

Chapter 4

Excavations in the TPC Area

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Introduction

The works in the TPC Area commenced in the 2016 excavation season were carried out in Trenches 3 and 4 located directly east of the South Shelter (Fig. 1). Trench 3 is located in the southern part of TPC Area. It is quadrilateral in shape with the southern and eastern edges being 10m long and the northern edge measuring 6m in length. Trench 4, measuring $c.8 \times 6$ m, is located between Trench 3 in the south and Trenches 1 and 2 in the north. Trenches 1 and 2 were not excavated in the 2016 season. Trench 1 is 5×5 m is located directly to the south of Mellaart Area A. Trench 2 is directly south of Trench 1 and its overall dimensions are 5×6 m. Four excavation seasons have been carried out to date in these four new trenches.



Figure 1. TPC Area in relation to other excavated areas.

One of the main goals of work in the TPC Area is to link the stratigraphy of the TP sequence, excavated between 2001 and 2008, with the stratigraphy of the South Area. It further aims to recognize 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, Level South T) and the beginning of the TP sequence (Building 81, Level TP M) (see more Marciniak 2015; Marciniak *et al.* 2012), as well as to overlap with the uppermost levels in the South Area occupation sequence and the lowest parts of the TP Area sequence.

The excavations carried out in the past four seasons have 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, Space 520) in Trench 3 have been unearthed. The works in Trench 4 conducted to date were concentrated upon post-Neolithic occupation phases. To date, only unspecified remains of Neolithic architecture have been revealed (Filipowicz *et al.* 2014; Marciniak *et al.* 2015).

Excavations in Trench 4

The walls of a large Neolithic structure labelled B.150 were discovered in the 2015 season (Marciniak *et al.* 2015). The work carried out this year made it possible to reveal some details of its construction and subsequent intense occupation and periodic reconstruction. In particular, major elements of the final phase of the building were revealed and excavated (Space 594) (Fig. 2). It consisted of a solid floor (F.8276) in its central part and a sequence of in-built structures including four platforms against the eastern wall of the building and three platforms in its southern and central area. Neither floor nor any kind of in-built structure representing the original construction of the building and its use were reached this year. Hence, an outline of the house history presented below is incomplete and the interpretations provided are preliminary.

Building 150 was most likely used for a long time. It has been significantly reconstructed and rebuilt at least three times, as indicated by a sequence of floor deposits, revealed in the section of a large Hellenistic pit in the southern part of the building, along with corresponding platforms and fire installations.

The last phase of B.150 (Space 594) is recognized by a clearly distinguished and well-preserved dirty floor. The floor (F.8276) is made of a sequence of three distinct deposits (31858), (20729) and (31849), respectively. Each of them had a similar texture and was composed of a number of superimposed striations of grey plaster and very thin layers of makeup. This is indicative of an intense use of the floor and its subsequent numerous reconstructions. The southern part of the floor was partly placed beneath wall F.3852 of later B.152, constructed after the abandonment of B.150 (see below). The floor was very clean and only a very small number of animal bones, sherds and obsidian was found. A small fire spot (F.8290), used in two distinct phases of the floor use, was located in the northern part of the building. It is a light fire installation with no superstructure of any kind. Interestingly, a fire installation was placed directly beneath a similar fire spot from the room fill.

A sequence of superimposed fire installations, one fire spot and three ovens, built on a distinct rectangular platform (F.3873) in the southern part of the building, was revealed. The platform was constructed against some kind of earlier largely destroyed platform from the preceding occupational phase, which itself was most likely built against the southern wall of the building. The platform F.3873 was constructed against another platform located directly to the west (F.8284). It was long in use and served as a place for numerous fire installations built one on top of the other. The



Figure 2. B.150, Sp.594: An orthophoto of the final occupational phase, Trench 4.

most substantial of them was a large oven F.8278 (Fig. 3). This is a regular, squared structure with a distinct floor and solid superstructure made of walls preserved to the height of 20cm.

