

ÇATALHÖYÜK 2008 ARCHIVE REPORT
Çatalhöyük Research Project



The excavations of the TP (Team Poznań) Area in the 2008 season - Lech Czerniak, Arkadiusz Marciniak

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Introduction

The TP (Team Poznań) team made of fourteen archaeologists and other specialists as well as students of Institute of Prehistory, University of Poznań and Department of Archaeology, University of Gdańsk undertook its next excavation season at Çatalhöyük. Work commenced on August 9 and was completed on September 9. This year excavation season had two major objectives: (1) to excavate a complex of late Neolithic structures exposed in 2007 and located in central and western part of the Trench, and (2) to analyse a sequence of deposits in eastern part of the excavated area underneath a thick deposit defined as the 'roof' and exposed in the 2004 season.

As regards the first objective, this year season began by excavating a sequence of floors and make up layers in Spaces 325 & 326 of Building 74, placed in central part of the Trench. Excavations were then carried out in its northern part. A white floor built on a solid and relatively thick make up of small white pebbles was discovered and identified as belonging to the oldest dwelling structure in TP Area and recorded as Building 81. The building has c. 54 m² in its preserved form. A large section of its eastern part, which comprised a long

rectangular platform, was truncated in relation to the construction of the tomb recorded as Space 327. As a result, only northern and southern parts of the platform were preserved. Two major features associated with the floor were identified. A large rectangular oven was recorded in the southern part of the Building while a solid c. 6 cm thick rectangular layer, probably some kind of platform, was placed in its central part.

The team completed also excavation of a sequence of deposits in Space 327. The Space was recognized at the end of the last year excavations as containing the incised panel with spiral motifs on its southern, western and northern walls. It was preliminarily defined as a burial chamber. Work conducted in this season fully corroborated this interpretation. Remains of at least nine individuals were recorded and fully excavated. A foundation deposit in the form of a cluster of animal bones was deposited c. 20 cm underneath the burial chamber floor.

A solid and compact occupation layer (the 'roof') as well as thick midden layers directly underneath were taken out. They were placed on the floor of Space 346. The Space was c. 7 m long and 2 m wide. A number of features, mainly bins and ovens, was identified against the Space eastern wall. Furthermore, two platforms were also recorded, one placed against the northern wall while the other in SW corner of the Space. Two large feasting deposits were also discovered, probably in relation to post abandonment activities.

Building 74

The team completed excavating Building 74 composed of Space 325 and 326 (see 2007 Archive Report). The Building was placed directly underneath B. 72 in central part of the Trench.

A partition wall between Space 325 & 326 was made of a number of elements indicating a complex history of its construction. The oldest element comprised a solid mudbrick wall preserved in its northern section (17613 & 17614). Its southern part was probably later truncated making a doorway between these two spaces. This opening was then intentionally built over to seal off the Space 325 when it went out of use. It is indicated by a vertically placed mortar (17610) aimed at attaching the newly built wall fragment (15298 & 17612) to the southern wall of Space 325 & 326 (15225 & 13029).

The floor of both Spaces in B.74 was a solid construction made of fine surface and sequence of make up layers. The floor surface was made of nicely plastered silty sand (15809 – W part, 15807 – E part). No replastering was detectable. The make up in both rooms was very solid and made of layer of white small pebbles lying on stony silt layer. Floors of both spaces were constructed on ashy black midden.

An interesting feature in both spaces are buttresses placed against longer (southern and northern) walls of both Spaces

and put up on their floors (15807 & 15809) (Figure 55). They are arguably some kind of constructional elements associated with roofing of both spaces. It appears that they were set up to hold beams placed against both walls which themselves were set up to hold transverse beams holding the roof. In any case, these new constructional elements mark a considerable shift in the house construction and anticipate further development of this kind of construction well reported at the early Chalcolithic settlements, e.g. at Can Hasan and Çatalhöyük West.

