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Tell Qaramel: Excavations 2008

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TELL QARAMEL EXCAVATIONS 2008

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Abstract: Tenth season of excavations at the site of Qaramel in Syria, exploring the building technique used in the construction of the fifth (earliest) tower/shrine and searching for the earliest PPNA stratigraphic horizons of site occupation. The combined extent of the uncovered area enabled a consideration of issues, such as settlement development and organization of space.

Keywords: Qaramel, Syria, proto-Neolithic, PPNA, tower/shrine, human-head sun-dried mud ornament

Excavations in the tenth season at Tell Qaramel focused on the deepest levels of Protoneolithic occupation in squares J-7b,d and K-7. Work concentrated on uncovering the interior of the oldest (fifth) tower/shrine in an effort to reconstruct the building technique. Exploration was also continued in squares L-5 and L-4/M-4, opened two years before. Since the Late and Middle Pre-Pottery Neolithic A layers in this area

had been badly destroyed by Iron Age and Middle and Early Bronze Age occupation, it was anticipated that the youngest horizons of the PPNA village could be found here. A new square (M-5) was opened, bringing the surface of the investigated area in this part of the site up to approximately 5 ares [*Fig. 1*]. The extent of the excavated area enabled studies of issues like settlement development and organization of space.

SQUARES J-7B,D AND K-7

Trench supervisor: Marcin Białowarczuk

Exploration was concentrated in square K-7. In square J-7b,d only the western part of the oldest tower (locus 65) was explored, focusing on clarifying details of tower construction and exploring Protoneolithic level 15 [*Fig. 2*].

STRATUM V, LEVEL 14:

THE OLDEST TOWER

Level 14 had been explored already last

season; it contained the oldest tower (Loc. 65), located exactly on the border between squares J-7b,d and K7 (Mazurowski 2010: 570–572). The semi-subterranean structure stood in a pit dug in the red soil level to a depth of approximately 0.80 m. The bottom of the pit was covered with a layer of soil with pebbles. The external wall of the structure was built along the edge of the pit and a floor of big stones was

laid out. The internal walls were added only afterwards. There are some indications of two phases of internal arrangement.

In the older phase A, the interior of the tower was divided into two rooms [Fig. 3]. The smaller unit was located in the southern part of the structure and was delimited by a semi-circular wall made of stones. The larger one contained four steps located in the northwestern part of the room. The steps were built of flat limestone slabs set between two rows of vertically standing stones. They clearly point to the location of an entrance in this area.

In the younger phase B, the level of the floor in the smaller room was raised

by adding a mud coat and the internal divisions were changed [Fig. 4A]. Two rows of vertical limestone slabs were set along the NW–SE axis, starting from the southeastern part of the wall and ending exactly in the centre of the tower, where a pyramidal stone hearth was situated. Two stone benches were also built, one in the western part of the tower and the other in the eastern part. The steps and the entrance remained in use in this phase as well [Fig. 4B].

Study of the external wall indicated that it was built of big limestone boulders laid in two rows, close to one another and set in red mud [Fig. 4C]. The upper

Team

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layers of stones were probably bonded in lime mortar, some traces of which were discovered in a few parts of the wall. The maximum thickness of the wall reached some 1.20 m. The manner of construction and especially the internal division of locus 65 clearly indicate that this structure was used as a shrine or a kind of public building. Additionally, this feature could have also been part of a defensive refugial system for the Qaramel village. The special function of this structure was confirmed additionally by a sun-dried clay image of a human head (perhaps a foundation gift) discovered below its floor [see *Fig. 17*].

STRATUM V, LEVEL 15

Level 15 had also started to be explored in the previous season in square J-7b,d and now it was recognized in square K-7 [*Fig. 5*]. Two single houses were found, accompanied by some contemporary mundane structures, such as storage pits and hearths, all belonging to the Protoneolithic horizon of Qaramelian occupation.

The first house (Loc. 64) was first discovered in the 2006 season and was originally believed to be connected with PPNA level 12 (Mazurowski 2007: 491–492). It was now established that it was in fact in level 15. It was located in

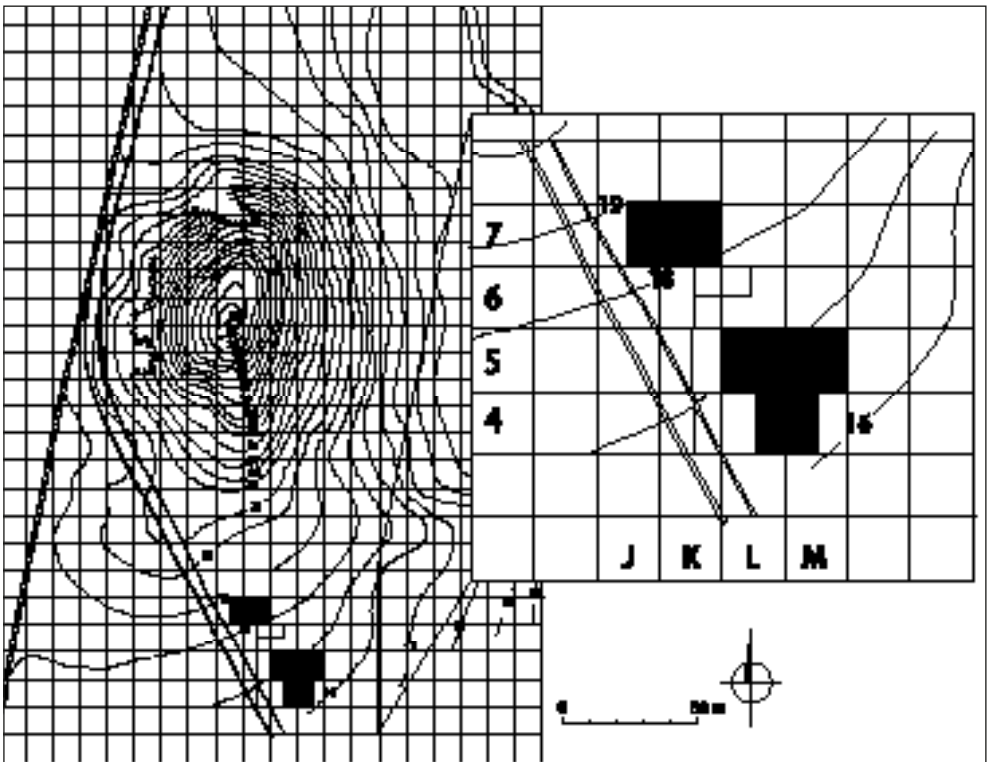


Fig. 1. Topographical plan of the site; inset, marked location of trenches (in black, trenches excavated in 2008 (PCMA mission archives; digitizing R. Mahler)



Fig. 2. Localization of tower V in the area of excavations
(Photo R.F. Mazurowski)

