sıralaması ve bu binaların altına yerleştirilmiş olan bir çeşit yerleşim alanı kazıldı. Bu sıralama, uzatılan açmanın kuzey tarafında yer alırken, güney kısımdaki stratigrafide çeşitlilik gösterir.

Kazılar ayrıca güney ve doğuya doğru olan alanda, Bina 61 ve 62'nin sıralaması ve bu binaların altındaki yerleşim tabakaları boyunca devam etti. Bu durum, Alan 248 ve buna bitişik olan alanların yapılışından önce amaçlı şekilde kesilen bir alandaki dolgu birikintisinden ödün verilmesine neden oldu. Alanlardaki bu değiştirme hareketi, Bina 62'nin terkedilmesinden sonra gerçekleşmiş olup, Tabaka II'ye tarihlenebilir.

Building 61

This year season began by excavating a large structure recorded as Building 61 located in the north part of an extension trench and placed directly next to the area excavated in the 1960s. This Building was discovered and partly excavated in the 2005 season and was tentatively dated to Level I. This chronological attribution was based upon very straightforward stratigraphy in the west section of an extension

trench, directly between TP area and the trenches from the 1960s. It refers to two parallel and N-S oriented walls placed in this area. Both of them comprised part of Building 61 in different phases of its occupation. The outer wall (11229 – bricks, 13034 - mortar) was dated back by Mellaart to Level I while the inner one (11583 – bricks, 13036 - mortar) to Level II. The former wall was made of dark brown mudbricks while the latter one was constructed of brown and light brown bricks. A relative chronology of these walls was established as a result of re-analysis of the 1960s plans in 2005. These walls were not excavated in the 2006 season.

An overall shape and size of Building 61 cannot be precisely defined. Its northern edge is placed outside the excavated area while its southern part was badly truncated by later occupation of this part of the mound, mainly by Hellenistic pits and Byzantine burials. A total length of the building from its western wall to the eastern platform is c. 6.2 m.

The Building was reconstructed a number of times as indicated by a complex sequence of floors and partition walls. The oldest phase of the building was recognised by a compact solid brownish floor placed on a thick compact clay make up layer. This floor was further rebuilt by adding yet another floor layer placed this time on a thin clay make up layer. In the following phase of the building reconstruction, its almost entire surface was deliberately truncated and then filled out by a layer of white pebbles. This very unusual make up layer was used for construction of another solid floor marking the youngest phase of the building occupation. Erecting two partition walls dividing the building space into separate rooms further strengthened this substantial modification.

The oldest floor of Building 61 is made of grayish and pretty solid silty clay followed by a light brown and relatively thin striation (maybe a make up layer) and then grayish, less compact than the first striation but a slightly thicker floor surface layer (12289) (Fig. 81)). This is indicative of at least



Figure 81: Building 61. The oldest floor

two episodes of the oldest floor reconstruction. An entire sequence is placed upon a solid c. 10 cm thick layer of clay make up that is light and mid brown in colour (Fig. 82). Due to later reconstruction of the building, a complete sequence is only preserved in small fragments. Hence, it is difficult to say whether it actually existed on the entire surface of Building 61 at this level or whether large fragments of this floor were destroyed during preparation, manufacture and/or use of the following sequence of floors in the building. A small fragment of hearth was recorded (12297) in western

part of the building. No other features were discernible on this floor. They may have been dismantled before the younger floor was built.



Figure 82: Building 61. A solid clay make up layer of the oldest floor

The following floor is hardly preserved as it was deliberately truncated by the youngest floor associated with a considerable reconstruction of the building interior and characterized by a very distinct make up layer marking the youngest phase of Building 61. Only tiny fragments of

this floor (12283) were preserved in the eastern part of the building. It was placed against the eastern platform of the building recorded as (11529), which indicates that both the floor and the platform were elements of the same phase of occupation (Fig 83).



Figure 83: Building 61. A small band of truncated floor (12283) from the middle phase of the Building occupation along with the eastern platform (11529).

