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The excavations of the East Area at Çatalhöyük in the 2021 season

Introduction

The 2021 excavation season brought about a continuation of the work in the East Area. It is the most distinct element in the eastern part of the East mound, directly East of both the main mound. It has the form of a circular and regular mound, which is ca. 50 m in diameter¹.

The work in the East Area in 2021 was aimed at further investigating its major objectives: (1) recognize the character of occupation in the eastern zone of Çatalhöyük settlement and establish its chronology, (2) recognize the character of dwelling structures, special purpose buildings, burial practices and diachronic changes in their character in this area, (3) compare the character of the settlement occupation with the contemporaneously occupied areas, in particular TP and TPC in the southern eminence of the main mound, and (4) recognize the abandonment of this part of the settlement in relation to the abandonment processes of the settlement as well as overall demographic processes in the second half of the seventh millennium BC (see Marciniak 2015; Marciniak et al. 2019).

The East Area is made of the longitudinal trench 10x50 m in W-E alignment. The area was divided into Squares 1-5, each 10x10 m, as seen from the west. Following the results of the work in previous seasons, it was decided to concentrate on the three westernmost Squares of the trench covering an area of 10 x 30 meters. A rich and complex stratigraphic situation was revealed in this part of the trench comprising numerous Neolithic buildings representing different chronological horizons as well as corresponding open space, including large midden. The post-Neolithic occupation is represented by a complex of pits and ovens as well as a series of burials with superstructures made of stones and tiles.

The work in the 2021 field season involved the excavation of different deposits and features dated back to the Late Neolithic as well as the Hellenistic and Late Roman/Byzantine periods.

The 2019 field season commenced on July 25 and was completed on September 1. The work was most focused on excavating different structures and deposits in Square 1, both Neolithic and post-Neolithic in date. A significantly smaller amount of time was spent on excavating different deposits in Square 2.

The Neolithic occupation of the East Area

BUILDING 172

Building 172 is a large Late Neolithic building located in N part of Square 1 (Fig. 1). Only its southern walls are inside the trench. Their length is 6,2 m. Larger part of the building is most likely located north of the trench. The preserved walls are the southern wall (F.10002), the

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western wall (F.10003), the eastern wall (F. 10004), a fragment of the N wall (F.10007). Two southernmost rooms were revealed within the trench: (i) western – Space 686, and (ii) eastern - Space 666. They were separated by a partition wall (F. 10001).

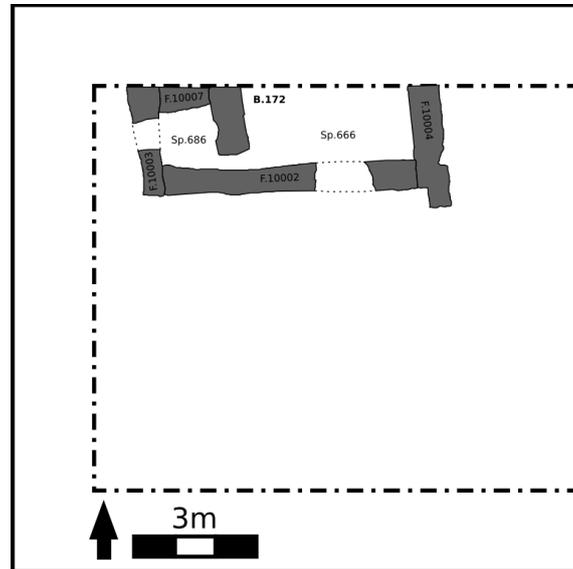


Figure 1. The plan of Building 172 (drawn by Jędrzej Hordecki)

The western room (Space 686) measured 1,8 m². Its main built-in structure comprised the platform (F. 10131 & F. 10135) in the northern part of the room. It is the preserved fragment of a larger platform, whose size cannot be reliably reconstructed due to its destruction by a late grave cut (F.10118) from the north. It not only destroyed the platform but also made any stratigraphic relation of the platform and related remains of the room's occupation difficult. Interestingly, the platform adhered to the walls with a few small ceramic sherds, somehow glued between them. One of the sherds was ornamented with a bucranium motif in relief (recorded as x1). The latest phase of the room occupation most likely comprised a tramped surface on the roomfill layer deposited on the original floor of the room.

The eastern room measured 6,3 m². It was devoid of any built-in structures. It was rebuilt and renovated a number of times, as indicated by the sequence of three superimposed floors: 40270, 40271, and 40274.