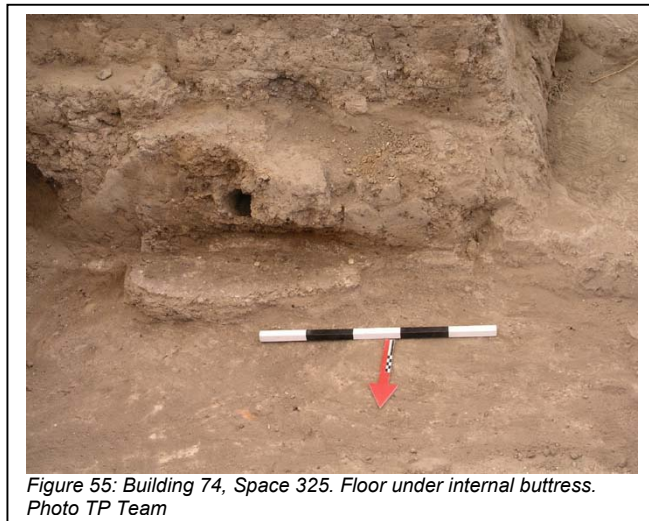


Figure 55: Building 74, Space 325. Floor under internal buttress.
Photo TP Team

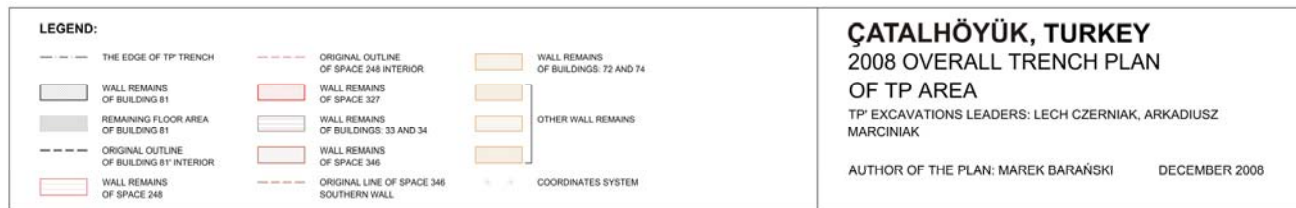
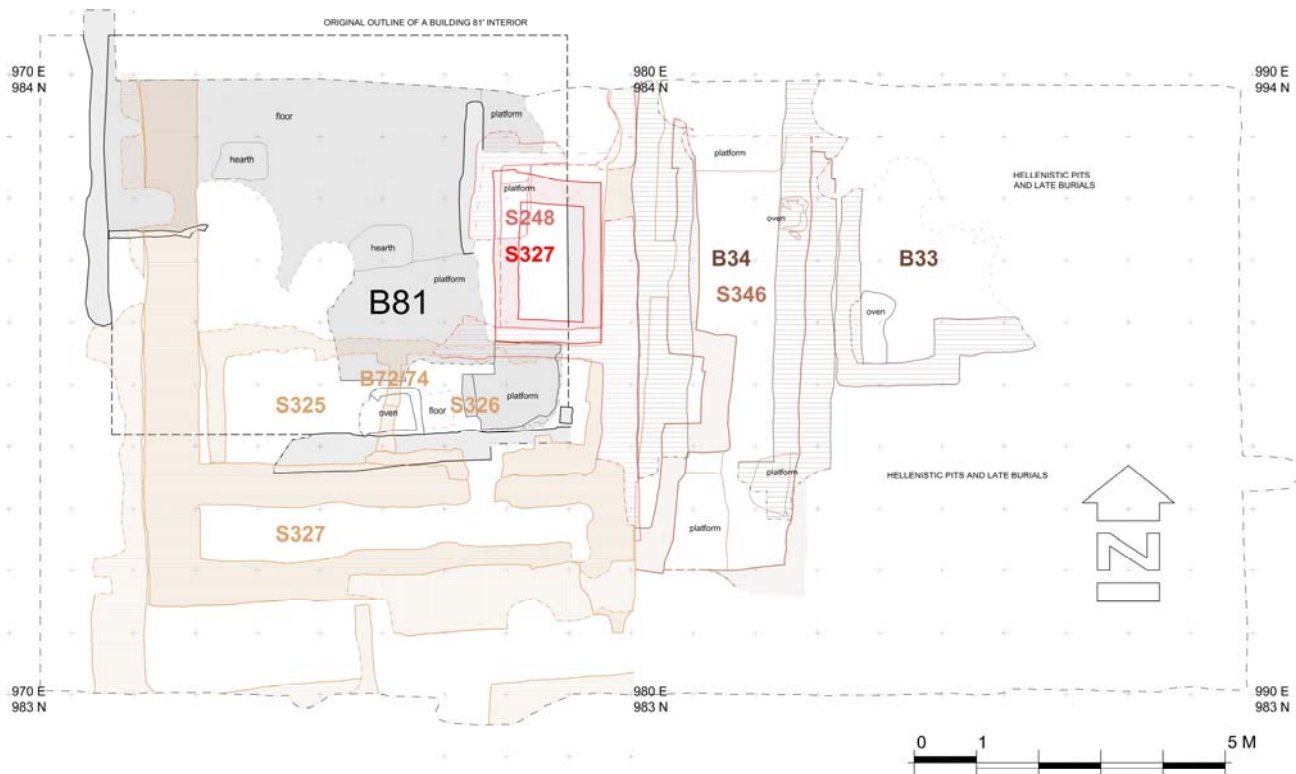


