

Society for the Exploration of EurAsia

**Archaeological investigations
at the site of Qarshovultepa
(Tashkent Province, Uzbekistan)
in 2016**

K.A. Sheyko

Dr. G.P. Ivanov

Dr. J.Ya. Ilyasov

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The site of the ancient settlement of Qarshovultepa is located in the neighborhood of the settlement Dustlik, in the Chinaz area of the Tashkent Province (fig. 1). Its stationary archeological excavations are carried out by the group of International Caravanserai of Culture, Ikuo Hirayama, Tashkent, since 2008, since 2010 with financial support from the Society for the Exploration of EurAsia, Switzerland.



Fig. 1. Qarshovultepa and Qarshovul 2 (Necropolis). Google Earth

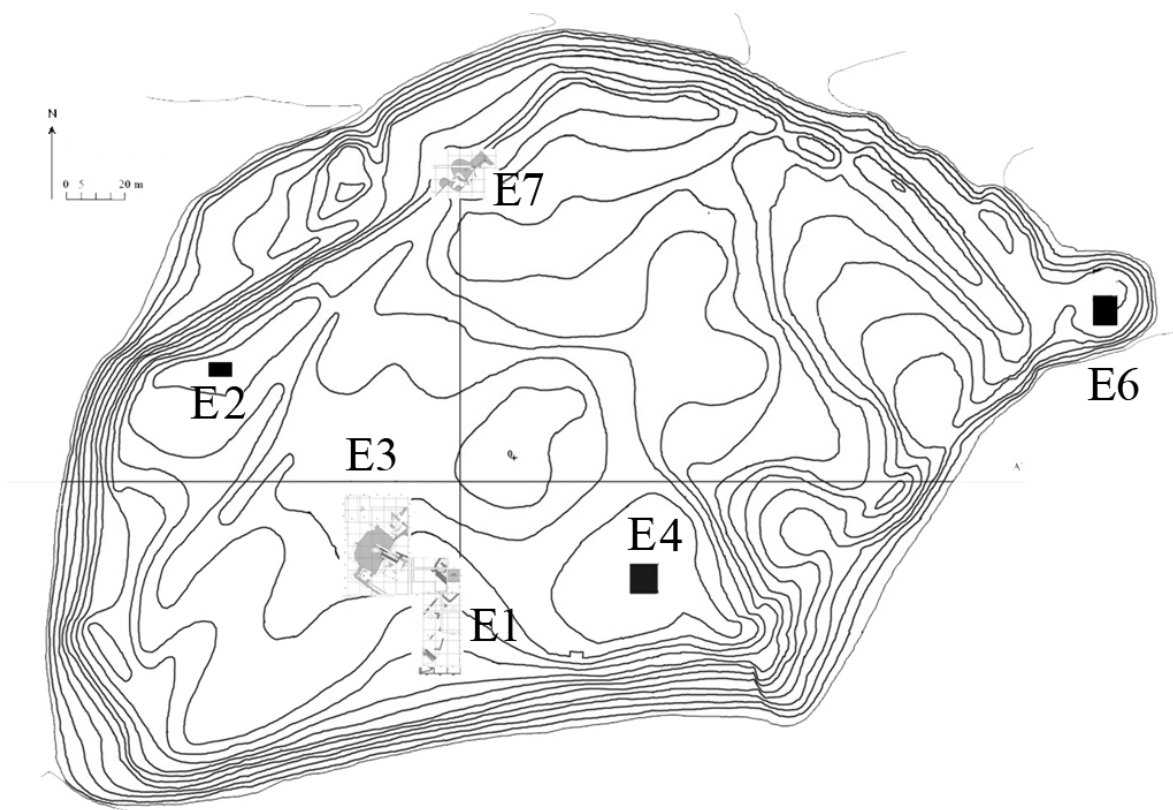


Fig. 2. Qarshovultepa, general plan

In 2016 the excavations on Qarshovultepa were conducted during 30 days from May to the beginning of June, and also again for 20 days in an additional campaign in July-August. Works have been

concentrated on a so-called platform with an adjoining extensive area (Excavation 3) and on the complex of the northern gate (Excavation 7) (figs. 1, 2). On Excavation 3, seven premises which are located to the north and the west from the platform have been opened. The description begins with Excavation 7.

Works on a complex of northern gate (E-7)

In 2014 the excavation of the gates and adjoining fortifications begun. The primary goal of works on Excavation 7 is studying the city fortification and its chronology. Here, on a line of the northern defensive wall, the rests of an oval shaped tower № 1, a part of a facade of tower № 2 (to the east from tower № 1), facing inside the ancient settlement, an external facade of a tower № 3 and a place of the city gate in width of 1,8 m and located between towers № 1 and № 3 (figs. 3, 4) have been opened. During the season of 2016 the excavated area has reached 200 sq.m. (Squares a-e, 100-104).

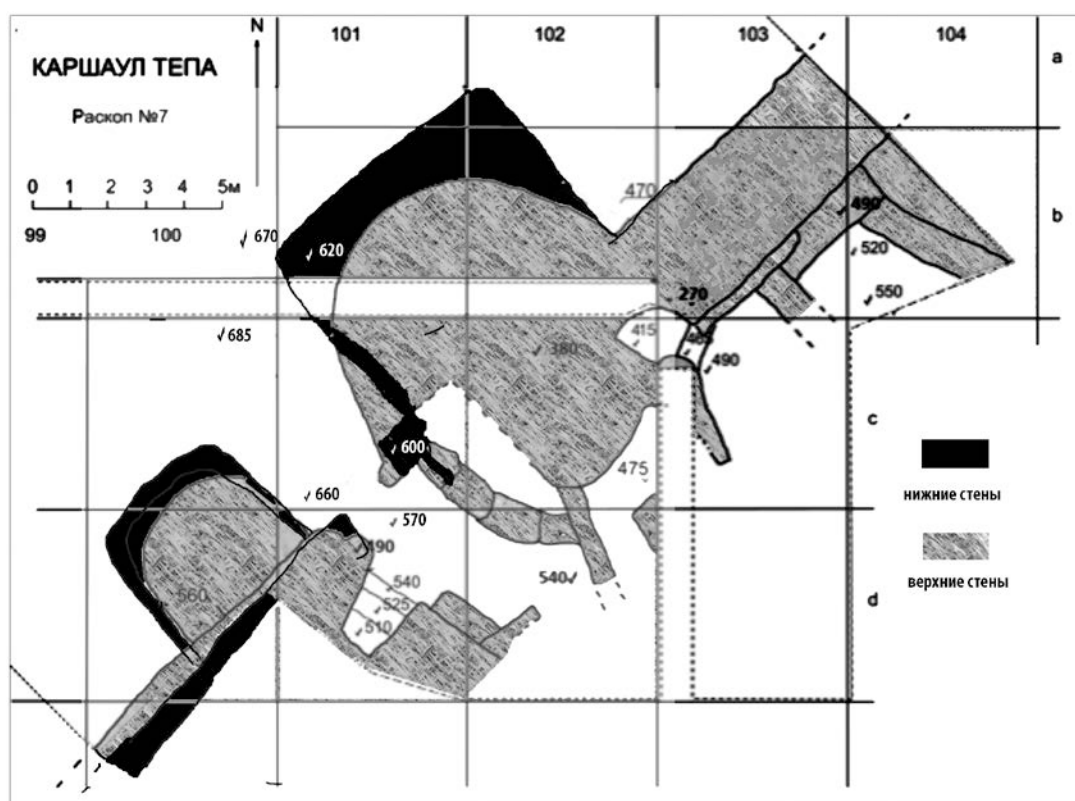


Fig. 3. Excavation 7 (Northern gate)

