

Report on the excavations on the site Novopokrovskoe II in 2016

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In 2016 the Novopokrovskiy archeological group of the Institute of History and Heritage of the National Academy of Sciences, with the support of the Society for the Exploration of EurAsia, Switzerland, continued the excavations of the medieval site Novopokrovskoe II. The work was done in Excavation I (small additional studies) and Excavation II.

Excavation I

In Excavation I we continued researching square 4 (5 x 5 m) in the north-west corner. The upper strata were studied here. In the uppermost layer the walls of the room 27 were identified, under it 2 smaller rooms 29 and 30 were opened. They were fully investigated and documented. Their walls were removed; and under them room 31 was found. It occupies almost fully the square 4 (Pic. 1).



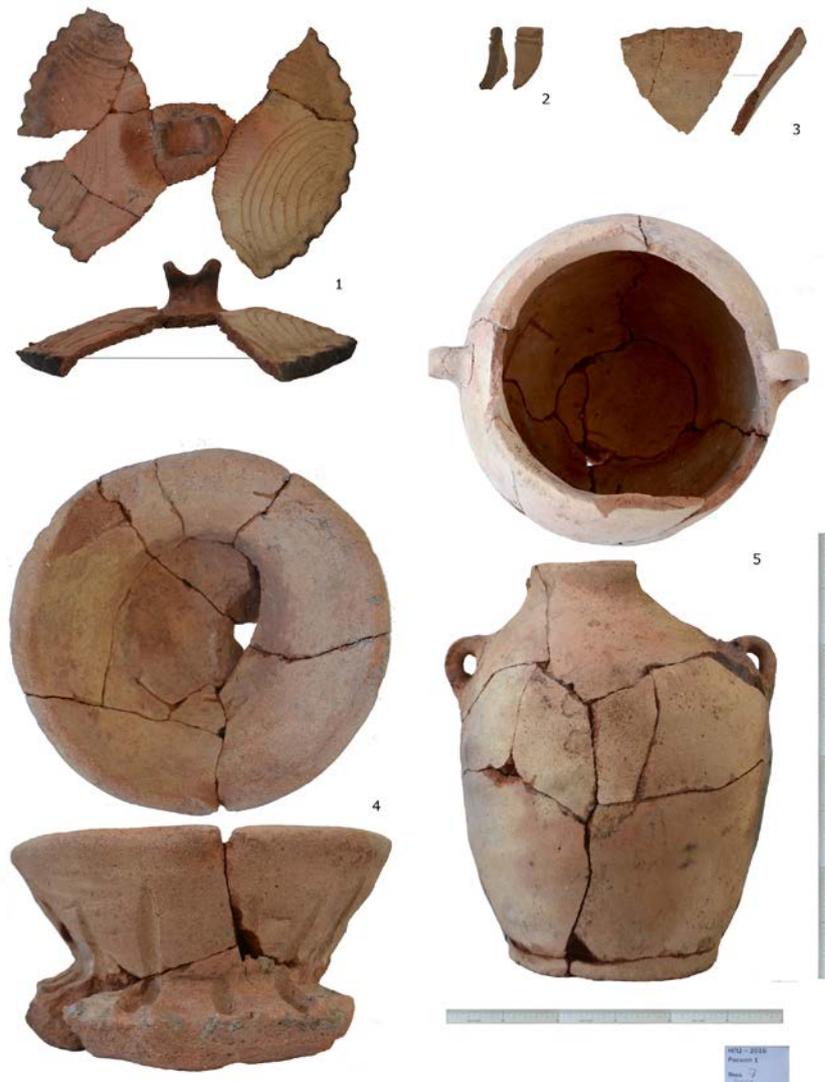
Pic 1. Square 4. Rooms 29, 30. View from the south-east.

The square 3 to the south was also researched: here the earlier layers were studied (Horizons A3-B1). Under the walls of the previously excavated room 22, room 28 was identified (Pic. 2). Its western mud brick wall goes in the border of the square 3.



Pic 2. Room 28. View from the south.