All elements of the building, except for the walls, were excavated. The preliminary stratigraphic analysis indicates that the building was constructed on a midden extending through the entire northern part of Square 1, beneath both Spaces 666 and 686, and going beyond the northern edge of Square 1.

BUILDING 178

This is a special-purpose building that was inserted in the southern part of B. 173, prior to the constriction of small rooms/cells, as presented below (Figures 2 & 3). It was a rectangular structure measuring ca. 3,5 x 1,5 m. It was constructed of four walls: eastern wall (F.10009), northern (F.10008), southern (F.10010), and western (F.10011).

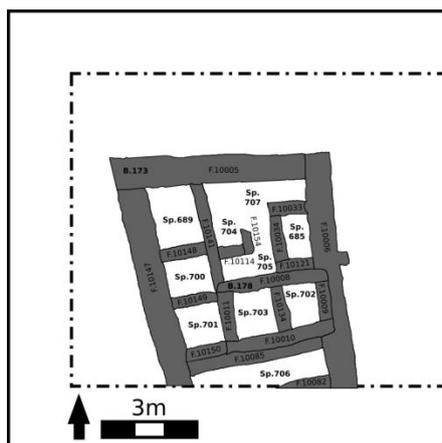


Figure 2. The plan of Buildings 173 and B. 178 (drawn by Jędrzej Hordecki)

An uppermost layer in the building fill was excavated as Space 668. After removing the fill, it turned out that the Building is made of two rooms: (i) eastern (Space 702) and western (ii) Space 703) divided by a distinct partition wall (F.10134), (Figure 2). Building 178 in its original was not divided by the partition wall and was ascribed as Space 708.



Figure 3. Buildings 173 & 178 – a view from above (photo: Mateusz Dembowski)

The earliest phase of this building (Space 708) had one room. Its major built-in structure was a large oven (F. 10151) placed in its SE corner, directly on the floor (U.40331). All its constructional elements were well preserved, including the dome (40319), base (40348, 40359), rake-out (40347) and walls (40338). The oven was long in use, as indicated by its numerous reconstructions and a significant amount of ash and charcoal.

The later use of the Building involved splitting up its interior into two rooms. The western room (Space 703) was used for a long time, as indicated by the presence of four superimposed floors (as seen from the bottom: U.40317, U.40310, U.40299, and U.40280). A large closing deposit was placed on the uppermost floor. It was composed of 12 cattle horn cores as well as scapulas, mandibles and pelvis.



Figure 4. Building 178, Spaces 702 & 703 (photo: Mateusz Dembowskiak)

Two superimposed floors (U.40291 and U.40308) were built in Space 702. A large oven (F.10136) was placed against the western wall of the room. A small bin (F. 10142) was found in its SE corner. It was rectangular in shape and measured ca. 0,50 x 0,50 x 0,07 cm. It was made up of three separated parts: the walls (U.40316), infill (U.40309) and a plastered cover (40315) that was put on the top. The walls were made of white silty sand and were plastered over. The north-eastern (7cm wide) and north-western (6,5cm wide) walls were very well preserved. The cover (40315) had the form of a thin layer of white plaster, which sealed off the fill in the uppermost part of the bin. Interestingly, this bin was built directly upon earlier construction (F. 10151, see above).

BUILDING 173

Building 173 is a large dwelling structure in the south-central part of Square 1. In its original form, it measured ca 35m². The construction was made of four solid walls: northern wall (F. 10005), eastern (F. 10006) southern (F.10082), and western (F. 10147). The work in the 2021 comprised excavation of the final phase of the building use. Its space was divided into six small rooms/cells: Space 685, Space 687, Space 688, Space 689, Space 700, and Space 701. They were arranged around B. 178, itself built inside B. 173 in its southern part.

Southern part: Space 687 & Space 688, Sp. 706

Space 687 is room of 1,3m². The uppermost very eroded platform (F. 10131) was excavated. A rich closing deposit was found on the platform containing a female figurine (40292.x29) as well as numerous worked stones and animal bones (horn cores, scapulas, mandibles; Figure 4).