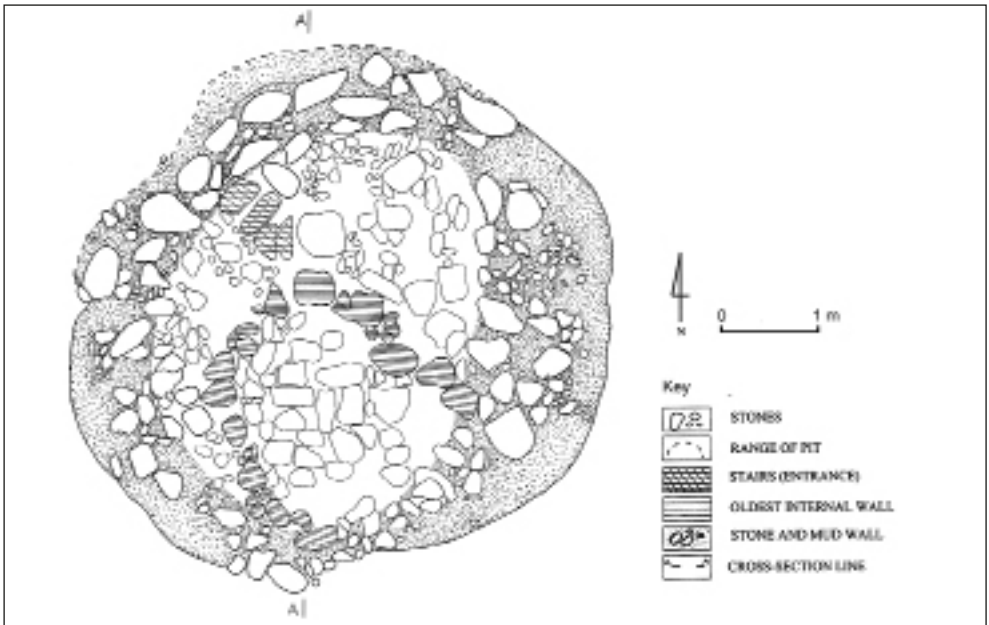


Fig. 3. Tower V (Loc. 65) in phase A
(Drawing S. Jarząb, Z. Różańska)

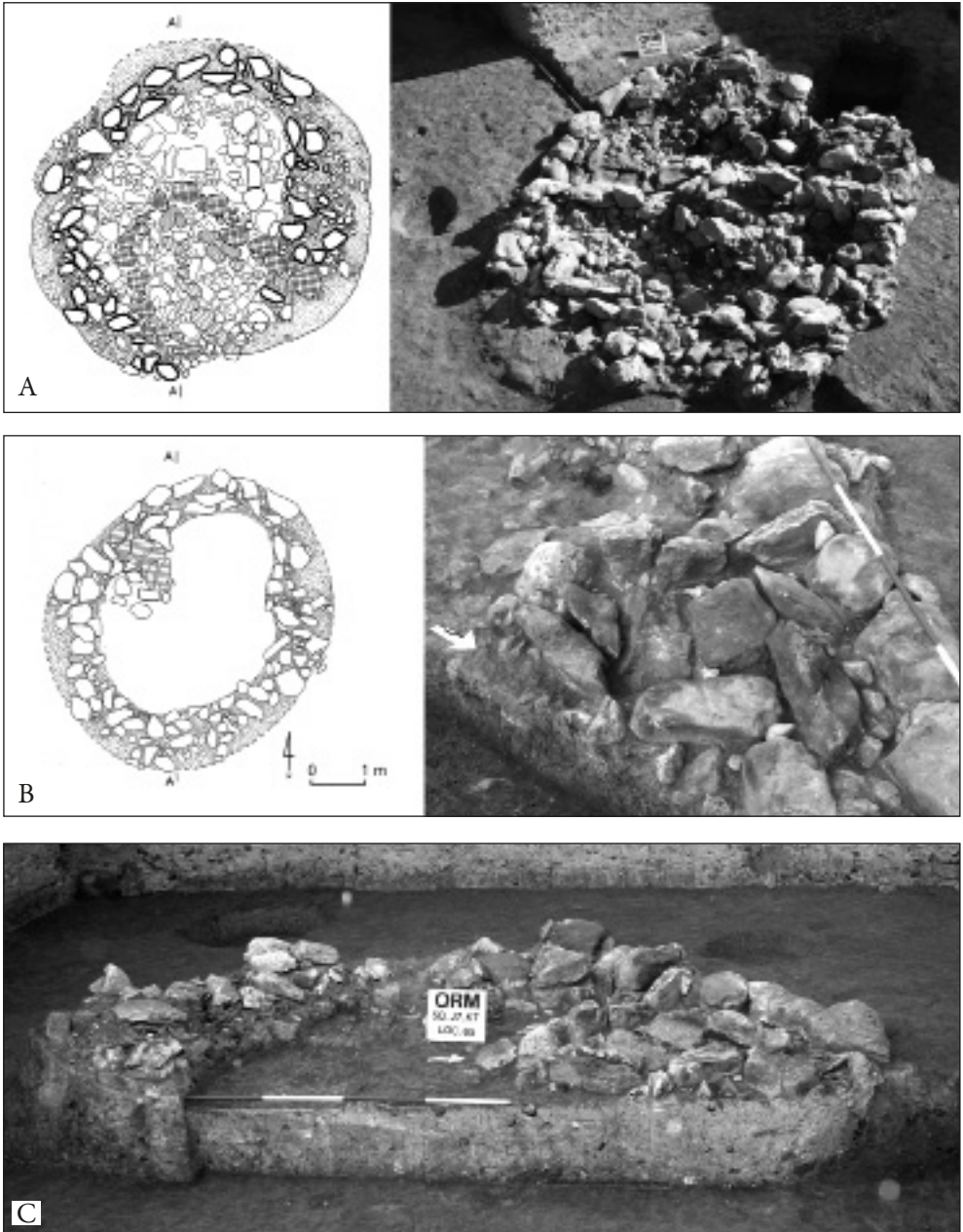


Fig. 4. Tower V (Loc. 65) in phase B: A – plan and view from the southwest; B – plan and view of entrance and steps in the northern part; C – cross-section. For the key to the drawings, see Fig. 3 on opposite page (Drawing S. Jarzb, Z. Rzaska; photo R.F. Mazurowski)

the southeastern corner of square K-7, but since its eastern part continues into the unexcavated part of L-7 a full dimension of the house cannot be given for the moment. It was semi-subterranean, round, approximately 5 m in diameter. The pit was sunk about 0.30–0.40 m into a layer of red soil and a small *pisé* (*tauf*) wall was built along the edge. Only a small part of this wall has survived. It was 0.30 m thick and by all indications it was originally no higher than 0.40–0.50 m. The superstructure was built of organic materials, supported on four postholes located along the wall, on its inner side. There is no doubt that regularly

spaced wooden posts were used as wall pillars and roof support, but in this case their location is quite unusual. This type of construction has not been noted before in Qaramel. The floor of the locus was made of a centimeter thick layer of yellow mud. A small round hearth (approximately 0.50 m in diameter) was situated in the center; it was filled completely with ash, charcoal and small pebbles.

