SUPPORT TEAM REPORTS

Conservation / Konservasyon - Duygu Çamurcuoğlu Cleere

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Abstract
Site and artefacts conservation was successfully carried out during the 2007 excavation season in collaboration with conservation students from the Institute of Archaeology-University College London and excavation and laboratory teams. The main activities of the season were the burial of the Building 5, conservation and reconstruction of a large number of Neolithic pottery, faunal and human bones as well as the conservation and lifting of plaster wall decorations. In addition to this, some architectural features and plastered walls were conserved as needed.

Research into particular on-site conservation problems were also carried out in order to find the most suitable solutions.

Özet
2007 kazı sezonu boyunca, gerek alan konservasyonu gerekse küçük buluntu konservasyonu, Londra Üniversitesi, Arkeoloji Enstitüsü'nden katılan öğrencilerin, kazı laboratuar ekibinin ve diğer kazı yapan arkeologların katkıları ile başarıyla tamamlanmıştır. Kazı sezonunun ana konservasyon işlemleri sırasıyla; Bina 5'deki gömüt, çok sayıda Neolitik çanak-çömleğin yeniden yapılandırılması ve konservasyonu, hayvan ve insan kemiklerinin konservasyonu ile duvar sıvası bezeklerinin kaldırılması olmuştur. Buna ek olarak, bazı mimari unsurların ile sıvanmış duvarların konservasyon işlemleri de yapılmıştır.

Aynı zamanda alan konservasyonuna dair bilimsel araştırma konuları içerisindeki sorunsallar da, alan içindeki yapılan işlemlerle tartışılıp çözüme kavuşturulmaya çalışılmıştır.

Excavation and treatment of fragile and complex materials
In the 2007 season, the conservation team worked on one of the first discoveries of the current excavations, a decorative wall border with a spiral motif (Figure167). The border surrounded 3 walls of a small room in the TP Area and was made of mud plaster. The spiral motif was incised on the mud plaster and was eroded in places. Once exposed, the mud plaster was cleaned with fine tools in order to reveal the surface detail for rectified photography as well as for drawing. After discussion, it was agreed that the border could not be left in situ due to the harsh climate and the risk of erosion in winter and therefore needed to be lifted. Time restrictions did not allow the lifting to take place this season but a mould was taken of the spiral motif prior to treatment and burial until next season.

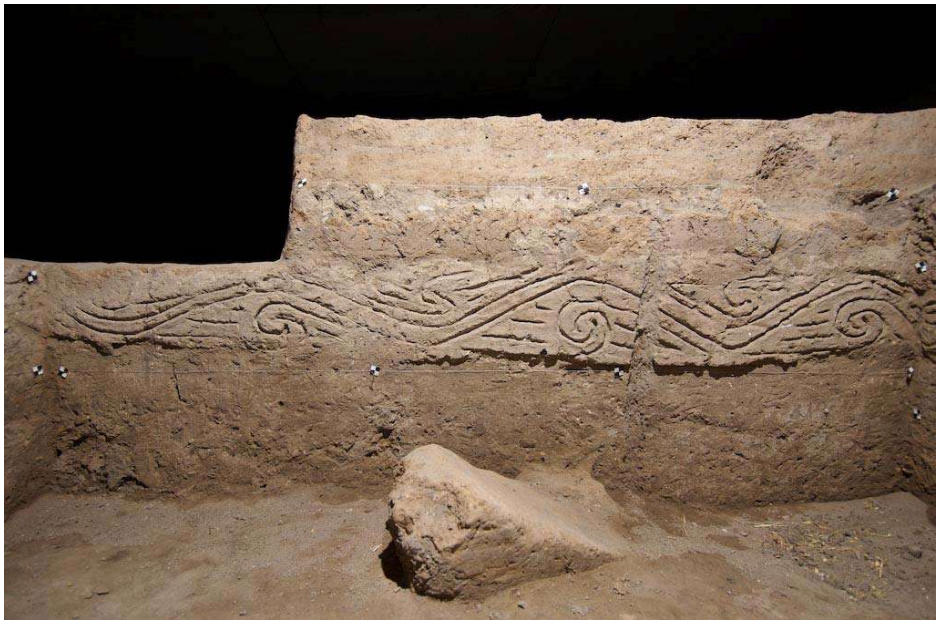

Figure 167: Decorative border with the spiral motif

The mud plaster was very fragile to deal with. Upon exposure, it began cracking and delaminating in areas. For this reason, it became crucial to use a moulding technique, which would not cause any damage to the border during application and removal. Since the use of available moulding materials posed the risk of staining the mud-plaster (as well as placing physical pressure) i.e. silicon rubber (synthetic elastomer made from a cross-linked polymer which is reinforced with silica), modelling wax etc., the least harmful method was considered to be squeeze paper.

