

Areas Excavated in 2007

Excavation took place in three areas on the East mound, 4040, South and TP Areas and three trenches on the West mound, Trenches 5, 7 and 8 (Figure 14).

4040 Area /East Mound

The 4040 Area scraped in 2003 and integrated with the area exposed by surface scraping in 1993-5, revealed a large number of houses that defined groups of similarly aligned Neolithic houses possibly separated by 'streets' or 'alleyways'. An area 30x40m has been excavated since 2004 to the latest building levels, recorded, conserved and backfilled. This area straddles a number of 'zones' of structures separated by rubbish areas. It has been established that these groups of buildings represent different time periods.

Much of this seasons work concentrated around the excavation of foundation trenches for the construction of our second permanent shelter on the East mound (see Other Activities).

The foundation trenches afforded 'windows' into the rich sequences in this area, highlights



Figure 15: Strand of interlocking bone and shell beads from a burial 15924.X3

of which included a complex of up to 30 burials in FT 1 & 2 which would have been located under the NE platforms of a house. A number of burials were found with burial items, one of the most spectacular of which was a strand of 124 bone beads from a single necklace in an adult female burial (15924) (Figure 15). These consist of interlocking or 'chain link' beads and several shell pendants.

The 'necklace' was not actually found around the neck of the skeleton, but looped over the chest. Some of the beads are made on metapodials of fox / small dog-size animals, others on cylinders of sheep-size long bone cortex. After shaping they were polished with a soft material such as leather or cloth (see Worked Bone Report, Archive Report 2007).

Another notable sequence excavated was located in FTs 22 & 23 where the base of a probable bear relief was found in the corner of a room (see Figures 1 – 3). This was a house of complex internal furnishings including a painted red panel on a niche, burial platforms, a spectacular oven and heavily undulatory plastered walls (Figure 16).



Figure 16: Sequence excavated in FT 22

South Area, East Mound

Under a large protective shelter since 2002 the South Area is open to the public all year round with defined tour routes and information panels for visitors.

The long-term and two-fold excavation aim in the South Area is to expand the area where we reached natural lake marl in 1999 in order to study the very earliest occupation sequence at Çatalhöyük and to investigate temporal buildings with repeated patterns (see Review above & Figure 6).

TP Area

The team from Poland headed by Professors Lech Czerniak and Arkadiusz Marciniak from the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences and the Institute of Prehistory, University of Poznań continued excavations at the crest of the east mound. This area was opened in the 2001 season to study the latest phases of tell occupation, dated to the end of the seventh millennium BC. The trench was located next to the 1961 trench in order to integrate results to Mellaart's Levels defined as I – III.

The highlight of this seasons work was finding the incised mudplaster freize (see Review above & Figure 4)

West Mound

On the West Mound a 5-year plan developed from the 2006 season and involves a three-fold research approach with three teams.

Trenches 5, 6 and 7

Trenches 5, 6 and 7 are located to the SE of the West Mound and under the leadership of Peter Biehl from SUNI Buffalo and Cambridge University the aim is to excavate a series of step trenches to natural in order to reach the earliest levels of occupation on the West Chalcolithic mound. The results combined with those from the TP Area on the East mound will inform on the nature of transition from Late Neolithic on the East Mound to Early Chalcolithic on the West Mound or, illustrate that the two sites may have been occupied concurrently.

This season a new Trench 7, was machine cut against the side of a ditch that runs along the eastern edge of the West Mound and which was located on the same alignment as Tr's 5 & 6 opened last season (Figure 17). The machined trench afforded a quick view into the depth and nature of the stratigraphy.



Figure 17: Vessel cluster found on a floor through the Chalcolithic sequence in Tr. 7. Two vessels were partly reconstructed and classified as storage vessels. The smallest vessel (15118) is a so-called basket-handle vessel and vessel (15116) is a typical EC I lugged jar. Two new vessel-types were (15117) and (15119).

Excavations in Trench 5 took place on the E part where substantial Early Chalcolithic architecture is under investigation in order to understand the spatial relationship of the architecture.

Trench 8

Trench 8 is located to the SW of the mound. The team here led by Burçin Erdoğu, University of Thrace have targeted this area to investigate the EC II occupation at Çatalhöyük

West, to explore how EC II occupation developed after the end of EC I and how to contextualize the transition from EC I (c.a. 6000-5700 cal BC) to EC II (c.a. 5700-5500 cal BC).

The excavations in 2007 revealed a large building dubbed “The Red Building” because of traces of red plastered walls and, floor. It incorporates large half circular buttresses. There are no comparable examples from any other Chalcolithic sites in Central Anatolia.

A total of 3163 sherds were found in the fill of the ‘Red Building’, and 1708 of them have painted decoration. The most frequent painted wares are red-on-orange and red-on-cream. The most exciting were sherds with human figures with raised arms (Figure 18).



Figure 18: This figure with raised arms, a long neck and open fingers is unique

SEL Team



Figure 19: Tile lined late burial F.2420

The third team led by Ahmet Tırpan and Asuman Baldırın from Selçuk University is conducting excavations of the later activity. It is known that the West Mound was used as a burial ground in the historic periods but so

far little by way of occupation or other activity has been found. The Selçuk University team is concentrating on excavating late burials and any other late activity in Trenches 5, 6, 7 and 8. This will enable the team to view a much wider and meaningful late burial assemblage in a holistic manner.