Three pits were discovered (12/08, 13/08 and 14/08) just beside locus 64. All were round and had been used as hearths. Pits 12/08 and 14/08 were approximately 0.70 m in diameter and approximately

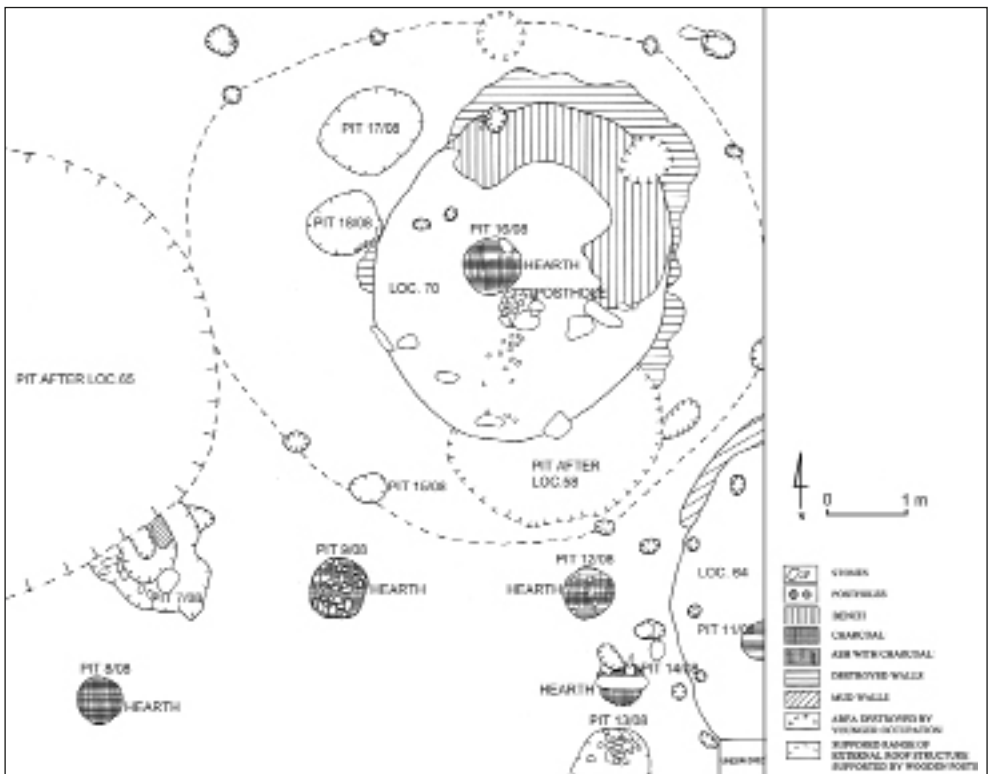


Fig. 5. Square K-7, stratum V, level 15
(Drawing S. Jarzab, Z. Różańska)

0.20 m deep. Only Pit 13/08 was bigger, being approximately 0.90 m in diameter and about 0.40 m deep. Five postholes were uncovered around these pits. Their presence suggests that the whole area with hearths could have been roofed.

Locus 70, located in the northeastern part of square K-7, about 1.50 m northwest of locus 64 [Fig. 6], was also semi-subterranean and round, its diameter being approximately 4 m. A wall of flat limestone slabs was built along the edge of the dwelling pit. A wattle-and-daub wall superstructure is suggested by lumps of mud with imprints of straw matting. The floor was made of a layer of red mud about 1–3 cm thick. A large posthole surrounded by pebbles in the middle of the locus indicates that the roof was supported on a wooden post approximately 25–30 cm square.

A round (approximately 0.80 m in diameter) central hearth just beside the posthole was covered with a thin layer of red, baked mud plaster. A crescent-shaped bench was built alongside the northeastern part of the wall. The bench (0.10 m high and 0.60 m wide) was made of a hard, white lime mass.

Around this house, at a distance of about one meter, ten regularly spaced postholes were discovered. Their location suggests that an area of about 1.00–1.20 m around the house was also roofed.

Two large pits were located near the northwestern part of the locus wall. Pit 17/08 was oval, approximately 1.20 x 1.00 m and about 0.40 m deep. No traces of fire inside suggest that it was used as a storage pit. The other one (Pit 18/08), approximately 0.80 m in diameter, was



Fig. 6. Structure (Loc. 70) in square K-7, stratum V, level 15
(Photo R.F. Mazurowski)

a round hearth. Both structures were operated together with the house.

Exploration of the southern part of the locus fill suggested the existence of an older phase. Continued excavation next season should verify this idea.

The southwestern part of square K-7 contained another four pits connected with level 15. Pit 7/08 was large, irregular and

stepped. Most of it had been destroyed by locus 65 from level 14, making it difficult to identify. Pits 8/08 and 15/08 were small round hearths, approximately 0.50 m in diameter, filled with light-grey ash. Pit 9/08 was also a round hearth, approximately 0.80 m in diameter, containing a layer of charcoal and plenty of pebbles, which is typical of hearths used for cooking.

SQUARE L-5

Trench supervisor: A. Gackowski

Two levels of occupation, both from Stratum III representing the middle phase of PPNA, were excavated in square L-5. The best preserved remnants of PPNA occupation survived in the eastern part of the square. The other parts (about 70 %) contained stony debris, pits and other traces of destruction connected with Early Bronze Age occupation. Among them was a fragment of a stone structure located in the western part of the square and Pit 16 located about 3.50 m south of this structure. Both contained a large number of pottery fragments.

STRATUM III, LEVEL 1

The remains of three houses (loci 18, 20 and 21) and two associated pits (14 and 15) were recorded [Fig. 8].

The house in the northeastern corner of the square (Loc. 18) [Fig. 7] was a round structure, approximately 4 m in diameter, with walls approximately 0.30–0.40 m thick, made of mud on a stone frame. Its floor was made of a layer of mud with lime added, formed on a pebble substructure.

A fragment of a terrace, preserved only in the northern part, was uncovered outside the house. The structure, made of

small pebbles, was covered with a layer of mud mixed with lime.

The second of the houses was Loc. 20, located about 1 m southwest of Loc. 18. It was heavily destroyed, but the surviving part of its wall suggests that it could have been an oval or round structure, approximately 2 m in diameter. Its walls, preserved to a height of about 0.20 m, were made of red-orange mud lying on a single row of



Fig. 7. Loc. 18 in stratum III, level 1, viewed from the north (Photo R.F. Mazurowski)

stones. The fragmentarily preserved floor was made similarly as in Loc. 18.

Another house (Loc. 21) was situated southwest of Loc. 20, but was so poorly preserved that its full plan and dimensions could not be defined. The walls were made of mud with stones of different size. The floor was of the same kind as in the loci described above. It appears stratigraphically to be younger than Loc. 20.

Of the two pits connected with these houses, Pit 14, located south of Loc. 20 and east of Loc. 21, was an oval storage pit approximately 0.80 m by 1.50 m and about 0.20 m deep. The fill of this pit contained a large number of animal bones of different sizes.

The other pit (no 15) was used as a hearth connected with the younger phase of occupation. It was round, measured approximately 0.30 m in diameter and was sunk into the upper layer of the fill of Pit 14. Pit 15 contained a layer of ash mixed with small fragments of animal bones.

