



Building 64

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Chapter 21

Building 64

Lisa Yeomans

B.64 is an irregular wedge-shaped building constructed in Level 4040 H (see Chapter 4, Fig. 4.29) on the same alignment as an earlier building (Sp.138) that could be seen in the sections of the quarry pits dug through B.64 after its abandonment (Fig. 21.1). B.64 went out of use at approximately the same time as B.55 (Chapter 17).

B.64 consists of four spaces that, following the unusual shape of the building, are similarly irregular in layout. Sp.286 was the largest room but heavily truncated by later quarrying which destroyed internal features such as the oven or hearths that would have existed in the room. In the northeast corner a plastered platform F.2236 had survived intact except for its southeast corner that was cut through by later pitting. A small square room (Sp.288) in the northwest corner may have once been part of the main room. Sp.287 formed a western side room, with a platform in the southwest corner, and Sp.303 was probably a storeroom to the south. The alignment of the eastern wall of the building was extrapolated based on the location of the wall of Sp.138 below as the eastern side of the building, mainly in Sp.286 and Sp.303, had been completely truncated away by the quarry pits (Video 21.1 http://www.catalhoyuk.com/media/video/2006/20060726_4040_02.html). The location of the storeroom in the south of the building, as opposed to in the north as in B.55 and B.59, was probably related to the strange shape of the building whereby the reduced space at the southern end of the building was chosen as a store as it would have been too narrow for use as part of a main room.

In the north of the building, wall F.2234 appears to have been a buttressing wall against which platform F.2236 was constructed. This wall also formed the eastern wall to Sp.288 with wall F.2233 perhaps a later addition resulting in an extra space. Since wall F.2233 only survived to a limited height, it is uncertain if an access-hole would have provided entry into the room. A post-retrieval pit (13123) was positioned at the end of the western wall of Sp.288 with a scar in the wall plaster also indicating the location of post.

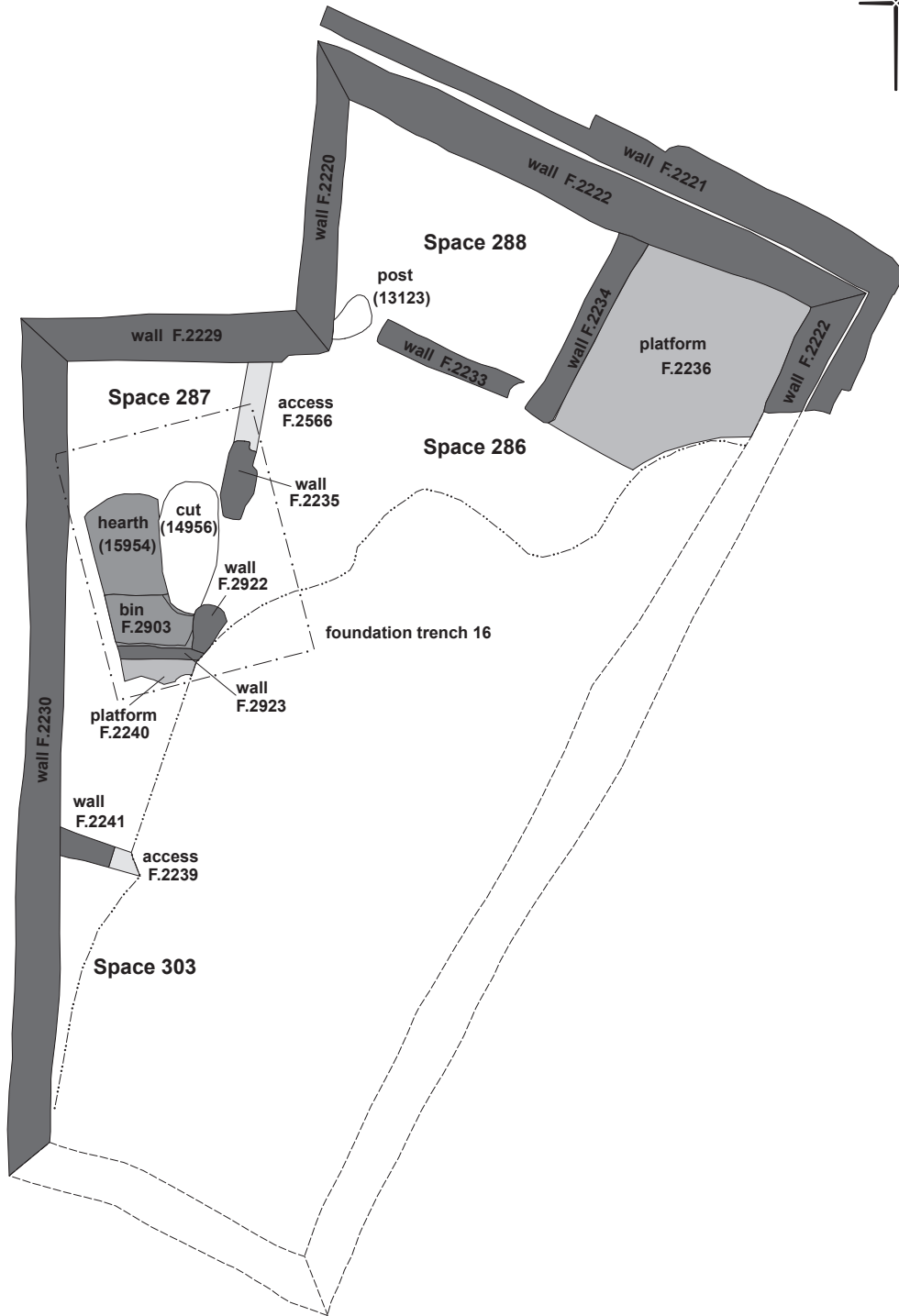
Sp.287 formed a western side room in the building separated by a narrow 0.13m wide wall F.2235. The later pitting had destroyed the southern part of the wall but the northern part survived. The wall stopped approximately 0.5m short of the northern wall forming an access-hole F.2566 between Sp.286 and Sp.287. In the southern part of Sp.287, a platform F.2240 had been built that presumably filled the width of the

