

TELL EL-FARKHA EXCAVATIONS, 2012–2013

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Abstract: Excavations at Tell el-Farkha in 2012 and 2013 were conducted on all three koms making up the site. The upper layers excavated on the Western Kom during the first campaign were connected with the beginning of phase 4 at Tell el-Farkha and the lower layers with phase 3. A few poorly preserved rooms were unearthed, mainly in the southern part of the trench. Also part of a brewery dated to Naqada IIIA1 was explored. A rectangular building with thick walls discovered on the Central Kom was most probably the remains of a big Naqadian store. Results of geophysical research from 2000 were verified; excavations uncovered a round edifice, 7 m in diameter, surrounded by a wall almost 2 m thick. In a test trench on the Eastern Kom, a rectangular room (2.50 m by 6 m) with two regular entrances from north and south was unearthed. In the main trench, work concentrated on the area north and south of the monumental mastaba uncovered a few seasons earlier.

Keywords: Nile Delta, Tell el-Farkha, Protodynastic, Early Dynastic, Naqada

All three tells forming the site were excavated in the course of the two seasons. Established trenches were reopened and test pits were explored on the Central and Eastern Koms.

Post-processing work was also conducted on the site, dealing with pottery, metal (Rehren and Pernicka 2014), flint and other stone tools, as well as animal remains.

WESTERN KOM

Fieldwork on the Western Kom in 2012 and 2013 was carried out in an old trench that had been opened in 2006–2007, was excavated again in 2006–2008 and extended north in 2009. In the end, more than 10 ares were covered by the trench.

Layers underlying the oldest phases of the administrative-cultic center (Naqada IIIA/B) were explored. A burnt layer

was evident beneath the east wall of the courtyard of the administrative-cultic center [Fig. 2]. It was connected with the burning of a monumental Naqadian residence, the eastern part of which had been excavated in 2000–2003 (Ciałowicz 2012: 163–171). It demonstrated a few successive construction phases and the size of the structure in the youngest phase

may be described as monumental. The rooms forming the building were outlined by regular arrangements of mud bricks. Concentrations of storage vessels at the western, eastern and southern ends of the kom suggested the presence of stores surrounding the main suite of rooms of the Naqada building. The burning of the edifice was dated to the end of Tell el-Farkha

phase 3, namely, Naqada IIIA1. In 2012 and 2013, a few poorly preserved rooms were unearthed [*Fig. 1*], mainly in the southern part of the trench (ares 34, 44). The rooms were rectangular and surrounded by thin walls (1–2 bricks). In some of them, like W267, layers of ashes and potsherds were discovered, but these belonged to the administrative-

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cultic center, rather than the last stage of the Naqadian residence, because they were superimposed on a burnt layer of destruction dated to Naqada IIIA1. Ovens, sometimes with pots inside, were located in other rooms and between them [Fig. 3].

The east and north walls of room W240 (part of the administrative-cultic center, see Ciałowicz 2012: 171–180), excavated in earlier seasons (2009–2011) were dismantled one layer of bricks after another. Pottery found during this process



Fig. 1. Western Kom. Southern set of rooms
(Photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 2. Western Kom. Burnt layer under the east wall of the courtyard of the administrative-cultic center (Photo R. Słaboński)

Fig. 3. Western Kom. Oven W268: top view and section view (Photos R. Słaboński)



Fig. 4. Western Kom. Brewery (W272): top, seen as a red-brown pit in the center of the trench following excavations in 2012; bottom, the brewery in different stages of exploration (Photos R. Słaboński)

dated the construction of the wall to the beginning of phase 4 at Tell el-Farkha (Naqada IIIA).

A feature filled with red-brown soil was discovered beneath the northeastern corner of room W238, which belongs to the oldest stage of the administrative-cultic center [Fig. 4 top]. The feature, which was almost round in shape (about 2 m in diameter) and was accompanied by some not very clear brick arrangements, turned out to be another brewery [Fig. 4 bottom]. It was dated to Naqada IIIA1 and proved to be the youngest discovered to date at Tell el-Farkha. It was clearly younger than

the Naqada building and older than the administrative-cultic center. It may have been established as the latter center was being built, producing beer for the workers. If so, then the Old Kingdom tradition would be much older than currently assumed.