In the northern part of Excavation 7 the soil has been removed completely on a hill slope to the north and the northwest from tower № 1 and an external facade of a defensive wall up to the level of 6,70 m in the eastern part and up to the 6,90 m in western part (all deep marks on Excavation 7 are given from a zero reference point, which is the settlement's highest point). Thus, all external facades of the two towers and 8 meter of an external facade of a defense wall were completely opened.



Fig. 4. Excavation 7, view from the west after completing of works of the year 2016

The removed soil was of a homogeneous structure. From above it is 15 cm of cespitose layer, while deeper, direct near the walls, there were large fragments of fallen *pakhsa* (beaten clay). On another area, to the northwest of the constructions, a friable soil was observed which is formed as a result of flowing water and dust deposits. There are no architectural remains or traces of economic activities on the given area, except for a level with traces of humus on the depth of 6,70-6,90 m. The external facade of a defense wall was opened on 8 meters to the northeast from a corner formed with a tower № 1. The thickness of a defense wall between towers № 1 and № 2 is 3,20 m in a north-eastern part and 3,60 m in south-western.

In spite of the fact that on Excavation 7 we have not reached the natural soil (or sub-soil) yet and we cannot judge on an initial lay-out of this part of settlement, it was possible to identify three constructions at the gate. At an early stage tower № 1 and tower № 3 were of a square shape with rounded corners, beginning from the level of 6,20 m. The size of tower № 1 by the bottom part is 6,05 m x 5,25 m. It is built from dense *pakhsa*. The preservation of the walls of a tower is not the same in different parts. Northern and western corners of tower were opened from a depth of -6,20 m to a depth of -6,60 m; we didn't excavate deeper in this season. The upper part of the tower walls are destroyed, or blocked up by the walls of the upper tower (fig. 5).



Fig. 5. Excavation 7, north-western facade of tower № 1

Another picture could be seen on the southern part, where the tower is joining to the northern defensive wall of the settlement. The wall of the upper part of the tower overhangs the wall of the older tower parts (fig. 6), because the tower configuration was slightly different at the different stages. The wall of former tower № 1 is 1,30 m high in a joining place with a defensive wall. It is traced from depth -5,00 m to -6,30 m.



Fig. 6. Excavation 7, view on south-western part of tower № 1

Layers to the west and the southwest from the tower lay down inclining. Under a modern surface, the dense cespitose layer about 20 cm in the thickness was opened, under it there was a layer of a friable blockage in the thickness no more than 5 cm over a wall of a tower and more than 40 cm thick in the western part. The top surface of the upper wall of the tower was found in the depth of minus 3,90 m from a zero reference point. The bottom of this wall was in the depth of -5,00 m. Directly at the bottom of the upper wall the layer of dense clay in width about 40 cm was adjoined, traced from depth -5,00 m to -6,00 m. Between it and a facade of the older tower there is a floor which gradually goes down from a mark minus 6,00 m to level -6,40 m. It is a continuation of the floor which has been opened in 2015 at the gate at the level of 5,70 m. Under the floor and a layer of dense clay there was the blockage of average density which had a thickness of 40 cm near the western facade of the bottom wall of the tower, and it gradually falls to zero in the distance of 5 metres to the west from it. There is a floor about 10 cm thick under this layer, between them there is a burnt layer with pieces of coal and ashes which is settled down at level -6,50-6,60 m. The sole of the bottom wall of the tower is at level -6,30 m. Under it there is a small layer of ash. As under the bottom floor we have not reached a sub-soil, it is possible that we will find earlier tower constructions still deeper.