room. The eastern side of the platform had been truncated leaving a section to reveal its construction that consisted of a single layer of plaster laid over the platform suggesting it had been constructed towards the end of the use of the building. The plaster on the surface of the platform lipped up to an access-hole (F.2239) that allowed entry into Sp.303. This access-hole was not blocked-in before the abandonment of the building but the subsequent fill that had built up inside could not be removed during excavation because of the instability of the structure. The plaster which lipped down into the roof of the access-hole from the dividing wall (F.2239) was thick suggesting that the access between the two was part of the original design of the building. The thin layer of plaster which lipped up onto the floor of the access-hole was only constructed during the last phases of building use and originally the access-hole would have been greater than its 0.26m height. This was confirmed by the excavations for a foundation trench for the north shelter, which showed that the platform at the southern end of Sp.287 was built towards the end of the use of the building. Sp.303 was formed by the converging walls of B.64 but the plan of this space is mostly conjectured from the plan of the equivalent space in the building below as much of the eastern part of the room had either been truncated by the quarry pits or by the foundation trench for the late B.41.

The narrowing, roughly triangular shape of B.64 had been caused because the building followed the footprint of earlier buildings. At some point, considerably earlier, there must have been two large buildings with a narrow gap between them that was used by a precursor of B.64. Perhaps this represents an expansion of a family group or an integration of two groups. Either way, it suggests a close relationship between the occupants of the cluster of buildings in that they did not mind or encouraged additional people to build between the two houses. What is most interesting about this is that it was not just one phase of building that this layout of building remained for. People kept on following the pattern of buildings and evidently some of the group of people did not mind that they ended up with an odd shaped house sandwiched between their neighbors (Fig. 21.2).

B.64 was only excavated down to its last phase of use with the exception of excavation that took place within Foundation Trenches 15 and 16 and the beam slot connecting Foundation Trench 16 and Foundation Trench 17, which

Building 64



- · — limit of excavation
- projected line
- · - · - truncation line

Figure 21.1. Plan of B.64 (Plan by Camilla Mazzucato, Cordelia Hall and David Mackie).



Figure 21.2. *B.64 showing quarry pits half-sectioned and infilled with midden (Photograph by Jason Quinlan).*

were dug for the north shelter. However, later pitting exposed sections through the floor layers and the presence of multiple floors indicated that the building had been occupied for some time before its abandonment. The length of occupation was substantially shorter than B.55 or B.66 but it was constructed later than B.55. The relationship between the phasing of construction between B.64 and B.66 is not currently known.

Building 64 Phase D: Construction

(Fig. 21.3. Harris matrix on CD)

The beam slot joining Foundation Trench 16 and Foundation Trench 17 cut through two abutting walls; wall F.2208, the southern wall of Sp.276, B.59 and wall F.2229, the northern wall of Sp.286, B.64. The between wall fill (16170) appeared to be a primary deposition with relatively unworn and un-weathered bone and stone artifacts. This fill material may have dropped from the roofs as the buildings were occupied. B.64 was built overlaying a building of similar size and shape (Sp.138) and both of these buildings were constructed after B.59 to the west.