Figure 4. Cluster, Sp. 687 (10137- platform, 40293- fetus skeleton, 40294- skeleton) (photo: Mateusz Dembowski)

Two skeletons were also found within a constructional layer of a platform (40279). The feature contains the remains of two primary disturbed individuals (sk. 40293; 40294). The first one (sk. 40294) was a primary disturbed individual (child between 3-12 years of age) lying flexed on the left side-oriented E-W facing W. No grave goods were identified with this individual, but a lot of pottery was found in the fill of this skeleton. The second one (sk. 40293) was classified as a fetus individual whose position of the whole body is impossible to define. No grave goods were found in association with this individual (see also Boz et al. 2021).

Space 688 is placed directly west of Space 687. It has 1,9 m². Its uppermost part comprised a largely destroyed platform: (F. 10138). The Neolithic burial (F. 10152) was located in the southwestern corner of Space. This feature involves the primary disturbed fetus individual (sk.40335) lying in a flexed position on its left side and interred in a pit (40334). The disturbance occurred due to animal activity (see also Boz et al. 2021).

After removing the partition wall (F.10140) between these two rooms, the longitudinal room (Space 706) measuring 1,8 m² was exposed. It was intensively occupied, as indicated by four layers (40353, 40369, 40380, 40384) of superimposed floors & make-ups. They were made of compact greyish silty sand. A large part of the room was destroyed by late Roman/early Byzantine burial (see Marciniak et al. 2019).

The burials of three Neolithic individuals were found in Space 706. Feature 10159 is represented by the burial located in its northeastern part, in the southwestern corner of Square 1. It was dug into the very solid floor (U. 40369). The cut was shallow, small, and ovoid (0.29 x 0.20 x 0.09 m). The burial pit contained the fetus individual (sk. 40361) covered by soft to loose and homogeneous- light grey burial fill. The individual cranium was smashed and disarticulated due to the excavation process, which had an impact on the original position of the head. No grave goods were found in association with this individual. Another burial (F. 10138) was located in the northeastern part of Space 706. It was placed against the E wall of this space (F. 10140), but was heavily destroyed by a later grave cut (F. 10078), therefore it is very difficult to define its original extent and character. Two burials (sk. 40282; 40283) were interred directly into the infill (40284). The one located close to the trench limit was recorded as 40282 and

comprised a skull placed just right to the wall F. 10140, and some ribs. The other one (sk. 40283), on the N side, comprised a fragment of a spine, ribs, and a skull. Interestingly, it seems that it was pushed into the wall, and it seemed to be associated with the two horn cores (recorded as x1 and x2 with the skeleton number) (see also Boz et al. 2021).

Western part: Spaces 689, 700 & 701

The work involved also the excavation of three small cell-like rooms: Space 689, Space 700, and Space 701, placed alongside the western wall of B. 173 (F.10147).

Space 689 is the room in the NW corner of B. 173. It measured 2,6 m². The following sequence of platforms and superimposed floors was unearthed (as seen from the top): (a) eroded platform (F. 10146, U. 40303), (b) floor I (U. 40341), (c) floor II (U. 40349), (d) floor IV (U. 40352). The first floor (40341) was made of clayish, firm white material and was badly destroyed by animal burrowing. It was constructed on a grey make-up (40342). The second floor (40349) was made of two thin, distinct and superimposed layers (upper one-whitish and lower one- light brown).

Space 700 is located directly south of Space 689. It measured 1,5m². A small partition wall (F.10149) separated the room from the neighbouring Space 701. It was built on top of the plastered bench (F.10156). The construction of the wall marks most likely the event of distinguishing Space 701 from Space 700, being an element of the complex reconstruction of the southern part of B. 173 in its final phase of occupation (Figure 6).



Figure 6. The partition wall F. 10149 placed on an earlier plastered bench, between spaces 700 and 701, B. 173 (photo: Mateusz Dembowski)

The following sequence of built-in structures and superimposed floors was unearthed in Space 700 (as seen from the top): (a) floor I (U.40326), (b) floor II (U.40343), (c) ledge (F.10157, U. 40362), (d) floor III (U. 40351), and (e) bench (F.10156). A doorway/crawl-hole was found from the eastern side of the northern wall (F.10148). It was later blocked (F.10155). The blocking (40354) was placed on a plastered threshold. It was made of a poor quality bricks made of brown clay, separated by whitish/ grayish mortar. Five superimposed layers of bricks were distinguished. The dimension of the blocking were the following: 0.40 x 0.32 x 0.50 m. One of the most interesting features in this room was ledge (F.10157) in its western side. It

abutted the W wall of B. 173 (F.10147). In the top part of the ledge there was a cluster of pottery shreds (40370; Figure 7). They were placed vertically between the ledge and the wall as a result of the deliberate act. Altogether, the cluster was composed of 75 pottery fragments, all of them of grey burnished ware. The size of pottery fragments varied from 2 cm to 15 cm. All of them were sealed by the highest step of the ledge.