One of the most interesting discoveries in the 2016 excavation season was a complete ceramic vessel (Fig. 4). Its stratigraphic position is indicative of its deliberate deposition in relation to one of the reconstructions of the southern platforms in B.150. It was placed directly north of a large oven belonging to an earlier occupation phase of B.150 (Sp.612) and deliberately deposited right beneath the northern edge of one of the later platforms (F.3873), shortly before its construction. The pot was placed in a circular and regular pit (F.3850), most likely deliberately prepared for this purpose. It was dug onto the earlier floor of B.150 (Sp.612). The full extent of this oven and its corresponding floor were not completely exposed during the 2016 season.

Another important architectural feature is a sequence of two platforms located in the central and southern area of Sp.594. The earliest one, F.8284 (Fig. 5), is rectangular in shape and was built against an earlier platform, which itself is located directly against the southern wall of B.150. A large platform (F.8279) from the same chronological horizon was built further to the North in central part of Sp.594. It was a very fine construction built with care and precision. The platform was



Figure 3. Space 594: oven (F.8278), Trench 4.



Figure 4. Space 612: complete vessel (F.3850), Trench 4.

intensively used, as indicated by numerous reconstructions and enlargements. It involved adding outer facings to its eastern, northern and western sides. As a result of this reconstruction, the platform was enlarged towards the north. The platform was most likely built right after the construction of the latest floor (F.8276).



Figure 5. Space 594: platform (F.8284), Trench 4.

The most distinctive element of the last phase of B.150 is a sequence of four platforms and three benches built against eastern wall of the building. The sequence is as follows, as seen from the northeast to the southeast corner of the building: (i) platform: F.3857; (ii) bench: F.8298; (iii) platform: F.8289; (iv) bench: F.8299; (v) platform: F.3855; (vi) bench: F.3859; and (vii) platform: F.8275 (Fig. 6).

Out of this sequence of platforms and benches, only a centrally placed platform (F.3855) was excavated this year. One surface of the platform (20737) consisted of a c.3cm thick layer of white homogenous plaster composed of numerous striations. It was followed by a very distinct, homogenous layer of loose light beige sand, most likely deliberately selected from around the site. It was then followed by a layer of dark brown sand with organic inclusions (20736) placed directly on the top of the earlier platform. Two burial pits were dug into this central part of the platform (F.3868 and F.3867) (Fig. 7). They were not contemporaneous, as the latter was truncated by the former. Neither of the burials has been completely unearthed this season, hence they cannot be described at this point. Both burials may have been reopened a number of times, as indicated by numerous carefully plastered layers in their fills. Interestingly, numerous loose human bones and teeth were found in the fills of both burial pits.



Figure 6. Space 594: platform: F. 3857; bench: F. 8298; platform: F. 8289; bench: F. 8299; and platform: F. 3855, Trench 4.



Figure 7. Space 594, platform F. 3855: burial pits F.3868 and F.3867, Trench 4.

In the northeast part of the makeup layer (20736) of platform F.3855, right beneath its plastered surface (20737), next to the eastern wall of B.150, and right by the northern edge of burial F.3867 two complete anthropomorphic figures were found (Fig. 8 - and see Figurines chapter for further details). Their deposition is most likely associated with the platform construction and it may have been contemporaneous with the closing of the adjacent burial (F.3867). They have been deliberately placed on the surface of an earlier platform and then covered by two layers of makeup: a homogenous light brown sandy layer followed by equally homogenous dark grey layer. They were then plastered over by a 3cm thick layer of white plaster. The large standing female figurine (20736.x1) was made of marble. It survives complete and it is c.17cm long, 11cm wide and 9cm thick. It weighs more than 1kg (see Figurines chapter Figs. 2-3 and 8-10). The hands are folded under the breasts, which are splayed to the side. Other features depicted include the eyes, mouth, chin, neck fat, the back of the head roll. The hands and feet are disproportionately small compared to the rest of the body. The second figurine, 20736.x3 was deposited immediately north of the larger figurine and was placed inside a lump of marl, itself dumped into the makeup layer. Near the head of that figurine a piece of galena and two blue beads were found. It is c.7cm long, 4cm wide and weighs around 55g. This a pale yellow standing female figurine carved from limestone (see Figurines chapter Figs. 6-7 and 11-15). The figurine has an elongated face with finely modeled face with eyes, nose, mouth and ears rendered in a realistic way. Two perforations are placed on top of the head. Its hands are placed on the breasts and the legs are joined.



