

Çatalhöyük 2015 Archive Report

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Chapter 4

Excavations in the TPC Area

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Introduction

The works in TPC Area commenced in the 2012 excavations season and three excavations seasons have been carried out to date. They have been carried out in four new trenches. Trench 1 is 5 x 5m is located directly to the South of the Mellaart Area A. Trench 2 is placed directly South of Trench 1 and its overall dimension is 5 x 6m. Trench 3 is located in southern part of TPC Area. It is quadrilateral in shape with southern and eastern edges being 10m long and the northern edge measuring 6m in length. Trench 4, measuring c.8 x 6m and is located in between these two sections of the TPC Area. This year field work in the TPC Area was concentrated in Trench 4 and to a lesser extent in Trench 3. Work began on June 24 and continued until August 25.

An overall goal of the excavation of TPC Area is to link the stratigraphy of the TP sequence, excavated between 2001 and 2008, with that of the South Area. A further aim is to recognise architecture, burial practice, pottery and obsidian manufacture and use, subsistence, landscape use, etc. in the period between the end of the South sequence (Building 10 in Level South T) and the beginning of the TP sequence (Building 81 in Level TP M) (see more Marciniak *et al.* 2012).

The excavations carried out in the past three seasons made it possible to reveal a sequence of Neolithic buildings and features in three excavated Trenches: 1, 2 and 3. Altogether, the remains of four buildings (B.121, B.110, B.115, B.109) in Trenches 1 and 2 and two (B.122, Sp.520) in Trench 3 have been unearthed. The works in Trench 4 conducted to date were concentrated upon post-Neolithic occupation and only yet unspecified remains of the Neolithic architecture had been revealed.

Building 121 is located at the bottom of the Neolithic sequence in Trench 1 and 2 and is dated to the period of c.6400-6250 calBC, which appears to be contemporaneous with B.81 (Level TP M) from the TP Area. The following Neolithic structure in this part of the TPC Area is B.110. As indicated by the character of walls and elements of constructional practices, the building was probably contemporary to B.74 from the TP Area, which means it can be dated to Level TP N (Marciniak *et al.* 2012, 2013). Following the abandonment of B.110, the area went out of use for some time and was transformed into a midden ((20232) and (20215)). This makes the sequence identical to that in the TP Area where temporarily occupied B.72 of a light construction and the following open space (B.73) emerged after the abandonment of a solid B.74. This further supports the claim that B.110 and B.74 may have been contemporaneous (see Marciniak *et al.* 2012, 2013). Remains of an *in situ* occupational activities were found directly above the open space and superimposed midden. Despite the fact that it was badly destroyed, but considering its character, it is right to attribute them to a separate B.115 (Sp.491). This construction is almost identical to the floor of B.61 in the TP Area, the latest in that sequence. The latest dwelling structure in this part of the TPC Area was B.109. This Building is possibly contemporaneous with the latest B.61 from the TP Area and can be tentatively dated to Level TP R (see a detailed discussion of relations between TP and TPC Areas in Marciniak 2015).

The Neolithic occupation

This year excavations brought about the discovery of at least four phases of Late Neolithic occupation. However, the detailed relationship between this sequence and that of Trench 1 and 2 is yet to be established.



Figure 4.1. Neolithic midden (21038), Space 598, Trench 4.



Figure 4.2. Space 595, a large platform (F.8289) with two benches (F.8298 & F.8299), Trench 4.

The earliest structure in the Neolithic sequence in Trenches 4 and 3, partly exposed but not yet excavated, is B.150 (Sp.586), located in southern part of Trench 4. This is a large building with a double mudbrick western wall (F.8267) and a single mudbrick northern wall (F.8288). Both walls were plastered and most likely painted. The remaining two walls have not yet been recognized. B.150 has been tentatively dated back to Level South S and it is most likely contemporary with B.44 from the South Area (Regan 2005). The building has been badly destroyed by numerous post-Neolithic pits, in particularly a large pit (F.7378) placed between its western and northern walls (see below; see also Filipowicz, Harabasz & Hordecki 2014).