Pottery from the two seasons included several complete vessels, both storage jars and small-sized pots [Fig. 5], which allowed the upper layers excavated during these two campaigns to be associated with the beginning of phase 4 at Tell el-Farkha (i.e., Naqada IIIA) and the lower layers with the end of phase 3 (i.e., Naqada



Fig. 5. Pottery from the Western Kom: top row, storage jars; bottom row, small pots (Photos R. Slaboński)

IIIA1). Most of the vessels were made of local silt and can be classified as Rough; only a few fragments were polished. Some fragments of imported Southern Levantine pottery (a wavy handle, for example) were discovered, confirming an earlier presumption that trade played a significant role in the life of the population inhabiting the Western Kom.

From this point of view, a fragment of a large vessel with white-striped decoration

merits interest [*Fig. 6*]; it was discovered in the courtyard of the administrative-cultic center, in a layer dated to the beginning of phase 4. The only known analogies come from Megiddo, testifying to contacts far beyond southern Canaan (Czarnowicz 2012b: 251). A model of a fish-tail knife made of obsidian, discovered in the same courtyard, represented imported raw material [*Fig. 7*].

[KMC]

CENTRAL KOM

The work in 2012 took place in an extension of the main trench, delimited in 2011, and an additional area to the west of it. It encompassed an area of 145 m² (squares C 52b, 53ab, 62cd, 63cd). Another extension was dug subsequently, this time to the south (squares C 52d, 53cd, 42). The additional trench, 195 m², was located on the northwestern slope of the kom, on the

spot of a round structure located during the geophysical survey of 2000 (see below).

In earlier reports the Central Kom was considered as a settlement occupied by farmers, fishermen and craftsmen. No monumental or official buildings from Naqadian times were expected there (Chłodnicki 2011; 2012b). A Lower Egyptian residential structure, partly

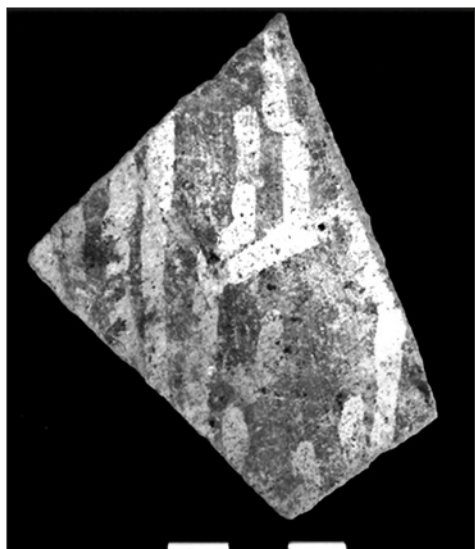


Fig. 6. Potsherd with white-striped decoration (Photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 7. Fish-tail knife fragment of imported obsidian (Photo R. Słaboński)

excavated in 2008–2009, stood there in the mid-4th millennium BC (Chłodnicki and Geming 2012) [Fig. 8]. A western extension of the trench was designed to uncover the southwestern part of this structure. Excavations initiated in 2011 produced material and architectural remains dated to the early Old Kingdom and late Early Dynastic times (Naqada IIIB–IIID), corresponding to Tell el-Farkha phases 5–7 (Chłodnicki and Ciałowicz 2014).

The work in 2012 started from level 16 (5.90–5.80 m a.s.l.), dated to the end of the Naqada IIIB. Most of the mud-brick

structures on that level had walls one-brick thick. A thick wall, three bricks wide (about 0.90–1.00 m thick), known already from the 2011 season (CW.8), continued in the eastern part of the trench. A section of the wall, 23 m long and about 0.30–0.40 m high, was preserved; it disappeared on level 20 (5.40 m a.s.l.). Another wide wall (CW.39), adjacent to the first one, appeared directly to the west of it. It seems that this line delimited a border between two separate sectors (buildings) of the settlement. The destroyed southern end of the wall made it impossible to estimate the length of this wall [Fig. 10].