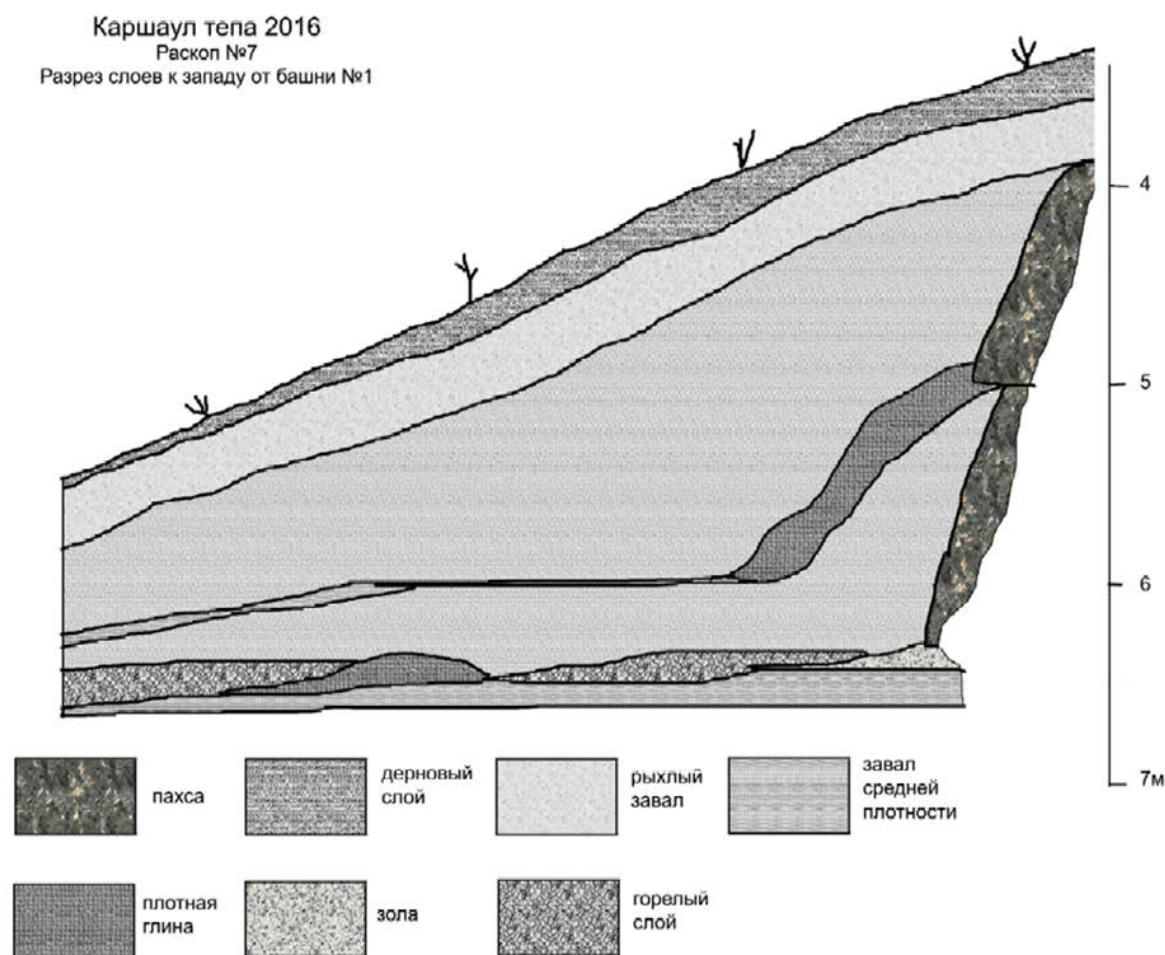


Fig. 7. Excavation 7, stratigraphy near tower № 1:

1 – *pakhsa*; 2 – cespitose layer; 3 – friable blockage; 4 – blockage of medial density;
5 – dense clay; 6 – ashes; 7 – burned layer

To the west of the gate the part of defense wall was dug out during the 2015 season. The wall is strongly destroyed as a result of the long period of desolation. It was necessary to find out at what level there is a bottom of this wall, because last year we didn't excavate deeper than the floor level which is laying on the depth -5,70. In 50 cm to the southwest from the gate rests of a strongly destroyed tower № 3 (with the height no more than 25 cm) have been found. Width of construction is 4,20 m. Tower № 3 was semi-circular in shape, with dimensions 4,20 m from northeast to southwest and 3,20 m from northwest to southeast.

In 2016 the given territory was dug out to a mark -6,70 m. As a result it was possible to outline the shape of early tower № 3 (figs. 8, 9).



Fig. 8. Excavation 7, defence wall, gate and tower № 3, view from the northeast



Fig. 9. Excavation 7, tower № 3, view from the north

Tower № 3 has a square shape with rounded corners, like tower № 1. It is smaller than tower № 1, its sizes are 4,30 x 4,00 m (fig. 9). At the joining points with the defense wall the height of the tower wall is up to 1 m. Distance between towers № 1 and № 3 is 3,60 m along the defense wall and it increases up to 4,00 m in the northwestern direction.

Between towers № 1 and № 3, on a place of the gate which was found in 2015 (fig. 10), excavations were from level of 5,70 m to level of 6,65 m. It is revealed that during previous phase of existence of the entrance complex the gate was located slightly to the eastern direction (fig. 11).



Fig. 10. Excavation 7, place of the gate (upper level), defence wall and part of tower № 3, view from northwest

The walls which formed the gate of the second (deeper) level are not identical. Both of them are built from *pakhsa*, but the eastern wall is put a little forward to the north and its thickness is 0,95 m, the western wall is 1,05 m thick. Width of gate was 1,80 m. We didn't excavate here deeper than -6,65 m.

Dating of the gate complexes is hard because of a scarcity of finds. But, judging by those fragments of ceramics which we have found here, it should be not earlier than 4th and not later than 8th centuries AD.

Further features of the gates and fortifications as well as the questions and matters of relative and absolute chronology will be settled during the forthcoming excavation works.



Fig. 11. Excavation 7, place of the gate (second level)

Works on Excavation 3

The main works in 2016 were concentrated on opening premises to the north and the west of the platform, as well as inside the platform. According to our system, all area of a site of ancient settlement is divided into a network of 5×5 m squares. Works have been concentrated to the west from so-called "platform", in squares 92 CC, 91-92-93 DD, 91 92-93 EE, 91-92-93 FF, 92-93-94 GG, 92-93-94 HH. The area of opened territory on the west side is of 400 square meters. In the northern part, in squares 95-96-97 HH, 95-96-97 GG, 95-96-97 FF, the area of excavation is equal to 225 square meters. Thus, the total area of a dug out site has made more than 600 square meters (fig. 12).

