

at risk to fire?

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### **TP Area - Lech Czerniak, Arkadiusz Marciniak**

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### **Abstract**

One of the major objectives of this season was to correlate walls and buildings in the TP area with those of Mellaart Area A from the 1960s to be able to relate excavated Neolithic structures to the Mellaart chronological scheme. This goal was satisfactorily achieved by analysing a sequence of mudbrick walls in the west sector of the excavated area. These were further identified on the Mellaart plans from his Anatolian Studies report published in 1962 as originating from Levels I and II. Consequently, after careful stratigraphic analysis of all deposits in the excavated trench, it proved possible to distinguish three late Neolithic phases corresponding to Levels 0, I, and II according to the Mellaart scheme. All structures dated to Level 0 in the TP area were excavated in the 2005 season.

This season also involved recognising and lifting the remaining elements of the late occupation phases of this part of the mound. These comprised five Byzantine burials (one adult and four infants), localised in the northern part of excavated area, in addition to twenty pits of different function including large storage pits as well as postholes and other unspecified features, most of them probably Hellenistic or Roman in date. A majority of them were discovered in the southern and western sections of the trench.

### **Özet**

Bu sezonun en önemli objektiflerinden birisi, Mellart'ın 1960 lı yıllardaki kazılarında bulunduğu duvar ve binaları, TP'de bulunan duvar ve binalarla bağdaştırarak,