Figure 8. Space 594, platform F.3855; depositional context of marble figurine (20736.x1), Trench 4.

Building 150 is the earliest building in this part of the TPC Area. It is one of the largest houses found on the summit of the East Mound in the TP and TPC Areas. Based on its stratigraphic position and the character of its construction, the building can be tentatively dated to Level TP-M, which is

contemporaneous to Level III/IV in the Mellaart phasing scheme. This level seems to represent the final phase of the classic Çatalhöyük occupation. The building appears to be contemporary with B.121 in TPC Trench 2 (Marciniak *et al.* 2013) and most likely B.122 from Trench 3.

Following the abandonment of B.150, as marked by a number of fill deposits (Sp.493), another Neolithic building (B.152) was constructed. Some elements of this structure were partly unearthed in the 2015 year (see Marciniak 2015; Marciniak *et al.* 2015). The excavations of B.152 were completed this year. The building can only be partially reconstructed, as its southern part is outside the limit of excavation. Its northern part is made of three small rooms serving unspecified purposes. Neither floor nor any inbuilt structures have been recorded. The relationship between these two superimposed dwelling structures has been established. They mark a major reconstruction of earlier B.150 and the beginning of a new type of dwelling structure characteristic of the latest Neolithic occupation levels at Çatalhöyük.



Figure 9. B.152: An orthophoto of the remaining walls, Trench 4.

The work this year concentrated on excavating the remaining walls of B.152 (Fig. 9). These comprised a solid northwest-southeast wall (F.3852) and two perpendicular walls (F.3850, F.3851). Each of these walls was bonded together, indicating they were built at the same time and comprised a part of the same dwelling structure. This is further corroborated by a similar shape and size of the bricks. All these walls were built directly on top of the structures belonging to the latest occupation phase of B.150 (Sp.594), including its floors and platforms. The northern wall (F.3852) was erected directly on the underlying features F.8257 and F.8258. The easternmost perpendicular wall (F.3850) was built directly on top of the earlier wall F.8259. Further to the south, another small

wall (F.3851), parallel to the latter and perpendicular to the northern wall, was placed right below F.8260 (see Marciniak *et al.* 2015). It is worth noting that this wall was constructed following a deliberate removal of a section of the eastern wall of B.150. This wall is placed directly upon an original basal part of the wall of B.150. There are some indications that older bricks were reused during its construction. After removing the walls of B.152, it was possible to re-define the character of features directly beneath (see Marciniak *et al.* 2015) and recognize the last occupation phase of B.150.

Excavations in Trench 3

The work in the 2016 excavation season was concentrated in the central and southern part of Trench 3. A narrow space, (Sp.521), adjacent to southern wall (F.3891) of a large storage room Sp.493, was initially recognized in 2013 (Marciniak *et al.* 2013) and completely excavated this season. The main objective of this work was to establish the stratigraphic relationship between this longitudinal space, clearly belonging to one of the latest phases of B.122, structures from earlier phases of its occupation in its south-central part (Sp.517 and Sp.562), as well as distinct Sp.493 directly to the north, defined as a dedicated storage room with bins for wheat and barley (Marciniak *et al.* 2013).