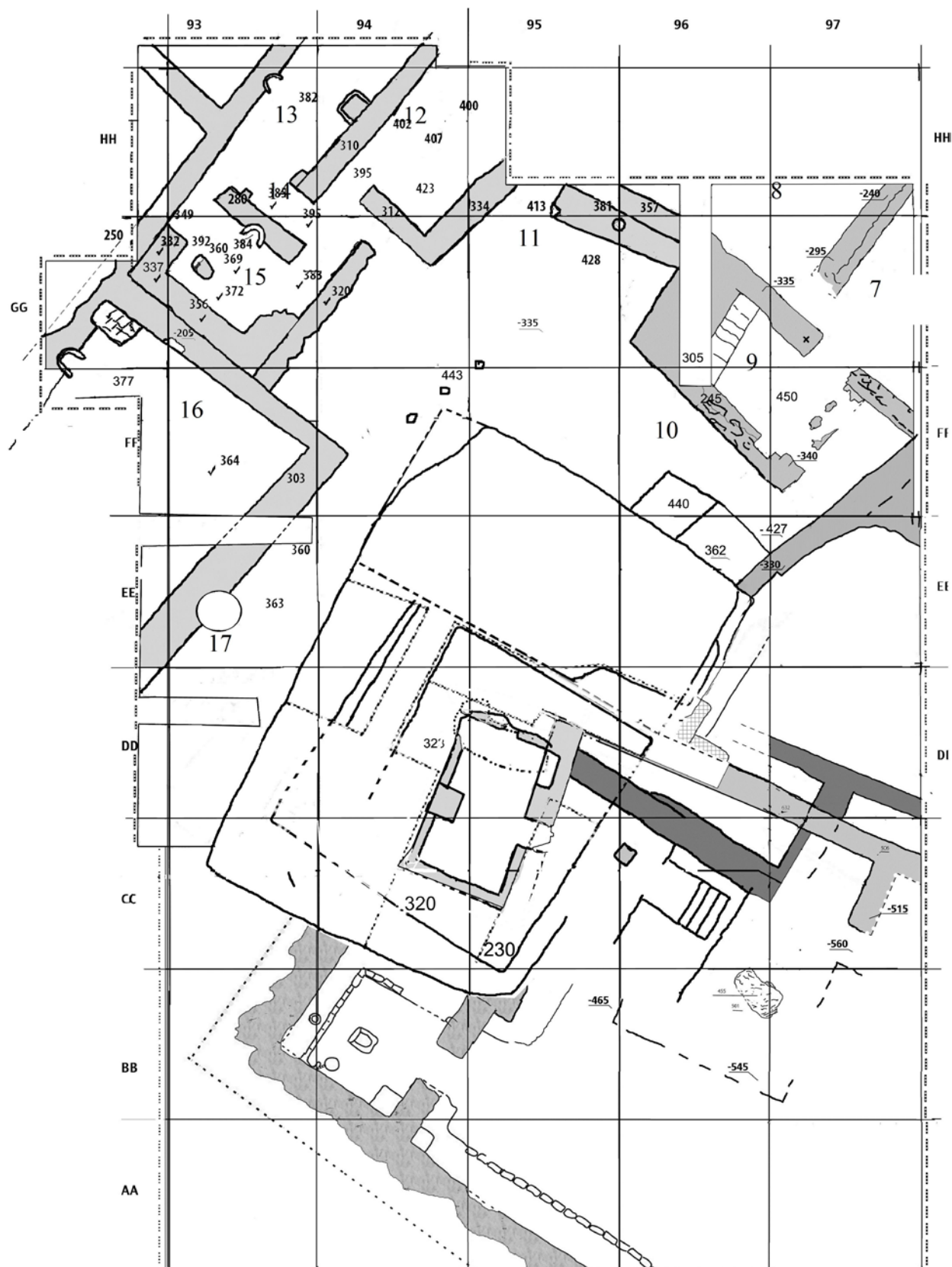


Fig. 12. Plan of Excavation 3

To the north of the platform several premises which belong to one complex have been dug out. All these structures are of the latest constructional horizon. Works in these premises consisted in the establishment of time of their functioning and studying of their stratigraphy. Walls of all premises are built from rectangular mud-bricks in the size 39-41 x 23-24 x 6-7 cm.



Fig. 13. View from the platform to the north-eastern part of Excavation 3

Within Excavation 3 in 2015, the western part of a room 7, a southern part of a room 8, and also rooms 9 and 10 had been opened. In 2016 the excavated area did not extend in a northeast direction, therefore rooms 7 and 8 are not dug out completely yet. The room 7 is with square GG97 and, partially, HH97, it is limited by walls from the northwest and the southwest, in each of which there is a passage (figs. 12, 13). The northwestern wall is traced for 4,25 m, its thickness is 1,10 m. The length of the southwestern wall is more than 3 m, the thickness of 0,75 m, it is the wall between rooms 7 and 9. The passage to room 8 is about 1,20 m wide. The passage to room 9 is in the southwestern wall and has a width of about 1,50 m.

In room 8, the southeastern wall, which is common with a room 7, and also the southwestern wall have remained on a height of 0,15-0,25 m only. The southwestern wall is traced on 7 m to the north from the passage to room 7 till the end of the excavations area. It is common with room 9, its thickness is from 0,8 m to 1 m. On the floor near this wall a coin was found (table I, 1). Obverse of this coin is strongly erased, but, judging by the lyra-shaped *tamgha* on the reverse, it can be put to a variant 1 of type 1 of group 7 (according to V.D. Shagalov's and A.V. Kuznetsov's classification). In their opinion, such coins belonged to small group of mint of rulers of Chach. They dated them back to the second quarter – the middle of 8th century

[Shagalov, Kuznetsov 2006, pp. 269-272]. Another coin was found in the centre of a room and belongs to the mint of ruler *Tarnavch*. On the obverse a predator is depicted, which goes to the right with his tail lifted, on the reverse is fork-shaped *tamgha* in the centre with Sogdian legend around is represented (table I, 2). Coin group 6 to which various types of coins with fork-shaped *tamgha* belonging, dated back from the second half of the 7th till the beginning of the second half of the 8th century CE. [Shagalov, Kuznetsov 2006, pp. 199, 235-239].

In room 8 the fragment of a *dastarkhan* (round ceramic table) and a fragment from a clay object with a zoomorphic image were found. In the Central Asian archaeology it is accepted to call similar objects as *shish-kebab* supports.

The room 9 is to the southwest of rooms 7 and 8. Its sizes are 7,25 x 3,45 m. The northwestern wall has a length of 3,50 m; to it a stairway from raw brick conducted to the second floor or to a roof to the extent of 2,90 m. The height of the stairway is 0,90 m, the width 0,75 m, it consists from 4 steps in width of 25 cm. The southwestern wall has a length of about 5 m, in the western corner of the room it joined to a stairway. The south-eastern wall has a length of 3,45 m. The north-eastern wall is divided by the passage in a width of 1,50 m, which leads to room 8. Its total length makes 7,45 m. On the last floor of room 9, a hearth functioned near the northern wall. At cleaning of the northern corner of the room some fragments of a vessel with engobe polishing were found, possibly, belonging to a mug. During works the second floor which is fixed on a mark -4,59 m was found. On this floor 3 coins were found, two of which belong to variant 1-2 of type 7 of group 6. On the obverse the image of a predatory animal – a lion or a leopard, – going to the left with the lifted right paw is depicted, around him is a dotted frame. On the reverse a fork-shaped *tamgha* is represented; on one of the coins over *tamgha* a cross is placed (table I, 3, 4). Group 6, as we have mentioned above, dated back to the second half of the 7th till the beginning of the second half of the 8th century [Shagalov, Kuznetsov 2006, pp. 199, 231-234]. The third coin has on obverse the image of the ruler with his spouse, *tamgha*, on the reverse reminds the stylised image of antlers (table I, 5); it belongs to a variant 1 of type 1 of group 5; the given group suggest to date to the second half of the 7th – the beginning of the 8th century [Shagalov, Kuznetsov 2006, pp. 187-192].

Room 10 was attached to the north-eastern platform, like Room No. 6. The size of the room is 9,40 x 3,46 m. Its peculiarity is a monumental *sufa*, added to the platform build of *pakhsa*. Its length – 2,45 m, width – 1,83 m, height – 0,60–0,65 m. The walls are made of mud-bricks, with the brick-size being 50 x 25 x 10–11 cm. The given room could play a role of *couloir*, flanking the room 11. The similar picture is observed also on the west side of the platform with room 17 (corridor). The southwestern wall of room 10 is the platform side. The southeastern wall has a length of 3,46 m. Special feature of the given room is a monumental bench (*sufa*), attached to a *pakhsa* platform. Its length of 2,45 m, width of 1,83 m, height of 0,60-0,65 m. Near the *sufa*, on the western side, a bronze coin was found on the floor (table I, 6). On the obverse an animal (a leopard?) is represented, going to the right. On the reverse a fork-shaped *tamgha* is placed. According to Shagalov/Kuznetsov it belongs to variant 3 of type 8 of group 6 [Shagalov, Kuznetsov 2006, pp. 240-241].