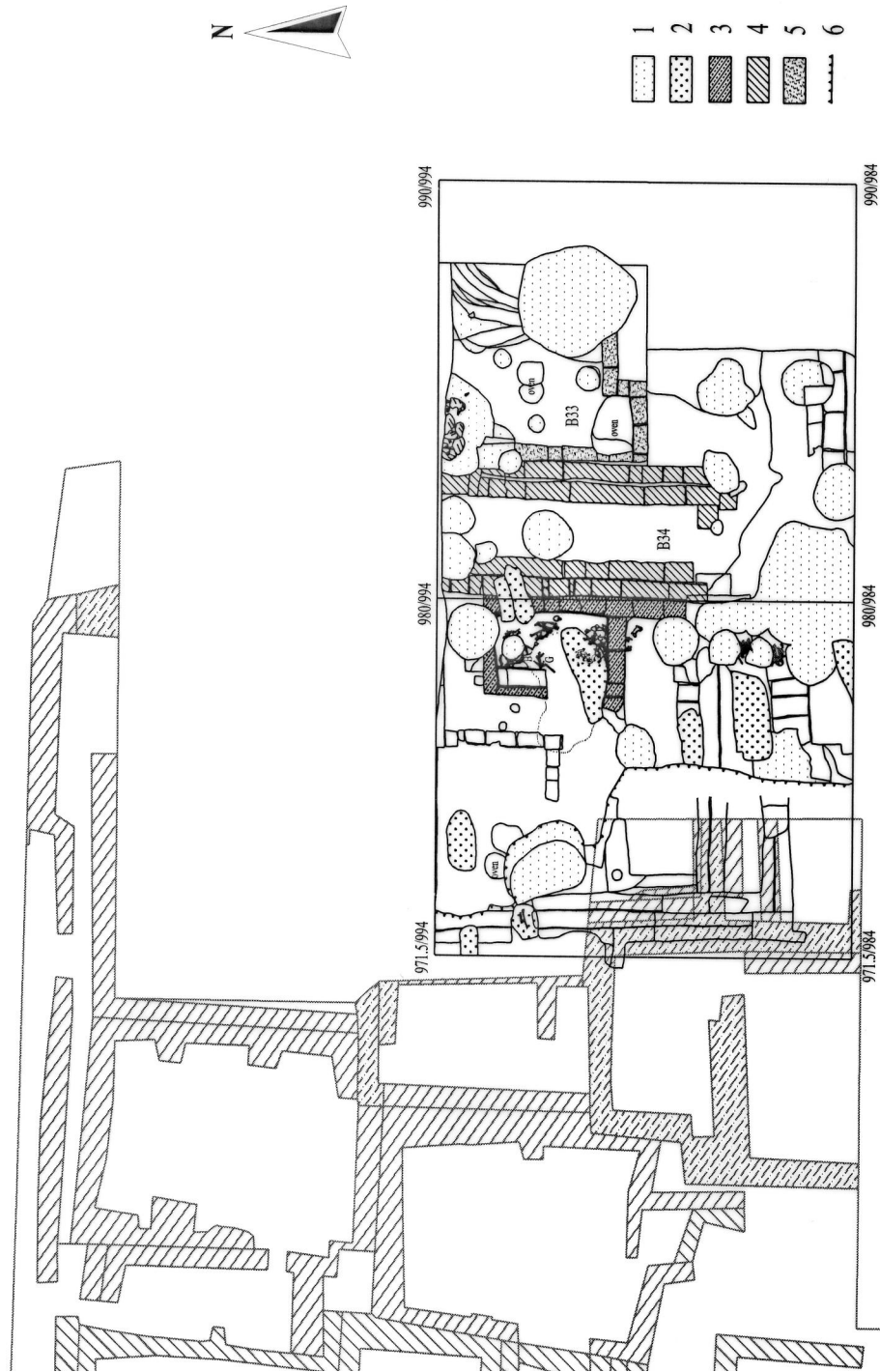


Figure 55. Plan of Levels I & II in TP Area and 1960s Area A.

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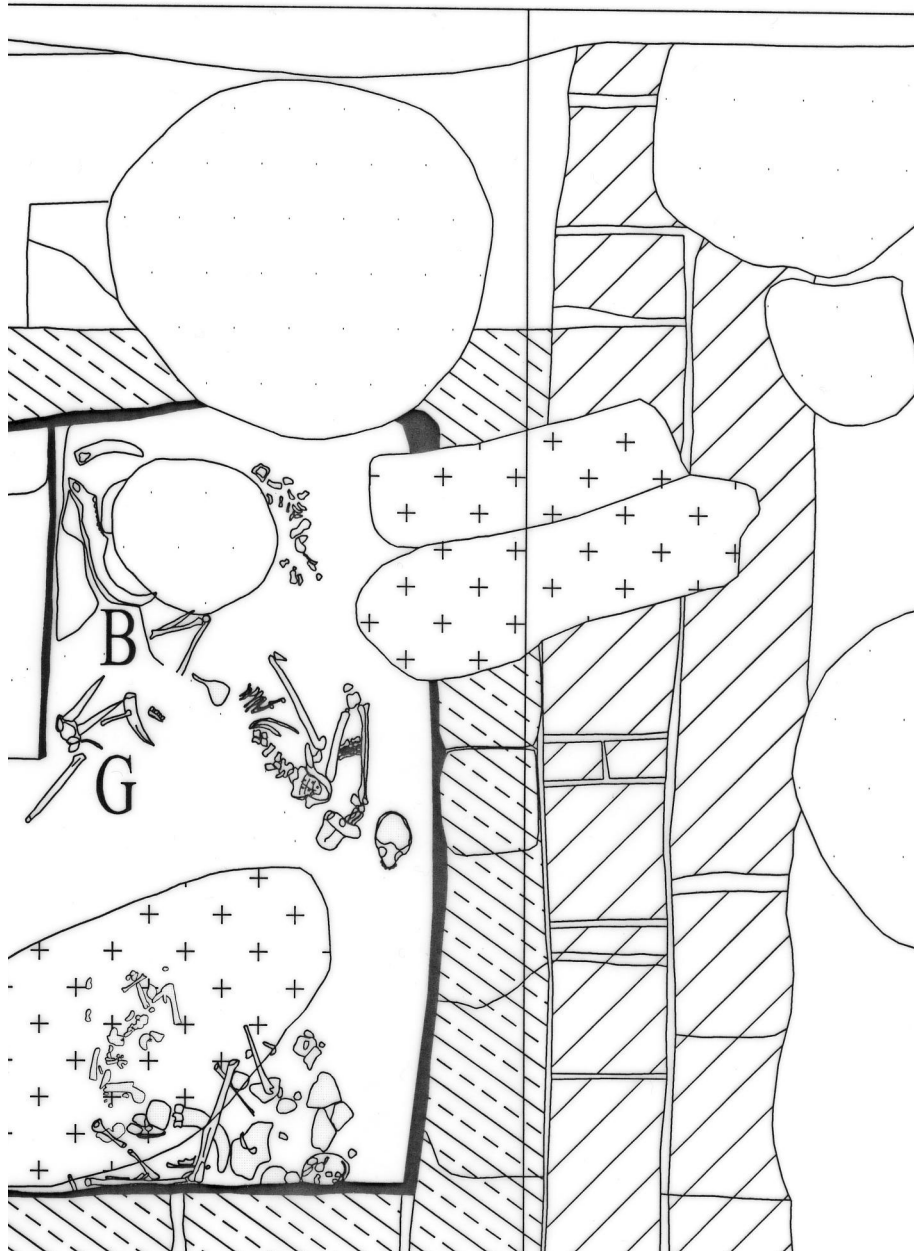