Figure 7. Ledge (40362) with pottery sherds (40370), Sp. 700 (photo: Mateusz Dembowski)

Space 701 is placed directly south of Space 700. It measured 1,6m². The following sequence of platforms and superimposed floors was unearthed (as seen from the top): (a) platform (F. 10145, U. 40355), (b) floor I (U. 40327), (c) floor II (U. 40330). On the floor (U. 40325), there was a rich closing deposit made of animal bones and worked bones. A fetus skeleton (F. 10145, sk. 40324) was deliberately interred in the NW corner of the room on the platform, most likely as an element of the closing ceremony. It was the primary disturbed individual, whose original position of the body was impossible to define due to disturbance that occurred in the infill (U. 40306) of that feature (F.10145)(see also Boz et al. 2021).

Space 705 & 704

The passageway (Space 705) leading to the entire sequence of small rooms in the western part of B. 173 (Spaces 689, 700 & 701) had a form of a narrow corridor between the two walls running N-S: (F. 10154) and (F. 10034). It was considerably destroyed from the south by a later grave cut (F. 10015) making its reconstruction difficult. After it went out of use, the passageway was deliberately filled in with a constructional, rubble deposit (containing mudbrick material, plaster). Right to the west of the passageway, there was another small room/cell: Space 704. It measured 1,8 m². The space was made of walls F.10114 (southern) and F.10154 (western). From the west, it abutted the eastern wall of Spaces 699 and 700 while the northern wall was truncated by the post-Neolithic pit and burial cuts. The room had a poorly preserved floor and no built-in structures.

Space 685

The most distinct room from the final phase of the occupation of B. 173 was the burial chamber assigned to space 685 in the western part of the Building (Figure 8). The space involved three features (F.10117, F. 10125, F. 10126) and 10 individuals within them (sk. 40219, sk. 40246, sk. 40247, sk. 40234, sk. 40285, sk. 40286, sk. 40287, sk. 40288, sk. 40320, sk. 40250).



Figure 8. Burial chamber Space 685. Burial F. 10125 with obsidian blade (40288. x3) (photo: Mateusz Dembowskiak)

Following is the description of the burial features. Each feature contains in brackets the unit numbers corresponding to the skeleton, burial cut, and burial fill number.

Feature 10117, Sk. (40219;40246;40247), Cut (40213), Fill (40214)

Feature 865 is represented by Neolithic burials located in the north part of Space 685. It contained three primary disturbed loose individuals deposited in a simple burial pit infill (U. 40214) measured from (0,10 x 0.8 x 0.04 m) to (0.21 x 0.10 x 0.10 m) and brownish color as well as soft consistency of soil. The first individual (sk. 40219) was heavily affected by post-depositional animal disturbance in the upper and lower limbs, hampering a full understanding of the original position of relative skeletal elements. Nonetheless, an articulated right radius, right ulna, and right carpals make it possible to define the remains of two additional primary disturbed individuals (sk. 40246, sk. 40247). No grave goods were found in association with this deposition (see also Boz et al. 2021).

Feature 10125, Sk. (40234; 40285; 40286; 40287; 40288; 40320), Floor (40373), Fill (40226)

Feature 10125 contains Neolithic burials in the southeastern part of Space 685. It was made of six primary disturbed individuals deposited on the floor (U.40373) of the chamber (1,57 x 0.90 x 0.49 m). The individuals were covered by the very thick (0.49 m), compact, greyish, and brownish burial fill (U.40226) without the burial cut, so the individuals were deposited in a very short interval. The skeletons were lying in different positions but all of them were flexed. The feature was surrounded by the Neolithic walls; from the N part by F. 10033, from the southern part by F. 10024, and from the western part by F. 10034 (see also Boz et al. 2021).