A wide range of occupational activities in the Neolithic has been revealed following the demise of this large dwelling structure. Hence, B.150 serves as point of reference for grasping and conceptualizing stratigraphic sequence in Trench 4 and to some extent also in Trench 3. Altogether, five distinct stratigraphic strands postdating B.150 have been revealed in different parts of both trenches. These are as follows (as seen from the north):

1. A sequence of homogenous and deep middens placed directly north of northern wall of B.150 (F.8288). Two phases of midden accumulation have been revealed: (i) an earlier phase at the bottom (Sp.598), composed of midden layers (21038) (Fig. 4.1) and (31850); it has been deposited against this wall, and most likely during the building's occupation; (ii) a sequence of later middens recorded as Sp.596 ((31854), (31832) and (31848)). It postdates the occupation of B.150, as their part has been placed on top of its northern wall.

2. A sequence of dwelling structures post-dating the use of B.150 in northern part of Trench 4. After B.150 went out of use, the space it had occupied has been intensively used. The northern part of B.150 has been reused and served as an element of a distinct dwelling structure (Sp.595). Two walls of this structure have been revealed: (i) northern (F.8267) that reused northern wall of B.150) and (ii) southern, composed of both grey and orange mudbricks (F.8257 and F.8258). A solid floor (F.8285) with a largely destroyed fire installation (F.8290) has been placed between the walls. From the east, a large platform (F.8289) with two benches (F.8298 and F.8299) has been found, but not yet excavated (Fig. 4.2). After abandonment, the house interior has been deliberately backfilled with heterogeneous deposits of a significant depth and rich in archaeological material, mostly animal bones. The southeast part of earlier B.150 has been then turned into two small rooms (Sp.578) sitting in-between two grey and orange mudbrick walls of north-south alignment (F.8259 in the west and F.8260 in the east). The southern wall of the building is beyond the perimeter of the trench. Its eastern room was very small and devoid of any in-built structures. A floor (F.8275) between the walls was found but as it may have belonged to the earlier room(s); it was recorded as Sp.594. A large oven (F.8278) was found in the southern part of its western room next to the platform (F.8279). It was square in plan and had a solid mudbrick superstructure of which the western and northern walls are preserved. The stratigraphic relations between Sp.595 and Sp.578 remain to be clarified in the next excavation season.



Figure 4.3. Space 585: Y-shaped structure F.8271, cluster of stones and bird wing (31825), Trench 4.

3. A sequence of dwelling structures post-dating the use of B.150 in southern part of Trench 3. The earliest reconstruction of B.150 in this part of the trench comprised a small special purpose room (Sp.585). Its main



Figure 4.4. Stone headless female figurine (31852.x3) in the room fill (Space 585), Trench 4.

element was a Y-shaped plastered structure in its central part (F.8271, Fig. 4.3). A cluster (31825) of worked stones, worked bones, horn core, obsidian and flint objects as well as two wings of a wild progenitor of domestic goose (identified by Teresa Tomek) have been deposited from its eastern side. Two largely unspecified fire installations (F.8282, F.8283) were found in the room fill. Worth mentioning is a large stone headless female figurine (31852.x3, see Fig. 4.4) that was found in the room fill. The following reconstruction (Sp.564) involved erecting the walls on top of the preceding room and their subsequent plastering and painting. Remains of fire installation were found on the well preserved floor (31321). A number of worked stones and large fragments of animal bones, indicative of post-abandonment activities, were found on the floor (31317). They represent all elements in the production cycle of worked stones – from the preparation of raw material, through different stages of their production to use, breakage and deposition.



Figure 4.5. Space 493- storage room with bins, Trench 3.