Room 11 is probably an *iwan*, because it has no wall on the south-western side. The north-western wall is 4,60 m long; the north-eastern wall is 5,40 m; south-eastern wall is 3,50 m long. Along the north-eastern wall there is a *sufa* 1 m wide and 4,15 m long. *Sufa* does not reach the north-western wall. In the centre of the *sufa* there is a round-shaped fire place 30-35 cm in diameter. Room's filling consisted of friable soil in which there were fragments of mud-bricks from the failed walls. The northwestern wall was very badly preserved because it was partly destroyed by the graves dug here later, when the site was abandoned. A coin with ruler's portrait *en face* on obverse was found in this layer. On obverse a *tamgha* in the form of a square with sprouts growing up from its corners is placed, with Sogdian legend around (table I, 7). According to classification of Shagalov/Kuznetsov it is possible to put this coin to a variant 7 of type 4 of group 4. These researchers dating back this group to the period from the second quarter – the middle of the 7th century to the first quarter of the 8th century [Shagalov, Kuznetsov 2006, pp. 142, 183-184]. The function of room 11 is not clear yet. Here, near the hearth on the *sufa*, a coin with ruler's portrait was found, to the left of his face the swastika (table I, 8). E.V. Rtveladze considers that these coins were minted by the ruler known from the Chinese sources as Mohedu tutun (700-740 AD). Unlike it, A.B. Kuznetsov reads the name of the governor as "Nirtnk (Zirtnk) the ruler of Chach". According to Shagalov/Kuznetsov this coin belongs to variants 1-2 of type 2 of group 6 [Shagalov, Kuznetsov 2006, pp. 205-208]. The third coin has images of the ruler and his wife on the obverse (table I, 9), it can be put to a variant 1 of type 1 of group 5, as well as a coin № 5 from a room 9 [Shagalov, Kuznetsov 2006, pp. 189-192]. Out of ceramic material from this room we will note some fragments of walls of vessels, most likely, from jugs, on which are flows of red engobe, as well as fragment of the handle from a large vessel.

Room 12 has been partially excavated. It is located to the north-west of Room 11. It is 3,50 m wide. The north-western wall has been traced for 4,70 m, till the northern edge of excavation area. There is a doorway in the southern corner. Its width is 1,05 m. The south-western wall is 2,50 m long, there is a doorway in it which is 1,05 m width. This doorway connects room 12 with room 14. The south-eastern wall is traced for the length of 3,50 m and just as the north-western wall goes till the edge of excavation. Room walls bear traces of destruction by late tombs which were dug out here, as well as in the room 11. Fragments of the big ceramic jar (*khum*) with the *tamgha* (individual or clan property mark) which was incised before burning were discovered in the room. On the chronologically latest floor a coin was found with a Sogdian legend on the obverse and an fork-shaped *tamgha* on the reverse (table I, 10). According to Shagalov/Kuznetsov it belongs to the first or second variant of type 14 of group 6 [Shagalov, Kuznetsov 2006, pp. 261-266]. The second coin from this premise has been found in a layer of a blockage above a floor. On the obverse there is a double portrait of ruler with the spouse, on the reverse a *tamgha* in the shape of antlers with Sogdian inscription around (table I, 11).

Room 13 is located to the north-west from room 12. Elongated in the direction of southwest – northeast it has been only partially excavated. The south-eastern wall has been identified for 6 m. The width of the room is 2,80 m. Same as in room 11, there is no southwestern wall there. It joins to a kind of communicating room (room 14) which connects this room with rooms 12 and 15. In room 13 there has also been found the iron bottom part of a spear, fragments of big ceramic jars (*khum*), a modelled fire-resistant

clay pot with two holders in the shape of roundish ledges. Near the communicating room's wall, at the side of room 13, a thin-walled ceramic mug was discovered with polished surface and the incised decoration in the shape of a cross inside a diamond (fig. 14).



Fig. 14. Ceramic mug with *tamgha* from room 14

On the floor of room 14, near the passage to room 15, a coin was found which is in bad condition. On the obverse the ruler's image could hardly be traced, on the reverse a lyre-shaped *tamgha* is represented. Nearby one more such coin was found (table I, 12, 13). A third coin was found near the western wall, on the floor. On the obverse is an animal going to the left, on the reverse a fork-shaped *tamgha* is represented (table I, 14).

Room 15 has two passages into the communicating room 14 and is located to the south-west from it. The north-western passage is 1 m wide; the second passage is 1,30 m wide. The room is 5,20 x 3,50 m. Along the south-western and partially, the north-western and south-eastern walls there is a *sufa* between 0,90 and 1 m wide. The height of the *sufa* at the north-western wall is 37-39 cm, at other walls, it is 23-25 cm. Closer to the western corner of the room there was a fireplace that rested upon the brick base. Another fireplace made in a style of the wall-mounted one was at the wall that separated the room 15 from the communicating room. The traces of a strong fire have been spotted here: on the upper floor level found burnt wooden roof beams were found and the room walls were red from fire. The filling of room 15 consisted of a friable ground of light brown colour which lay once under a cespitose layer. Its thickness is from 35 cm to 50 cm. In the western part of the room this layer reaches a thickness of 70 cm. Deeper is a layer of a blockage from pieces of mud-bricks from falling walls which in turn lies on a burnt layer formed as a result of a fire. The fire layer is fixed on a mark -3,70 m under a zero reference point.

Near the wall-mounted hearth 2 coins were found. The first coin is of the type with a pair portrait. On the obverse is a circle of points surrounding the ruler's and his wife's portrait. On the reverse is a *tamgha* in a kind of "antlers", with Sogdian legend around it (table I, 15). The second coin is found closer to the passage to room 14. On the obverse a predator is going to the left, and on the reverse the fork-shaped *tamgha* is represented (table I, 16). In the centre of room 15 one more coin was found on the floor (table I, 17), on the obverse a predator going to the left; it is interesting that on the reverse we have a cross instead of the traditional fork-shaped *tamgha* (fig. 15). Two other coins were found near the south-eastern wall over a fire layer. They are bad preserved; on one of them, possibly, a predator and fork-shaped *tamgha* are represented (table I, 18, 19).

In room 15 also the fragments of *khums* and a modelled intact mug were discovered, the mug with relief decor, polished red engobe and *tamgha*, scratched under the handle before burning of mug (fig. 16, 1, 2). All ware bears traces of fire in the form of burnt stains and soot.