Building 64 Phase C: Occupation before space divisions

The evidence of occupation was very limited; a complicated stratigraphic sequence was glimpsed within a small foundation trench. A dirty floor sequence (15973) in Sp.287 repre-

sents the first formal surfaces in the room and therefore was associated with a number of what appeared to be contiguous construction events. These include walls F.2922 and F.2923 that appeared to be the earliest internal features in this part of B.64. Wall F.2922 in the north was a straight north-south partition wall, whilst F.2923 to the south returned west, presumably to form another, as yet undefined, space or feature to the south outside the foundation trench. All of the wall components in these partitions were difficult to distinguish but they were all made of yellow-brown slightly sandy silt with a primary plaster layer. The walls were then replastered higher up the floor sequence, with (15946) and (15947) on wall (15948) in the north and (15953) and (15954) on the southern elements (15653/15955).

The next feature which was associated with the earlier dirty floors was the bin complex F.2903. This, like the walls, was a multi-phase structure with at least two and possibly up to six remodeling events. It should be noted that the key remodeling fit precisely within the division of the walls already noted. A cut was made on the northern side and in the base (15997) (mostly respecting F.2923 on its southern side). This resulting square cut was then also plastered (like F.2923) with (15954) which served as the first surface of the bin.

Building 64 Phase B: Occupation

After some use and repair, during which time Sp.287 and Sp.286 were divided, the bin appeared to have been recut (14942) and replastered (14957). Like the walls this final



Figure 21.4. Wild sheep horncore 13153.x1 found on final floor of Sp.286 (Photo by Lisa Yeomans).

phase of use also appeared to be associated with the later floors (14969), (14940) and (15919). The final feature was an ambiguous possible hearth structure which showed some traces of burning (15945). However, the backfill of the feature was impossible to distinguish from the superstructure so that the plan was difficult to establish. All the later floor sequences, however, respected the hearth on the northern side and the later phase of the bin also appeared to incorporate the hearth's southern side into its construction.

The later floors themselves seemed to respect all of the features outlined so far and built up steadily until they went out of use. In fact, it seems that all the features remained until they were backfilled and the area was resurfaced as an apparently open space with surface (14946). Prior to resurfacing something (possibly a post) was retrieved from the centre of the area in line with the partition walls, leaving a large retrieval pit (14956) filled with an ashy fill and an abundance of animal bone (14955). At about that time the space to the south of F.2923 was backfilled with homogenous orange-brown silt (15911) and another wall or partition was built (15670). The space to the south of this was thinly plastered (15699) before finally going out of use and being backfilled with a loose ashy fill (15699). The fill of the retrieval pit (14956) was not fully excavated as the pit continued beyond the extent of the foundation trench. Most of the bone in it was in good condition with sheep/goat, pig, equid, cattle and fish all rep-

resented. Only a tenth of the bone had been burnt to varying degrees despite being from an ashy deposit. The bone suggests rapidly accumulated waste from daily consumption. It seems possible that waste from within this building was used to backfill the retrieval pit

Building 64 Phase A: Closure/infilling

After abandonment the building was not infilled with the intention of immediate rebuilding but it was left to be gradually infilled by layers of demolition. Evidence for final activities within Sp.286 was limited to the phytolith remains of a basket or mat 13158.x1 located on the floor in Sp.286. Both buildings B.55 and B.64 had similar impressions left at the abandonment of the building. A group (13153) of animal bone just above the surface in Sp.286 was centered on a wild sheep frontlet with horncores (Fig. 21.4). The animal bone is mostly from sheep-sized animals with small amounts of bones from larger and smaller mammals. Of particular interest is a humerus of a wild cat; normally only the head or foot bones would have been brought to site with the skins. The sheep/goat bones consist of the main meat-bearing elements and there is a minimum of three individuals represented by these remains. Overall, in placement and contents, this bone deposit resembles a final meal but it may have been mixed with more general infilling material. The infill of B.64 did contain more animal bone than usual for infill deposits, although the deposit could simply be a temporary dump for the remains of daily meals while the house stood open; the concentration of bones around the wild sheep frontlet could be coincidental.

Following the disuse of B.64, the walls were not knocked down to the same extent as is often the case at Çatalhöyük. Wall F.2230, for example, was left standing to a height of 1.35m and although the surviving depth of the walls was shallower in the northern part of the building, this may have been caused by subsequent erosion rather than the deliberate dismantling of the walls. Since no building was to be constructed above the remains of B.64, there was no need to push the walls into the internal spaces of the room to form an even, solid grounding for the following structure. Roomfill in the surviving western part Sp.303 consisted of layers of demolition (13160)/(13107) that contained large fragments of animal bone that may have resulted from the dumping of waste. The bone is a mixture of species with fragments showing evidence of weathering to varying degrees and some gnawing; the evidence suggests gradual infilling by discrete dumping events into the open space. A couple of fragments of worked bone were also discarded; these are a rib used as a polisher 13160.F17 and the end of a broken point dumped after breaking.

A cut (13121) F.2231 into the lower roomfill (13118) in



Figure 21.5. Articulated segments of adult human bone buried in pit (13121) truncating lower infill of B.64 (Photo by Lisa Yeomans).