Figure 56. Plan of Space 248.

kazılmış olan Neolitik yapıları Mellart'ın tarihsel şemasına uydurmaktır. Bu amaç kazı alanının batı kesimindeki kerpiç duvarları analize ederek gerçekleştirildi. Bu duvarlar, Mellart'ın 1962'de Anadolu Çalışmaları'nda basılan raporundaki planlarla karşılaştırılarak, Tabaka I ve II'ye ait oldukları belirlendi. Kazılan alandaki tüm birikintilerin stratigrafik analizi sonucunda, Mellart'ın şemasına göre Tabaka 0,I ve II'ye tarihlenen üç geç Neolitik evrenin ayrıştırılması yapılabildi. TP alanında Tabaka 0'a tarihlenen tüm binalar 2005 sezonunda kazıldı.

Ayrıca bu sezon höyüğün bu kısmındaki geç yerleşim evrelerinin geriye kalan kısımlarının belirlenip kaldırılması çalışmaları da yapıldı. Bu kısımlar, kazı alanının kuzeyinde yoğunlaşan 5 adet Bizans gömüsü (1 yetişkin, 4 çocuk), bir çoğu Hellenistik veya Roma dönemine tarihlenen belirsiz nitelikler, direk çukurları ve saklama çukurları gibi farklı gereksinimlere hizmet eden 20 çukurdan oluşmaktadır. Bunların büyük bir çoğu kazı alanının güney ve batı kısımlarında ortaya çıktı.

## **Introduction**

The TP team (Team Poznan) team made of twelve archaeologists and students of the Institute of Prehistory, University of Poznan and the Institute of Archaeology and Ethnology, Polish Academy of Sciences in Poznan conducted its fifth field season at Çatalhöyük between July 7 and August 3, 2005. The excavations this year 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.

One of the major objectives of this season was to correlate walls and buildings in the TP area with those of Mellaart Area A from the 1960s to be able to relate excavated Neolithic structures to the Mellaart chronological scheme. This goal was satisfactorily achieved by analysing a sequence of mudbrick walls in the west sector of the excavated area. These were further identified on the Mellaart plans from his Anatolian Studies report published in 1962 as originating from Levels I and II (Fig. 55). Consequently, after careful stratigraphic analysis of all deposits in the excavated trench, it proved possible to distinguish three late Neolithic phases corresponding to Levels 0, I, and II according to the Mellaart scheme. All structures dated to Level 0 in the TP area were excavated in the 2005 season.