Fig. 15. Coin with cross from room 15



Fig. 16. Mug with *tamgha*, room 15

Room 16 is to the southwest of room 15 and is isolated from rooms 15 and 17. It is dug out partially, the sizes of the opened part are 10,45 x 7,50 m. Judging by the size, it may have been a courtyard. As well as all other premises, it is oriented by its corners to the cardinal points. The thickness of the south-eastern wall is 1,5 m, height of the remained laying is 0,45 m. The thickness of the north-eastern wall is 0,70-0,75 m, height is 1,3 m in the western part and 0,45 m in the east.

The stratigraphy of room 16 is as follows:

1. A cespitose layer – the rests of the root system of plants. Thickness is 1-3 cm.
2. An inflatable layer – a friable soil (loam) of light brown colour. Thickness of a layer is 40-100 cm; it increases from north to south.
3. The light-greenish friable ground, its thickness is 25 cm.
4. A blockage – a light brown friable ground with fragments of bricks.
5. A floor – a dense ground of light brown colour (clay-coat) with fragments of pieces of coal. Thickness is 5-10 cm.

On the first floor in room 16 a coin with the image of the ruler with his wife was found, it is similar to a coin from room 12 (table I, 11, 20). Below level of the first floor, ceramic vessels of the spherical form, with four loops like handles, with red engobe and with relief decor and polishing were found (fig. 17). Apart from this ware, fragments were found in a considerable quantity from various table and kitchen ware.



Fig. 17. Pots from room 16

To the south-east of the room 16 there is a corridor that divides it from the platform and has been named room 17. So the area between rooms 10, 11, 12, 15, 16 and 17 could have been used as an inner yard which included the *iwān* (that is, room 11). The width of the corridor in the southern part – 2,75 m, in northern – 3,05 m. In the corridor, on distance about 6 m from the external corner formed by the north-eastern and south-eastern walls of room 16, there was a pit. This pit partially cuts the corridor wall. Its size is 1,25x1,3 m.



Fig. 18. One of the robbers' pits in the platform, view from the northwest



Fig. 19. The main robbers' pits in the centre of the platform, view from the east

In the previous reports it was repeatedly noticed that the platform had been built from layers of beaten clay (*pakhsa*) and layers of mud-bricks (figs. 20, 21, 22). In this season it was possible to specify its structure. It was erected on the filled up rests of premises of the second constructional horizon. The filling clay had given a massive basis 1,50 m thick and more in some places. The surface of this basis, which is in the depth of - 3,20 m from a zero reference point, has been carefully levelled. Directly on an ideal horizontal surface of this clay basis one row of mud-bricks had been laid (figs. 19, 20, 22). Then, the vertical seams between bricks

were filled up with a clay mortar that allowed keeping over bricks an equal horizontal surface. The sizes of bricks are 48-50×24-25×8-9 cm. Over a brick row there is a layer of *pakhsa*, and on it – again one row of bricks, and so on (figs. 19-22). The thickness of *pakhsa* layers is 20, 25 or 35 cm. The maximal remaining height of the combined part of platform is 2,10 m, thus, general thickness or height of the platform is 3,60 m. Taking into account wash-out of mud-made building materials it is possible to speak about a platform of about 4 m height.