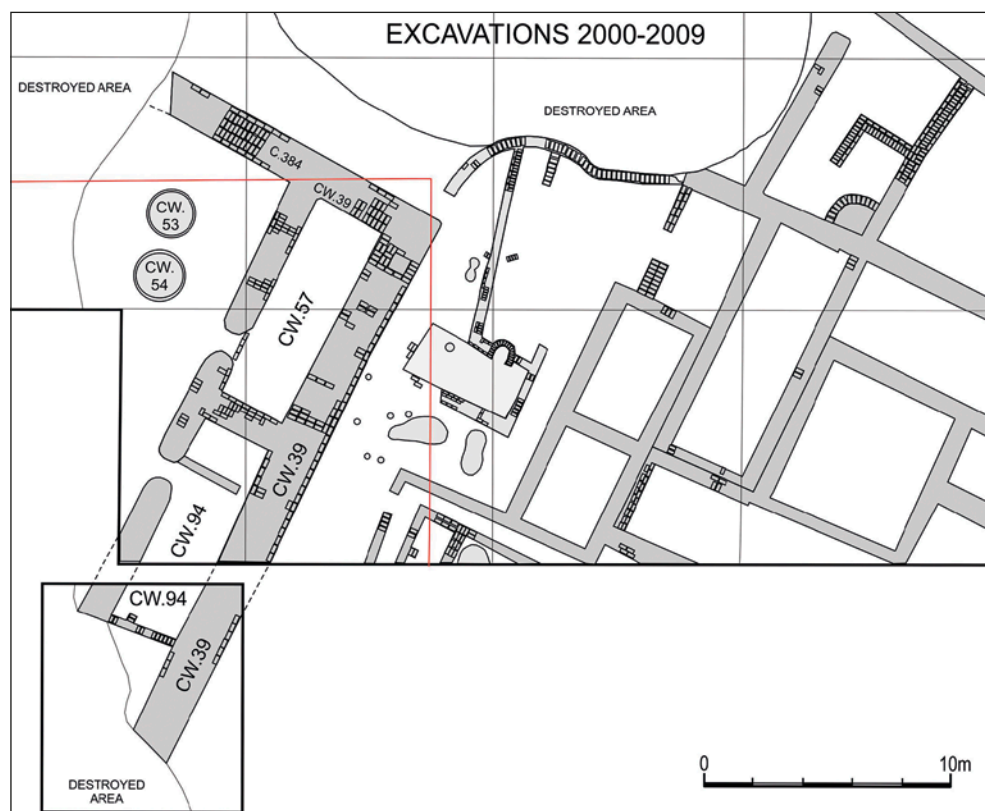


Fig. 8. Plan of the excavations with a big Naqadian building on the Central Kom (Drawing M. Chłodnicki)

A building with thin walls was discovered (CW.44) on the slope of the tell, to the west of wall CW.8. Four cylindrical jars decorated with an impressed rope pattern below the rim [Fig. 9] were discovered in this unit. A door stone lay near them, close to the entrance to the room. The jars dated the functioning of this building to Naqada IIIB.

Once this structure was removed, the ground upon which it stood proved to be empty of any walls save CW.39. To the east of this wall was typical settlement debris with ovens, sometimes with pots still inside them (CW.52), covered with soft soil mixed with ashes. These remains were a continuation of structures discovered in the main trench in levels 26–28 excavated in 2003 (Chłodnicki and Ciałowicz 2005: 53–55). To the west of wall CW.39 the layers were hard and consisted mostly of mud-brick debris. Wall CW.39 was 1.50 m thick, made of sandy, well-made bricks; it was connected to wall C.384 discovered in 2006 (Chłodnicki

and Ciałowicz 2010: 105, Fig. 30), which could now be identified as forming with CW.39 the external (north and east) walls of a monumental building with adjacent rooms and a courtyard in front of them [Fig. 11]. The plan of this massive building was uncovered over the two reported seasons [see Fig. 8]. It consisted of the east and north wall (CW.39), the north wall of the courtyard (C.384), the northern (CW.57) and southern (CW.94) chambers, the wall between the chambers, two walls forming the west wall of the two chambers and a wall between the entrances to chambers.

The external walls CW.39 and C.384 were thicker than the other walls of the building. They were about 1.80 m thick compared to 1.20 m of the other walls. The walls were constructed of sandy mud bricks. Their state of preservation was much better, that is, higher, on the eastern side (level 16, about 6.30 m a.s.l., compared to level 23, 5.60 m a.s.l. on the western side). The difference was due to



Fig. 9. Cylindrical jars from a Naqada IIIB building on the Central Kom
(Photos R. Słaboński)



*Fig. 10. Destroyed southern part of a big Naqadian building on the Central Kom
(Photo R. Słaboński)*



*Fig. 11. Central Kom. Room CW:57 and rounded structures in front of it
(Photo A. Longa)*

the erosion of the sloping edge of the kom. A bin, 0.50 m by 0.50 m, 0.40 m deep, was located in the external wall, close to the corner of the north and east walls [see *Fig. 8*]. It was empty save for a few potsherds.