Space 521 has an elongated shape and is located between the northern, southern and western walls (F.3891, F.8253 and F.7194 respectively). An internal wall of B.133 (F.7194) was recognized in earlier seasons and almost completely excavated in 2015 except for its easternmost section that was only removed this season. Space 521 appears to be an unspecified platform/floor (F.8294). After going out of use, it was backfilled by a heterogeneous rubble deposit (20791). Space 521 is an integral part of B.122, most likely marking its final reconstruction and use and it appears to be contemporary with Sp.517 in the central-southern part of the building (see Marciniak *et al.* 2015).

The work in the 2016 season also made it possible to reconstruct a life history of B.122, marked by numerous reconstructions and re-buildings. However, the earliest phase of B.122 has not yet been revealed. Its first major reconstruction comprised a construction of a distinct storage room (Sp.493) (see Marciniak *et al.* 2013, 2015). Most likely it was built in the place of the eastern platform of the building; however, it is difficult to estimate how long the original building might have been in use before the storage room was constructed. Similarly, it is difficult to estimate a time span between the construction of Sp.493 and the construction of Sp.562 directly to the east, whose most distinct elements comprise the eastern platform built against the western wall of Sp.493 and the geometric painting of its outer walls. The subsequent reconstruction marked a closure of this space by carefully placed mudbricks (Sp.517) (see Marciniak *et al.* 2013, 2015). The stratigraphic relationship between Sp.517 and Sp.521 further to the east and excavated this year (see below) were reexamined this year. As mentioned above, it appears that both structures were most likely contemporaneous.

The original purpose of Sp.493 remains unknown. It cannot be ruled out that it served a storage purpose from the beginning of its construction. It remained in use until the very end of the occupation of B.122, represented by Sp.521, as these two distinct parts of the building were used at the same time. It is indicated by a crawl hole between Sp.493 and Sp.521, which is located in the southeast part of the dividing wall. This kind of stratigraphic relationship implies that Sp.493 was also in use when the western part of B.122 was reconstructed and converted into a room with a ceremonial character (Sp.562). Accordingly, it is most likely that the room was also used as a storage facility when its outer walls were painted over in an elaborated geometric design. Hence, the most likely scenario is that Sp.493 was originally constructed as a storage room and served this purpose for a long time, both during the construction and use of a ceremonial part of the building (Sp.562), as well as during subsequent reconstructions (Sp.517 and Sp.521) of B.122.

As access from Sp.521 to Sp.493 through a relatively large and oval crawl hole has been unquestionably established, it remains unclear how the storage room was accessed during earlier phases of its use, in particular during the occupation of Sp.562. It may either have been accessed through the same opening as in the final phase, or most likely by a corresponding opening somewhere beneath the floor/platform (F.8294) of Sp.521. This, however, cannot be verified as excavating this sequence is beyond the scope of work in the TPC Area. However, it cannot be ruled out that Sp.521 comprised the remaining part of the eastern platform of the original B.122, the larger part of which may have been truncated later during preparation of the space for the construction of a storage room (Sp.493). However, this scenario is unlikely as the floor of Sp.521 was built against the wall F.7176, which is certainly later than the original wall of B.122. Hence, it is most likely that Sp.493, in its phase contemporaneous with the existence of Sp.562, was also accessed from the south, most likely from some kind of platform/floor directly beneath its successor (F.8294) in Sp.521. This interpretation is further corroborated by the presence of two steps from the western side of the latter platform, which may indicate that it had either undergone some unspecified reconstructions or that we exposed a small section of the sequence of platforms/floor, the lower part of which belongs to an earlier phase. This can only be clarified by fully excavating the stratigraphic sequence. The storage room Sp.493 was deliberately destroyed by fire, which most likely meant its closure. Following this conflagration the crawl hole was blocked by a pile of bricks and bricky deposits. They were placed directly on the surface of the floor/platform of Sp.521. This closure meant that Sp.493 went out of use.