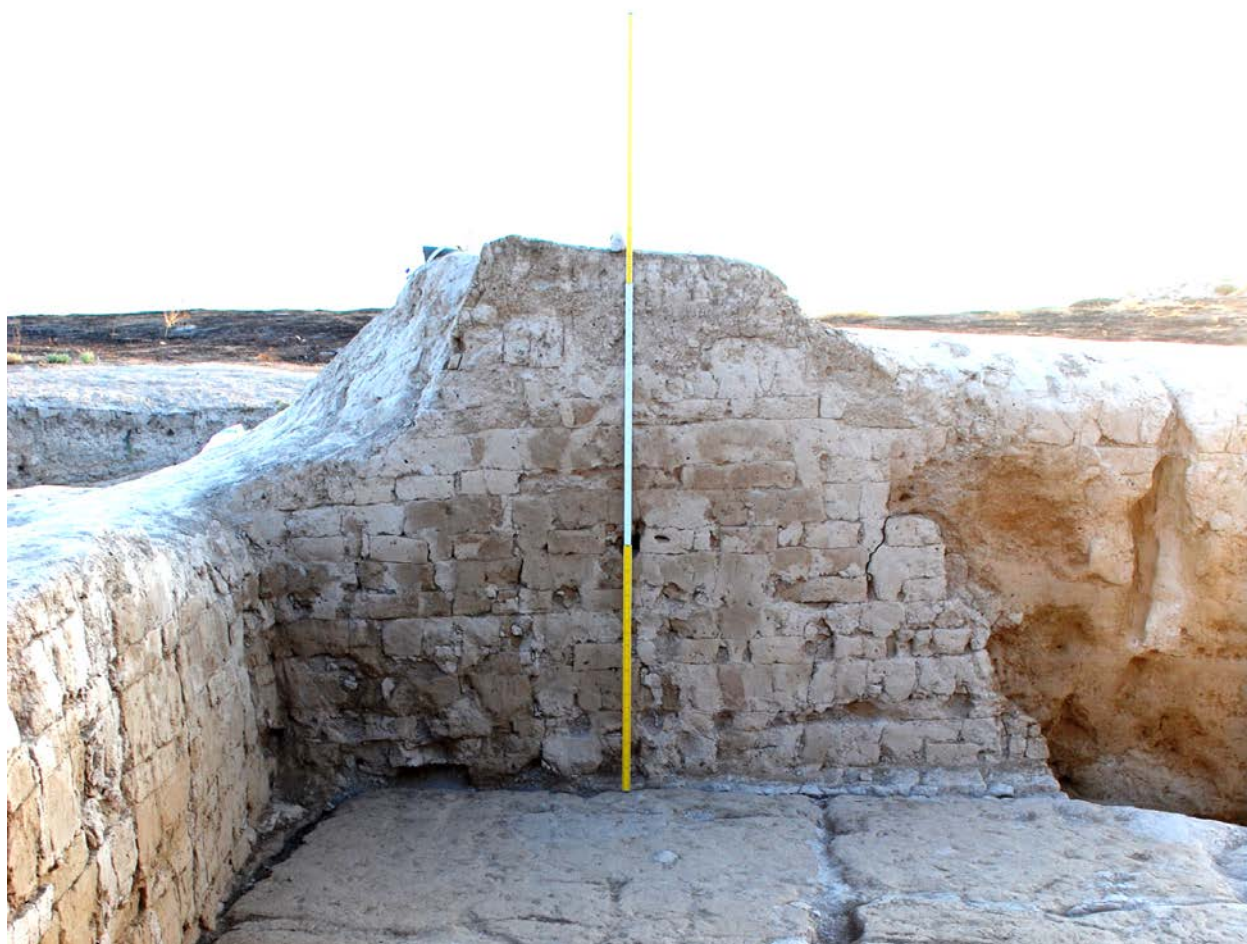


Fig. 20. Top part of remaining platform structure, view from south



Fig. 21. Structure of the platform



Fig. 22. Clay basis and combined part of the platform, view from the east

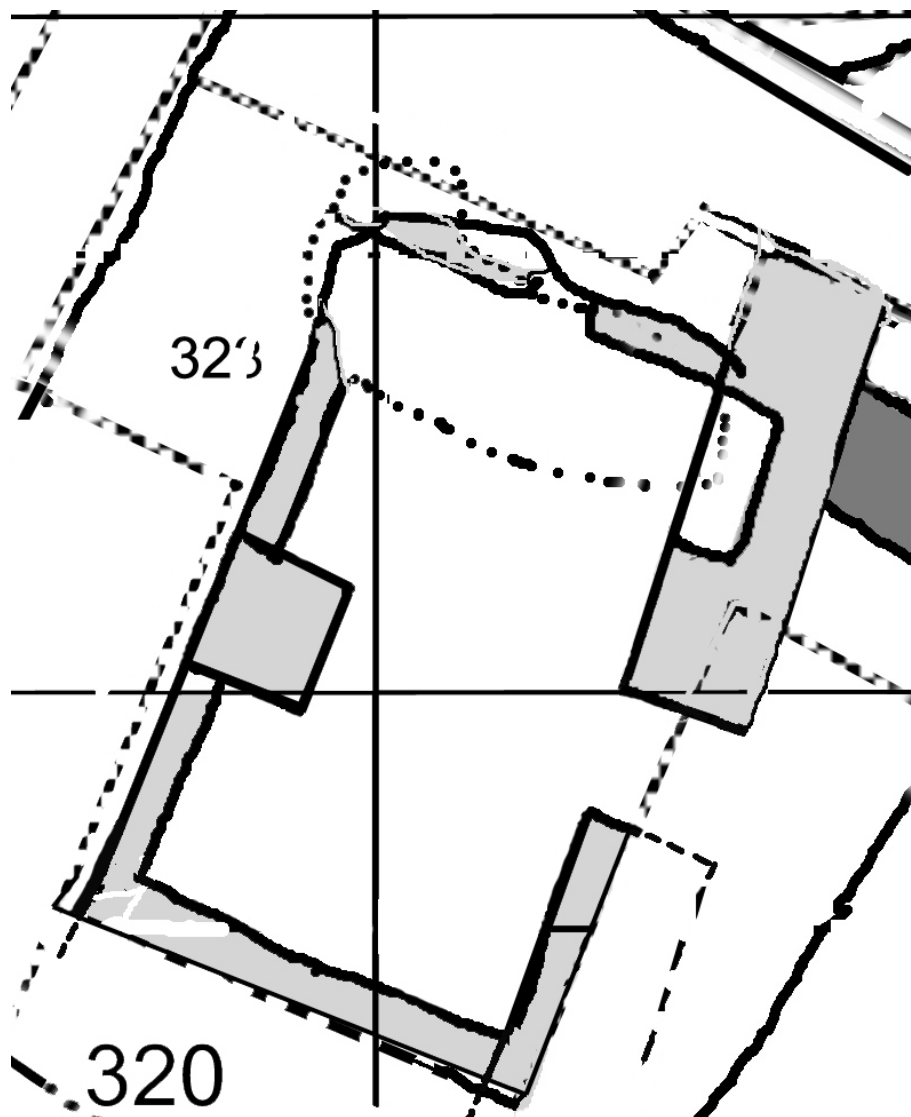


Fig. 23. The plan of a Room No. 1 of the Second constructional horizon

Before constructing the platform, the upper parts of the walls of the building related to the second constructional horizon were levelled. Under the central part of the platform the Room No. 1 of the abovementioned premises has been excavated. It is a rectangular room, and its walls are orientated mainly on cardinal points, with a small declination towards east (figs. 12, 23). The layout of the room No. 1 on the level of first (i.e. uppermost) floor (–5,22 m from the zero point) represents a replication of a throne or parade (guest) rooms so typical for the early medieval palace or castle architecture of Central Asia (figs. 23, 24). Classical examples of the «throne room» were square in plan, although they can sometimes be rectangular in plan. The best examined examples are in Northern Tokharistan, Sogdiana and Chach (Nil'sen 1966: figs. 24, 50, 65, 66; Lunina 1984: 98–100, fig. 28; Hmelnickij 2000: 57, figs. 38, 54, 60; Ilyasova 2004: 207–213, figs. 2, 3).



Fig. 24. Room No. 1 of the 2nd constructional horizon

Room No. 1: the western wall is 5,40 m long, the width along the southern sufa is 2,81 m, the room goes slightly wider to the northern direction. Its width is 2,90 m at the distance of 1 m to the north from the podium. Along the southern and western walls there are benches (*sufa*). The height of the *sufa* is 50 cm in the south-eastern and 47 cm in the southwestern corners; it's width is 44 cm. The height of *sufa* at the western wall is 50 cm, the width 39-42 cm. Here, 1,66 m from the southern *sufa* a «place of honour» was made (figs. 24, 25). It was organized as follows: the *sufa* has a niche of 90 cm wide, the back wall of which is angled at about 30 degrees. The northern side of the niche is 15 cm deep; southern side is 20 cm deep. A brick podium covered with the fine clay plaster on the sides and on the upper surface is attached to the niche. Its sizes are: southern side is 50 cm; eastern side is 94 cm and northern side is 63 cm. The height of the podium is 39-40 cm. The space of 72-81 x 90-94 cm (which is the area of podium plus niche) made it possible for one person to sit in this place of honour. The *sufa* continues to the north from the niche, but as a more complex structure: for 54-55 cm it is 50 cm high, the width being 37-38 cm. Then it is getting 8-10 cm lower due to one row of brick less than in the other part. So, figuratively speaking, this is a kind of an armrest sized 55 x 38 cm and 10 cm high.