Narrow entrances, only 0.60 m wide, with rounded jambs led to the chambers. They were 8.50 m long and 2.70 m wide. In the northern chamber the entrance was located near the southern end, whereas in the southern one it was in the northern part of the room.

The northern chamber (CW.57) was excavated in 2012, revealing only white traces of matting and plaster and no other archaeological material except for a smashed jar of Petrie's type L30, which lay near the wall to the left of the entrance. The southern chamber (CW.94) was explored in 2013 and was also found to contain little beyond a few potsherds concentrated mostly near the bottom of the unit to the right of the entrance. The debris was mixed with ashes and there was evidence of burning fires. It seems that the part lying to the left of the entrance was separated from the rest of the room by a low wall, one-and-a-half bricks thick. The south wall (and wall CW.8 at the same time) was destroyed when the western part of the kom slipped away, probably owing to a flood. Evidence for the destruction was very well visible in trench C62 excavated in 2007–2009. It was replaced with a narrow, provisional construction that was one-brick thick [see *Fig. 10*]. Traces of a fire found in the southern chamber were probably connected with this phase of usage of the "big store". Probably after this disaster the entrance to the northern chamber was widened. The fact that the external wall CW.39 is longer than room

CW.94 may indicate that the building was previously bigger and the other room was probably located to the south. The destruction of this part of the site probably took place during the end of Naqada IIIB and beginning of Naqada IIIC1 period.

In front of chamber CW.57 was a square in which two rounded structures 2 m in diameter [see *Figs 8, 11*] were located. They were filled with crushed mud bricks, whereas the exterior was carefully faced with 5-cm-thick bricks. They were preserved only to a small height. It seems that they are the remains of the oldest siloses found at Tell el-Farkha.

Extensive remains of matting were discovered inside the chamber as well as on the square in front of it, along with modest amounts of potsherds, animal bones and other refuse. The area appears to have been cleaned frequently, quite unlike the space outside the building (to the east of it) where typical settlement debris was found. This building was raised on the western edge of the settlement and fades away to the northwest, to the river bank. It appears to have served an important role, possibly a central store. It was built contemporary with the Naqadian residence on the Western Kom (phase 3) and still existed when the administrative-cultic building was raised there (phase 4). It was raised on the spot of the earlier Lower-Egyptian residence and appears to have been a kind of public space that lost significance in the Early Dynastic times (phase 5 of Tell el-Farkha).

In the archaeological layers, to the east of the big Naqadian store, and contemporary with it, mud-brick walls were found, connecting with structures excavated in 2005–2006 in the main

trench. Their thickness was no more than two bricks (Chłodnicki and Ciałowicz 2010: 106).

Artifacts discovered in this trench were not numerous. Beside the four cylindrical jars (see above and *Fig. 9*) and pottery fragments dated to the Naqada IIIA and Naqada IIIB period, several dozen flints: sickle blades, blades, bladelets, flakes as well as borers, razor blade and fragments

of bifacial knife were discovered, along with some animal bones.

The results of geophysical research from 2000 (Herbich 2004; 2012: *Fig. 3*), which had revealed an anomaly in the form of a round circle about 8 m in diameter, were verified in 2012. A structure similar to the building excavated in 2002 on the Eastern Kom was expected. That structure had been 8 m in diameter, the walls being



Fig. 12. General view of the excavations on the Central Kom in 2013, looking southeast; rounded building CW.49 at left (Photo R. Słaboński)

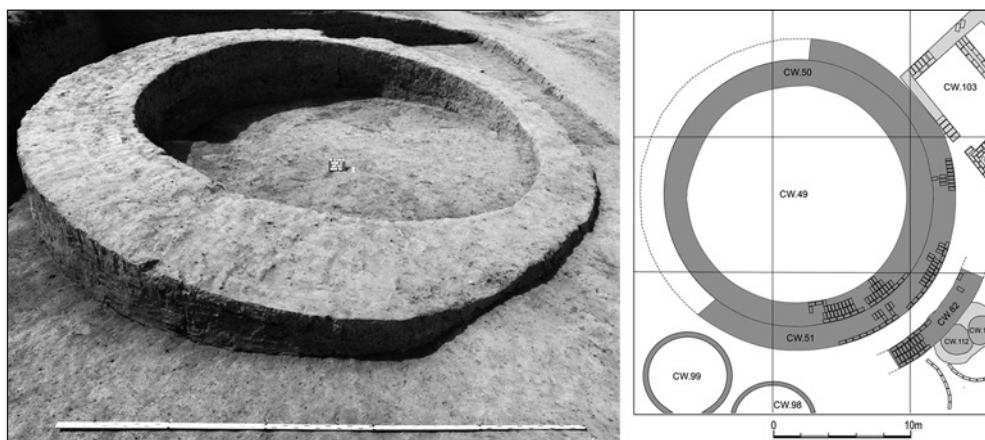


Fig. 13. Rounded building (CW.49) on the Central Kom: left, view from the north; right, plan (Drawing M. Chłodnicki; photo R. Słaboński)