By exposing the northern wall of Sp.574 (see Marciniak *et al.* 2015), it was possible not only to define its stratigraphic relation to wall F.7176 but also to the floor/platform (F.8294) of Sp.521, placed between the wall F.7176 to the south and the southern wall of Sp.493 to the north. The wall F.8253 of Sp.521 was most likely functionally related to the latest flooring event in this space (F.7199). Space 521 in its latest phase might have been backfilled and separated from the continuously occupied main room (Sp.517). However, its final function remains unclear due to significant damage by post-Neolithic truncations and a lack of any features and finds. By analyzing the stratigraphic relationships in this part of the trench, it became clear that the platform/floor F.8294 was constructionally related to the floor of Sp.517, which extended a bit further to the west. This makes the platform/floor most likely contemporary with Sp.517.

This year's work was not aimed at excavating the floor layers of Sp.562 and Sp.517. However, the work in Sp.562 involved the consolidation of all features exposed in the past season (Marciniak *et al.* 2015) and taking some samples for the radiocarbon dating project. A podium/pedestal (F.8291) from the western edge of the platform, along with a badly preserved bucranium (31803.x1), were removed this season. The pedestal has the following dimensions: 0.75 x 0.22 x 0.30 m.

This year's excavations also made it possible to refine a stratigraphic sequence in the southern part of Trench 3. Its main part comprises a sequence of superimposed rectangular structures with distinct and well-preserved walls. The latest in the sequence was Sp.520, excavated last year (Marciniak *et al.* 2015). Directly beneath were two contemporaneous Spaces 574 and 575. The oldest in the sequence was Sp.515.

Excavations directly to the south of Spaces 562, 517 and 521 from B.122 focused on refining the character of Spaces 574 and 575 and stratigraphic relations between them. The northern walls of both spaces abutted the wall F.7176. Both spaces were placed beneath Sp.520 excavated last year (Marciniak *et al.* 2015). As the uppermost parts of the walls of both spaces were at the same level on which the walls of later Sp.520 were constructed, they may have been contemporaneous.

Space 574 is located in eastern part of the southern section of Trench 3. It has four very distinct walls: F.7484 (western), F.7485 (northern), F.7487 (eastern) and F.7488 (southern). The southern and northern walls were destroyed by post-Neolithic truncations. The wall F.7488 was truncated by an early Hellenistic bell-shaped pit (F.3869), while the northern wall F.7485 was truncated by a large ovoid pit (F.3877) that also truncated the platform (F.8294) in Sp.521. The work in Sp.574 involved also removing its infill, units (20757) and (20784).

Space 575 is located in the central-western part of Trench 3. Two of its walls F.7489 (northern) (Fig. 10) and F.3872 (eastern) are in the trench while the western wall is placed outside the limit of excavation. Directly beneath both walls, two walls belonging to earlier Sp.515 were revealed. Two of its walls: F.3878 (northern) and F.3879 (eastern) were excavated during the 2016 season. Platform F.7173, exposed in 2015 (Marciniak *et al.* 2013), belongs to this space.



Figure 10. Space 575, wall F.7489, Trench 3.

Final remarks

The aim of the 2017 field season in Trench 4 is to excavate all remaining occupation phases of B.150 and, in particular, to recognize the layout and character of the original phase of the building. As regards Trench 3, the work next year will focus upon refining the stratigraphic relationships between Spaces 515, 574 and 575, as well as the relationships between Buildings 122 and 133. The ultimate goal of these works is to establish a stratigraphic relationship between the TPC Area in Trench 3 and the South Area, which can be achieved by excavating different parts of Sp.515.

Acknowledgments

We would like to acknowledge an important contribution of the following undergraduate, graduate, and PhD students: Anna Haberland, Karolina Joka, Anna Rybarczyk, Mikołaj Budner and Maciej Chyleński to the success of TPC excavations. The 2016 excavations in the TPC Area were financed by the project 3085/Kultura/2014/2 of the Polish Ministry of Science and Higher Education.

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