This season also involved recognising and lifting the remaining elements of the late occupation phases of this part of the mound. These comprised five Byzantine burials (one adult and four infants), localised in the northern part of excavated area, in addition to twenty pits of different function including large storage pits as well as postholes and other unspecified features, most of them probably Hellenistic or Roman in date. A majority of them were discovered in the southern and western sections of the trench.

## **Late Neolithic sequence**

### **Level 0**

A major discovery from this phase was a room recorded as Space 248 (Fig. 56). It is a rectangular structure 2.7 m long and 1.7 m wide. This room was probably used as a burial chamber as indicated by remains of at least six individuals (two infants and 4 adults) in its south part and three to four individuals (all adults) in the north (Fig. 57). The south part of the space contained mostly disarticulated remains, predominantly skulls, while the north part was dominated by articulated skeletons. All these individuals or their remains were interred on the floor and then deliberately plastered. The bodies were buried in at least two episodes/phases, each of them marked by a layer of silty plaster.

The Space 248 had four relatively well preserved mudbrick walls (units 7827, 10918, 10982, 10985). All of them were plastered. Preserved remains of the walls comprised two to three courses of mudbricks. The walls were made of dark brown bricks of good quality, especially in its south part. The walls were placed on a levelled infill/dump layer. The east wall extended beyond a line defined by the south wall, which may indicate the existence of yet another room/space from this phase south of the space. However, no other remains were discovered which may

indicate a considerable destruction due to unspecified post-Level 0 construction activities, assuming this tentative interpretation is plausible.

A well preserved plastered bench (11573) was placed against the western wall of the space. It was constructed of three courses of horizontally placed greyish mudbricks (Fig. 58). Bricks were made of coarse silt and silty clay. Microstratigraphic analysis of this part of Space 248 indicates that the bench is younger than the space itself and was a later addition during one of the episodes of its rebuilding. The outer surface of the bench was plastered. A small bin (?) (11574) was placed in the northern part of the bench. It was probably plastered.



*Figure 57. Space 248 looking S.*

A narrow entrance to the space was located against the north section of the west wall. Due to later destruction, its overall shape and size are impossible to define. A solid floor (11752) of Space 248 was preserved next to the entrance and in its central part. It was pretty homogenous and made of compact greyish silty sand. Unfortunately, its state of preservation was poor. The floor was built on a sequence of two deposits – think silty/white make up layer (12234) followed by a bricky make-up layer. The latter layer was probably deposited after abandonment of the older floor from phase or Level I. The floor from Level I, placed directly underneath Space 248, is a solid grey and very homogenous layer constructed on white pebble make up layer. It will be excavated in the 2006 excavation season.

A cluster of animal and human bones comprising goat horn corn, cattle horn core, sheep/goat tibia and human femur (?) as well as a few sheep/goat mandibles were placed directly underneath the floor of Space 248 (12239, 12240 & 12263). Lumps of plaster were also found in its infill, which is indicative of a practice of plastering similar to the one discovered within Space 248. The deliberate character of this cluster and its location indicate that it may have been a foundation deposit. Individual elements of this cluster may have been dismantled from other locations and placed deliberately here. This cluster belongs to the earliest phase of Space 248.

The most important element in the north section of the space is an installation composed of a cattle skull (11562) and human skeleton (skull 11566) (Fig. 59). Both elements were placed directly on the floor of the space in some sort of deliberate act. It was only after this deposition took place that the adjacent bench (11573) was plastered,

probably together with this installation. The cattle skull is smallish with horns, but within the female aurochs range.



Figure 58. Bench (11573) in Space 248.

This partial skeleton of a young female (?) (11566) was largely disturbed by the post-Neolithic pit (F. 1903). The body was flexed on its right side, oriented with head to the west. The skull abutted a bucranium (11562) which was against the bench attached to the west wall of the space. Most of the skeleton had been removed when the pit was dug. The head, the spine, pelvis and feet were the only elements present as they were outside the pit. The spine and pelvis occurred in the northern section of the pit and connected with the head and feet clearly showing that this was the same individual.