This youngest floor was built on a make up layer of special character. It was made of white small pebbles, which is the first discovery of this kind at Çatalhöyük. A thin whitish striation was placed on its surface making it smooth. This make up layer has been subdivided into 4

arbitrary layers (as seen from the east): (12295), (11780), (12268) and (11729) (Fig. 84). The most solid is its eastern part. The floor itself was made of greyish and relatively compact layer of silt and silty clay (Fig. 85). Its surface was artificially divided into small layers, such as (11724) and (11745), as they were discontinuous in places. It appears as if both make up layer and floor were also functionally associated with adjacent platform recorded as (11529). The space of the building in its younger phase was divided by two mudbrick partition walls into two parts – western and eastern. One of them was placed in western part of the building against the platform

recorded as (11529). Another wall (11715) was built in central part of the Building along N-S alignment (Fig. 86).



Figure 84: Building 61. Make up layer (u. 12295) of the youngest floor made of white pebbles.



Figure 85: Building 61. Brown floor (12294) from the youngest phase over white pebble make up layer (12295).



Figure 86: Building 61. Partition walls from the youngest phase (11715, 12280 and 11792). The latter wall placed against the eastern platform (11529) from older phase

A detailed stratigraphic analysis indicates that all floor deposits of Building 61, marking three phases of its occupation, were undoubtedly functionally related to the platform placed in its eastern part and recorded as (11529) (Fig. 87). A preserved fragment of the platform is built of four



Figure 87: Buildings 61 & 62. Eastern platform (u. 11529) during excavation.

horizontally placed mudbricks of different colour. It was badly truncated by later activities, probably related to construction of the above located Space 248 excavated in the 2005 season. Both horizontal and vertical surfaces of the platform were plastered by c. 1.5 – 2.5 cm thick lime whitish and brownish striations. It looks as if the platform horizontal surface was plastered regularly, at least three times, as indicated by a sequence of these whitish striations. Outer horizontal and vertical platform surfaces were probably plastered at the same time as indicated by a continuous layer of plaster on both of them. The platform itself seats on an older platform/wall that is particularly well visible in its N section.

Stratigraphic relationship between floor surfaces of Building 61 and its western wall indicates that the oldest floor was undoubtedly linked with the wall from Level II (11583). It may indicate that Building 61 was built in Level II, in the understanding of the Mellaart relative chronology scheme. A stratigraphic position of the youngest floor in relation to the western walls is unclear due to later destruction of this section by post-depositional processes. Hence, it is difficult to say whether the floor built on a white pebble make up layer stretched as far as the wall recorded as (11229), dated to Level I, or whether it was built against the wall (11583) from Level II.

Building 62

Further excavations revealed existence of older house recorded as Building 62, which was placed directly underneath Building 61. Removal of infill deposits underneath Building 61 revealed patches of floor running across most of the building space with signs of trampling and rich organic material (Fig. 88). The floor of Building 62 was recorded as (13043) (W part) and (13040) (E part). Concentrations of organic material, mostly charcoal, were recorded in eastern part of the building as separate layers: (13046), (13047) (13048). A presence of these features does not simply imply that we are dealing here with some kind of activity areas as no other features corroborating this space division was distinguished. However, a separation of patches of organic material may help in discerning possible activity areas in the future thanks to results of heavy residue & palaeobotanical analysis. The same situation took place in western part of the Building when a similar patch was distinguished and recorded (13050).



Figure 88: Building 62. Floor with centrally placed oven (F.1933) and two partition walls (13025 & 13026)

Building 62 underwent at least two occupation episodes as indicated by presence of two partition walls. The N-S wall (13026) aimed to divide the building space into two roughly equal parts, while the E-W wall (13025) is indicative of yet another division of space. However, the latter cannot be inspected any further as this part of the building was badly destroyed by later pits, the result of which only a small fragment of the wall was preserved. This stratigraphic relation implies that the walls are to be associated with younger phase of the Building 62 use. A small partition wall (13032 and 13026) was also recorded in the southern part of Building 62.

Only a few features were revealed in this building. A solid square oven (F.1933) was placed in its central part. It was composed of two superstructures, one placed on top of the other, which is indicative of two phases of its construction (Fig. 89). Interestingly, the oven was built in a place that was earlier used by previous inhabitants of this area to construct some kind of fire installations.