4. A sequence of special purpose buildings in the northern part of Trench 3. The earliest structure discovered to date in this sequence is Sp.493, identified and partly excavated in 2012 as well as in 2013 (see Marciniak *et al.* 2012: 73; Marciniak *et al.* 2013: 86-88; Fig. 4.5). The room is most likely a part of B.122 and is located in its northeast corner. This was a storage room of c.3m² and full of a large amount of barley and wheat grain. It consisted of five rectangular bins: F.3933, F.7182, F.7198, F.7196, F.7197 and F.7497. The former was revealed in the 2012 excavation season (Marciniak *et al.* 2012: 73), while the remaining four in the following year (Marciniak *et al.* 2013). The infills of two bins F.7182 and

F.7198 were removed that year while the remaining two: F.7196 and F.7197 were left unexcavated. This year we exposed the entire northern part of the room revealing a new bin F.7497. The infills of all the bins from Sp.493 have been taken away.

The fill of bin F.7197 fill (22713) consisted mostly of rubble from the collapse of the building but also some few inclusions of grain, both barley and wheat. These few inclusions may represent the original content of the bin, which most likely must have been emptied before abandonment. The bin F.7497 contained only rubble infill (22748) with the exception of one polishing tool (22748.x2), one cutting tool for plant material (22748.x1) as well as a thick layer of phytoliths at the bottom. The bin F.7196 has been backfilled with a large amount of burnt rubble infill ((31310), (30831)). However, two grinding tools (x1 and x2), one unworked ground stone, as well as several large cattle bones have been found, which most likely formed a some kind of special deposit.

The stratigraphic analysis of Sp.493 made it possible to establish the order of construction of all of the features in the room. The earliest two bins have been placed against its northern wall (F.8255) – F.7196 in the northeast corner and F.7497 in the northwest corner. Two bins (F.7182 and F.7197) have been added later from the south. A small bin F.7198 in the southwest corner has most likely been constructed later.

Space 493 is in bad condition due to heavy burning that damaged the structure. It might have happened as a result of deliberate fire, which happened after the room went out of use. It is indicated by the fact that both bins and the room infill (30868) had marks of fire. The fire was so intense that the infill (31384), directly underneath the room's southern wall, was affected. Signs of fire on later structures in close proximity to the storage room also prove that the burning event happened after the room's construction and use.

The walls of Sp.493 (F.8255) and the southern wall of Sp.564 (F.7499) from Trench 4 (see above) were clearly contemporary, at least for some time, as they have both been affected by the same deliberate fire event that led to the destruction and ultimate abandonment of Sp.493. The fill (22762) between the walls of these two structures was partly excavated in order to get a high quality datable material from this stratigraphically locked event.

The storage room Sp.493 was completely excavated in the 2015 season. A few earlier layers were revealed directly underneath the occupational surface of the room and belong to earlier construction of unspecified character. Space 493 can be dated back to the period of c.6400-6250 calBC (Marciniak *et al.* 2013: 87).

Space 493 is most likely an element of a large structure stretching further to the east. Its tiny fragment (Sp.577) was revealed between its eastern wall and the eastern edge of Trench 3. A fill (31355) of c.30cm wide in the western part of the space was excavated. The top edges of bins, most likely similar to that from the neighboring Sp.493, were revealed.

Sometime after the construction of Sp.493, a special purpose room was built directly to the west (Sp.562). It was 5.13m long and 3.74m wide (see Fig. 4.6). The western part of the room is located outside the trench. The walls have been plastered and painted with black and white geometric design in the form of vertical and transverse sets of parallel lines (Fig. 4.7), very similar to the decoration of B.121 from Trench 2 (see Marciniak *et al.* 2013: 77). Numerous features were revealed inside the room: platforms in its northern and eastern part (F.8262, F.8294, F.8296), ovens (F. 8295, F. 8297), benches (F. 8291, F.8293) and a bucranium (F.8292). Of extraordinary character are two small painted pillars (F.7291, F.7292), which were painted over with geometric design, and placed on a bench (F.8293), itself located against the northern wall of the room. Northern part of the room was of a ceremonial character while the southern one seemed to serve domestic purposes. At least two distinct phases of its occupation were distinguished, as indicated by a sequence of superimposed floors ((31843), (31846), (31847) and (31859)). The uppermost floor (31843) covered the entire surface of the room. The following two floors (31846 and 31847) were exposed directly underneath, but in only in the southern part of space. The floor directly underneath (31859) covered its

entire surface. Directly underneath, an as yet unspecified floor was revealed in the southern part of the room while a fragment of infill was found in its northern part. The work in Sp.562 will continue in the 2016 excavation season with the main aim of reaching the earliest floor of the building.



