

Excavations of the TP Area

Team Poznań

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Abstract

The archaeological expedition from Poznań, Poland, continued the excavation of a trench of 10 by 10 meters (TP Area), which is located in the highest point of the East Mound. Additionally, the works continued in an extension trench of 10 by 4 meters located directly to the east of Mellaart's Area A. Work was undertaken between 10th of July and 3rd of August 2004. As a result of this year season a complex sequence of midden and constructional layers placed on a structure that appears to be remains of the fallen roof of a younger Neolithic building has been recognized and clarified. In the extension trench four burials and three clusters of human bones were exposed and excavated during the season. All of them were placed between the walls of Roman buildings. Further works in this area focused on remains of the Roman production facilities such as walls, pits, floors and kilns associated with west part of Buildings 30 and 31. The results of this year season made it possible to better understand spatial and temporal relation between the buildings and off building facilities. In the subsequent season works will be continued both in the main trench as well as in its west extension. The excavation of the 'roof' deposits will be a priority for the main trench while the works in the extension trench will focus on remaining parts of the Roman occupation phase and Neolithic structures in its NW section.

Özet

Poznan, Polonya'dan gelen arkeologlar ekibi, Doğu tepesinin en yüksek noktasında yer alan 10'a 10 metre (TP Area) açmasını kazmaya devam etmişlerdir. Buna ek olarak, çalışmalar Mellaart Alanının doğusunda yer alan 10'a 4 metre açmasında devam etmiştir. Çalışmalar 10 Haziran ve 3 Ağustos 2004 tarihleri arasında olmuştur. Bu sezon çalışmalarının sonucunda daha erken bir döneme ait Neolitik bir binanın çatısı üzerindeki kompleks bir dizgede yer alan çöplük tabakaları ile bir takım yapı kalıntıları tanımlanmış ve ortaya çıkarılmıştır. Bu sezonda ek açmada dört gömü ve 3 insan kemiği topluluğu ortaya çıkarılmıştır ve kazılmıştır. Bütün bunlar Roma döneminin ait binaların duvarlarının arasına yerleştirilmiştir. Çalışmaların diğer kısmı, Bina 30 ve 31'in batı kısmı ile ilintili olan Roma dönemine ait duvar, çukur, taban ve ocak kalıntılarının ortaya çıkarılmasına yönelmiştir. Bu sezon çalışmalarının sonuçları ile bina içi ve bina dışı aktivitelerin arasındaki mekansal ve zamansal ilişkilerin anlaşılması sağlanmıştır. Bunu takip eden sezonda çalışmalar ana açmada olduğu kadar, batı ek açmasında da devam edecektir. Ana açmada çalışmalar daha çok 'çatı' kalıntıları üzerine yoğunlaşacakken, ek açmada ise çalışmalar Roma dönemine ait kalan yerleşim kalıntıları ile Neolitik yapı kalıntıları ve onun kuzeybatı bölümünde yoğunlaşacaktır.

Introduction

This year was the fourth season of excavation of an area on the East Mound called TP (Team Poznań). Work commenced on July 10 and were completed on August 3, 2004. The team made up of 10 archaeologists and students from the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences in Poznań and Institute of Prehistory, University of Poznań continued the excavations in the trench 10 by 10 meters located on top of the East Mound, next to the area excavated by James Mellaart in the 1960s. Additionally, the work continued in an extension trench of 10 by 4 meters which was opened up and is situated directly to the east of Mellaart's Area A.

The primary objective of the TP excavations that began in the 2001 season was to recognise and study the last two phases of the Neolithic tell occupation, known as Çatalhöyük I and II and dated back to the end of the seventh millennium BC. The crest of the East Mound was believed to be ideal for recognition of the late Neolithic structures. The first seasons revealed long and complex occupation of the mound in the Hellenistic, Roman, and Byzantine periods. First two periods were represented by storage buildings made of mudbrick along with three ovens used for pottery and spindle whorls production. The excavated area was later used as a cemetery in the Byzantine Period. It contained a large number of ca. sixty complete burials plus the remains of disturbed human bone clusters.