It is not clear whether the bucranium was in the burial, the burial cut through a pre-existing deposit with the bucranium, or both were placed in during the filling process. If it was deliberately placed with the skull, it is a quite different use of bucrania from earlier levels. It seems hard to imagine that such a precise placement with respect to the bucranium was accidental.

The entire Space 248 had multiple individuals, all incomplete. The majority of individuals (perhaps all) appear to be female and children. It is highly probably that these skeletons were between layers of plaster. A large number of disarticulated human remains were recorded as X-finds within the upper layer of the space infill (10986).

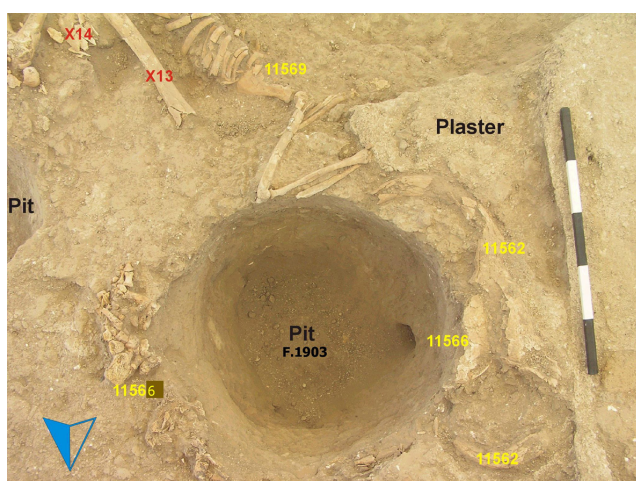


Figure 59. Cattle bucranium (11562) and human skeleton skull (11566) in Space 248..

The most completely preserved skeleton was recorded as (11569) in the central part of Space 248 (see Fig. 59 & 60). The left side of the body was missing. The body was on its stomach with the right arm extended over the head. The right lower arm was bent with the right hand going under the plaster. The burial was disturbed by the excavation of a Byzantine burial pit (F. 1921). It is possible that bones of this skeleton were disturbed after their deposition.

Another skeleton (11571) was represented by the left femur and tibia and it was placed against the south wall of the space (Fig. 61). The femur is noteworthy as it had a healed fracture with a large

bony callus in its mid-shaft. This was probably a result of spiral fracture and the nature of the healing suggests this injury occurred when this individual was adolescent. The disarticulated skeleton of an infant was found in SE corner of Space 248, directly after the proximal tibia of skeleton (11571). A string of beads was found near this concentration of bones but was not found in direct association with this individual. A cattle horn core (11704) was also found in the southern part of Space 248 in association with disarticulated human remains (see Fig. 57).

Bucrania and disarticulated human bones in Space 248 were deposited in most instances in two layers, each covered by a thin white plaster (Fig. 62). It is indicative of a deliberate act of sealing off subsequent deposits.

Floor deposits (10986 & 11740) in Space 248, stratigraphically belonging to Level 0, were composed of light & mid grey silty clay with a small number of constructional materials and lumps of plaster. Animal bone deposits in (11740) contained undiagnostic remains of small ruminants, mostly sheep size bones. A small part of the bones (a few long bone shaft splinters, mostly sheep-size) were burnt at low temperatures. Generally speaking, the bone deposits in Space 248 were fairly processed and re-deposited. A number of fresh fragments of lithics along with uncharacteristic palaeobotanical material containing fragments of dung and food processing weeds and chuff were also discovered.



Figure 60. Details of human remains deposition in (11569), Space 248.