The first individual deposited in this feature was in the N part and the remains belong to the primary disturbed young adult female (sk. 40320) lying on its left side in a flexed position with a partially disturbed cranial vault. The female was lying also in articulation with the disturbance from animal activity and other individuals lying on top of her. Eighteen different x-finds were found in close association with this female including a cluster of beads recorded as a bracelet with more than 65 beads, it was located on her right wrist. Another x-find was recorded as worked animal bone in the form of pallet, stone axe, and animal teeth with pigment, this young female was lying in a possible mat of phytoliths. The second individual (sk. 40285) deposited in this feature was lying in the N part and seems to be pushed to the N profile, therefore some of the cranial and mandibular remains were disarticulated. The third sequence of burials deposited in this feature is represented by two primary disturbed adult male individuals (sk. 40286, sk. 40287) placed at the same event. Another individual (sk. 40287) was lying on its left side in a tightly flexed position. Some of the x-finds were found in close association with both males. The next sequence and more less directly on top of the sk. 40286, sk. 40287 another primary disturbed adult male individual (sk. 40288) was placed. This skeleton showed the traces left over by organic planting on the vertebral spine because of some deposition from the hearth or oven. Some (seven x- finds) were found in close association with this deposition with special attention to the percussion blade made of obsidian located right below the feet. The last sequence of the individuals deposited in this feature represents sk. 40234 (middle adult male?) located in the central-western part of the feature. No grave goods were found in close association with this individual. This feature possibly contains more individuals because the infill was composed of more human remains. There was the possibility to distinguish one adolescent individual (no number has been given yet). Another possible scenario for the sequence in F. 10125 is that three individuals were deposited at the same event (sk. 40285, sk. 40286, sk. 40287) and then after some period the secondary treatment appears for the individuals sk. 40285, sk. 40286 because their cranial and cervical remains were mixed (see also Boz et al. 2021).

Feature 10126, Sk. (40250), Cut (40241), Fill (40240)

Feature 10126 is a burial located in the southeastern part of Space 685. Its bottom is placed directly on the eastern wall (F. 10006) of the Neolithic Building 173 and the northern wall (F. 10033). The burial pit was very shallow (0.50 x 0.50 x 0.05/0.07 m) and circular in shape with imperceptible angles and covered by soft and greyish burial fill. The feature contained remains of an infant individual (sk. 40250). It was disturbed and loose due to proximity to the surface and it is possible that its upper part (cranium and mandible) was removed earlier during the scraping, or the bones were just not preserved and only some fragments were originally deposited in this pit. No grave goods were found in association with this deposition. A small arrowhead was recovered from the infill (U. 40240:x1).

Space 707

The earliest recognized phase of the building was designated as Space 707 (Figure 9). It measured ca. 7 m². Two superimposed floors of the Building were identified (40376) and (40382). Above them, the three after mentioned spaces 685, 704 and 705 were erected.



Figure 9. Space 707, B. 173 (photo: Mateusz Dembowski)

The Neolithic burials excavated in the 2021 season

Table 1 provides a summary of all Neolithic burials excavated in 2021, along with corresponding grave goods.

<i>Feature</i>	<i>Skeleton</i>	<i>Age</i>	<i>Sex</i>	<i>Feature measurements</i>	<i>Associated objects</i>
10117	40219	YA	F	from 0.10 x 0.8 x 0.04 m to 0.21 x 0.10 x 0.10 m	N/A
10117	40246	N/A	N/A	from 0.10 x 0.8 x 0.04 m to 0.21 x 0.10 x 0.10 m	N/A
10117	40247	N/A	N/A	from 0.10 x 0.8 x 0.04 m to 0.21 x 0.10 x 0.10 m	N/A
10125	40234	MA	M?	1.57 x 0.90 x 0.49 m	N/A
10125	40285	N/A	N/A	1.57 x 0.90 x 0.49 m	x1 bead x2 bead x3 bead x4 bead x5 stone ball x6 stone ball x7 stone ball x8 stone ball x9 bead

						stone bead with geometric decoration
					x10	
					x11	bead
					x12	bead
					x13	bead
					x14	bead
					x15	bead
10125	40286	A	M	1.57 x 0.90 x 0.49 m	x1	obsidian
					x2	stone pendant
					x3	bead
					x4	cluster of beads
					x5	bead
					x6	stone ball
10125	40287	A	M	1.57 x 0.90 x 0.49 m	x1	bead
					x2	bead
					x3	bead
					x4	bead
					x5	bead
					x6	bead
10125	40288	A	M	1.57 x 0.90 x 0.49 m	x1	flint
					x2	bead
					x3	percussion blade (obsidian)
					x4	bone point
					x5	bead
					x6	obsidian
					x7	bead
10125	40320	YA	F	1.57 x 0.90 x 0.49 m	x1	cluster of beads
					x2	cluster of stone balls
					x3	beads
					x4	cluster of beads
					x5	cluster of beads
					x6	worked animal bone with blue p
					x7	stone axe
					x8	animal bone with blue pigment
					x9	cluster of beads
					x10	cluster of beads
					x11	cluster of beads
					x12	bead
					x13	bead
					x14	cluster of beads
					x15	cluster of beads
					x16	cluster of beads
					x17	cluster of beads
					x18	bead
10126	40250	Infant?	N/A	0.50 x 0.50 x 0.05-0.07 m	N/A	