Sp.287 contained the disarticulated bones of an adult human right arm and left leg (Fig.21.5) overlaying the humerus of a left arm. Although disarticulated from the main body, the individual limbs (13120) were still articulated, suggesting that they were moved when still fleshy, perhaps when a burial was being dug elsewhere on the site. Two of the limbs were lying in an impossible anatomical position proving that the bones were not just the remains of a truncated burial. The reason for reinterring these bits of human is not clear but perhaps they were parts of bodies from burials that were reopened, but perhaps not all of the body parts were wanted so the spare parts were buried in an abandoned space that, at the time, was only used as an occasional dump.

The argument for the bones (13120) being the dismembered remains of a partially decomposed human body was reinforced by the presence of multiple chop-marks on the left humerus. The chop-marks (Fig. 21.6) were apparently made with a fairly blunt tool and occurred on the posterior side of the distal shaft and the anterior side of the proximal shaft where the bone is uneven because of the attachment of the deltoid muscle. It seems probable that the chop-marks may have been made whilst a burial pit was being dug and, upon the exposure of partially fleshed human bones, the limbs were taken out of the burial, perhaps requiring the use of the same digging tool to chop at muscles to release bits of the body into segments that could be removed. We cannot be sure how much of the human remains were removed and buried into the partially infilled B.64, as the east side of the cut was itself truncated by the large quarry pits. It is possible that an entire body was removed in this way, or some parts may have been kept for whatever reason. It is clear though that no care was taken with the bits of human remains that we found. After the

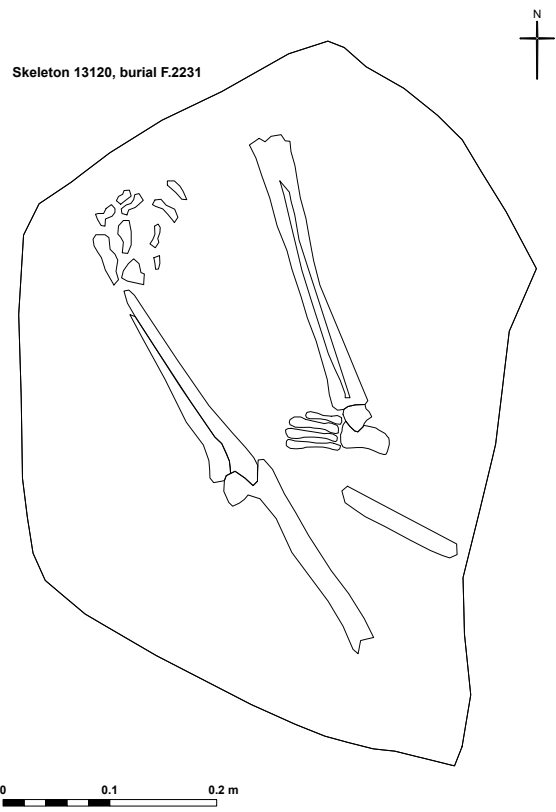


Figure 21.6. Chop-marks on the anterior and posterior sides of the left humerus from human remains (13121) (Photo by Faunal Team).

human remains had been disposed of, other layers of roomfill (13149)/(13117)/(13112) raised the level of the infill in B.64 but they did not reach the height of the upstanding walls before the activity in the space changed and the area was heavily utilized as a quarry (Chapter 27).

One aspect that the truncated human remains do remind us of is the lack of respect for this cluster of buildings, of which B.64 formed a part, after they were abandoned. The bones with the chop-marks provide solid evidence for a lack of care for the dead in a way that is unusual for the site. The

later quarrying must have disturbed numerous burials within the buildings. The way that the building was infilled was recognized as atypical even during excavation. Richard Turnbull noted in his diary at the time of excavation; it “*looks like they demolished this building in an atypical way for Çatalhöyük, that is they had no intention of backfilling it and building on top as normal, they just demolished it and then dug pits*” (Diary, RT, 09.07.06).

Summary

There is not much evidence for the occupation of B.64 and much of the discussion about the abandonment and infilling of B.55 also applies to B.64. What is of interest, from the evidence specifically in B.64, is the extent of the quarrying

that destroyed the long sequence of buildings in this cluster. There is also evidence for the use of the area to discard parts of human remains as well as dumps of animal bone and other waste, including some broken bits of worked bone. The irregular shape of B.64 is a legacy from an earlier packing of buildings, but the quarrying and subsequent use of the area for midden ended the long sequence. “*The conversion of the area to midden after the disuse of B.64 represented a significant change in the use of the area*” (Diary, LY, 12.07.06).

Acknowledgements

B.64 was excavated by Lisa Yeomans and Richard Turnbull in 2006.