Space 248 was placed directly above an earlier platform, later intentionally truncated, from Level I (see below), which itself comprised the NE part of an older, yet unexcavated, building from that phase. Only a small fragment of this platform was preserved. The presence of the burial chamber, undoubtedly of considerable significance, in the place of the NE bench of an older building, may indicate that the chamber retained a special importance inscribed to this space from the earlier phase. A significance and meaning for the NE platform of an older building has certainly been remembered but manifested and articulated in a different way in this last episode of the Neolithic occupation of the mound. It facilitated a creation of this burial chamber, recorded as Space 248, which is totally different from earlier levels.



Figure 61. Fragments of skeleton (11571) in southern part of Space 248.

Unfortunately, Space 248 was badly truncated by later pits (especially Byzantine burial – F. 1921) from different periods making a detailed observation of its overall layout impossible.

### Level I

Other discoveries of the 2005 season in the TP Area comprised elements of a late Neolithic building in the west section of the excavated area dated back to Level I. The building was rebuilt at least twice as indicated by two types of floor as well as a number of partition walls. Its overall shape and size have not yet been defined. The two-phased floor was built up on a white pebbly make-up layer, which is the first discovery of this kind at Çatalhöyük (Fig. 63).

Some elements of the building were excavated this year. These included a largely truncated oven with adjacent rake out area (F. 1918) located in the southern part of the solid floor (12244). It had probably a domed superstructure as indicated by fragments of its construction. The rake out area was composed of ashy sand. The oven was badly destroyed by the Byzantine burial (F.1921) making impossible a detailed recognition of its construction. A large pot from this phase was found in a pit dug into the floor in its northern part.



Figure 62. White plaster on human remains in Space 248.

A sequence of deposits on this building's floor in its eastern section (12244) was also excavated. An infill/dump deposit between the wall directly underneath the bench of Space 248 (11792) and a partition wall in the central part of the building (11715), both of them sitting directly on this floor, was recorded as (12219). It contained a rich lithics assemblage typical for infill/dump deposits. The material was quite fresh with only a few dull/scratched pieces. It is one of the richest deposits in terms of its relative quantities of material in the TP area. It was considerably varied and contained a wider range of debitage including a lot of prismatic blade end-products with the presence of cores. Floors of this building were not excavated in the 2005 season.

Two burials from this phase were found in the south part of the excavated area (Fig. 64). Both burials were badly truncated by later pits making analysis of their context virtually impossible. F. 911 was a largely destroyed burial that sat atop a long east–north wall, probably dated back to the Neolithic Level II. The burial of one adult individual has been disturbed such that its lower body was missing. It has been truncated by two post-Neolithic pits (F. 1175 & F. 1909). As a result of these destructions, no burial cut was distinguished. The body was so tightly flexed that the knee was at the forehead. The bone would probably have been disarticulated (at least in part) to achieve this kind of flexure. The right side of the body was more clustered than the left.



Figure 63. White pebbly make up layer under floor from Phase 1.



F. 912 was a largely destroyed human burial found at the base of a large pit (F. 1909). The bones were the disturbed remains of two Neolithic individuals. There was a small gap between the two individuals although the burial fill appeared the same. Several body parts were in articulation (e.g. shoulder, hand, foot, knee), which indicates that the body was at least partially fleshed when it was placed here, although both bodies were disarticulated in terms of their anatomical position. The remains may have been removed from another location and placed here. The skeletons were also truncated by post-Neolithic activities by the excavation of pits to the north, south, and east of the skeleton.



Figure 64. Human burials from Phase I (F.911 & F. 912)

A cluster of human bones (F. 912) is younger than a homogenous layer placed directly underneath, which is composed of mid brown and light grey. Stratigraphic analysis of this section of the excavated area indicates that both burials are contemporary and are certainly younger than Level II. A position of these burials in relation to other elements of architecture, in particular the walls, may indicate extramural burials from Level I. Fragments of broken mudbricks in the infill of (11767) above F. 911, resulting from destruction of wall (11503), probably of Level I, may imply that the burial is older than both (11767) and this adjacent wall.