0.80 m thick and the floor given a checker pattern (Chłodnicki and Ciałowicz 2005: 63, Pl. XVII.1). The function of the building had not been established at the time. The building that was now unearthen proved to be much bigger, the interior measuring 7 m in diameter without any internal divisions, surrounded by a double set of circumferential walls, each 0.95 m thick. Both walls were constructed of an external row of mud bricks placed longer side to the face and three rows inside, placed longer side across the wall thickness [Fig. 13].

The internal wall (CW.50) was complete, whereas the external one (CW.51) was preserved on 70% of the perimeter (in the eastern, higher part of the Kom). The structure was filled with mud-brick debris, and only near the southeast wall with dark brown soil.

Excavations outside the round structure uncovered on its southeastern side another row of mud bricks, similarly thick (0.95 m), preserved for a length of 2 m and only one layer high [see Fig. 13]. It seems to have been a kind of floor surrounding the building. Potsherds abounded in this area, whereas flint implements and animal bones were rare.

Remains of rounded silo were recognized on level 15 (6.40 m a.s.l.), in the northeastern corner of the trench. It had narrow walls (one-half-of-a-mud-brick thick) and a diameter of about 3 m. To the north of it was a rectangular building, also with narrow (one brick) walls. Four red-polished dishes lying close to one another [Fig. 14] and a small, also red polished, globular pot with flat base and narrow orifice were discovered in the corner of one of the partly excavated rooms. Two more siloses (CW.98 and

CW.99), also with walls made of half a brick, were uncovered going into the south trench wall. White traces of mats and poorly preserved mud-brick wall were observed in the eastern part of the trench (level 16).

Exploration of the interior of the rounded building (CW.49) on level 22 (5.70 m a.s.l.) yielded the remains of an older building with walls going under wall CW.50. Two walls forming a corner were recorded: CW.116, which was one-and-half-brick thick, and CW.115 of same thickness, running NE–SW. The remains of the building had been heavily damaged by later pits. The rounded building had been constructed on these remains.

On level 18 (6.00–6.20 m a.s.l.) to the south of the rounded building, fragmented human bones were found to be scattered.

The rounded building was raised in phase 6 of Tell el-Farkha (middle of the First Dynasty) and did not exist beyond the Third Dynasty. It functioned most probably as a store building with more floors than just the one. It should be seen as a kind of tower.

[MC]

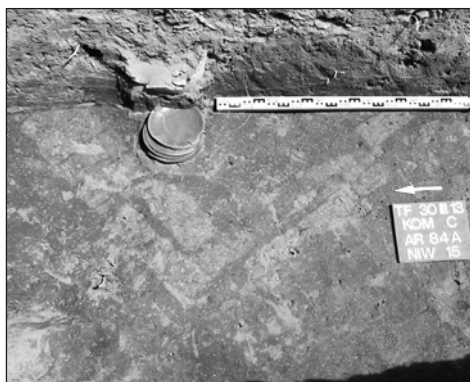


Fig. 14. Red-polished dishes *in situ*
(Photo J. Karmowski)

EASTERN KOM

NORTHERN TRENCH

In the northern trench on the Eastern Kom work continued on the previously excavated are E75 (northeast of the big mastaba), as well as on areas E73–74 and E83–84, between the big mastaba and trench E93–94 (Chłodnicki and Ciałowicz 2007: 150; Chłodnicki 2012a: 23, Fig. 7). In the last trench excavations had been stopped in 2008 (Chłodnicki and Ciałowicz 2011: 167–168; Chłodnicki 2012a: 23–25). Excavated in 2012–2013 were archaeological layers 43–48 in the area located to the north (squares E73–74 and E83–84) and layers 40–48 to the northeast of the big mastaba (square E75). The discovered structures can be dated to Naqada IIIA (levels 43–48) and Naqada IIIA/IIIB (levels 40–42).