Figure 54: TP Area. General plan in the 2008 season. Plan Marek Baranski

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Figure 55: Building 74, Space 325. Floor under internal buttress.
Photo TP Team

Depositional Sequence Underneath Building 73

The works also continued in the northern part of the Trench. A sequence of deposits underneath the floor surface of Building 73, excavated in 2007, was taken out. A solid compact infill layer (13532) was placed directly underneath the floor of Building 73. It was c. 45-50 cm deep and was composed of large number of constructional materials and mixed clay. Its NW part was made from a large number of organic material such as ash and charcoal, which made it looked more like a midden. In addition, it contained a huge number of large fragments of animal bones, mainly cattle and horse, in addition to numerous fragments of fine ware of sophisticated forms, including exotic shapes. A fragment of small figurine ('fat lady') was also found in this layer. The lower level of the layer was divided into western (17603) and eastern part (17600) and it was placed directly on the floor of Building 81 (see below).

The entire sequence of infill deposits was later truncated by a huge cut, which was then filled in by a solid midden rich in different kind of organic and inorganic materials. This cut additionally truncated NW edge of the floor of Building 81 and was particularly deep in its western part.

The midden was composed of two layers. Analysis of stratigraphic relations reveals that its lower part (17630, 17637) was clearly placed underneath walls of B.74 and a sequence of walls in the western part of our Trench. In particular, western room of B.74 (Space 325) and its N-S walls (12230, 15529) was constructed directly on top of the midden. This implies that this midden was deposited after abandonment of B.81 but before construction of B.74. Its upper layer (15847), however, was placed against the N wall of Space 325, which means it was later than the wall construction itself.

Space 327

The work in the 2008 season continued also in tomb decorated by incised panel and recorded as Space 327 (see 2007 Archive Report). Space 327 is c. 2.8 m long and c. 0.9 m wide. Its longer wall is made of seven courses of bricks of considerably standardized size while its shorter wall is made of only five courses. A majority of bricks has dimension 68 x 7 x 8 cm and are made of yellow clay of high quality. Altogether 8-9 individuals were buried in the Space (15838, 17622, 17623, 17624, 17625, 17626, 17807, 17823, 17698, 17699) (Figure 56). They were mostly placed in its northern part. Most of them were clearly articulated. All

individuals were deliberately interred in the burial pit at three levels. The lowest level contained mainly disarticulated fragments of bones.