Figure 4.6. Space 562- an overview of the room, Trench 3.



Figure 4.7. Space 562- geometric wall painting on the wall, Trench 3.

The top part of the fill (22797) of Sp.562 was made of neatly placed bricks held together with mortar forming a stable foundation, possibly for a floor layer. There was no clear evidence of the floor, however a distinct, white layer (22765) was recognized at the bottom of the Hellenistic pit. It is not clear whether this is a part of the pit bottom or is a fragment of the Neolithic floor. This surface continued also into the niche to the north and east, which has been shaped by the cut of the late pit F.7272.

Sometime after the special purpose room Sp.562 went out of use, yet another dwelling structure has been constructed directly on top of it. Building 133 was composed of a number of small rooms, most likely surrounding some kind of large room. It extends to the north where one of the rooms has been placed directly above Sp.564 (see above). Three rooms of these structure have been identified. The most southern room (Sp.517) was excavated in the 2013 and was identified by a floor that was radiocarbon dated. The preliminary attribution of this room to B.122 needs to be reconsidered (see Marciniak *et al.* 2013). The second room (Sp.557) is placed directly North of Sp.517. The room seems to have a rather indistinct floor (22762). These parts of B.133 were badly destroyed by the Hellenistic pit F.7272. As the building has been placed directly underneath the surface and due to considerable destruction by post-Neolithic occupation, it is only preserved in small fragments making its reconstruction difficult. Building 133 is most likely the latest Neolithic building in this part of TPC Area. It was completely excavated in the 2015 excavation season.



Figure 4.8. Neolithic mudbrick walls (F. 7481, F. 7482), Trench 3.

A sequence of walls in Trench 3, indicative of four superimposed buildings, was uncovered in 2015. The earliest of them (Sp.575) was only partly exposed. The next building (Sp.574) had three walls: F.7488 (south), F.7487 (east) and F.7484 (west). A small buttress was found on its western wall. The following struc-

ture (Sp.520) was made of four walls: F.7172 (west), F.7486 (north), F.7252 (east), and F.7253 (south). The walls had the following dimensions: F.7172: 2.04x1.12m, F.7486: 6.35x1.17m, F.7252: 1.21x0.94m, F.7253: 3.02x0.78m. The fill of this space was removed in 2013. Similarly to B.74 from the TP Area and B.110 from Trench 2 in the TPC Area, the building did not have a floor (Marciniak *et al.* 2013) The latest building in this sequence (Sp.573) was only preserved in its western and northern parts. Both its northern (F.7481) and western (F.7482) walls were excavated (Fig. 4.8). The four superimposed walls seem to represent a continuously reconstructed room of some as yet unspecified larger structure.

Not a single Neolithic burial was unearthed in the TPC Area, which seems to corroborate an earlier conclusion about a lack of intramural burials in the last three hundred years of the Neolithic settlement occupation (e.g. Marciniak 2015).

The post-Neolithic sequence

The 2015 excavation season in TPC Area brought about the discovery of a wide range of features indicative of the post-Neolithic occupation. Altogether, three distinct phases of late occupation have been revealed: (a) post-Chalcolithic, (b) Hellenistic and (c) early Islamic.