A sequence of infill deposits south of the southern wall of Space 248 was also excavated. It is younger than Level I and it may have been deposited either in the period contemporary with Space 248 or after its abandonment. (11772) & (12200) were typical bricky infill/dump layers deposited directly south of the south wall of Space 248. They had a lot of prismatic blade end-products. Faunal material was pretty worn with little integrity, mostly sheep/goat with some dog and cattle size bones. The adjacent unit (12205) was quite similar, however it had a higher proportion of blade material than (12200). It was also characterised by very low density of seeds and had no chaff and food processing material. It was more like midden crop processing waste. Animal bones from this deposit look worn and for the most part were slightly weathered, however they were not highly reworked/redeposited since there were some relatively delicate pieces present (e.g. a large cattle sacrum fragment). The bone deposit included mostly sheep/goat bones, with some cattle and a little bit of dog and mustelid. **There was a moderate amount of burning bone** in mostly low-temperature and a fair amount of digestion and gnawing.

## Level II

The season also led to the recognition of a number of solid mudbrick walls from Level II. They were found in the west and south part of the excavated area as well as at the bottom of cuts of older pits. The layout of these walls may tentatively suggest a size of building as being 9 meters long and 7 meters wide. The most straightforward stratigraphy was in the west section of the excavated trench, directly between the TP Area and the Mellaart trenches from the 1960s

(Fig. 65 & see also Fig. 55). Two walls from Level II, recorded as (12229) and (12230), were later replaced by a wall recorded as (11583) from Level I. No elements from this phase were excavated in this season.



*Figure 65. Mudbrick walls from Phase I & II between TP Area and 1960s Area A.*

## **Hellenistic/Roman and Byzantine phases of occupation**

### **Hellenistic/Roman pits**

The 2005 season brought about excavation of twenty pits of different function including large storage pits as well as postholes and other unspecified features, most of them probably Hellenistic or Roman in date. They were located almost in all parts of the trench. However, they are mainly concentrated in its west and south sections. Twelve pits were regularly and irregularly oval in shape and had length varying from 1.00 to 2.10 m and width from 0.24 to 1.25 (F. 1186, 1189, 1193, 1195, 1904, 1909, 1910, 1920, 1925, 1927, 1928, 1929). Both their cuts and infills were usually easily distinguishable. In the majority of cases they were relatively deep (up to 0.85 m), which resulted in a considerable destruction of earlier Neolithic structures. F. 1909 was the largest pit excavated in this season. It was located in the south part of the excavated area. Its base was made of six small circular and relatively shallow flat-bottomed pits. They may have been used to place large vessels such as pithos or jars. It had the following dimensions: 1,50 x 0.70 x 0.63 m. Another deep pit recorded as F. 1910 was placed next to F. 1909. It was trapezoid in section with c. 1,3 m in diameter at the bottom and c. 110 cm in diameter at the top. It had the following dimensions: 1.05 x 0.85 x 0.78 m.

Another category of pits comprised circular features (F. 1194, 1196, 1197, 1900, 1903, 1922 and 1924). They were regular and irregular in shape and had diameters ranging from 0.60m to 0.80 m. They were shallower than large storage pits.

One of the pits recorded as F.1923 was certainly Byzantine or post-Byzantine in date as it cut through a large Byzantine burial (F. 1921). It was a large feature of the following dimensions: 3,00 x 1,70 x 0.72 m.

### **Byzantine cemetery**

The work in the 2005 season concentrated also on uncovering remaining parts of the west section of the large Byzantine cemetery, which was identified and excavated extensively in the 2001 season. Altogether five Byzantine



Figure 66. Byzantine burial F.1097.

The western part of the burial was probably discovered and excavated in the 1960s campaign. The discovered elements of the skeleton comprised foot and leg bones. The burial cut was largely destroyed. F. 1919 was a child burial in a relatively shallow burial cut oriented E-W with the head facing west. The human remains were well preserved lying supine with arms extended to the side and legs extended. F. 1921 was the only Byzantine adult burial excavated this season with bones lying supine with arms extended to side and legs extended. The upper extremity remained slightly disturbed and positioned away from the body. The burial cut was substantial and truncated a Neolithic wall and floor deposits of Space 248.