Figure 56: Space 327, Human burials in northern part of Space. Photo TP Team

They may have belonged to individuals deposited above. Interestingly, a headless female skeleton with symptoms of osteoporosis was found at the third level. In general, one child skeleton was discovered in addition to fragments of three other child skeletons. Individual bones were recorded as subsequent numbers in (15839). A large number (>30) x-finds such as figurines, obsidian & flint tools or beads (Figure 57) was recorded in the tomb chamber. The space had some kind of floor, which however was not particularly distinct.

Around 20 cm below the space floor, the western wall of B.81 was recorded. At the same level, a cluster of animal and human bones was also found. It was pretty small and contained fragments of c. three cattle horn corns in addition to individual animal and human bones (Figure 58). The cluster was placed in the very centre of Space 327. This location along with composition of the bones may imply some kind of foundation deposit. A similar deposit was registered underneath the entrance to Space 248 that was placed directly above Space 327 (see 2005 Archive Report).

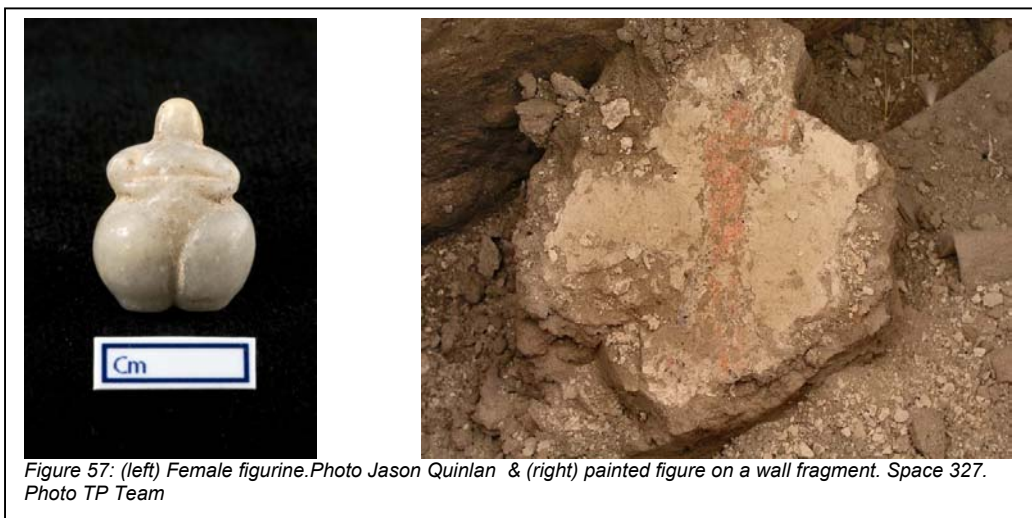


Figure 57: (left) Female figurine. Photo Jason Quinlan & (right) painted figure on a wall fragment. Space 327. Photo TP Team

Stratigraphic analysis implies that Space 327 is much younger than B.81 and is probably to be associated with the use of B.61 and/or B.62.

Walls In Central Part Of The Trench

Our work also concentrated on a sequence of N-S walls in central part of the Trench between B. 74, 73 and Space 327 to the west and Space 346 to the east. This sequence used to divide TP Area into the main Trench to the east and the so-called extension Trench to the west that we started digging in the years 2003-2004. The most upper structure in this sequence comprised long wall consisting of a number of constructional elements. The upper part of this wall (7808) belonging to B.34 was excavated on 2003 & 2004. It is currently c. 20 cm high and is made of two courses of bricks.