STRATUM III, LEVEL 2

This level of occupation contained two structures, Loc. 22 and 23 [Fig. 9]. Locus 22, a house, was located in the southeastern part of the square, directly under Loc. 21. Only a small part of its wall and an internal bench were preserved. Its walls, approx. 0.30 m thick, were made of buff mud with lime added. The internal

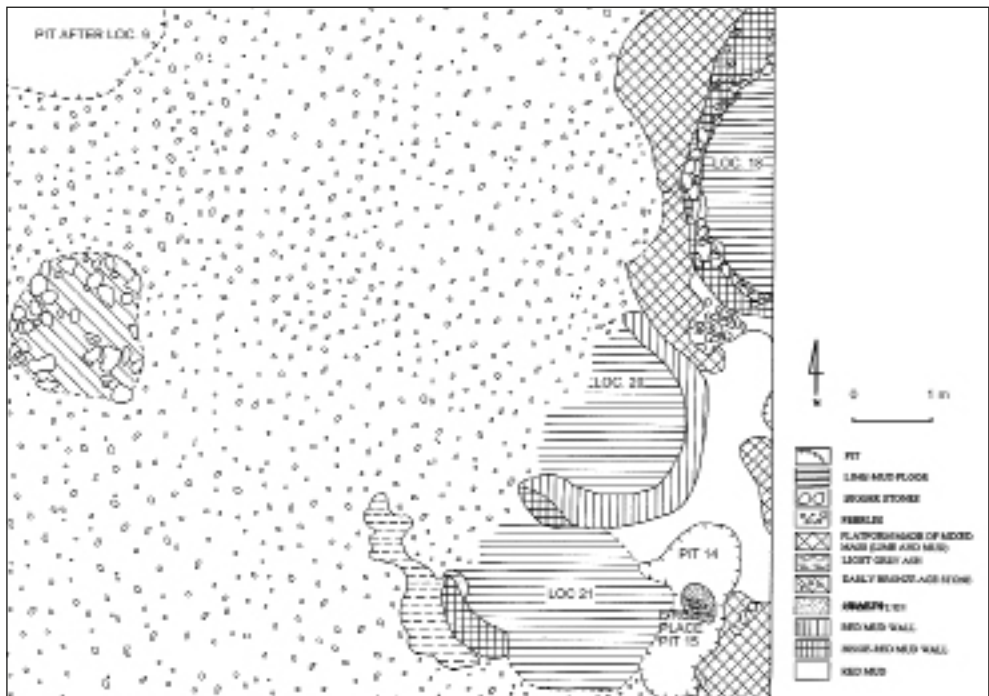


Fig. 8. Square L-5. Plan of occupation in stratum III, level 1
(Drawing A. Gackowski)

bench was fashioned of red mud with small pebbles. A small patch of floor was discovered as well. It was made of a layer of mud-lime plaster on small pebbles. The full dimensions and shape of this house could not be defined within the trench.

Another house (Loc. 23) was situated in the northeastern part of the square. The surviving 2.50 m long wall was made of

buff mud with stones, the latter including a broken basalt quern. Reuse of stone implements as building material was typical of PPNA structures.

A part of wall with a fragment of floor was discovered about 5 m further to the south. There is no evidence that it belonged to the same house. Outside the wall, a fragment of mud platform was unearthed.

SQUARE L-4B, D AND M-4A, C

Trench supervisor: J. Gawrońska

Square L-4/M-4 is situated in the lowest, southern part of the slope, south of squares L-5 and M-5. Three occupational stratums (I-III) apparently from the Late PPNA had

already been identified during two previous seasons of work. Now, a new occupational stratum (IV) representing the middle phase of the PPNA was discovered.

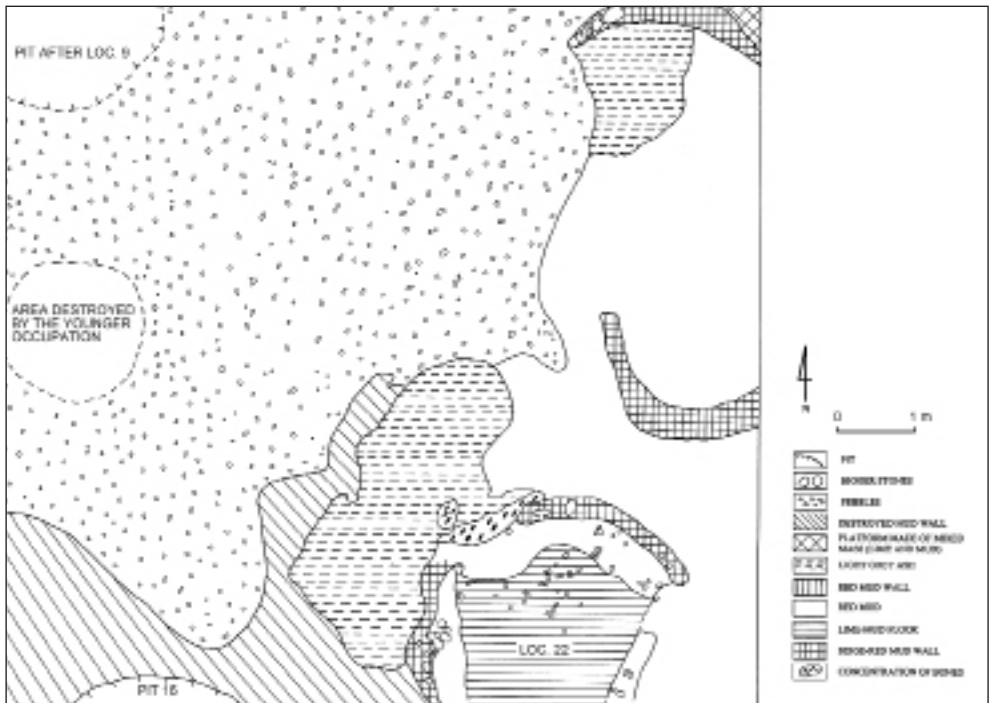


Fig. 9. Square L-5. Plan of structures in stratum III, level 2 (Drawing A. Gackowski)

STRATUM IV, LEVEL 1

A house (Loc. 7) and a pit (Pit 9) from an older occupational level were unearthed below structures of stratum III [Fig. 10]. The house, situated in the southern part of the square, featured an oval “cellular” plan. Its eastern, western and southern parts were destroyed by features from younger layers. The preserved part of the structure was about 5.50 m long (S-N) and 5 m wide (E-W) and divided into four small oval

rooms (Loci 7a–7d). Its mud-plastered wall was shaped in the *pisé* technique; it reached about 0.30 m in width and was preserved approximately 0.20 m high. The floor, made of pebbles covered with lime and plastered with mud, was about 0.15 m thick. Below the floor, a fish sculpture made of bone (in Loc. 7b) and a small stone bead (in Loc. 7c) were found.

Pit 9 was discovered southwest of Loc. 7, near its wall. It was round in shape,



Fig. 10. Square L-4b,d and M-4a,c. Plan of structures in stratum IV, level 1 (Drawing J. Gawrońska)

approx. 0.90 m in diameter and 0.50 m deep. Its fill contained red mud with a very small number of artifacts and animal bones. Its construction seems to suggest a water-storing function.

STRATUM IV, LEVEL 2

A house (Loc. 8), courtyard, grave (no. 10) and two pits (10 and 14) from the second occupational level were brought to light in the southern part of the square, under structures of level 1 [Fig. 11].