Figure 89: Building 61. Oven in central part of the Building (F.1933)

The younger oven (13030) had a very solid superstructure made of a grayish silty clay wall, especially distinct from the east and the south. It was c. 8 cm high from these two sides. The oven interior comprised dark brown/reddish clay formed as a result of its exposure to heat. It seems that this younger oven was some kind of reconstructed version of the older oven recorded as (13029). It seems as if both ovens were built and used on the floor of Building 62 (13040) as indicated by the oven infill sitting directly on the floor. Some details such as a floor plaster on the oven wall indicates that it was certainly used in younger phase. A wall bottom was built of numerous striations full of charcoal.

Fragments of burnt soil (hearth?) were placed directly underneath the floor on which a partition wall (13026) was later put up. This corroborates a hypothesis about two phases of the floor use, which further implies that we are dealing with two phases of the building occupation. A fragment of southern wall of Building 62 composed of greyish layer of bricks was recorded as (13024). Unfortunately, this cannot be specified any further as only a very small fragment of this structure was preserved.

A sequence of deposits underneath Building 62

An interesting sequence of occupation levels was discovered underneath the building 62 floor (13041, 13079, 13509 and 13522). The latter layer is the last element in a sequence underneath Building 61 & 62 that sits between their east, south & west walls. A character of this sequence is unclear. No floor remains were discovered. An entire sequence is composed of infill, destructional and midden-like deposits, which degree of homogeneity varied considerably. At the same time, a presence of five fire installations of different size and character is indicative of some sort of activity area (F.1940, F.1942, F.1943, F.1944, F.1945) (Fig. 90). All of them were carefully designed and manufactured and without doubt were placed in situ. In some cases, they were located on a layer of destroyed bricks, which indicates that they were constructed after the bricks were dumped/ collapsed.



Figure 90: A sequence underneath Building 62. Two hearths (F.1944 & F.1945) in the courtyard

The most distinct is a well preserved oven placed in central part of this ‘occupation’ level and dated to its oldest phase (F.1940). Elements of its wall superstructure were preserved in situ while some others were found in the oven infill. Interestingly, it was built in a place that was later used by subsequent inhabitants of this area to construct other fire installations as indicated by location of hearth (F.1930) and oven (F.1933).



Figure 91: A sequence underneath Building 62. A cluster of rubble

A sequence of heterogenous deposits directly underneath Building 62 marks some sort of occupation level mixed with a considerable concentration of destruction material, mostly in the form of clusters of rubble and clay (Fig. 91). The deposits are relatively shallow and their depth almost identical

throughout entire deposits. These may indicate that they were formed as a result of the same process, possibly a collapse of the roof. These rubble and clay patches were certainly not deposited as a result of a deliberate dumping aiming to level the occupation surface. Hence, these cannot be regarded as a make up layer.

It is unclear whether this ‘occupation’ level was constantly used throughout its entire surface. It is possible that some features may have been used in different time. Hence, it appears as if this was an area outside houses, possibly some sort of ‘industrial’ and temporarily used courtyard placed between the houses. Interestingly, the oldest level of a solid floor of Building 62 followed a space division from this phase. It is interesting that both Buildings 62 and 61 were built on top of this occupation space. One may speculate that after a long occupation of this courtyard, the inhabitants decided to construct some kind of dwelling structure (Building 62) and later a solid building (Building 61) built on a thick and solid clay make up layer in a place that to this date was not used in a permanent manner. An entire sequence, from the ‘industrialized’ occupation level up to the floor built on a white pebble make up layer,

can be regarded as one Level in the mound stratigraphy. An awful lot of reconstruction/rebuilding took place within this level.

The last element in this sequence excavated in the 2006 season was an uneven structure of unspecified character placed under midden/infill layer (13522), which itself was the oldest element in a sequence of the courtyard occupation described above. The structure slopes down towards the east. It has a relatively even and clear surface in its northern part and wavy and difficult to distinguish in the central and southern part. A clearly distinguishable platform was observed in its eastern section (Fig. 92). An entire sequence is very similar to ‘the roof’ from the main TP trench excavated in previous seasons. Both structures slope towards the east and are clearly parallel. They had either a similar function and/or were formed as a result of the same large scale event. This sequence was then truncated in Level II (Building 61 & Building 62) that is during construction of the walls of Building 62. As seen in this perspective, a formation of occupation levels underneath Building 62 may have been related to the levelling a highly uneven surface before erecting this building. At the same time, the inhabitants may have reused the building western wall, following probably its slight reconstruction, which means that this wall is actually later than Level II.



Figure 92: A sequence underneath Building 62. Slopped structure along with a small platform underneath the oldest layer in this sequence.