The area located to the north of the mastaba was delimited on the east by

a thick wall or rather two adjoining walls (EN.308 and EN.336), leading to the northeastern corner of the mastaba and from the north also by two adjoining walls EN.141 and EN.230 [Fig. 15].

The northern facade of wall EN.141 was already visible in the older trench E93–94 (Chłodnicki and Ciałowicz 2005: 63). The last two walls combined were almost 3 m wide. Both were made of Nile silt bricks, whereas the east walls were constructed of silt-and-sand mud brick. These walls seem to have delimited a space that was functionally connected with the mastaba, forming part of a funeral complex with the mastaba, encircled by a thick wall. In this area, two chambers of similar size were located, both about 8 m long and about 3 m wide. One of them was connected with the north wall (EN.279). Inside it was an accumulation of soil



Fig. 15. General view of the area on the Eastern Kom located to the north of the mastaba (Photo J. Karmowski)

mixed with ashes and a huge number of pots of Petrie type L30, of which only the lower parts were present. Pots of this kind were often found inside the ovens (Rozwadowski 2012: 44–46). It is the



Fig. 16. *Figurines: left, clay figurine of a man; right, bone figurine of a bird*
(Photos R. Słaboński)

first time to have such a concentration at Tell el-Farkha. A chamber of similar size (EN.207/231) was explored on the opposite side of the excavated area, connected with the mastaba wall, but without such a unique content. The lower parts of building EN.228/229, already excavated in 2006–2008, were discovered to the northwest of the mastaba.

A small building with three small rooms (EN.355/356) was discovered in the central part of the area, where in earlier excavations an empty space had been recorded (Chłodnicki and Ciałowicz 2011: Fig. 19). The biggest of these rooms was 4.00 m by 2.50 m; the others were smaller: 1.50 m by 1.50 m and 1.50 m by 0.80 m, separated by a wall only 0.20 m thick. A small fireplace was noted here.

The space between and inside the buildings mentioned above yielded huge quantities of potsherds, including fragments of imported Southern Levantine vessels. Four storage vessels were found *in situ*, as well as a pot-stand, fragments of spinning bowls, simple bowls, some of



Fig. 17. *Bifacial flint knife*
(Photo R. Słaboński)

which were used as lids for storage jars, several small globular pots and a set of miniature vessels.

Of greatest interest, however, was a broken clay figurine of a man [Fig. 16 left]. It had a schematic face and protruding ears. The hands were also schematic. A belt and penis sheath could be observed. There was also another figurine representing an unidentified quadruped. A better executed figurine of a bird was made of bone [Fig. 16 right]. A big bifacial knife made of flint merits note [Fig. 17].

Remains of building EN.341/342/351 excavated in 2011 (Chłodnicki and Ciałowicz 2014) were explored to the east of wall EN.308. Copper objects and a large knife had been found there the previous season (Czarnowicz 2012a: Fig. 1.3) and now the collection was enlarged with more items, including a harpoon of the same type as discovered in grave 55 (Czarnowicz 2012a: Figs 3.8–9) and a rounded plate with folded edges which originally covered a wooden object.

Another rectangular structure (EN.369 and EN.370) with walls 0.60 m thick (two bricks) surrounding a room (EN.372) was found below the building. It was at least 5 m long and 3 m wide (partly excavated) and was filled with mud-brick rubble.

A row of ovens (EN.365, EN.366 and EN.367) was discovered on level 44, between wall EN.369 on the east and thick wall EN.308/336 [Fig. 18]. The diameters of these ovens were about 0.70–1.00 m. Layers of ashes were about 10–20 cm thick and in the center of each oven was a pot, either the upper or the lower part of jars of Petrie's type L.30, buried in mud (below the fire level). These vessels acted as stands for cooking pots. The fire was inside as well as outside the stand.

In the subsequent layers EN.369/370 was leveled and only some postholes and fireplaces (EN.378, EN.379 and EN.380) were noted. Only EN.380 held a pot; the other two contained burnt bricks.

[MC]



Fig. 18. Ovens with pot-stands in the center, discovered on the Eastern Kom (Photo M. Chłodnicki)

SOUTHERN TRENCH

In 2012–2013, field activity in the southern part of the Eastern Kom at Tell el-Farkha focused on two main areas. These were: a new test trench opened by the eastern limits of the site, and the southern and eastern areas in the main trench, neighboring on the large and still incompletely excavated mastaba ES10 (see, e.g., Ciałowicz 2011), extended to the east in 2013 (squares 46, 66 and partly square 56).