### Conclusions

The season resulted in a complete recognition and excavation of this youngest phase of the Neolithic occupation of the mound. The work in the next season will focus on excavating Level I and defining and excavating various architectural elements from Level II. It will aim at analysing and reconsidering stratigraphic relationships between midden deposits and the roof excavated in the 2004 season and architectural elements discovered this year in order to understand the complexity of the late Neolithic sequence in this part of the mound (Fig. 67).

burials were identified and excavated (four infants and one adult).

F. 1097 was a child burial with complete preservation. The skeleton was lying E-W with head facing west. Remains were supine and extended full length with left hand at the hip and right arm at the side. The burial cut had truncated the Neolithic floor (Fig. 66). F. 1908 was a partial Byzantine child burial truncated by Mellaart's trench in the 1960s. Only the lower extremities were preserved. The burial was in a defined burial cut with the skeleton oriented E-W with head facing west. The cut was made through two Neolithic walls from Levels I & II recorded as (11583) and (11229). F. 1915 was a burial of an infant dug into one of the Neolithic walls from Level II (12229) defining the western edge of the excavated area.

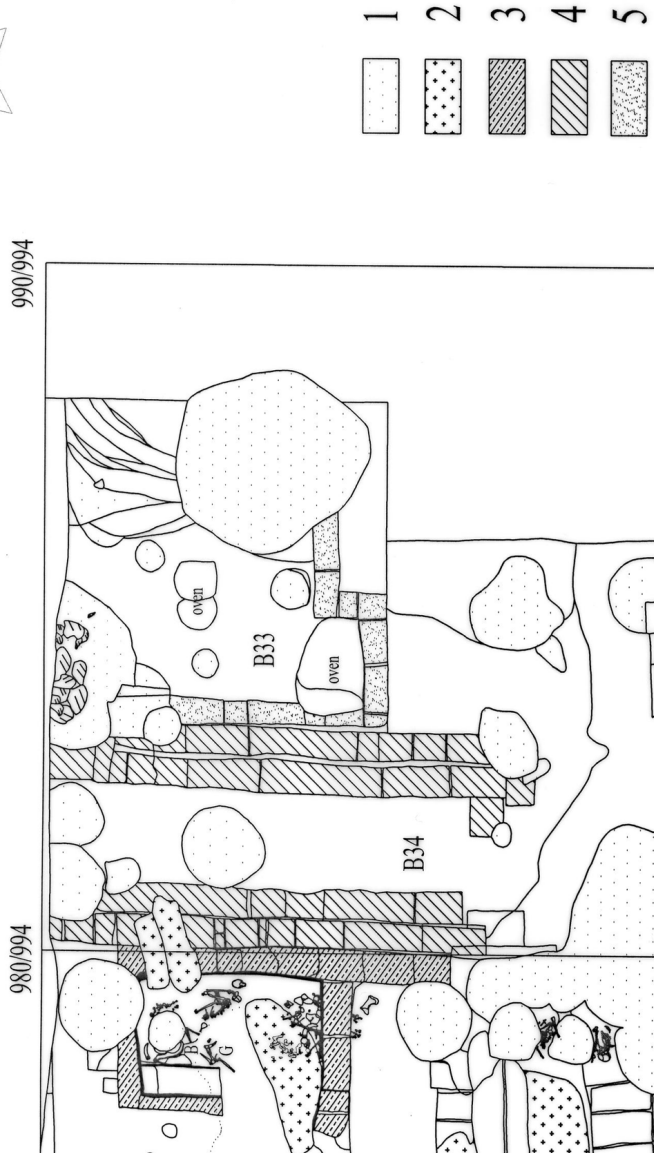


Figure 67. Neolithic deposits in TP Area.