The house (Loc. 8) in the southeast part of the square was a fragment of an oval cellular structure, which had been damaged extensively by structures built from younger levels in its eastern and western parts. It was about 5.50 m long (N-S) and 4.50 m wide (E-W), and was divided into three oval(?) rooms (loci 8a-8c). The stone and mud-plastered wall of the locus, preserved to a height of 0.15 m was approximately 0.35 m wide. The floor (about 0.10 m thick) was made of pebbles covered in lime-

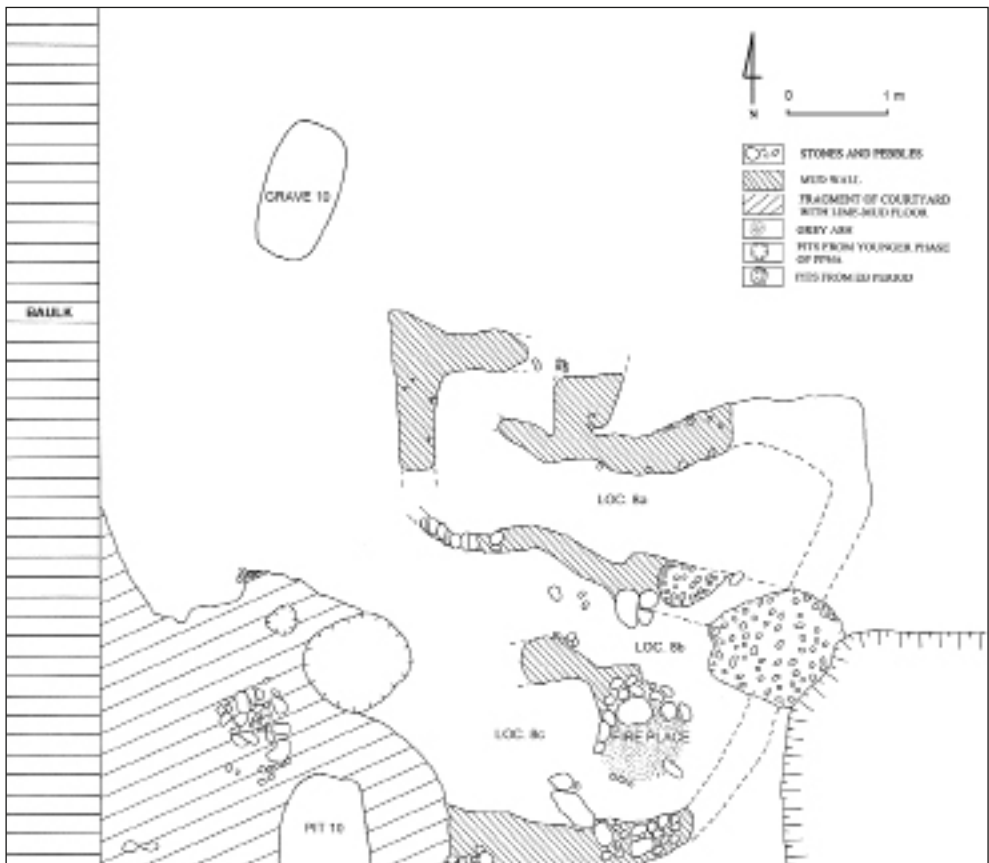


Fig. 11. Square L-4b,d and M-4a,c. Plan of structures in stratum IV, level 2 (Drawing J. Gawrońska)

mud plaster. A circular hearth, approximately 1 m in diameter, was dug into the floor in the south part of the house (inside locus 8c). It was surrounded by a double row of large and mid-sized stones. The fill of this hearth, nearly 0.30 m deep, contained light-grey ash with a small number of animal bones. Its bottom was covered in burned, middle-sized stones.

A fragment of courtyard with lime-mud floor (about 0.10 m thick) was cleared west of locus 8. Its southern part was hidden under the southern baulk, while its western part was completely destroyed by structures from younger layers. A circular stand(?), made of large and middle-sized stones, was situated in the centre of the uncovered part of the courtyard. It measured approximately 0.90 m in diameter and about 0.30 m in depth. Two pits (Nos 10 and 14) were dug into the courtyard floor in the southern part, truncated by the baulk. Both were oval (or round?) in shape and measured about 0.90 m in width (E–W), 1 m (or more?) in length (N–S) and 0.50 m in depth. The bottoms and sides of the pits were covered in mud. Their fill contained coarse red mud with a small admixture of animal bones.

North of the courtyard (northeastern part of square L-4b) a destroyed human and animal burial was unearthed. An incomplete man's skeleton (*iuvenis/adultus*) without skull was oriented on a NE–SW axis, with the upper body directed to the northeast. The deceased was probably lying on his right side in a crouched position. There were no gifts. An incomplete animal (*Bovidae*) skeleton was interred to the west of the human, also without any gifts; the animal lay on its left side, with head directed to the northeast, facing the man.

STRATUM IV, LEVEL 3

A fragment (half?) of a house (Loc. 9) and three pits (Pits 11–13) were uncovered in the southern part of the square [Fig. 12]. The single room(?) forming Loc. 9 was located in the southeastern part of the square. The northern half of this single-room(?), a round (oval?) structure, as well as its western part, were destroyed by pits from the EBA and features from a younger phase of the PPNA. The house measured about 6 m in diameter. Its nearly 0.50 m thick wall was preserved to a height of about 0.40 m. It was built of large and middle-sized stones plastered with mud. The fill of the structure contained, among others, a small stone bead, a fragment of decorative shaft-straightener made of chlorite and some animal bones. A round posthole(?) nearing 0.40 m in diameter, was dug into the middle part of the south wall of the structure.

An oval pit (No. 11) southwest of Loc. 9 was approximately 1.20 m long (E–W), 0.90 m wide (N–S) and 0.70 m deep. Its sides and bottom were covered by a mud coat approximately 1 cm thick. The fill of the pit contained red mud with a small number of artifacts (mostly animal bones).

A round hearth (Pit 12) by the south wall of locus 9, on the outside, measured about 1 m across. It was 0.50 m deep and was filled with light-gray ash containing various artifacts. In the middle of square M-4a, north of locus 9 (or inside it perhaps), there was yet another small round hearth (Pit 13), measuring approximately 0.70 m in diameter and 0.30 m in depth. Its sides were covered with a 10-cm thick layer of lime-plaster, while its bottom was packed with small pebbles and middle-sized burned stones. The fill of the hearth contained light-grey ash with some animal bones.

SQUARE M-5

Trench supervisor: P. Karczmarek

The only level explored in the newly opened square M-5 (excavated area 10 m x 10 m), situated east of square L-5, was a largely destroyed settlement level from the Early Iron Age (with mixed archaeological material).

STRATUM I, LEVEL I

The debris of the one traceable building (Loc. 1) was located close to the center of the square [Fig. 13]. Its outer wall, 0.60 m thick, was made of a double line of big stones set on a N-S axis. Small pebbles