A series of seven rubbish pits was found 2016. Most of them contain animal bones and ceramic finds (Pic. 3).



Pic. 3. Ceramic finds from rubbish pit 7/2016.

We researched layers of square 3: the layers under the room 22 of Horizon A which belong to the *Karachanid* time, and the filling of the room 28, which is not fully excavated. The layers of square 4 (correlated with data collected before) can be dated to the end of XI-XII centuries.

Excavation II

In excavation II the layers of the Horizon B were further studied. The constructions of room 25, which was excavated in 2015, were removed. And under them two new rooms 30 and 35 were opened. To the north of them the structures of room 28 (excavated 2015 as well) were studied. Under it the room 31 was documented. Three floor levels with associated *sufas* and other constructions were found here. Along the western border of the Excavation II under the room 26 and 27 (both of 2015) new rooms 33 and 34 were opened (Pic. 4).



Pic. 4 Excavation II. View from the west.

In the area to the west of the House I, which was marked as a Street 2, incl. room 29/2015, the lower layer was researched. Here the new room 32 was documented.

House I

House I is located in the south-eastern part of Excavation II. To the west of it there are street 2 (opened 2014) as well as rooms 29 (2015) and 32 (2016), to the north there is street 1. House I consists of two rooms 25 and 28. 2016 the excavations were continued here. The following rooms were found after removing the floors of the mentioned rooms: 30 and 35 and 31 to the north of them. In the last one three levels of *sufas* were documented. They go along the southern wall of the room. On the floor of room 25, closely to the eastern wall, there is a *tandyr*. Its sizes: 54-58 cm. Its height is 23 cm. Its walls are intensively burned. Inside the *tandyr* three fragments of a ceramic Π -formed oven-stand were found. The room under the floor of room 25 was marked as room 30. It occupies practically the same area as a room 25.

In this room there were *sufas* along the northern, western and eastern walls. Their height is four mud bricks or 40-45 cm. The southern wall is located outside Excavation II. Anyway, no remains of the *sufa* along this wall were documented. The mud bricks of the eastern *sufa* are brown, their remained sizes here are following: 25 x 9 cm, 26 x 9,5 cm, 15 x 10 cm, 18 x 8 cm. The upper layer of the western *sufa* is grey, sizes: 20 x 9 cm, and lower ones are brown with sizes: 16 x 8 cm, 26 x 9 cm and 21 x 10 cm. The width of the eastern *sufa* is 80 cm, of the western *sufa* 97 cm.

The *sufa* 3 is made of mud bricks of grey colour. Their remained sizes: 21 x 7 cm, 23 x 8 cm, 23 x 6 cm. The wall of *sufa* has a slope inwards because of sag in the centre of the room. The eastern wall of the room is covered with a plaster of a good quality of yellow colour.

Between those *sufas*, closely to the western *sufa*, a floor oven was documented (Pic. 5). Its base is of one mud brick height, it is covered with a plaster. All surfaces of the base are covered with two layers of a plaster. The plaster is clayish, of yellow colour, the thickness of each layer is 2-3 cm.



Pic. 5. Room 30. Section of the floor oven and of the western sufa. View from the north.

The area between both *sufas* was filled with mud bricks and afterwards the floor was made. The mud bricks are of yellow colour. Their remained sizes: 20 x 10 cm, 28 x 10 cm, 24 x 9 cm, 28 x 8 cm.



Pic. 6. Room 30. View from the south.

Under the level of room 30 there is another room 35 (Pic. 7). The southern and eastern walls of this room are outside Excavation II. The filling is soft, in the under-floor layer a lot of organic remains in form of green lenses.



Pic. 7. Room 35. View from the south.

In the northern wall there is a passage into room 31 (Pic. 8).



Pic. 8. Room 35. The passage to room 31. View from the west.

Along the western, eastern and northern walls there are *sufas*. All of them as well as a floor are covered with a plaster. 2016 the *sufas* were not dismantled, so their construction remained not clear.