Similarly as in the previous season, this year excavations were concentrated in northern, southern, and western part of the main trench. A three-meter-wide strip along the eastern edge of the trench was left unexcavated for the security reasons as the trench is getting very deep in this part. Moreover, this section contains very deep later deposits, which considerably destroyed earlier Neolithic layers and constructions. This season began with the exploration of the stratigraphic sequence placed directly underneath two small late Neolithic buildings (Buildings 33 and 34) excavated in the 2003 season. This year excavations comprised also exploration of difficult to define diagonally placed compact layer, which is tentatively regarded to be a fallen 'roof' of difficult to specify building. The works in the extension trench concentrated on lifting remaining elements of Roman occupational phases and a few Byzantine burials.

Late Neolithic Sequence

The last phase of Neolithic occupation of the part of the mound discovered in the 2002 season and excavated in the following year comprised clearly defined two small Late Neolithic buildings (Building 33 and 34) in the western and central part of the excavated area. Both constructions were considerably destroyed by cuts of various features dated back to all later phases of occupation in this part of the tell, especially by Hellenistic storage pits. The latter were very deep in the majority of cases, which led to a considerable destruction of the earlier Neolithic structures. Hence the recognition of layout of the Neolithic structures as well as discerning relations between them turned out to be very difficult.

Buildings 33 and 34 were placed directly on midden layers. Directly below one of them, a solid compact construction of what appears to be remains of a fallen rectangular roof of a younger Neolithic building was discovered in the 2003 season. It is about 0.17m thick and slopes down towards the east (Fig. 61). However, closer examination of this structure made this interpretation difficult to be unequivocally accepted. However, considering the structure has not yet been completely excavated, it remains to be tentatively called 'the roof' (unit 7866).

The works in the main trench focused on excavating deposits placed on top of this 'roof'. Previous season revealed three major deposits located directly underneath Buildings 33 and 34. At the top of the 'roof', there was a bricky layer created to level the surface before putting up these buildings (unit 7813). It was followed by a brown midden mixed with fragment of destroyed bricks, mortar, and plaster (units 7864, 7880, 7895). Large ashy middens were located on both sides of the bricky layer (see details in the 2003 archive report).



Figure 61: Fragment of the 'roof' of Neolithic building

Directly underneath this levelling bricky layer, there was a large and deep midden deposit units (7864), (7880), (7881) (7895). It was composed of friable, mid and light brown and mid grey mixed sandy clay loam. Unit (7880) was placed directly on the 'roof'. Directly above four corners of the fallen roof concentrations of constructional elements were located within the middens units (7881), (7882), (7886), (7894). These deposits are followed by three layers of constructional material (small fragments of mudbricks, mortar and plaster) and midden units (8991), (10909). No considerable differences between subsequent layers were observed.

The layers are considerably heterogeneous and are composed of a large number of destroyed fragments of mudbricks, mortar and painted plaster. The material is scattered randomly across the layer, albeit their small concentrations are also discernible. Remaining elements of the sequence will be excavated next year.

The next stratigraphic sequence excavated this year comprised sloping deposits placed between the above mentioned layers and double mudbrick wall located against S edge of the trench. The excavated sequence is composed of three bricky and three midden layers placed next to the other (Figs. 62 & 63). The former are deposited directly along the wall while the latter further towards a sequence of horizontally placed layers in central part of the trench. The bricky layers units (8921), (8901), (8994), (8996) are composed of highly heterogeneous material such as fragments of mudbricks, mortar and plaster.



Figure 62: A sequence of bricky and midden layers placed against Neolithic wall in south part of the trench

Interestingly, the layers contain a small number of artifacts as compared to neighbouring midden deposits. These layers were probably formed as a result of slow destruction of the wall. The sequence is younger than midden layers (see below) as they are placed on their top. A sequence of irregular midden deposits units (7872), (7871), (8922), (7898), (8904), (8995), placed next to these bricky layers, are relatively homogenous and characterised by differentiated composition of mixed ashes.