10137	40293	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
10137	40294	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
10152	40335	fetus	N/A		N/A
	40324	fetus	N/A	N/A	N/A
10159	40361	fetus	N/A	0.29 x 0.20 x 0.09 m	N/A
10138	40282	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
10138	40283	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Table 1. The summary of the Neolithic burials excavated in the 2021 season with corresponding grave goods.

SPACE 678, Square 2

Space 678 located in the N part of Square 2 was exposed and partly excavated in the 2019 season (Marciniak et al. 2019). The space is defined by three walls: western (F. 10049), southern (F. 10048), and eastern (F. 10067), the latter placed against the western wall of B.175 (F. 10047). Only a small southernmost part of the Space is located inside the trench while its larger section goes beyond its N section. The internal surface of the space inside the trench measures 1,1 m².

In the 2021 season, the room fill (U.40368) was excavated. The floor (U. 40678) was made up of several distinct flooring layers. A bin (F. 10066) was placed in the SW corner of the Space. It was rectangular in shape and was constructed of four well-made and solid thick (10 cm) finely plastered walls (U.40381). Inside the bin, a considerably dense concentration of objects was found, most likely comprising the deliberately deposited cluster (40371; Figure 10). In total, it contained 48 objects, most of them stones (ground stones, tools) and a large lump of pigments. The most important were: hammer stone (40371: x8), pigment (40371: x25), stone ball (40371: x29), and bone pounder (40371: x36).



Figure 10. Cluster of objects (40371) inside bin F. 10066, Sp. 678 (photo: Mateusz Dembowskiak)

The post-Neolithic occupation of the East Area

SPACE 677 – the post-Neolithic settlement

Altogether 3 features dated to the post-Chalcolithic phase of the East Area occupation were excavated in the 2021 season.

The first of them was a rounded pit F.10122 located in the central-eastern part of the Sq1. It had the following dimensions 2.10 x 2.03 x 0.28 m. Directly below was another rounded pit (F.10130). It had the following dimensions 1.45 x 1.76 x by 0.20 m. Both pits truncated the southern wall of B.172 and were themselves truncated by later burials (F.10124, F.10016, F.10017).

The third rounded pit (F.10153) was located central part of Square 1, directly south of the other post-Chalcolithic pits excavated this year. It had the following dimensions: 0.62 x 0.89 m and preserved depth of 0.30 m. The feature was truncated by later burials (F.10015 and F.10081) as well as the above-described pits (F.10122 and F.10130) that identify its stratigraphic position.

SPACE 670 - the post-Neolithic burial ground

The 2021 excavation season revealed eight features recognized as late burial structures (F.10115, F. 10118, F. 10119, F. 10124, F.10123, F. 10127, F. 10128, F. 10129) that contained the 8 individuals with given skeleton numbers (sk. 40215, sk. 40238, sk. 40229 sk. 40239, sk. 40235, sk. 40251, sk. 40257, sk. 40244). All of them were located in Square 1 (Plan 3).

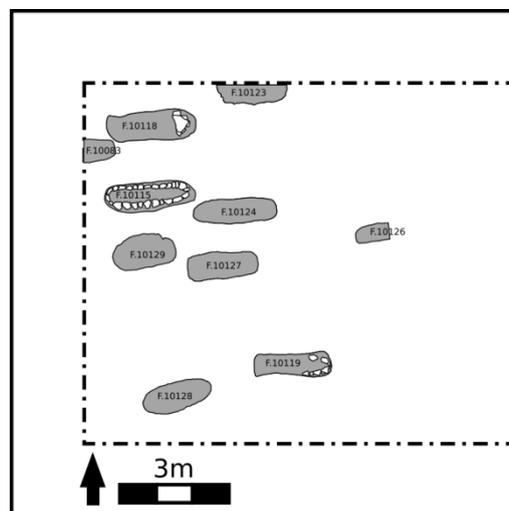


Figure 11. The plan of the post-Chalcolithic cemetery (drawn by Jędrzej Hordecki)