Post-Chalcolithic occupation

One burial (F.7287), preliminary dated back to the Bronze Age, was excavated this year. Its chronology was established on stratigraphic ground as it truncated the latest Neolithic deposits (Fig. 4.9). Three individuals ((22740), (22746), and (22759)) were interred inside one oval burial cut (22752). All of the human remains were in bad condition, which is understandable considering they were placed directly underneath the mound surface. The first two skeletons Sk(22740) and Sk(22746) were preserved in the form of disarticulated



Figure 4.9. Burial F.7287, probably Bronze Age, Trench 4.

body parts in a non-anatomical order. Individual Sk(22740) was originally a flexed inhumation with probably upper limbs flexed to the left side. No cranium was recovered while mandible was found but not *in situ*. No feet were recovered but the hands or at least elements of both were revealed. Individual Sk(22746) was only some cranium and feet fragments. The individual Sk(22759) belong to a baby and was the best preserved as the entire skeleton (apart feet) was recovered. Some loose human bones were also recorded within the burial infill (21046). Thereby, this is the third Bronze Age burial found in the TPC Area. It resembles burials F.3931, F.3961 both in the shape, the localization close to the ground surface and the presence of remains of multiple individuals (Marciniak *et al.* 2012).

In the northeast corner of Trench 4, a post-Chalcolithic building was unearthed. It is preserved by a fragment of sunken floor and fragment of wall (Sp.589). It extends beyond the eastern and northern edge of Trench 4, therefore it is hard to establish its chronological position and its relation to surrounding deposits (e.g. Sp.584).

In the northern part of Trench 4, a sequence of largely eroded and truncated deposits (Sp.584), most likely post-Neolithic in date (as they are sitting directly on the Neolithic middens designated as Sp.596) were lifted up.

Another feature that can be tentatively dated to the post-Neolithic period is B.134 (Sp.569), located in the southeast part of Trench 4, consisting of very scant and poorly preserved small, isolated fragments of floor (22725) measuring 0.84 x 0.52 x 0.02m; (22727) - 2.64x 0.53 x 0.05m and (22730) - 0.37 x0.30 x 0.02m; and walls (F.7384, F. 7280). In the beginning it was thought to be Neolithic in date, but it turned out that some Hellenistic pit were located underneath.

Finally, in the central part of Trench 4, a sequence of infills, designated as Sp.544, was revealed. It is a relatively large (c.4.2 x 2.9m) and deep sequence of infills: (22717), (31326), (22735), (31327), (31329), (31328), (31335). It is definitively pre-Hellenistic in date, as some Hellenistic pits were cut into the infills of this big truncation.

Hellenistic occupation

During this year excavation, a number of features from the Hellenistic phase of the mound occupation was found, including 14 pits and four fire installations.



Figure 4.10. Bell-shaped Hellenistic pit F.7261 truncating Neolithic structures visible in the W section of Trench 4.

The chronology of pits was established upon stratigraphic relations between features and chronological attribution of archaeological material. They were grouped into already existing spaces that were established in previous years. The following Hellenistic pits from Trench 3 belong to Sp.484: F.7273, F.7276,

and F.7288. Pits in Trench 4 belonged to the Early Hellenistic (Sp.495) and Late Hellenistic (Sp.496) periods. Altogether, 10 Early Hellenistic pits were excavated this year: F.7261, F.7264, F.7265, F.7267, F.7268, F.7272 (previously recorded as 7356), F.7275, F.7285, F.7290, F.8256 and only one dated to the Late Hellenistic (F.7262).

Some of the pits excavated this year have interesting characteristics. Pit F.7261 (Fig. 4.10) from the western section of a large pit F.7378, excavated in 2014, is distinctively bell-shaped in section with a significantly larger diameter at the bottom as compared with the upper part. Along with similar pits in the SUMMIT Area (Kotsakis 1996, 1997), and other parts of Trench 4 in the TPC Area (Filipowicz *et al.* 2014), the bell-shaped pits form an interesting cluster, arguably of some functional significance, in this very part of the Hellenistic settlement. Another interesting pit is F.7371. It was partially excavated last season (Filipowicz *et al.* 2014) and the works were completed this year. Well-preserved Hellenistic pots and articulated bones of a horse in its fill were discovered. The large pit F.7272 partially destroyed both the walls of Sp.562 and a later wall (F.7277) further to the south. A smaller pit F.7276 was cut into its infill. It contained a pot and human remains.