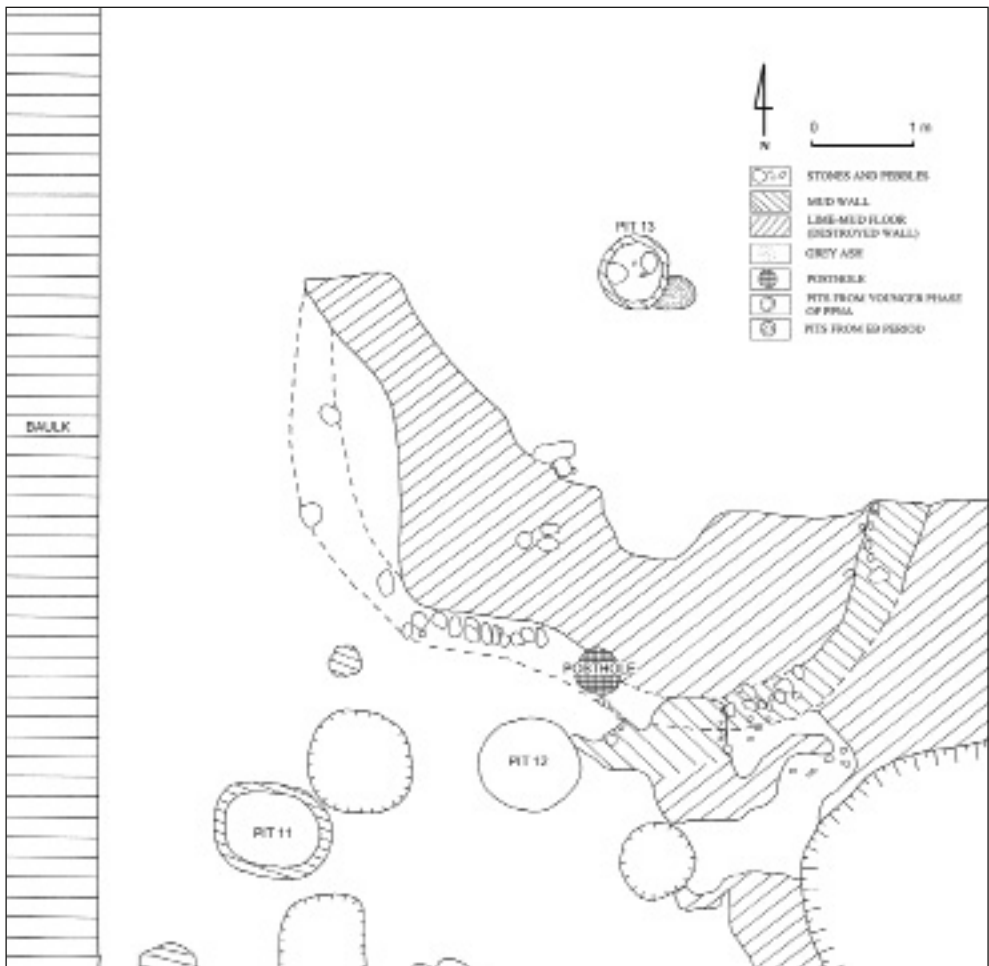


Fig. 12. Square L-4b,d and M-4a,c. Plan of structures in stratum IV, level 3
(Drawing J. Gawrońska)

filled the space between bigstones. An inner wall made of a double line of perfectly fitted, medium-sized stone blocks, 0.40 m thick, ran at a right angle to it. Different kinds of floors were found in the rooms on both sides of this wall. One was a white lime floor approx. 2-3 cm thick; it was heavily damaged and only partly visible. The one on the other side of the wall was made of reddish mud on a bedding of small pebbles.

An irregular pit (Pit 1) and a stone pavement can probably be connected with Locus 1. The pit was filled with grey

soil and a few stones and some potsherds, and was approximately 0.20 m deep. The pavement extended to the north and east of Locus 1, stretching probably also beyond the excavated area.

CHIPPED STONE (FLINT) INDUSTRY

Over 3000 flint artifacts were collected this year, similarly to previous seasons in terms of quantity, and of these 97% were identified as so-called “chocolate flint”, which was the main raw material used on site. Unidentified burned flint made up 2%

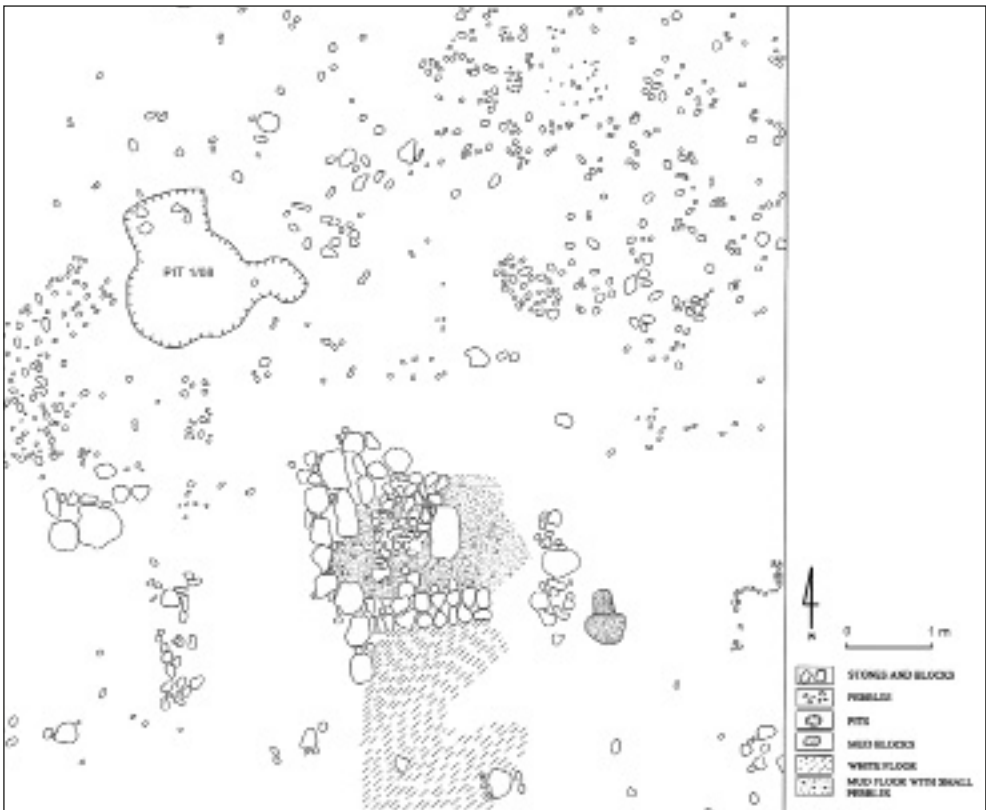


Fig. 13. Square M-5. Plan of structures in stratum I, level 1
(Drawing P. Kaczmarek, Z. Róžańska)

of the collection. The rest (approximately 1%) was constituted by gray obsidian imported from Anatolia. Obsidian is present in the middle and younger PPNA occupation levels only.

The oldest, that is to say, Protoneolithic (Proto-Qaramelian) material comes from the J-7/K-7 squares, where unipolar cores were commonly attested. Small El-Khiam type points were characteristic of those levels. Among other tools, there are retouched blades, sickle blades, slender borers and perforators, burins, end-scrapers and in lesser numbers also retouched flakes, truncations and other backed pieces, except lunates. Levels investigated in the

L-4/M-4 and L-5 squares represent the Middle Early Aceramic Neolithic occupation. Generally, artifacts became more massive with time, bipolar 10 cm long cores becoming a basic type. For these levels, Helwan type and smaller handle points are most characteristic, very often with recesses typical of the Qaramelian.

Other categories of tools remained the same as in other settlement levels. Only the number of retouched blades went down.

Artifacts from square M-5 were found in secondary position, representing different kinds of tools from all the Protoneolithic and PPNA layers.

GROUND AND PECKED STONE INDUSTRY

The excavations this season produced 91 objects representing the ground and pecked stone industry of the Protoneolithic (Proto-Qaramelian) and the Middle Early Aceramic Neolithic, called Middle PPNA in traditional terminology.