The test trench in area E39 was meant as an extension of another test trench from 2011 where the bottom layers were not reached before the end of the campaign. Apart from a few simple burials from the Early Dynastic cemetery known to be present on the site, the greatest promise was offered by a massive and very regular mud-brick corner in the northeastern part of the trench. Upon exploration, the trench turned out to be virtually empty save for two small and thin mud-brick walls of Early Dynastic attribution and the structure at the bottom. This dearth of finds was informative in the light of the present knowledge of human occupation of the Eastern Kom, enabling the tracing of the cemetery limits and establishing that Lower Egyptian people did not make use of this part of the mound.

The most important structure, ES.119 [Fig. 19], was unearthed on the level of 3.21 m a.s.l. Its foundation reached the depth of 2.69 m a.s.l., giving 0.52 m of perfectly preserved walls with rounded corners. The walls, which were about 1 m thick, were built of dark mud bricks. They formed a rectangular room, approximately 2.50 m by 6.00 m in size, with two regular entrances, one in the middle of the longer north wall and the other directly opposite

in the south wall. The whole structure was oriented NW–SE and as it filled almost completely the surface of the trench, it probably belonged to a larger complex, which was established evidently on the plain sands of the *gezira*, although below the present groundwater level. The pottery material collected inside the room was very scarce and fragmentary, and could not provide precise dating, although a date for the structure in Tell el-Farkha phase 3 (Naqada IID2/IIIA1) is tenable. Other finds were few, but included a large stone with a hollow in the middle, found close to the northern entrance, probably used as a door socket, and a few mollusk shells. The preserved part of the building was found covered with a compact layer of mud with some hardly recognizable bricks within it, obviously a level of destruction. Topping it was a thick black burnt layer [Fig. 20].

It is too early to speculate on the actual function of the structure, but it can be said that it was not a typical sepulchral building. There was no burial, no intentionally deposited offerings, and entrances were discovered instead. Neither was it a dwelling: it contained no hearths and a poor assemblage of finds (highly fragmented refuse was concentrated in a dark layer outside the structure and by its southwestern corner), not to mention the massive walls, all of which suggest a building of some significance (see Ciałowicz and Dębowska-Ludwin 2013: 29–30). The structure is located so deep (more than 4 m), however, and the presence of an extensively used modern road just above the area of interest has resulted in further fieldwork being postponed.

A preliminary hypothesis was formulated based on the results of



*Fig. 19. Mud-brick structure ES.119
(Photo R. Słaboński)*



*Fig. 20. Mud-brick structure and layers of destruction visible in the section
(Photo R. Słaboński)*

excavations in the main trench. Another mud-brick wall (also founded on the *gezira* sand) at the southern end of the trench, about 30 m to the west of the described structure, had a similar orientation as the described structure and may even have been



Fig. 21. *Door socket*
(Photo R. Słaboński)

part of it. It was evidently destroyed and covered by a burnt layer; even some bricks were fired to a red color [Fig. 22]. Near its eastern end was a 1-m-wide entrance with a stone door socket [Fig. 21].

All the younger structures discovered until now on the Eastern Kom, that is, the mud-brick walls on the east, north and south of the mastaba and the mastaba itself [Fig. 23] were built on this layer of destruction. The date of this disaster corresponds with the end of the Naqada edifice on the Western Kom, which is placed in the beginning of Naqada IIIA1. Thus it may be supposed that the entire settlement on Tell el-Farkha was destroyed as a result of human action during this period. It is very likely that different political centers were competing in various fields. Control over trade routes leading to the Levant could have been the dominant issue. It may also be presumed that the



Fig. 22. *Mud-brick wall in the southern part of the main trench*
(Photo R. Słaboński)

first Naqadian settlers at Tell el-Farkha, the builders of the Naqada residence, originated from a different center than their successors. Unfortunately, until now no graves of the first Naqadian settlers (as well as Lower Egyptians) have been discovered at Tell el-Farkha, and our knowledge is still very limited.

Excavation in the main trench, ongoing since 2001, was focused in these seasons on ares E43, 44, 45, 55 and 65, that is, to the east and south of the large mastaba in order to expose its facades and reach the foundation. No particularly interesting features were discovered east of the mastaba, thus the main structure was not supported or enlarged by any other structures. The only important observation was that the eastern facade was clearly sloping.