Among all the discovered structures three types of graves could be identified: (I) grave with superstructure on the eastern edge of the burial pit, (II) grave without superstructure in the form of a simple pit, and (III) grave pit laid out with stones/tiles. The first type is represented by F. 10118 (sk. 40238, F. 10119, sk. 40229), located in the northwestern corner of Square 1 as well as F. 10119 in the southern part of Square 1. The second type of a grave is represented by F. 10123 (sk. 40235, F. 10124, sk. 40239), F. 10128 (sk. 40251, F. 10129, sk. 40257), and F. 10127 (sk. 40244). F. 10123 was located in the northern section of Square 1, F. 10124 was placed in its central part while F. 10128 was in the southern part of Square 1. Feature 10129 was placed in the western part of the Square while F. 10127 was in its central part. The third

type was represented by only one burial F. 10115 (sk. 40215) in the northwestern part of Square 1.

Following is the description of the burial features. Each feature contains in brackets the unit numbers corresponding to the skeleton, burial cut, burial fill, and funerary superstructures (if present) (see also Boz et al. 2021).

I. Graves with a stone superstructure on the eastern edge of the burial pit

Feature 10118, Sk. (40238), Cut (40218), Fill (40217), Grave superstructure (40216)

This is a burial pit with a distinct superstructure made of stones surrounding the pit perimeter and inner walls and covering the eastern edge of the burial space (U.40216). It contained the skeletal remains of an individual, (sk. 40238) lying supine, extended, and with the head oriented toward the west and interred in the pit (2.43 x 0.85 x 0.48 m) with oval shape (U. 40218) and soft, grey and black sand burial fill (U. 40217). The post-burial animal activity resulted in the partial disturbance of these primarily deposited skeletal remains.

Feature 10119, Sk. (40229), Cut (40222), Fill (40221), Grave superstructures (40223)

This is a burial pit with a distinct superstructure made of stones surrounding the pit perimeter and inner walls and covering the eastern edge of the burial space (U.40223). It contained primary disturbed deposition of the individual (sk. 40229) lying supine and extended with the forearms overlying the abdomen and the head oriented toward the west. It was interred in a pit (2.1 x 0.69 x 0.45 m) with an oval shape (U. 40222) and a homogenous, soft, grey and black sand burial fill (U. 40221). The post-depositional animal activity led to the partial disturbance of the skeletal remains.

II. Graves in the form of a simple pit without superstructure

Feature 10123, Sk. (40235), Cut (40233), Fill (40232)

F. 10123 is a simple pit without a stone superstructure. The grave intercepted the northern limit of the excavation area. It was therefore decided to excavate this feature only partially, focusing on its southern half. The burial includes the remains of an individual (sk. 40235) interred in a simple pit (2.01 x 0.55 x 0.45 m) with a rectangular shape (U. 40233) and soft, grey sand burial fill (U. 40232). The relative position of the upper limbs (partially disturbed by post-depositional animal activity) suggests that the individual was lying supine and extended, possibly partially rotated toward the right side and with the head oriented toward the west.

Feature 10124, Sk. (40239), Cut (40237), Fill (40236)

F. 10124 is a simple burial pit without the superstructure. It contained the skeletal remains (sk. 40239), lying supine and apparently extended interred in a pit (2.19 x 0.75 x 0.48 m) with oval shape (U. 40237) and soft, grey sand burial fill (U. 40236). This primary deposition was heavily disturbed by animal activity.

Feature 10127, Sk. (40244), Cut (40242), Fill (40243)

F. 10127 is a simple burial pit without a stone superstructure. It contained a primary deposition of an individual (sk. 40244) interred in a simple pit (1.94 x 0.74 x 0.50 m) of irregular shape: rectangular with slightly rounded corners of a burial cut (U. 40242) and soft, grey sand burial fill (U. 40243). The individual was lying supine and extended with the forearms overlying the

abdomen and the head oriented toward the west. The post-depositional animal activity led to the partial disturbance of the skeletal remains hampering a full understanding of the original position of the skeletal elements.

Feature 10128, Sk. (40251), Cut (40248), Fill (40249)

F. 10128 is a simple burial pit without a stone superstructure. It contained the remains of a primary disturbed individual (sk. 40251) deposited in a very shallow pit (U. 40248) with an oval shape (1.84 x 0.65 x 0.29 m) and soft, grey sand burial fill (U. 40249). The individual was lying in a supine and extended position with forearms over the abdomen and head oriented toward the west.