Figure 58: Space 327, foundation deposit. Photo TP Team

Its lower part was composed of two parallel rows of relatively small bricks (12274, 17680 & 17681). The space between these two rows was filled in with pretty homogeneous silty clay (possibly material otherwise used for bricks manufacture). Three pilasters (buttresses) from the eastern side of the wall (7809, 17676) comprised its integral part (Figure 59). They were interwoven within one of the lowest courses of the bricks. There is no doubt that this course and all pilasters belonged to the Building placed directly underneath B. 34 as they were located right under its western wall.



Figure 59: Wall 7809 & 17676 with pilasters. Photo TP Team

The wall with buttresses probably comprised western wall of older building that may have been completely destroyed by later activities. If this is the case, we encounter yet another example of construction with internal buttresses indicative of early Chalcolithic tradition (e.g. Can Hasan, Çatalhöyük West). Alternatively, they might have been external buttresses set to support the eastern wall of the building endangered from being collapsed. It is worth stressing that these buttresses are later addition to the wall, which seems to support the latter hypothesis. If this is the case, the building with this wall was probably placed to the east from the wall. However, no traces of it are discernible in terms of floors or any other constructional elements (this applies to both areas to the east and to the west from the wall). However, we cannot rule out a possibility that there were no solid floors at the end of the mound occupation.

The 'Roof' Sequence and Space 346

A second major objective of this year excavation season was to dig a sequence of deposits east of a range of walls in central part of the Trench that comprised the eastern walls of Space 248, 320, 327 as well as the eastern walls of B.74 (Space 326) and B.72 (Space 324).



Figure 60: Walls 7689-17693 with alcove. Photo TP Team

This part of the Trench was excavated in the years 2001-2004. A major discovery of the 2003 season was a solid and thick layer of plaster defined as a 'roof'. It was placed diagonally sloping to the east, probably as a result of some kind of post depositional processes (see 2003 & 2004 Archive Reports).

The work this year began by redefining a sequence of layers between the 'roof' and centrally placed N-S walls. An original sequence of layers was redefined in the following way: a sequence of midden layers placed diagonally (at the same angle as the 'roof') (7841, 7842, 7843 and 7844) were treated as one and excavated as unit 7841. This newly differentiated deposit is younger than solid infill layer directly to the west.

This space is located directly to the East of long walls following N-S alignment and made of yellowish mudbricks. Its upper part was a continuous wall, which subsequent elements were given separate unit numbers (17689, 17690,

17691, 17692, 17693). This wall had a kind of alcove in its central part of difficult to define function (Figure 60). Dimensions of inner part of the alcove were 1.15 m x 0.65 m. This wall was probably rebuilt at least twice as seen in its western section. The entire space between the walls of the alcove was filled in by horizontally and vertically placed bricks. Interestingly, bricks in the alcove seem to be somehow constructionally related to the lower section of the wall itself (17824). In any case, we are almost certain that this pile of bricks was actually older than the bricks surrounding it and making the alcove, at least in the last phase of the wall. This older wall (17824) is made of finely made black bricks, especially distinct in its central and northern part. This kind of bricks has not been encountered in the TP area to date.

Space 346 is placed between the walls (17689-17693) from the west, the wall (17825) from the east, and the wall (17826) from the south. The northern wall is located beyond the excavated area but it seems to be placed very close from the north section of the Trench. The room was pretty long as it was c. 7 m in length and c. 2 m in width. Since the space is clearly delimited from the west by this solid wall (17689-17693 & 17824), its functional relations with adjacent Space 327, B.74 and B.81 remain unclear. As regards stratigraphy, Space 346 is certainly older than destruction of the east wall of Space 327. A fragment of incised brick probably originating from the north wall of Space 327 was dumped into the infill above northern part of the floor of Space 346.

This longitudinal space has numerous in-built features associated with its use. As seen from the north, there is a rectangular platform (17818) that appears to be sitting against the space northern wall. Its dimensions within the Trench are 130 cm x 58 cm. The platform abuts the lower part of the wall (17824). Alternatively, this construction may have been a kind of basin. This hypothesis seems to be supported by presence of a kind of white/yellowish wall from the east side. It is c. 20 cm wide and it may have made its south wall. However, the corresponding western and eastern walls are hardly discernible.