South of the large structure a massive wall about 1.20 m thick was discovered, composed of silt-and-sand bricks founded on the said layer of destruction and located parallel to the southern facade of mastaba.



Fig. 23. East facade of mastaba ES10 on layer of destruction (Photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 24. South wall separating mastaba ES10 from the settlement and (in the middle) remains of an earlier mud-brick wall founded on the gezira (Photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 25. Grave 94, northern part of burial chamber: left, the chamber overbuilt by a mud-brick wall; right, chamber after exploration (Photos R. Słaboński)



Fig. 26. Pit with ochre east of grave 94 (Photo R. Słaboński)

A beautifully preserved corner unearthened beneath grave 63 from Naqada IIIB (Dębowska-Ludwin 2012: 65) countered the assumption that the wall was somehow connected with the mastaba, especially when it turned southwest [Fig. 24]. The main function of this wall may have been to separate the settlement area from the mastaba.

Excavations were continued within the area enclosed by the wall where the southwestern part of the trench was covered with a very dense dump. After the zone was explored, yielding masses of highly fragmented pottery, the said wall



Fig. 27. Greywacke palette topped by two lion figures (Photo R. Słaboński)

from the beginning of occupation was exposed [see Figs 22, 24]. Interestingly, also in this part of the site no remains of Lower Egyptian culture habitation were registered.

Work was conducted within a narrow strip around graves 94 and 100 excavated in previous campaigns (Dębowska-Ludwin 2012: 59–60). Clearing the cross-section of empty Grave 100 revealed the clearly sloping facades of the tomb and the exact level where the niched superstructure was built over thin walls lining the burial chamber.

Grave 94, the superstructure of which had been explored in 2009, was now cleared in the bottom layers, reaching 2 m deep. Surprisingly, the builders of the tomb had built the wall of the superstructure on top of the grave chamber once the body of the deceased and the equipment had been placed in it [Fig. 25]. Was this a mistake on the part of the builder or a method to secure the most precious goods? In effect some additional offerings were discovered in 2012: two small jars of travertine, a basalt bowl, two cosmetic palettes. One of them is rectangular with incised decorated edges. The other is shield-shaped with two plastic figurines of animals, possibly lions, modeled in its upper part [Fig. 27] and a string of 141 beads of carnelian. The bottom of the chamber was covered with pure sand and red ochre. An oval pit filled with a thin layer of red substance, possibly ochre [Fig. 26], was discovered to the east of the grave and at the bottom level. The substance was used presumably to cover the bottom of the burial chamber during the funerary ceremonies.

Additional excavation to the east of the old trench (square 46) revealed traces of



*Fig. 28. Early Dynastic building on the Eastern Kom
(Photo R. Słaboński)*



*Fig. 29. Eastern Kom. Top level of grave 121
(Photo R. Słaboński)*

a building a dozen or so centimeters beneath the surface [Fig. 28]. It was composed of two rectangular rooms (E117–E118) and a round structure to the north of them, probably a silos (E116). These buildings were dated to the Early Dynastic and beginning of the Old Kingdom. Two big vessels (broken) and some bread molds around them were found in the houses, suggesting that the remains were part of an ancient bakery.

In square 56, a compact mud-brick structure (4.50 m by 2.50 m) was

discovered [Fig. 29]. It may be the upper level of a small mastaba (grave 121), which will be explored in the next season.

A poorly preserved, small rectangular room (E127) was unearthed in square 66. Two big bowls [Fig. 30], some bread molds (one of them in a bigger bowl), a fragment of a schist bracelet and a few pieces of clay seals were found. Some of them preserved barely visible impressions of cylinder seals with hieroglyphic signs, traces of finger marks and an imprint of cloth [Fig. 31]. Two middle-sized jars were discovered in



Fig. 30. Bowls and bread molds from room E127 (Photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 31. Early Dynastic clay sealing (Photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 32. Storage jar in situ (Photo R. Słaboński)



Fig. 33. Beads from storage jar (carnelian, hematite, quartz) (Photo R. Słaboński)

the northeastern part of room E127, one broken and the other completely preserved [Fig. 32]. The complete pot yielded an assemblage of beads [Fig. 33] made of carnelian (23 specimens) as well as one of haematite and one of quartz; six beads

were of faience, one of bone. Three unfinished beads were of serpentine and there was also small chrysoprase pebble which probably served as small grinder or miniature palette.

[KMC]

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