Two animal bone clusters were recorded in one of these layers. The whole sequence of bricky and midden layer have proved to be older than horizontally placed deposits on the 'roof'.

The works in the main trench comprised also excavating western section of unusually deep pit, probably Hellenistic in date (see the 2002 archive unit). The bottom of the pit was reached ca. 60 cm below the studied surface. The infill contained a large number of artifacts including pottery, obsidian, animal bones, beads, etc. Analysis of west section of the pit cut made possible to observe depositional processes taking place on the 'roof'. The stratigraphic sequence is composed of constructional layer followed by the organic-rich midden. Neither floor nor wall of the Neolithic building was found at the pit bottom and in its sections.

Approximately one-meter wide strip through the 'roof' along with the associated sequence of deposits directly underneath was cut off in its north part aimed at recognition of the whole stratigraphic sequence. The sequence between the 'roof' and the west wall of Building 34 (see the 2003 archive report) is very complex. It is composed of a number of heterogeneous midden layers of differentiated thickness. Interestingly, all of them are parallel to the 'roof' and slope down towards the east (Fig.64). This indicative of the same depositional history.



Figure 63: A sequence of bricky and midden layers placed against Neolithic wall in south part of the trench

West part of the sequence is poorly recognised as the strip was excavated arbitrarily (unit 8932). The bottom part of the strip from west side is covered by rubble composed of elements of fallen wall. It is probably associated with the wall placed directly underneath west wall of Building 34 and linked to yet unrecognised Neolithic house. Subsequent layers in the sequence, well defined thanks to opening up this strip, will be excavated in the next season.



Figure 64 A sequence of midden layers associated with the 'roof'

Byzantine & Roman Phases of Occupation

Byzantine cemetery

The works continued also in the extension trench located directly to the east of Mellaart's Area A. Works in the first season in this area concentrated on uncovering remaining part of the west section of the large Byzantine cemetery, which was identified and excavated extensively in the 2001 season. Altogether eleven Byzantine burials were identified and partly excavated. It is a much smaller number that it was expected considering the results of the 2001 season.

Further works this year involved lifting a number of Byzantine burials placed between the walls of Roman buildings. Four burials (feature F.955, (1171), (1179), (1182) (Figs. 65, 66 & 67) and three clusters of human bones (features F.888, (1169) were exposed and excavated during the season. The Byzantine people buried their dead in a complex and standardised way. The most striking is E-W alignment of all burials at this cemetery. Head is located towards the west and the face is looking towards the south-east. Cranium is therefore lying on its right side. Arms are usually straight in line with the body or slightly bent. Burial superstructure was in some cases highly elaborated (feature F.1169). It was composed of carefully prepared cut and a marker made of diagonally placed solid brown mudbricks. Results of this investigation may imply that we have reached western edge of the burial ground.



Figure: 65 Byzantine burial of an adult individual



Figure: 66 Byzantine burial of an adult individual



Figure: 67 Byzantine burial of a juvenile individual

Roman production facilities

Further works in an extension trench focused on remains of the Roman production facilities including two kilns, one room with solid floor and number of mudbrick walls. The results of this year season made it possible to better understand spatial and temporal relation between the buildings and off building facilities identified for the first time during first two seasons at the site.

Work in the north section of the extension comprised west part of Building 30. Its east part was excavated in the 2001 and 2002 seasons. It comprised a large storage room. A cellar having about 1 meter diameter and 0.5m depth was located against its north wall. An area just outside north wall of the Building 30 was probably used for pottery and spindle whorls storage and manufacture. The circular kiln (feature F.966) was found very close to its north wall. An array of four rectangular kilns, used for spindle whorl and pots production, was built against east part of the north wall of Building 30 (feature F.991) (Czerniak, Marciniak, & Pyzel 2002). Well preserved bases of the house walls rendered recognition of the house construction possible. West wall of the this part of the Building was situated directly below the edge of the main trench and was is clearly visible in its west cross section.