The finds were divided into separate forms by class and variety (Mazurowski 1997; symbols in parentheses refer to this classification system). The collection contains:

- two spherical *bolos* balls (IA1) made of grey flint;
- five fragments of a round quern similar to forms with trough-shaped cross section (IIA1) (some with traces of searing, like grinding/polishing plates or “kitchen” plates);
- fragments of four oval querns with trough-shaped cross section (IIB1a) made of basalt;
- 20 complete or fragmentary single (IIIA1) or double-pole (IIIA2) pestles

made of chlorite, two of these with grooved decoration;

- three complete unilateral (IIIE1a) or bilateral (IIIE2c) oval basalt grinders with traces of usage on lateral edges [*Fig. 14*, top left];
- one complete unilateral mortar with bowl-shaped depression (IVA1);
- one fragment of cylindrical mortar pounder (VB1/2);
- complete double-pole pounder (VD2) made of a natural pebble;
- five trapezoidal two-sided celts with oval transverse section (VIIA1a) and two triangular forms with oval transverse section (VIIA2a [*Fig. 14*, bottom left], one specimen decorated with parallel grooves on one edge, all made of green chlorite diabase;
- two trapezoidal adzes (VIII A) of chlorite;
- one fragment of ovoid macehead (XC1) made of calcareous mudstone;

– one complete and three fragments of pointed tools (XIB) made of slender pebbles with one pointed end and opposite end used as pestle, one of them decorated by two parallel grooves;
 – one chisel (XID) made of chlorite;
 – two needles (XIC1) made of chlorite;
 – four fragments of hemispherical bowls with inward rims (XIVA2), three of them decorated in the “Jerf el-Ahmar style” [Fig. 14, bottom right];
 – one fragment of decorated bowl (XIVA2) reused as shaft straightener (XVD);
 – eight oval (XVA) or rectangular (XVC) shaft straighteners made of chlorite, seven

of them decorated with geometric motifs or images of snakes [Fig. 14, top right];
 – 17 beads made of chlorite, white or gray marble, and green calcite including the following forms [Fig. 14, center bottom]: three cylindrical long tubular (XVIA1a), 10 small circular (XVIA2a) which are rectangular in transverse section and have length/diameter ratios from 1/1 to 1/3; barrel-shaped with ovoid (XVIA3a-3) or sub-rectangular (XVIA3c-1) transversal section;
 – two pendants made of natural pebbles (XVIB1) [Fig. 14, center bottom];
 – two plaquettes (XVIK) made of chlorite,

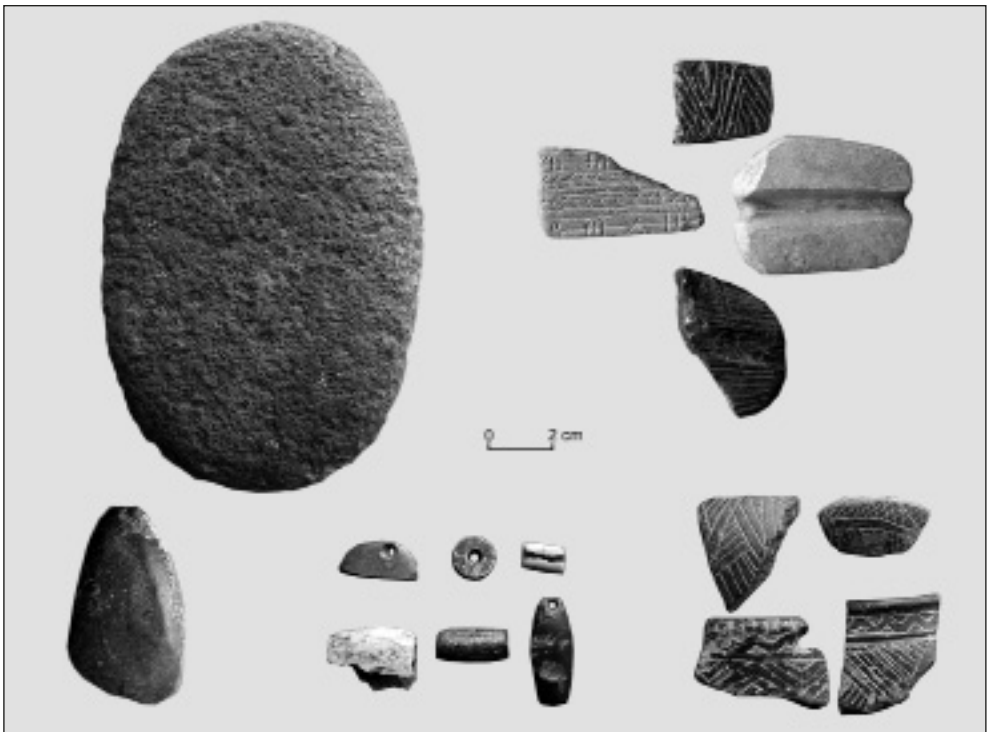


Fig. 14. Ground and pecked artifacts (counterclockwise from top left): basalt grinder IIIE2c and chlorite artifacts, that is, celt VIIA; beads and pendants; four fragments of decorated bowls; shaft straighteners (Photo R.F. Mazurowski)

one of them decorated with a groove on the side edge;

– one fragment of ring with sub-rectangular transversal section.

The number of stone finds this year was limited compared to previous seasons, due to the more intensive exploration of occupational levels belonging to the Proto-Qaramelian (Protoneolithic) period. Probably for the same reason, the number of heavy duty tools has fallen, as has their functional diversification. Basalt, chlorite and calcareous mudstone have remained the most common raw materials used. The high number of decorated everyday tools

and the uniform character of the ornaments merits note (17.6%). Moreover, many stone objects from the Proto-Qaramelian have parallels in the form of the decoration to the Natufian tradition, while the material from layers belonging to the Qaramelian (PPNA) demonstrates similarities with settlements from the Taurus Region (Göbekli Tepe, Nevalo Çori) and the Middle Euphrates area (Tell Abr 3, Mureybet, Sheikh Hassan, Jerf el-Ahmar).

Most of the stone objects were found in layers, used as construction material in walls and floors. Only a few stone relics were found *in situ*.

BONE AND SHELL OBJECTS

In total, 34 complete or fragmentary bone tools and ornaments were found. Almost all were discovered in the same localization as the stone relics described above. Many were discerned only when processing animal bones from layers and pits. Their primary classification after R.F. Mazurowski (1997) is as follows:

– 17 complete or fragmentary awls made of middle-sized mammals bones [Fig. 15, right and left top];

– three fragments of daggers made from massive ribs of large mammals [Fig. 15, center top], one of them decorated with incisions made with a flint tool;

– sculpture of a fish in naturalistic style made from the flat part of a mammal rib [Fig. 15, bottom left];

– double perforator made of a flat animal bone;

– two needles from bird bones;

– two long cylindrical tubular beads made of bird bones;

– three fragments of mammal ribs with cut marks made with a flint tool;

– three fragments of flat, polished bones;
– two small intentionally perforated shells used as pendants.