Another feature on the floor of Space 346 comprised rectangular bin (17816) placed against its east wall (17825). The bin is a pretty solid construction made of clearly distinguishable walls of white silt and up to 6 cm wide. Its outer dimension was 54 x 41 cm. The construction appears to have been covered by some kind of lid as indicated by a compact fragment of

white silty layer in SE corner of the feature. A circular feature (17817), possibly another bin, was placed against the eastern wall of Space 346 in its more central part. It is considerably larger than the bin (17816). It was also made of four walls of white silt, however they were not as well preserved as the walls of bin (17816).

Another in situ feature comprises a posthole (17820) placed against the west wall of space and against the south wall of the alcove. It is oval in shape with dimensions 48 cm x 34 cm. Both, the base of the feature and the northern wall of the alcove is burnt. It was probably burnt during abandonment of the space. Alternatively, this may comprise a bottom part of some kind of destroyed fire installation. Another feature associated with the floor (17819) of Space 346 is an irregular oval pit (17815) placed against its eastern wall (17823). It is 54 cm long and 48 cm wide. Fragments of broken bricks and numerous animal bones were registered on top of this feature.



Figure 61: Space 346, SW platform with adjacent feasting deposit. Photo TP Team.

One of the most substantial features in Space 346 is a large platform (17813) located in its SW corner. It is made of a solid clay layer dark yellow/orangish in colour. A fire installation, probably oven (17821) was placed against eastern wall of the space and the platform (17813). Its size is difficult to estimate as it was badly destroyed by burrowing animals. Its preserved dimensions are 96 cm x 60 cm. Inside the oven walls, there is a lot of clayish material that appears to be very burnt.

Except for these in-built feature, remains of two activities were also recorded on the floor of Space 346. They are possibly associated with abandonment of the space. A cluster of large animal bones, mainly cattle, and large pieces of pottery (17809) was found in SE corner of Space 346 next to the oven (17821). In addition to large pottery fragments, a residual piece of some kind of plastic installation with female breast attached to the brick was also recorded. These are probably remains of feasting (Figure 61). A similar deposit was also found on the northern platform (17818) of Space and around it. This feasting deposit was also composed of a large number of bones. However, they were considerably more fragmented than large pieces in the former deposit (17809).

Building 81

This large construction is the oldest building in TP Area. Its overall size was possible to reconstruct quite reliably and had an area c. 54 m². The western wall of the Building was 6.8 m long. Its northern wall is located outside the excavated Trench. However, its western edge making NW corner of the building was identified making possible to reconstruct the northern wall. Unfortunately, southern wall was considerably destroyed. Its SW corner is not preserved as it was truncated by large cut that was later filled in by a deep and homogenous midden (see above). Hence, a shape of this part of the building can only be tentatively reconstructed. If this reconstruction is correct, the southern wall was 7.8 m long. Considerably destroyed was also eastern wall of the building. Considering the stratigraphic complexity in this part, identification of this wall was not at all straightforward. It seems that the wall (15856) served as the eastern wall of the building. This wall was originally set to be the eastern wall of 327, and only later it was reused (Figure 62).

The floor of the Building is pretty substantial. It appears to be made in two major sequences. The lower floor is made on a solid and clearly layered silty make up. White floor surface



Figure 62: Building 81 with later midden. Photo TP Team.

replastering of the floor surface (see 17842). However, this observation is tentative as the floor was considerably truncated by later activities and only its small fragment was exposed. The upper floor is made on a very characteristic make up composing of small white pebbles. They were mixed up with brownish clay. The layer was up to 6 cm thick. The floor surface was solid but rather thick and probably was not replastered. In general, the floor was very distinct, generally white in colour but with signs of tramped dirt (Figure 63). This kind of floor has striking similarities to the floor of B.61 some 1.2 m directly above it (see 2006 Archive Report).