In the north-eastern corner of the room the mud brick block was documented. Its sizes: 137 x 60-80 cm. The mud bricks inside the block lie obliquely (Pic. 9).



Pic. 9. Room 35. Mud brick block in the south-eastern corner of the room. View from the South



Pic. 10. Room 35. Ceramic oven stand.

The northern wall of the room 35 consists of mud bricks of following sizes: 9-9,5-10 cm, ? x 20 x 10 cm, 37 x 20 x 10 cm, 47 x 24 x 9 cm. Some of mud bricks have however another size: ? x 22 x 6,5 cm.

The area under the floor of the room 28 is marked as a room 31 (Pic. 11).



Pic. 11. Room 31. View from the east.

Beginning from the western part of the entrance from the south from the rooms 30/35, which goes along the eastern wall, there are remains of a *sufa*. The height of its walls is 2-3-layers of the mud bricks of light-brown colour. The sizes of the mud bricks: 24 x 23,5 x 8,5-9 cm and 23 x 23 x 9,5 cm in the upper layer and 40 x 22 x 8,5-9 cm and 20 x 22 x 8,5 cm in the lower layer. The thickness of the mortar is ca. 1 cm. The external wall is covered with one layer of plaster (0,2-0,3 cm). The bricks of the *sufa* are put to the southern wall not closely but lie on the small goaf (up to 7 cm). Under the lower bricks there is a thin layer of ash (*sufa* 3). The *sufa* 2 covered the *sufa* 3. It is made of mud bricks of brown colour put on thin mortar of the dark colour (Pic. 12).



Pic. 12. Room 31. View from the north.

Street 1

In 2016 the street 1 was researched. Two layers of stones were documented here (Pic. 13, 14), which correspond with two building periods/renovations of the area here. The upper layer consists of relatively big stones (its width is 0,95-1,2 m); the lower one consists of shingles. The surfaces of the street themselves are done of clay, immediately along the wall of the House I almost no stones were documented. So there is a strip of clay here, which is free of stones.

In the surfaces of both levels of the street ceramic pieces and animal bones are incorporated.



Pic. 13. Street 1. View from the west.



Pic. 14. Street 1. Two layers of stones.

The traces of horizontal (10-12 cm) and vertical (6-8 cm) wooden poles were documented. We suppose that due to these poles the street was enhanced and repaired (Pic. 15). Unfortunately the system of those poles is remained too poor, which does not allow any reconstructions.



Pic. 15. The eastern part of the street. The traces of horizontal wooden poles. View from the north-west.

Apart from ceramic pieces and animal bones, the fragment of a bronze bracelet was found on the surface of the street (Pic. 16). Only one third of it is remained. It is round in shape. It does not allow any conclusions, because the typology of such bracelets does not exist for the region and it is a single find.



Pic. 16. Street 1. The fragment of a bronze bracelet.

Six rubbish pits were found here. They contain mostly ceramic fragments (Pic. 17-18) and animal bones.



Pic. 17. Street 1. Fragment of ceramic vessel.



Pic. 18. Street 1. Fragments of miniature ceramic vessels which probably served to store oils or spices; several of them were found in kitchen environments.

The rubbish pit 6/2016, as we could documented, dropped from the level of the *sufa* 2. It is round, has a porous filling, including organic remains and ash. In the filling there are animal bones, some ceramic fragments, mostly hand made as well as mud bricks of brown colour.

At the Excavation II the layer which was researched in 2016 belongs, according to the relative stratigraphy, to the IX century.

The finds of *Türgesh* coins (and of so called *Türgesh* type) on the surface of the street (Pic. 19) allow to date it not earlier than the VIII century.



Pic. 19. Excavation II. Coins.

Conclusion

The archaeological researches done in 2016 provided us with new data regarding to the stratigraphy and planigraphy and brought new finds, including some ceramic vessels which were so far unknown in the Chu Valley. An important point is the study of the structure of the street, which is also unusual for the mentioned region. Such profound and complicated structured street was rather unexpected for such a small settlement. The complete analysis of the street and the layers under it and under the House I will be done 2017.

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