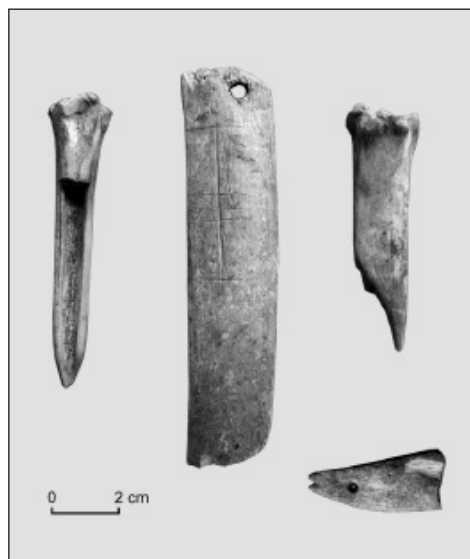


Fig. 15. Bone artifacts: awls (left, top right), dagger (center) and fish sculpture (bottom right) (Photo R.F. Mazurowski)

SUN-DRIED MUD ORNAMENTS

Altogether five objects made of sun-dried mud were found. Two of them were discovered in structures dating to the Proto-Qaramelian (Protoneolithic) and were situated in the oldest tower/shrine (human head) and a pit located nearby (ovoidal disc).

The sculpture of the human head (L. 0.44 cm, W. 0.36 cm, Th. 0.34 cm) was shaped in naturalistic style with recognizable eyes, nose, mouth and ears [Fig. 17]. The head is pierced with two holes, probably forming a V-shaped perforation for suspending as a pendant. All of its surfaces are well polished. The ovoidal disc also has a well polished surface [Fig. 16, top right].

Two barrel-shaped beads with ovoidal transversal sections [Fig. 16, top and bottom left] and a sub-rectangular separator bead with two transversal perforations [Fig. 16, bottom right] came from Middle PPNA layers.

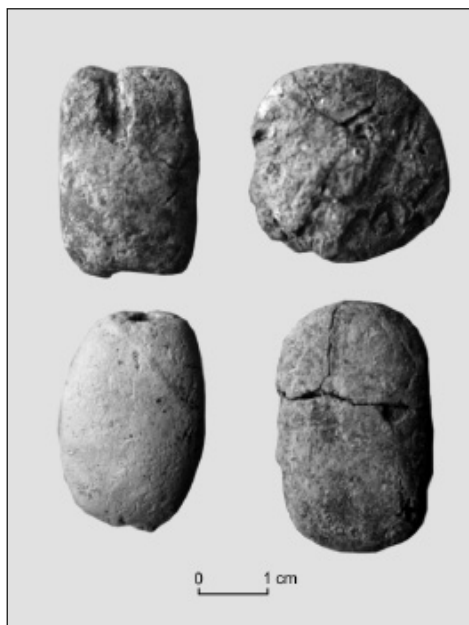


Fig. 16. Artifacts of sun-dried clay (counterclockwise from top left): two beads, separator and disc (Photo R.F. Mazurowski)

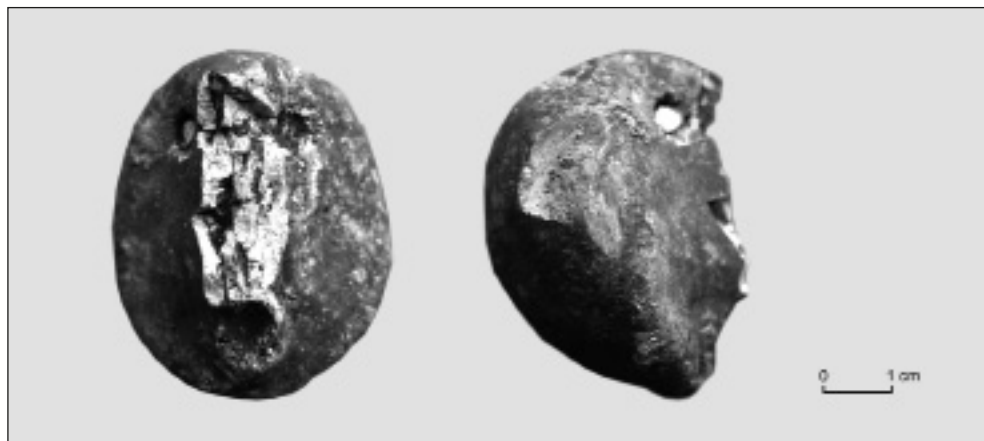


Fig. 17. Human head sculpted of sun-dried mud, front and profile views (Photo R.F. Mazurowski)

ANIMAL BONES

The osteological material from the Proto-neolithic and PPNA layers was analyzed typologically and anatomically and estimates were made of the animal age, sex, and morphology (based on bone measurements). An evaluation was made of different kinds of traces on the bone remains.

As reported by Dr. A. Gręzak, 17,642 (56.27%) of the more than 31,000 fragmented bones and teeth were identified anatomically and zoologically. Most of the bones were in poor condition, probably due to processing of the meat for consumption and post-depositional conditions.

Mammal bones constituted the vast majority of the assemblage. These were accompanied by 108 bird fragments, 47 pieces of turtle carapace and 33 fragments of snail and mollusk shells (mostly *Unio* sp.).

Mammal remains represented wild animals exclusively and they belonged to the following categories:

– small ruminants (40.46%)

Sheep and goat bone remains were dominant in this group. Some elements of skeleton (vertebrae, horncores, long bones and phalanges) belonged to gazelles;

– large ruminants (39.72%)

The majority of teeth and bones belonging to this group were identified as aurochs. A group of smaller bones was characterized by traits typical of the Cervidae family and could belong to deer and/or fallow deer. Some elements in this category could belong to large antelopes;

– *Equidae* family (11.68%)

From a preliminary osteometric and morphological analysis it can be inferred

that most of the animals from the Equidae family were medium-sized individuals, probably onagers (*Equus hermonius* onager);

– *Carnivora*e (1.07%)

The osteological material is of three different sizes. The most common bones are those of fox (probably sand fox);

– *Susidae* family (4.32%)

Represented by pig remains only.

Other animals (2.76%) included specimens of the *Epridae* family (hare or wild rabbit) and micromammals (*Rodentia* and/or *Insiwora*).

The preliminary analysis shows that the osteological material comprises all parts of the skeleton of the most common mammals. The remains bear traces of pre-consumption treatment. There is abundant evidence for the use of sharp tools, mostly in the form of short narrow cuts, which are made when splitting and filleting meat.

Several dozen simple tools were found among the post-consumption bone remains. The tools had been made by splitting the bones (usually the tibia and metapodial bone) of mainly ruminants (usually small). The osteological material included several auroch first phalanges with in the bone shafts. Inch-long bones are sometimes said to have been used as whistles. It is also possible that the holes could have been made in order to get the marrow out.

Some bones bear marks made after they had been discarded. These include bite marks made by carnivores and marks made by plant roots.

CONCLUSIONS

First of all, with the excavation of the oldest tower (Loc. 65) from the Proto-Qaramelian (Protoncolithic) period nearing completion, we now have fuller knowledge about construction technique and arrangement of the internal space of this monumental structure in two phases of use. Moreover, we have data on two subterranean structures, as well as pits and fireplaces east of the tower, which were associated with its Proto-Qaramelian occupation. Culturally sterile soil has not been reached yet in squares J-7 and K-7 and there is some evidence to suggest the existence of even older occupation below 50 cm of red mud

containing no archaeological objects. The same situation was observed in all squares where exploration has been finished.

In squares L-4b,d/M-4a,c and L-5 several houses representing the Middle PPNA horizon of the settlement were discovered. Associated pits, fireplaces and graves have produced interesting artifacts made of flint, stone, and bone.

The season also produced another 17 decorated objects made of stone, as well as a bone carving of a fish and the image of human head made of sun-dried mud which shows many similarities with forms known from Mureybet.

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