Other features connected with post-Neolithic occupation comprised two ovens F.7263, F.7159 and two fire installations F.7266, F.7278. All of them were clustered in Sp.495, dated back to the early Hellenistic period. Oven F.7263 was constructed in the cut truncating the earlier Neolithic walls; it was oval in shape and had a solid superstructure. It was not completely preserved due to post-depositional processes and later truncations..

The second oven F.7159 was placed in the southwest corner of Trench 3. It truncated earlier Neolithic walls F.7159, which later served as some kind of its superstructure, but it was cut through construction elements of Hellenistic B.120. A number of distinctively Hellenistic pottery fragments were found in its infill.

The fire installation F.7266 was located in northern part of Trench 4, west of oven F.7263. The shape of both features was distinctively similar. Two occupational layers of burnt matter, charcoal and ash were found around it. Both of them belong to Sp.495. The second fire installation F.7278 was an oval feature placed in central-eastern part of Trench 4. No pottery was found but instead a large number of animal bones, both charred and unburnt, were discovered. Additionally, a cattle horn core was also found.



Figure 4.11. Early Islamic child burial F.7298, Trench 4.

Early Islamic burial ground

During this year season altogether three burials F.7298, F.7358 and F.7377, located in Trench 4, were excavated. Similarly to burials excavated in previous years, they were dated back to Early Islamic period (Filipowicz *et al.* 2014). All of them were niche grave type burials. Every single burial was placed on the northeast-southwest axis with the head facing southwest. This type of grave, according to Moore and Jackson's typology (Moore & Jackson 2014), consists of an upper pit, grave markers and lower pit. The upper cut is rectangular in shape with rounded corners. The niche is oval in shape and is localized in southern part of grave below the grave markers lying next to the southern part of upper cut. The body was put in the niche. Each of the burials excavated this year have all of these elements.

Burial F.7298 was a child burial located in the southwest corner of Trench 4 (Fig. 4.11). Its upper part was mistakenly identified and excavated as a pit in 2014 (recorded as F.7354). A mudbrick marker was also registered in the cut, but because of high levels of erosion, it was not

recognized as a burial marker. This year excavation led to discovery of a niche cut (22777), the infill (22779) and deposited in it a child skeleton Sk(22778).

The second excavated burial was F.7358, located in the southern part of Trench 4, recognized and partially excavated (upper infill and grave marker) in 2014. This season the niche cut (21040), its infill (21041) with the skeleton of an adult Sk(21042) was excavated.

The third burial was F.7377 is located in the eastern section of Trench 4. It was partially excavated in 2014 (the infills of upper cut as well as a grave niche). Only a cranium was left in place and lifted in 2015. The rest of the skeleton was left unexcavated as it is outside the limit of the excavation area.

During 2014 and 2015 seasons, a total of nine early Islamic burials were identified. Altogether since the beginning of excavation in the TPC Area, 21 early Islamic burials were excavated. They are part of a larger burial ground identified on the top of the East Mound, used at least for 300 years (Kwiatkowska 2009).

Final remarks

The future works will concentrate on the clarifying Neolithic strata in all five stratigraphic strands in Trenches 3 and 4. The excavations in Trench 3 shall involve reaching Neolithic levels below Sp.484 while further investigating the Neolithic features within Sp.493. The works will also be continued in B.111, placed directly north of Trench 1. The ultimate goal of the incoming works would be to connect the TPC Area with the complex of B.10 from Level South T, and hence an area directly south of B.10 in the very southeast corner of the South shelter will be investigated. These works, along with the results of works from the TP Area, will make it possible to reach broader goals of the project in this part of the mound and contribute to an in-depth understanding of different facets of this major threshold in the development of the Çatalhöyük community.

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