The second truncation of an uneven structure took place shortly before construction of Space 248 from Level 0. It is when southern walls of Building 61 & Building 62 were dismantled/destroyed and a sequence of N-S walls (between the TP main and extension trench) were built. The latter walls were then used as construction elements of Buildings 33 & 34 and later Space 248. As mentioned earlier, deposits between these N-S walls and both Building 62 and Building 61, are younger than the walls

themselves and where deposited there shortly before construction of Space 248 (see below).

A sequence of deposits east of Building 61 & Building 62

Two layers of heterogeneous destructional material (12277 & 12282) were recorded directly to the east of a sequence of floors of Building 61 & Building 62. They were deposited in a deliberately truncated space that took place after abandonment of Buildings 61 & 62, dated tentatively to Level II. This is indicated by a clearly discernible diagonal cut through the platform (11529), in particular its southern part, and walls east of Buildings 61 & 62. As a result, only small fragments of both structures were preserved.

Two layers of heterogeneous destructional material (12277 & 12282) were deposited in the space formed after this deliberate truncation. Their consistency was relatively loose, which may imply a relative short depositional event. No layers/striations within these layers were discerned. Interestingly, infill of the layers contains a lot of constructional material, including fragments of platform (11529), which indicates that the space was at least partly filled in with elements originating from the previously destroyed Building 61. A sequence is delimited from the east by a poor quality mudbrick/wall (12274).

As regards stratigraphy, it is clear that both layers were deposited after abandonment of Building 61 and before construction of Space 248. Hence, these layers are younger than the N-S walls (12274 & 12279), which are probably dated to Level I. This implies that a sequence of these two layers is of a post-Level I date but at the same time is older than Level O. It was probably deposited as a result of destruction of Building 61 or during its natural abandonment. Interestingly, it is worth stressing that it was the eastern platform that was truncated after abandonment of Building 61. It may have been a deliberate act aimed at searching for bucrania & human skulls and other prestigious objects, that may have been later re-used during construction of Space 248.

A sequence of deposits south of Building 61 & Building 62

It seems as if a preserved fragment of the youngest floor in Building 61 and dated to Level II comprised the very southern edge of this floor. It may have been delimited by the building southern wall. Only fragments of northern edges of this wall were preserved in situ. Interestingly, numerous wall fragments were found against the floor edge in a bricky layer (12278) directly to the south of Building 61. In particular, a number of broken bricks, forming small piles in some sections, were found in the north part of this layer. They seem to contain elements originating from destruction of the building from Level II implying that this layer is younger than Level II.

A space south of Buildings 61 & 62 was also deliberately truncated, similarly to a sequence south of Buildings 61 and 62, and this may have been a contemporary activity. This is indicated by destruction of southern wall of Buildings 61 and 62. Consequently, all layers in this section of the excavated area were younger than deposits within Buildings 61 & B62. A sequence of layers in this area reached the N-S walls between the TP main and extension trench (see above). This implies that these walls were built at the bottom of a previously dug space. As regards stratigraphy, this indicates that the walls are dated to the post-Level II period.

An interesting element in a sequence south of Building 61 & Building 62 is a solid wall placed at W-E alignment (12503). The wall was clearly put up on an sloped surface heading the east. Therefore, prior to building the wall itself it proved necessary to build up in a construction made of two courses of bricks and solid mortar from its eastern part aimed at levelling the foundation surface. In total, c. 60 cm of difference was leveled between the higher western part and the lower one from the east. It means that the wall was placed on a surface which was originally horizontal and which was probably later destroyed by a large scale event. This formed a sloping surface, very similar to the adjacent 'roof' excavated in the 2004 season, which was probably also formed by the same event. The same certainly happened to a sloped structure underneath a sequence of deposits below Building 62 (see above). If this is the case, the wall construction is older than Level II. Hence, it may be dated to Level III. This also means that Building 61 & Building 62 are younger than this wall.

Summary

Work in the next season will continue in the same zones of the TP trench and will focus on identifying and then excavation of late Neolithic structures from Level III and IV. It will also aim at analysing and reconsidering stratigraphic relationships between midden deposits and the 'roof' excavated in the 2004 season as well as architectural elements discovered this year in order to understand a complexity of the late Neolithic occupation in the part of the mound.