The wall was excavated in the 2004 season. Further works led to discovery of two walls (south wall - unit (7830); north wall – unit (8987)) parallel to the latter, which defined yet another room placed westwards to a large storage room excavated in 2001. This indicates that the Building 30 has another room and thus it is larger than previously estimated. The walls were made of mudbricks of different size. The wall dividing two rooms (unit (6952)) and fragment of north wall (unit (8987)) was placed on solid stony foundations (unit (10956)). A relatively big mating layer was identified inside west room of Building 30. It is composed of a number of small striations. It was placed on a solid mid grey floor (unit (8986)) and partly on three large stones.

An area north of west room of Building 30 was relatively difficult to define as it was largely destroyed by later features. Yet unspecified kiln was placed in its central part. It is adjacent to the kiln with a domed superstructure made up of many layers of clay placed directly to the north of east room of Building 30 (Czerniak, Marciniak, & Pyzel 2002). Remaining parts of the kiln will be excavated in the 2005 season.

In the north – west corner of the extension trench, a new room of the Late Roman house was identified on the basis of its shape and existence of clay floor unit (10988) (Fig. 68). It was placed directly on top of a room, probably late Neolithic in date, composed of lower parts of walls with plaster, units (7833), (10970), (10981), (10984), (10983). Accordingly, the trench was extended one meter to the west in the part of the area. As a preparation for the foundation of the shelter, to be put up at the end of the season, one meter wide strip was cut off along west and north edge of the trench. It was aimed at levelling the surface in this area with that in the main trench. Remains of yet another house was revealed (older than the one mentioned above) in the form of plastered floors, units (11541), (11542), plastered bench (11529) and two walls, units (11538), (11543). A large number of late Neolithic pottery was also excavated (Fig. 69).



Figure 68: Fragment of clay floor of the Late Roman room



Figure 69: Selection of late Neolithic pottery

South part of the extension trench comprised excavating elements of west part of Building 31, which was identified in SW part of the main trench. It consisted of a storage area and was used as a storage place, which can be inferred on the basis of a large number of potsherd and grinding stones. North wall of the Building 31 had a relatively light wooden construction. Its south wall is difficult to define as it was considerably destroyed by later features. It probably had a small niche in its SW corner,

but its south wall is located outside of the excavated area (Czerniak, Marciniak, & Pyzel 2002).

Detailed recognition of this area in the extension trench is particularly complicated due to a number of intertwined postdepositional processes. Excavated features comprised remains of the production facilities including one kiln, one room with solid floor and number of mudbrick walls. Constructional elements of west part of Building 31 comprised fragment of wall unit (7857) consisted of two layers of mudbricks. Interesting feature is a compact floor, units (10926) & (10927) with complex of walls, units (10924), (10926), and (10955). Relationships between these units are yet to be discovered. This may be indicative of yet another room. Other features comprised rectangular kiln (feature F.1176), similar to the one found in the main trench unit (991). It is largely destroyed and only its northern wall is preserved in situ. It appears to be a sectional superstructure made of interlinking mudbricks. Remains of rakeout area were placed from the south side. A relatively big mating layer was also identified in SW corner of the extension trench and fragment of Neolithic seal stamp was found in the bottom layer of large late Roman pit (feature F.1175).

The 2004 season revealed extension of a flat and well kept passage between Buildings 30 and 31, unit (7030). Its west part comprised a layer of limestone, unit (7889). We speculated that this might have been a paved area considering its regular rectangular shape. A vast majority of stones is small and irregular, some of them with traces of being worked. We argue that this unit is an entrance to the passage and Buildings 30 and 31. Interestingly enough, no stone layer was discovered in a narrow passage separating these buildings in the main trench (Czerniak, Marciniak, & Pyzel 2002)

The aim of the next year season is to continue excavating the roof sequence in the main trench. It is aimed at revising and reconsidering stratigraphic relationships between midden and constructional layers to be able to understand depositional history of the sequence. Additionally, it is planned to recognise and then excavate the first Neolithic level in the extension trench, in particular Neolithic building identified in NW part of the extension trench. The works will also focused on remaining elements of the Roman occupation phase.