Feature 10129, Sk. (40257), Cut (40252), Fill (40253)

Feature 10129 is a simple burial pit without a stone superstructure and contains a primary disturbed individual (sk. 40257) interred in the pit (1.75 x 0.98 x 0.57 m) with ovoid shape corners (U.40252) and soft, black sand burial fill (U. 40253). The individual was heavily disturbed by animal activity. Only the proximal femoral remains, a fragment of the pelvis and the proximal part of the humerus were recovered. The individual was lying apparently supine and extended, cranial elements were found scattered in a burial fill.

III. Grave pits lined up with stones/tiles

Feature 10115, Sk. (40215), Cut (40201), Fill (40200), Upper and lower superstructures (40211 and 40199)

Feature 10115 is a longitudinal and relatively deep burial pit (1.74 x 0.42 x 0.56 m) with oval-shaped corners and soft, mid-brown burial fill (U. 40200) surrounded by two stone superstructures (Figure 9). The lower superstructure (U. 40199) consists of eighteen fragments of limestones with different dimensions, but the same type of limestone. The limestone fragments are deliberately assembled. The upper superstructure (U. 40211) was made of tiles. The adult individual (sk. 40215) was lying supine and extended with the forearms overlying the abdomen and the head oriented toward the west. The post-depositional animal activity led to the partial disturbance of the skeletal remains.



Figure 12. Late burial with stone lining F. 10115 (skeleton 40215), Sp. 670 (photo: Mateusz Dembowski)

The post-Neolithic burials excavated in the 2021 season

Table 2 sums up the post-Neolithic burials excavated in 2021, in particular their type, location and burial pit dimension.

<i>Feature</i>	Location	Burial type	Dimensions
10115	N-W part/ 1square	pit surrounded by stones/tiles	1.70 x 0.42 x 0.70 m
10118	N-W part/ 1square	pit with superstructure on eastern edge	2.43 x 0.85 x 0.48 m
10119	S part/ 1 square	pit with superstructure on eastern edge	2.1 x 0.69 x 0.45 m
10123	N part/ 1 square	simple pit	2.01 x 0.55 x 0.45 m
10124	Central part/ 1square	simple pit	2.19 x 0.75 x 0.48 m
10127	Central part/ 1square	simple pit	1.94 x 0.74 x 0.50 m
10128	S part/ 1 square	simple pit	1.84 x 0.65 x 0.29 m
10129	W part/ 1 square	simple pit	1.75 x 0.98 x 0.57 m

Table 2. The post-Neolithic burials excavated in the 2021 season

Overall, during the work in the 2019 and 2021 excavation seasons, 28 post-Neolithic burials were found. The frequency of subsequent types are as follows:

- Type I – 6 burials
- Type II – 11 burials
- Type III – 8 burials

In addition, three empty graves were found (F. 10021, F. 10028, F. 10050) (Marciniak et al. 2019)

Final remarks

The work in the 2021 season marks an important step in the study of the occupational history of the East Area. The first major achievement was a complete excavation of all remains of the post-Neolithic occupation in Squares 1 and 2. In particular, it comprised the completion of work in the large post-Neolithic burial ground. The other important accomplishment is the excavation of the post-Neolithic settlement, mostly made of numerous pits. However, a major discovery in the 2021 season was B. 173 in its final phase of occupation. Its interior was split into small cells/rooms – each no bigger than 2 m². Some of these rooms were used as burial chambers in which numerous individuals were interred. The placing of the dead in these cells involved adding subsequent individuals or their incomplete skeletons over the long period of time. They must have died elsewhere in the countryside and their remains brought into the settlement. The closing of the room involved burying the fetuses, usually in the very corner of respective rooms.

The work in the coming excavation season will involve the excavation of different deposits and features dated back to the Neolithic in Squares 1, 2 and 3. The main focus of the work in in Square 1 will be Buildings 173 and 178. The plans in Square 2 involve the excavation of Space 669 – a sequence of heterogeneous deposits placed between the western wall of B. 175 and eastern walls of B. 172 and 173 as well as Space 683 - a large midden in the southern part

of Trench 2 and 3. The work in Square 3 shall involve the excavation of B. 177, which is the latest Neolithic dwelling structure in the East Area revealed to date.

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Table 2. The post-Neolithic burials excavated in the 2021 season

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