Single in-built features were identified and recorded. Some kind of N-S partition wall (17862) placed against the northern wall of the building was found. Alternatively, this may be an edge of the platform, which was later destroyed /truncated. In any case, this partition wall is clearly younger than the floor (17618) with pebble make up as it is sitting on these pebbles. Further to the east from this wall was a white platform (17863). Only their small fragments were preserved. A relationship between the partition wall and the platform is not at all clear. A significant part of the platform was truncated by the large rectangular cut in relation to the construction of much later Space 327 (see above).

Quite mysterious constructional elements were recognized in central part of the floor of B.81 (17845 & 17844). They were close to rectangular in shape. They may have been formed as a result of placing some kind of hot objects that left behind signs of fire cracks. One of them was placed against centrally placed platform/floor (17846) (see below). However, it looks as if the platform, which is related to one of the later episodes of the building reconstruction, was built against possibly then existing object that left this burnt surface behind.

A solid screen wall (17861) was built on the floor perpendicularly to the western wall of the building. The screen wall itself was not preserved and its presence is discernible by a distinct layer of brown bricky material. The area directly south of the wall was then truncated and filled in with substantial midden that is placed in what was the SW corner of B.81 (see above).

The most complicated situation occurred in central-southern part of B.81 where large platform/floor (17846) of unknown function was placed. It was built directly on the floor (17618). It is delimited from the west by a thin screen wall (17847) that is painted in red from the inner side and by similar screen wall (17867) from the south. It is c. 2-3 cm wide and is painted in red on both sides. The platform was sat neatly between these two walls, as described above. It is composed of three layers: white plastered surface, greyish layer, and brownish layer. The entire platform is up to 4-5 cm thick. Its exact size remains unknown as it was certainly truncated by later cut in relation to the construction of much younger Space 327 (see above).



The platform itself was placed on older platform/floor that also is abutting both partition walls (17847, 17867). An exact size of the older structure cannot be recognized as it was only observed in sections. It was not exposed as the younger platform (17846) was not taken out. Both platforms may have had a ceremonial significance as they were sitting between two partition walls that are nicely decorated by red painting.

Directly to the south, exactly between the screen wall (17867) and the building's south wall (17865), there was a rectangular basin that was later used for the construction of oven (15896). This oven is certainly younger than the screen wall (17867). An original function of this basin is difficult to define considering it is not excavated. This space was later used to build up an elaborated oven. Its solid superstructure was rectangular in shape and it was made of two parallel walls. The outer surface was painted in white (?). The oven base was solidly built and had a smooth outer surface. A pretty substantial layer of ash was found on the oven base.

Particularly complex situation occurred in SE corner of the building. The uppermost element in this part comprised a white and thick platform (17604, 17606, 17615). It was made of substantial and thick make up of white pebbles (similar to the building floor). This platform was placed against some kind of older platform. It had white surface and was also made of make up of white pebbles. The entire layer was c. 2-3 cm deep and was certainly thinner than the platform above. Both platforms were placed on a solid make up of soil and bricky infill up to c. 13-14 cm thick (17871). This layer itself was again sitting on older greyish floor (17870) ca. 2 cm thick. This implies that in this corner we have at least two platforms and one floor underneath, all related to the oldest phase of the building use. Since this part of the building is not to be excavated in the future, more details of this constructional sequence will not be available.

As mentioned above, almost entire eastern part of the Building was deliberately destroyed in relation to the construction of the tomb (Space 327). The latter was built in the place of eastern platform of B.81 and this should be regarded as a deliberate act. Consequently, the entire content of this platform was taken out before the tomb was built. This is further corroborated by the presence of the eastern wall of B.81 (17810) at the bottom of Space 327 (see above).

Summary

This was the last season in TP Area in this phase of the project. The work in the next two years will be aimed at studying all materials excavated in the years 2001-2008.