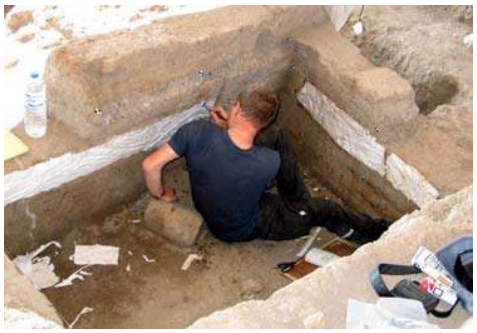

Figure 168: Taking the squeeze mold

Prior to moulding, the surface of the mud plaster was consolidated by using 2.5% Paraloid B72 (ethyl methacrylate co-polymer) in Xylene (petroleum distillate) in three layers. The squeeze method involved dampening strips of blotting paper with water and gently pushing into the incisions with a medium hard brush (Figure 168). Once the paper dried, it formed the shape of the area applied and was gently removed from the surface. Even though this method worked well, the deeper incisions proved to be difficult to mould. In these cases, the paper strips were used in multiple layers to prevent ruptures.

The result of the moulding was successful. The next step will be to take a silicon rubber mould from the mother mould and then to make a cast of the spiral motif for further study and display. In the mean time, the border is planned to be lifted in the 2008 season.

Another complex project undertaken in the 2007 season was the lifting of a plaster wall relief, which was found on a plastered wall in Foundation Trench 22 in the 4040 Area (Figure 169).

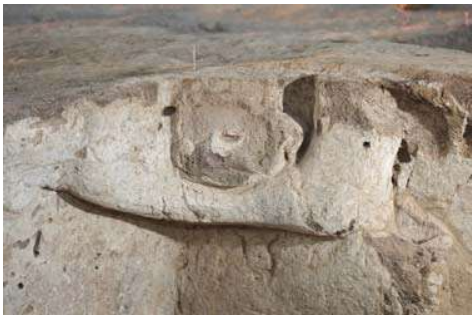

Figure 169: Plaster bear relief

The relief is interpreted as the bottom half of a bear (see Introduction). Its belly and belly button were quite clear even though the upper portion of the relief was eroded due to its proximity to the surface of the mound. It was made of many layers of plaster and its condition was relatively sound. It was located on the corner of a wall and therefore presented a challenge in terms of excavating, cutting and lifting. Prior to the lifting process, the plaster layers were consolidated by spraying with 25% Primal AC-33 (Acrylic dispersion) in distilled water in many applications. The areas that remained unstable were further consolidated with 50% Primal AC-33 in distilled water, which made the mud-brick wall as well as the plaster layers quite strong to withstand the lifting process.

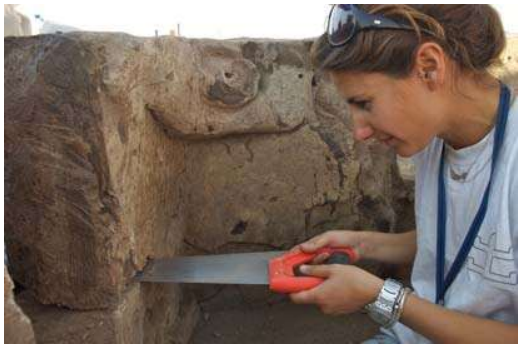

Figure 170: Cutting the plastered wall

Once the plastered wall was fully stabilised, the surrounding soil was excavated in order to create an area wide enough to be able to cut and lift the relief. During this process, the relief was supported by placing plastazote (closed cell polyethene) foam against its surface and propping it with sand filled buckets. When the excavation was complete, the buckets and the support material were removed and the area of the relief (10cm in depth, 35 cm in height from the top of the wall) was marked out for cutting. Before the cutting took place, a padded, wooden board (custom made for the shape of the wall corner) was prepared. A variety of saws was used for cutting (Figure 170). As the relief separated from the wall it was placed onto the board with the help of local workmen and was carried to the excavation finds laborartory in order to undertake further work in the 2008 season (Figure 171a,b).