Fig. 25. "Place of honour" at the western wall in Room No. 1

On the distance of 1,10-1,20 m to the north from the podium *sufa* a robbers' pit was cut. The cut coming down from the top of the platform had partially destroyed the surface of the northern part of the western wall of the room 1. Because of the fact that the pit had completely chopped off a significant part of the northern wall together with the north-western and north-eastern corners of the room No. 1, there is no way to prove that the *sufa* continued along the northern wall, although it looks logical from the point of view of the planning scheme of this type. The «place of honour» is placed vis-a-vis the entrance to the Room No 1 at the eastern wall (figs. 26, 27). Such configuration is typical for the gala-halls, where the walls are lined with *sufas* and opposite the main entrance there is a «kiosk», i.e., widened part of *sufa*. The entrance is 87 cm wide. Its southern cheek is 2,28 m away from the south-eastern corner of the room; northern cheek is 2,15 m away from the northern wall. The entrance was bricked-up with mud bricks (46 × ? × 9 cm, ? × 23 × 10 cm). Under the brick, there is a layer of a dark grey fine soil, 10–20 cm thick. The height of the brick laying of the entrance is 70-75 cm from the level of the floor 1. Above this is a layer of smoothing filling, and above, at the height of 84-85 cm *pakhsa* had been applied, which served as a platform's basis.



Fig. 26. A layer of greyish fill of premises of the 2nd constructional horizon



Fig. 27. The bricked-up entrance in eastern wall of Room No 1

Room No. 1 had another niche, which was arranged at the northern side of the eastern wall by the north-eastern corner. It was 1,12-1,14 m wide and 46-48 cm deep. The bottom of the niche was 5-6 cm higher than the level of the floor 1; the walls of the niche have only survived for 45 cm. As the niche in the western wall, this niche correlated with floor 1. We can assume that the niches were used for storing certain objects, like statues, ceramic or wooden containers, ceramic vessels and so on. But considering that the podium is right in front of the first niche, as well as the fact that the back wall of this niche has a gradient

back, we can propose that it was used as a «front seat» that was covered up with mats, carpets and cushions (figs. 24, 25). As for the niche in the north-eastern corner, it had most probably been used for keeping the objects described above, so that they would be standing above the floor 1 level for just several cm.

The abovementioned pit of robbers destroyed one third of the room No. 1 (fig. 24). The pit had, of course, been dug up after the settlement was abandoned by its inhabitants. The robbers started digging the pit to the west from room No. 1. The pit was round in shape, about 3 m in diameter and shaped like a funnel. At the depth of 3 m from the preserved top of the platform the pit changed its shape into an elongated oval, because the robbers intruded into the *pakhsa* foundation of the platform in the direction of the East. The treasure seekers managed to break through the extremely tough platform body, having demolished a part of the northern wall of room No. 1, they also broke through the floor 1, as well as several lower levels of floors that were related to Constructional horizon II. Within the Room No. 1 the size of the pit is 3 x 1,30 m. At about the level of floor 4, which is located at the depth –6,40 m from the zero point, the size of the pit gets smaller and it is occupying the north-western corner of Room No. 1. The depth of the pit is at least 7 m from the zero point.

In room No. 1, the excavation at the level of floor 2 (–5,76 m) has been partially done (fig. 24). Apparently the floor plan at this level is somewhat different to the plan at the level of floor 1 (–5,22 m), for instance, the entrance to the room was, possibly, different, as well as the disposition of *sufas*. This is going to be examined in the next seasons of excavations, during the gradual, level-by-level clearing of the Room No. 1 and the adjacent premises.

In the stratigraphic trench, that links with the Room No. 1 from the East, there can be tracked the structure and phases of the platform construction, as well as the remains of the Room No. 2 (or a small courtyard?) of the Constructional horizon II, the northern wall of which is joining the eastern wall of the Room No. 1 (figs. 28-32). It is built of the mud-brick sized 49×?×8 cm, 52 ×?×8 cm, ? ×26×9 cm, about 1 m thick and is traced back 4,50 m to the east. After that the wall turns to the north. Entrance to the Room No. 1 was through this room (or yard). Details of the plan and attribution will be clarified during the coming seasons.



Fig. 28. Section of platform and layers of 2nd constructional horizon, view from north



Fig. 29. Section of platform and stairway of 1st constructional horizon, view from north (continuation)

The stratigraphic survey reveals the following: At the level of the eastern wall that was horizontally cut as preparation for the platform construction in room No. 1, there was a layer of clay coat consisting of several layers of thin clay and identical to the fine plaster, covering the walls of rooms No. 1 and 2. The clay-coat layer is between 5 and 25 cm thick. Evidently, this was not the real floor, but a multilayer coating spread through the premises of Constructional horizon II, that was applied over the friable layer of backfill in order to level the surface for the construction of the platform. This level spreads for 5 m to the southeast from the wall of Room No. 1 and is adjacent to a small, 30 cm thick, brick wall that limits the courtyard (Room No. 2?) of the Constructional horizon II from the East. At about 1 m from the wall of Room No. 1 the layer is horizontal, but then it smoothly lowers for 10-15 cm, but after 2,50 m it increases again. The lowering could have appeared due to the fact that the filling and plaster have sagged under the weight of the platform that was initially built from this level. Underneath the layer of filling and plaster at about 40-50 cm lower there was discovered Floor 1, which coincides with the floor 1 in Room No. 1 (-5,20-5,22 cm from the Zero point). It is continued horizontally from the eastern wall of Room No. 1. The abovementioned one-brick thick wall is standing at the same level. Lower is the floor 2 (-5,39-5,49 m), the floor coating is 5 cm thick. This floor has a fired surface. It is holding another thin wall (40-45 cm thick) that limits a courtyard or Room No. 2 from the East. This wall is standing right under the first thin wall that was built 15 cm off. So the distance between this thin wall and the eastern wall of Room No. 1 is 4,85 m. These two thin walls are adjacent with a staircase (related to the Constructional horizon I) leading to the platform (figs. 29, 32). On the floor 2, at 85 cm to the west of the limiting thin wall and 3,45 m from the wall of Room No. 1, a square structure has been cleaned. It possibly was a base for the wooden (?) column that supported the roof or canopy. The floor 2 coating is 3-4 cm. Underneath Floor 2 there is a 6-8 cm thick soft crumbling layer of the dark-grey colour, rich of ash. Continued further to the east and south-east, this layer becomes the ground level of a spacious courtyard that is linking to the platform. The lower ash layer continues to the east with the swell of 20-25 cm.



Fig. 30. Layers of the 2nd constructional horizon, view from north



Fig. 31. Section of platform and wall of the 2nd constructional horizon, view from south

Inside the Room No. 2 under the ash layer there is a Floor 3. The coating of the floor is 3-4 cm thick, underneath are the accumulation layers 25 cm thick, one of which is of greenish colour. Lower there is the

Floor 4, about 5 cm thick, and below it is a layer of a lumpy soil about 10 cm thick. Underneath there is a layer of rubble about 25 cm thick. Below it, on the level of Floor 1 which belongs to the Constructional horizon III, there is a dense loam layer. Detailed investigation of this horizon is a matter of the future.



Fig. 32. A stairway of the 1st constructional horizon and layers of the 2nd constructional horizon under it Section of platform and stairway of 1st horizon, view from north

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